

Narratives

Executive Summary

Utah Governor Gary Herbert and South Salt Lake Mayor Cherie Wood, along with Read Today and United Way of Salt Lake as nonprofit partners have come together to support Ogden City School District's proposal for "Read. Graduate. Succeed," a Governor/Mayor AmeriCorps Initiative. One hundred sixty five (165) AmeriCorps members will leverage at least 5,500 volunteers to support a cradle-to-career pipeline of literacy tutoring, mentoring, and academic support to ensure participating elementary students are reading on grade level and participating junior high and high school students have a clear pathway to on-time high school graduation. Member placement will focus on South Salt Lake and the Wasatch Front (major urban area in Utah). At the Governor's request, it will also expand to rural, isolated communities who need the support. At the end of the first year of this grant, 80% of the 8000 elementary students who complete the tutoring will show at least a 30-point gain in their oral reading fluency as measured by the DIBELS pre/post test scores. It is also expected that 80% of the 1200 junior high and high school students assigned school-based mentors will complete the mentorship by being continuously matched for at least six months. This project will address the focus area of Education. The CNCS investment of \$1,237,575.00 will be matched with \$ 1,026,829.00 for a total of \$ 2,297,586.00.

Rationale and Approach

Pressing Community Need

In his recent State of the State Address, Utah Governor Gary Herbert outlined his goal to improve education in Utah schools, On Pace 2020, with an outcome that 66% of Utah's workforce will have post-secondary training by 2020. To achieve this goal, he is determined that 90% of elementary students will be reading on grade level and 90% of high school students will graduate and complete post-secondary education or training by 2020. A coalition made up of South Salt Lake Mayor, Cherie Wood (focus community), United Way of Salt Lake and Read Today (well established nonprofit organizations), and Utah AmeriCorps Literacy (successful elementary tutoring program) has been established to take on this challenge. The Governor has directed the coalition to address the goal with urgency and implement a strong program in South Salt Lake and expand to other needy schools throughout the state. It is called "Read. Graduate. Succeed."

In the city of South Salt Lake (pop. 30,000), 22% of the children live in poverty, 49% are reading below grade level and 38% do not graduate from high school. This percentage is higher among low income students - 53% do not graduate. Mayor Cherie Wood, herself a single mother and first-

Narratives

generation college graduate, is uniquely positioned to be a powerful advocate for bringing about the change needed, as these statistics are unacceptable to her. She is a strong partner in United Way of Salt Lake's neighborhood-based work and is personally engaged in the transformative work to improve student outcomes in her community.

Across the state, other urban areas have equally challenging situations. 65% of participating schools in this program are designated inner city schools where free and reduced lunch numbers 87% of the students. In these schools, the average number of students reading below grade level is 53%, with 25 of the schools reporting that number to be over 60% by the end of 5th grade.

(www.schools.utah.gov/assessment/reports.aspx) The number of ESL students has increased by an average of 24% in the past three years. While 78% of students graduate from high school on time, only 62% of Hispanic students, 61% of Black or African American students, and 47% of English Language Learners do. (<http://www.schools.utah.gov/data/Educational-Data/Graduation-Dropout-Rates/Graduation-Rate-2012.aspx>)

In addition to the urban challenges faced by South Salt Lake and communities like it, Utah's rural poor population faces unique challenges, including understaffed schools with few resources, and depressed economies. In these isolated and remote schools, the number of children reading below grade level is 48% and high school graduation rates are below the state average. *Read. Graduate. Succeed.* will provide resources and help so needed in these schools, and will focus on the Ute tribe, living on reservations in eastern Utah (55% reading below grade level and only 47% graduate from high school).

The Utah State Office of Education (USOE) has identified 15 schools as priority schools that participate in the SIG program. AmeriCorps members will be placed in 9 of these schools (60%). The USOE has also identified 28 schools as focus schools which are low performing, and AmeriCorps members will work in 24 of these schools (56%). Program staff will also reach out to other SIG and low-performing schools and offer the opportunity to participate in *Read. Graduate. Succeed.* To address these needs, *Read. Graduate. Succeed.* will implement a two-pronged strategy focusing on grade-level reading for elementary (grades K-6) students and on-time high school graduation for secondary (grades 7-12) students. The targeted communities were selected because there is: 1) clear need based on demographic and achievement data; 2) commitment from the school district and/or school principals; 3) established alignment with one or more of the initiative's core strategies. The elementary program, which has been in place for the past seven years and administered by the Utah AmeriCorps Literacy Initiative, will continue to operate statewide. Secondary members will serve in

Narratives

schools located in United Way of Salt Lake's South Salt Lake Promise Partnership, where nine Neighborhood Centers provide cradle-to-career support for children and families are located, and in additional junior highs and high schools throughout the state.

This proposal will move students and communities closer to achieving these goals, and as a result, "Read. Graduate. Succeed." has garnered enthusiastic support from Read Today, which has provided extensive support to the Utah AmeriCorps Literacy Initiative and will continue to provide support for this program. Read Today is affiliated with the largest media company in the state and will provide extensive public exposure for this initiative. Last year they produced over 100 literacy news stories and flew a news helicopter to more than a dozen participating schools to celebrate student achievement. They have pledged to expand that coverage and remain a public advocate for this initiative. United Way of Salt Lake, the other nonprofit partner, has created vibrant neighborhood partnerships throughout its service area through Neighborhood Centers where children and families gain the tools and resources they need to gain education, increase financial stability, and improve their health. They have made a promise to the community to create opportunities so that children—even in the toughest neighborhoods—have the chance to become productive, self-reliant members of our community. UWSL will provide financial, in-kind and supervisory support to the sites in South Salt Lake.

AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems

AmeriCorps members will provide added value to the students, schools, and communities they serve and lay the groundwork for fundamentally transforming Utah's most high need communities into places where all children succeed, regardless of their circumstances. As members fulfill their assignments both through direct service and by building a grassroots network of volunteers for the future, they will be creating the infrastructure necessary to support and sustain long-term community transformation. Their unique place within the community, but outside the traditional structure of the school district or school itself, will allow them to contribute to the development and modeling of a culture of success in a way that is not possible for existing staff and volunteers. AmeriCorps members will be well-positioned to work with resources available at schools while linking isolated interventions and volunteer pools into a more cohesive and effective way. They will be trained on how to use data, mobilize volunteers, and coordinate programs for maximum community impact.

AmeriCorps members assigned to the elementary program will: 1) provide one-on-one tutoring to children in grades K-6 and 2) recruit and train student (peer) and adult volunteers to augment the program's effectiveness. They will be supported by Read Today, which provides marketing and

Narratives

publicity for reading programs as well as resources and supports for students and families, including online reading trackers, reading tips, prizes and incentives.

Those assigned to the secondary program will: 1) mentor student participants, emphasizing on-time high school graduation and college preparedness strategies; 2) engage parents in on-time high school graduation behaviors and connect them to appropriate resources; and 3) recruit and train adult volunteers to augment the program's effectiveness. They will be supported by United Way of Salt Lake, which has extensive experience in implementing school- and neighborhood-based academic enrichment programs and engaging volunteers and will interface with the Utah System of Higher Education, which administers multiple college preparedness and access programs that can benefit student participants.

The coalition seeks 129 members to serve in the elementary program (21 full-time and 108 part-time) and 36 members to serve in the secondary program (12 full-time and 24 part-time).

Evidence-Based/Evidence-Informed and Measurable Community Impact

Read. Graduate. Succeed will implement strategies that are evidence-based/evidence-informed and will facilitate measureable community impact through improved reading scores (elementary) and improved on-time high school graduation rates (secondary). The program will be managed by administrators who have had extensive experience working with AmeriCorps programs, including the Utah AmeriCorps Literacy Initiative, for the past seven years.

Elementary AmeriCorps members will implement one-on-one reading tutoring programs in participating schools by recruiting, training and monitoring adult volunteers or peer tutors who will work individually with students. AmeriCorps members will offer: 1) an individualized tutoring program for at-risk youth in grades K-6 by adult volunteers and/or 2) a class-wide peer tutoring program using students in upper grades to provide tutoring to students in lower grades. Members will assess the students with a pre/posttest, supply logistical support, and monitor the daily functioning of the programs to ensure the highest quality.

During its first six years, the Utah AmeriCorps Literacy Initiative served 27,883 students, 71% of whom tested at grade level in reading after adult tutoring. In the peer tutoring program the average growth in fluency for student tutors was 22.04 words per minute and for tutees was 25.24 words per minute. In the seventh year of the program, 79% of the 9,535 students tutored by an adult volunteer read on grade level at the end of the year. The average growth in fluency for student tutors was 26.47 words per minute and for tutees was 28.26 words per minute. The expected level of growth over the school year is 20 words per minute.

Narratives

The effectiveness of one-on-one instruction for enhancing outcomes in reading is well documented, both for those who are learning to read and those in need of remediation and is the preferred instructional procedure (e.g., Jenkins, Mayhall, Pschka, & Jenkins, 1974; Juel, 1991; Wasik & Slavin, 1993). One-on-one instruction is also essential for students who are failing to learn to read. For these students, reading instruction in small groups has proven inadequate as a preventive or remedial strategy (Slavin & Madden, 1989, p. 11). Evidence also indicates that well designed tutoring programs utilizing trained volunteers and nonprofessionals can be effective in improving children's reading skills. (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Students who participate in peer tutoring benefit from higher academic achievement, improved relationships with peers, improved personal and social development as well as increased motivation. The teacher benefits from this model of instruction by an increased opportunity to individualize instruction, increased facilitation of inclusion/mainstreaming, and opportunities to reduce inappropriate behaviors (Topping, 2008). The tutoring process that will be used by AmeriCorps members and volunteers is scientifically-based. It incorporates the five components of good reading instruction as outlined by the National Reading Panel's publication, "Put Reading First." The curriculum includes: phonemic awareness, explicit phonics instruction through correction, fluency, vocabulary development, and continuous checks for comprehension. Participating students will receive systematic and consistent direct instruction in areas where their reading difficulties occur. Members and volunteers will be taught to use STAR Tutoring 1-3 and STAR Advanced and Mentor Tutoring (the Utah State approved tutoring programs). These proven programs provide step-by-step instructions for a 30-minute session in which tutor and student(s) read orally together to teach familiar and new text. The tutor observes decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension through a running record assessment. The following tutor tips are used as needed: 1) before reading - activate prior experience, build background knowledge, set up purpose for reading, and work on vocabulary development; 2) during reading - as student reads, ask for predictions, check for text comprehension. When a student comes to an unknown word, wait 5 seconds then use correction strategies including phonics (sounds & blending practice); 3) after reading - praise student, and discuss the book by checking predictions, clarifying meaning, extending ideas, and connecting text to self, other texts, and life experiences.

At the end of each school year in the grant cycle, 80% of participating students will show at least a 30-point gain in their oral reading fluency as determined by pre/post test scores. Pre-tests will be given within a week prior to beginning the tutoring session and post-tests will be given within a week after the session ends using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment,

Narratives

which has been approved by the state of Utah and CNCS. DIBELS are a set of standardized, individually administered measures of literacy development. They are one minute fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of reading skills. The specific assessment that will be used is the DIBELS Next Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) Benchmark Assessment, which is currently being used in all elementary schools in Utah. Technical reports of the validity and reliability can be viewed at <https://dibels.uoregon.edu>.

The elementary program will report on the following national performance measures: ED1 (number of students who start in a CNCS supported education program); ED2 (number of students who complete participation in a CNCS supported K-12 education program); ED5 (number of students with improved academic performance in literacy and/or math).

Secondary AmeriCorps members will serve as *Destination Graduation Mentors* and work with junior high and high school students to create clear pathways to on-time high school graduation. The secondary program will focus on reaching underserved students, including low-income students who qualify for free or reduced lunch, those who are likely to be the first in their families to graduate from high school, and those who are achieving just below grade level but who have been identified as likely to be able to get on track to on-time high school graduation with the specific intervention of a Destination Graduation Mentor. To avoid the duplication of service delivery, students who are already participating in well-established, supplemental mentoring programs will not be eligible to participate. AmeriCorps Destination Graduation Mentors will: 1) mentor student participants, emphasizing on-time high school graduation and college preparedness strategies; 2) engage parents/guardians and families in on-time high school graduation behaviors and connect them to appropriate resources; and 3) recruit and train adult volunteers to augment the program's effectiveness as outlined below.

Research has shown the effectiveness of mentoring relationships and parent engagement in improving on-time high school graduation rates. For example, Check and Connect, a program that combines monitoring of performance and attendance with mentoring was found to have positive effects of staying in school (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/interventionreport.aspx?sid=78>). In Radcliffe and Stephens's mid-point report from a seven-year study about building a college-going culture among middle school students, they identified mentoring as the first key component. Other key components to on-time high school graduation included parent and family involvement and tutoring (Radcliffe, R., & Stephens, L. C. (2008). Preservice teachers are creating a college culture for at-risk middle school students. Research in Middle Level Education Online).

Destination Graduation Mentors will emphasize specific on-time high school graduation and college

Narratives

preparedness strategies with students. Mentors will assist students in navigating class choice, including taking required classes and honors, AP, CE, and IB classes where appropriate; enrolling in the Utah Scholars Core Course of Study, the completion of which will enable them to apply scholarships awarded by the Utah Board of Regents; understanding college admissions requirements; understanding college financial aid options, including completing the FAFSA; and preparing for college entrance exams including the ACT. Mentors will advise students about the availability of college preparedness and college access programs administered by the Utah System of Higher Education and will encourage participation in those programs. In addition, mentors will monitor student attendance and follow up with students and families regarding chronic absence. Mentors will encourage students to participate in out of school time enrichment activities based at their schools or at nearby United Way of Salt Lake's Neighborhood Centers. They will facilitate peer support discussion groups, which have been shown to have a positive effect on middle school students and early high school students staying in school (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/interventionreport>).

Destination Graduation Mentors will work with existing parent resource centers to implement strategies to engage parents and families in the academic achievement and college planning. They will use resources available through the Utah System of Higher Education to plan parent workshops. Topics may include how to talk about school with children, why high school graduation is important, how to pay for college and why college is important for their child's future, the Utah Scholars Core Course of Study, and Utah Education Savings Plans. These mentors will also develop and implement ESL and ELL classes for parents geared at helping their students achieve academic success. These will take place both on campus and at convenient neighborhood locations, including UWSL's Neighborhood Centers.

Destination Graduation Mentors will be responsible for recruiting volunteers who may provide one-on-one/small group tutoring, homework help, workshops, college and career fairs, and communicate with parents about their child's mentoring successes via email or phone. They will be placed at junior highs and high schools throughout the state. In South Salt Lake, mentors will augment their service by meeting with students at UWSL's Neighborhood Centers, well-established community hubs where students in this program spend significant time. Each full-time mentor will work with 50 students and each part-time mentor will work with 25 students, for a total of 1200 being served annually.

The secondary program will report on these national performance measures: ED3A (number of disadvantaged youth/mentor matches that are commenced by the CNCS supported education program; ED4A (number of disadvantaged youth/mentor matches that are sustained by the CNCS

Narratives

supported program for at least the required time period); and ED9 (number of students graduating from high school on time with a diploma).

Program staff will compile, analyze, and report progress and outcomes to the ¿Read. Graduate. Succeed.¿ Advisory Board and the Utah Commission on Volunteers. Annual reports will be completed prior to October 30 each year. Participating schools and districts will sign MOUs to ensure that data can be secured without violating the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Program staff will develop and document best practices to allow additional communities to replicate this program with maximum efficiency statewide.

Member Recruitment

The Initiative will recruit highly qualified individuals who meet NCLB requirements for placement within participating schools. The national on-line AmeriCorps Recruitment Placement System will be searched for those with the necessary qualifications who are interested in relocating to Utah and prospective members will be recruited from colleges, universities, religious and community centers within the program¿s service area. For the elementary program, individuals with classroom tutor training or who are education students within a year of graduation or graduates will be given priority. For the secondary program, individuals with classroom or volunteer experience with junior high and high school students will be given priority.

To ensure that the members understand the communities being served by ¿Read. Graduate. Succeed.¿, principals from the host schools will be responsible to select and supervise both elementary and secondary members. They will be required to consider diversity in candidates including racial, ethnic background, age and gender when choosing AmeriCorps members. All selections must comply with equal opportunity guidelines. Full-time members will be paid \$1,500 in living allowance monthly for 10 months (\$15,000.00 yearly) and part time members will receive \$750 per month for 10 months (\$7,500.00 yearly). Criminal background and sex offender checks will be conducted on all members by the districts they are serving. Districts will verify the outcome with program staff before the member begins serving.

Member Training

All AmeriCorps members will participate in a three-day pre-service training. Topics may include: recruiting and retaining adult volunteers; citizenship, leadership, and supervision; basic first aid, CPR, and conflict resolution. All members will be supplied with a handbook that will include member requirements and qualifications, education award requirements, service requirements, professionalism policies, member restrictions, member benefits, discipline procedures, prohibited activities, and

Narratives

grievance procedures. Members will be given explicit training as to the activities that are prohibited and those that are appropriate for accumulating service hours. In addition, members will receive training specific to their assignment in either the elementary or secondary program as outlined below. Pre-service training will include an overview of both the elementary and secondary programs to ensure that each participant has a comprehensive overview of the whole initiative.

Elementary members will receive high-quality training based on current reading research for elementary aged children, which will be conducted by specialists from the Utah State Office of Education for a minimum of 15 hours and includes basic reading skills and tutoring methods. Other training topics include development of reading materials, the leveling of supplementary books, and training on the assessment and monitoring of student growth in reading, including practice administration of state- and district-approved assessments. Because tutoring is the main activity members will perform, 50% of the time will be spent learning the adult and mentor tutoring programs used by the initiative. Elementary members may attend school and district professional development opportunities as well as reading conferences and literacy summits.

Members assigned to the secondary program will receive training that will include topics such as: the importance of academic planning for future success; understanding and working with diverse populations; understanding both the public education and higher education systems and how to work within both; using \leq below the achievement line \leq data to guide academic interventions and planning; preparing students for college admissions tests; and assisting with college admissions process and financial aid options. Secondary members serving in UWSL's South Salt Lake Promise Partnership will receive additional training designed to help them understand the history, needs, and resources of that community. .

All members will benefit from professional development coordinated by program staff throughout the school year including monthly regional training meetings and participation in the annual Utah Conference on Volunteerism. In addition, the following activities will promote spirit de corps and show appreciation for each member: presenting National Presidential Service Awards to deserving members; providing tokens of appreciation during national service week; engaging in group service projects on national service days, and United Way Day of Caring; and developing a communication network among members via email and social networking. Program staff will meet with members individually to set goals for personal and professional growth.

Member Supervision

AmeriCorps members will benefit from a supervisory structure that ensures compliance with

Narratives

applicable guidelines and allows them to seek advice, problem solve in a collaborative environment, and find personal support and guidance if necessary. The vast majority of elementary members will be placed at sites where the Utah AmeriCorps Literacy Initiative already has strong relationships with principals and reading specialists, which helps to ensure adequate support for and effective supervision of members.

Secondary members will be placed in schools and districts that have well-established relationships with the AmeriCorps and now want to expand to their secondary schools, and junior highs and high schools located in UWSL's South Salt Lake Promise Partnership. Principals will provide the supervisory backbone at the schools; in South Salt Lake, Neighborhood Center coordinators will provide additional support.

Elementary members will benefit from two levels of supervision: the school principal and the reading specialist or coordinator who is a certified teacher with reading endorsement credentials and expertise with tutoring as an intervention. Daily supervisory responsibilities fall mainly to the reading specialist, who will spend approximately half of his/her time in direct contact with the member through observing, planning, assessing, and discussing students and programs. Other responsibilities include: 1) verifying members' service hours and approving time sheets; 2) providing daily informal feedback on members' tutoring skills and abilities; 3) overseeing data collection on volunteers and students; and 4) any other supervisory activity the principal may deem necessary to ensure success of the program. Members are under regular indirect supervision by either the reading specialist, who is often housed in the same room, or the principal. Principals' responsibilities include: 1) conducting informal observations of members' daily activities including the academic instruction of students; 2) completing two formal evaluations of members' performance (mid-year and year end); 3) being available to handle any concerns, problems or needs of the member; and 4) any other supervisory activity necessary to ensure the success of the program. Program staff will provide Principals with site supervisor training and will make three or four site visits during the year. Special monitoring visits will be conducted if observations lead staff to believe there is a problem at the site.

Secondary members will be supervised by school principals or their designees, typically academic or career counselors, or nonprofit directors at the organizations where members are placed. The principal, nonprofit director, or designee will be responsible for: 1) conducting informal observations of members' daily activities including interactions with students; 2) completing two formal evaluations of members' performance (mid-year and year end); 3) being available to handle any concerns, problems or needs of the member; and 4) any other supervisory activity necessary to ensure the

Narratives

success of the program.

An on-site supervisor assigned to work with individual members will be responsible for: 1) verifying members' service hours and approving time sheets; 2) assisting and monitoring members' counseling activities; 3) providing daily informal feedback on members' counseling skills and abilities; 4) overseeing data collection on volunteers and students; and 5) any other supervisory activity necessary to ensure success of the program.

Program staff will train site supervisors, make regular site visits, and interview members on a regular basis to review goals. Principals, counselors, and the program staff will work together to ensure appropriate supervision of all member activities. Memoranda of Understanding will be executed with all partners involved in supervising AmeriCorps members.

Member Experience

AmeriCorps members need to have powerful service experiences that produce community impact and lead to continued civic participation and connectivity with other national service participants. To achieve this goal, members will: 1) participate in structured opportunities to reflect on and learn from their service at regional monthly gatherings, semi-annual conferences, and gatherings with other members, including AmeriCorps, VISTA, and Foster Grandparent that may feature presentations and interactive discussions with local and state nonprofit leaders, business leaders, and elected officials; 2) receive public relations and communications training giving them the tools and resources to communicate in a succinct and compelling way about their service; 3) participate in community service activities.

In addition to their assignments, AmeriCorps members will be required to participate in an additional community service activity during their term. They will work closely with their on-site supervisors and program staff to develop plans for meaningful service, whether it consists of a variety of one-time or short-term projects or an ongoing project. All members will be trained on how to plan and carry out their Individual Community Service Project using information from *A Guide to Effective Citizenship through National Service*, and methodology developed by the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps. Service that members choose must take place in coordination with other local service agencies for a minimum of 100 service hours (full-time) or and 50 hours (part-time). It may include such projects as: volunteering at a homeless shelter, making quilts for hospitals, cooking and serving meals to homebound citizens, or cleaning highways. Their experiences will be reported to the program staff and shared with other members. AmeriCorps members will also participate in group service projects on at least two National Days of Service, MLK Day, and United Way Day of Caring.

Narratives

Specialists from Read Today will provide training on communication via traditional and social media, which will prepare members to share their stories to the broader community in ways that will increase interest in civic participation and volunteerism. Members will be encouraged to share their experiences in school and nonprofit newsletters, by writing op-eds for publication, and through social media including Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. Member service activities will be highlighted on coalition member websites and public relations staff may highlight their work in various communications. The program will foster a sense of connection with the AmeriCorps identity by requiring members to prominently display the AmeriCorps logo at their site of service. They will wear the logo uniform or pin whenever they are providing service or recruiting volunteers.

Volunteer Generation

AmeriCorps members will have the responsibility to recruit, train, schedule and maintain volunteers at their individual sites. Full-time members will recruit at least 60 volunteers and part-time members will recruit at least 30. The coalition has set a goal to recruit at least 5500 volunteers during the grant period.

The Utah AmeriCorps Literacy Initiative has been successful in recruiting volunteers to support tutoring efforts over the last seven years. For the first six years of the program, members recruited a total of 27,646 volunteers who served 638,674 hours tutoring in schools. In the most recent year 9,645 recruited volunteers served for 153,063 hours tutoring 9,535 students. Nearly 10% of UALI volunteer recruits were either baby boomers or students.

Read. Graduate. Succeed. will expand on relationships that the UALI has developed with cities, mayors' offices, fire and police departments, churches, and businesses to ensure maximum community exposure for the program. An established relationship with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church), which has committed its leadership to recruit members of its congregations to provide tutoring to their area elementary school, is continuing to grow. After one month more than 1,300 volunteers had signed up to tutor approximately 2,800 students through the UALI, and this recruitment effort remains in effect. In addition, members will publicize volunteering opportunities at colleges and universities, at United Way Neighborhood Centers, and at religious and community centers. Program staff will access the public relations and communications staffs of the coalition's partners to ensure community awareness of volunteer opportunities.

United Way of Salt Lake (UWSL) is uniquely positioned to ensure success in recruiting volunteers. In addition to having three full-time Volunteer Coordinators, UWSL has access to significant populations of new Americans through its immigrant and refugee integration work and to low-

Narratives

income individuals, people of color, and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds through its Neighborhood Centers. They will work to ensure that these populations are provided opportunities to serve through town hall meetings, flyers, bulletin board postings, and social media outreach. On-site coordinators will seek out individuals who are qualified to serve and extend personal invitations for them to do so.

Some of the sites served by AmeriCorps members may incorporate the use of VISTA, RSVP volunteers and Foster Grandparents. Members will be encouraged to develop specific strategies to attract baby boomers, college students, low-income, minority, new Americans, and people with disabilities, within their communities to serve. All volunteers will be honored at each site during National Volunteer Week.

Organizational Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

Read Today is committed to branding national service through its material and will ensure that all participating schools and nonprofits will use the AmeriCorps name and logo on websites, service gear, and public materials such as stationery, application forms, recruitment brochures, on-line position posting and other recruitment strategies, and all materials related to the AmeriCorps program. Program staff has worked with schools and partners to monitor consistency for the AmeriCorps brand over the past seven years. United Way of Salt Lake has had experience working with partners to uphold similar commitments to branding and will commit marketing resources to ensuring the highest standards are upheld. Formal agreements regarding branding and publicity requirements will be incorporated into memoranda of understanding with each participating partner. As part of its partnership with this program, Read Today will bring outstanding public outreach and awareness. Read Today is committed to an ongoing public awareness campaign highlighting student achievement and parent involvement that will also recognize the role of AmeriCorps members.

Organizational Capability

Background and Staffing

Read Today will be administered by the Ogden School District and brings together other organizations with significant capacity to ensure the program's success. The staff and administrators of the Utah AmeriCorps Literacy Initiative, which has administered the elementary program for seven years, will become the staff of Read Today. They will be employed by and housed at Ogden School District, which will provide training regarding financial policies, procedures and systems. The Utah Commission on Volunteers will provide programmatic orientation and support through trainings and site visits.

Narratives

Staffing for *Read. Graduate. Succeed.* will include a secondary administrator, an elementary administrator, a member support specialist, and a program assistant as outlined below:

Secondary Administrator Linda Anderson's responsibilities will include the support, training and monitoring of the members placed in secondary schools, with special emphasis on those in South Salt Lake, to ensure that best practices and high quality service will support the sites in their efforts. She will conduct regular site visits which will include meeting with members, counselors and principals to discuss the progress of the students involved in the program. Ms. Anderson will supervise the Member Support Specialist and will be responsible for the tracking of members' time, activities and progress towards completing their assignment. She will also act as the liaison with the Utah Commission on Volunteers. Ms. Anderson is a retired principal and high school counselor who has administered AmeriCorps Programs at her school. She has a Master's of Social Work, Utah Teaching, Counseling/Administrators License, and 25 years experience in elementary and high schools. Linda has a unique perspective of the K-12 experience that will benefit secondary sites as she collaborates with them to provide support for students struggling to graduate from high school.

Elementary Administrator Dr. Gloria Skanchy is currently the full-time director of the Utah AmeriCorps Literacy Initiative and will be the primary contact for this grant application. She will have responsibility for the programmatic supervision and fiscal oversight. Gloria will supervise, train and monitor the members placed in the elementary schools and conduct regular visits to monitor compliance and foster professional relationships with the administration at each site. She will also supervise the program assistant. Dr. Skanchy is highly qualified for this administrative position based on her 13 years of teaching experience in primary grades; a B.S. in elementary and early childhood education; a M.S. in special education where her thesis was the development and field test of a reading program for grades 1-2; and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction. Her experience and expertise gained through previous administration of AmeriCorps grants will be of great benefit when this proposal is funded for continuing years.

Member Support Specialist Maranda Thompson will be responsible for member enrollment and exits, time sheets, records, files, contracts and background checks. She will work with IPT (on line time sheet program) and Egrants portal. Ms. Thompson is currently the program secretary for the UALI and has had two years of experience working in this area. She has excellent knowledge of the requirements of AmeriCorps programs and is attentive to detail, which makes her ideal for this position.

Program Assistant Marie Pontius will be responsible for the daily management of the office. She will

Narratives

assist the elementary administrator in training AmeriCorps members, monitoring and supporting members' individual community service projects and providing technical assistance to members in the implementation of successful volunteer recruitment and reading tutoring programs. Ms. Pontius has previously served as an AmeriCorps member in an elementary school and will bring that unique understanding and experience in addressing concerns and issues of members.

In addition, Read Today has committed its Program Manager to work with student motivation projects, public awareness campaigns, and efforts to improve parent involvement. The Read Today Program Manager will devote 30% of her time to activities related to this grant.

The program staff members' extensive experience in education, administration of AmeriCorps programs, and volunteer recruitment will be the basis for training and member development activities. UWSL, Read Today, USHE, and other nonprofit organizations will provide additional support.

Program staff will hire an independent, external evaluator who will begin working the second year of the grant to develop a plan for conducting a thorough evaluation during the third year of the program operation. Previous evaluations of the UALI were conducted by Dr. Steve Laing, who recently served as the State Superintendent of Utah Public Schools. Staff will make an effort to work with Dr. Laing again as he brings institutional history and a wealth of experience to conducting this program evaluation.

Ogden City School District, the fiscal agent, has been a prior recipient of federal grants. It administers these federal grants and state funded allocations. The fiscal management of the Initiative will be part of the district's Budgeting and Accounting System. They follow guidelines, comply with requirements, and are audited under the direction of the Utah State Office of Education. The District Business Manager and the Superintendent will approve financial transactions. All expenditures are subject to the approval and oversight of the District Board of Education.

Each participating school has signed a letter of commitment to participate that has described their funding sources and dollar amount pledged over the three years of this grant. They will provide 55% of the living allowance and a \$100 participation fee in matching funds. Funding sources are generated from state/local education sources, and are explained in detail in the cost effectiveness section.

The grantee share of the grant, which includes monetary match and in-kind contributions, will be \$ 1,026,829.00. Schools are expanding their in-kind contributions by purchasing supplies and providing office space, computers and phone access for members. This proposed project constitutes the complete operating budget of Read. Graduate. Succeed., which is funded solely by the Corporation's money.

Narratives

Sustainability

Read. Graduate. Succeed. is committed to both the sustainability of these efforts and their scalability throughout the state. Both the elementary and secondary programs will be supported by an Advisory Board, which will be made up of representatives from Read Today, United Way of Salt Lake, Utah System of Higher Education, school district administrators from the participating districts, and nonprofit leaders throughout the state. Brad Smith, Ogden School District Superintendent, will chair the Board and Cherie Wood, Mayor of South Salt Lake, will be the vice chair. This Advisory Board will meet to review and discuss program goals and to develop capacity and sustainability plans. Program staff will provide board members with quarterly progress reports, regular emails, and other periodic updates. Frequent informal contact with individual board members via phone or email will provide opportunities for discussion. Members of the Advisory Board are all active in their individual communities, both professionally and personally and bring a high level of commitment to their service.

The Board will develop plans for sustainability by involving additional stakeholders including AmeriCorps members, business partners, building level administrators, and school district officials. The plan will include three areas of emphasis: 1) identifying private and community foundations, businesses and state agencies with an interest in improving education outcomes as possible funding sources; 2) refining the training of AmeriCorps members and volunteers to maintain high quality service; 3) mobilizing a larger volunteer corps at each site to expand the range of services that can be provided at each site.

In addition, sites have developed procedures that may provide options for program sustainability. In the past seven years approximately 10% of the elementary schools participating in the UALI, hired their AmeriCorps member at the completion of their years of service as literacy aides to continue the tutoring and volunteer recruitment programs. Principals recognize the training and practical experience these members have received and are often willing to hire them and opt out of the program, allowing new sites to be served. Similar outcomes are expected among participating junior highs and high schools.

Compliance and Accountability

The program staff is committed to ensuring that all members and sites will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations, including those related to prohibited activities. Members and on-site supervisors including principals, reading specialists, and counselors will be given a thorough overview of all regulations at trainings, presentations, and meetings. Each principal will sign a memorandum of

Narratives

understanding which will clearly outline prohibited activities. Members will also sign a contract that outlines prohibited activities and the consequences for engaging in any of them. The program staff will lead a clear and careful discussion at the pre-service training of all prohibited activities, using thorough examples of each activity.

To prevent compliance issues from arising, written evaluations will be done on site with AmeriCorps members and site supervisors at least twice annually. Members will submit information concerning objectives, hours of service, and training monthly using an on line tracking system developed by the Utah Commission on Volunteers. If they submit information that indicates a lack of progress toward a goal, they will be contacted by program staff, who will discuss any problems and provide assistance in meeting the objectives. Success stories or exceptional progress will receive recognition. Informal conversation and communication through email will take place between the program staff, members and site supervisors on a regular basis.

If instances of risk or noncompliance are identified, program staff will immediately contact the member and/or the site supervisor to take immediate steps to remedy the risk. In the event of noncompliance, sites and members will receive instruction on how to remedy the risk or noncompliance and a deadline for doing so. Program staff will follow up to ensure appropriate steps are being taken. Should the member or site fail to comply, disciplinary actions described in the member contract will be followed. In the past seven years that Utah AmeriCorps Literacy Initiative has been administering the elementary program, there have been no situations where a member participated in a prohibited activity.

Special Circumstances

Ogden School District has been designated a Federal Enterprise Zone. Through this Governor/Mayor Initiative we will place members in 77% of the 43 schools identified by the Utah State Office of Education as priority and focus schools working in the SIG program. *Read. Graduate.Succeed.* will also serve in rural or remote communities and communities with a high poverty rate.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

Cost Effectiveness

The total request being made of the Corporation is \$ 1,270,575.00. The Grantee match is 1,026,829.00. This is 55% funding from the Corporation and 45% funding from the grant. The cost per MSY is \$ 12,836.00. This extremely high match demonstrates districts' commitment to cost effectiveness and is much larger than the required percentage for a first year program. The Ogden City School District will support the program with office space, equipment and administration services

Narratives

(budgeting, payroll, accounts payable, etc.). The signatures on the assurance forms accompanying this grant application demonstrate this three-year commitment. The matching funds are the responsibility of participating schools and school districts where the AmeriCorps members serve. Each school administrator has signed a letter of commitment to participate that describes their funding sources. Monies used for the match may be State Education Funds allocated under a 'block grant' system. Funding may also include money distributed under state legislative mandates for School Improvement and School LandTrust plan, local school district foundations, discretionary funds, community nonprofits and business partnerships. Participating schools will also provide in-kind contributions to support their member(s). This includes, but may not be limited to: office space, computer, printer, use of phone, program supplies (i.e. tutoring programs, folders, copies, etc.), and personal office supplies (i.e. pencils, pens, staplers, etc.). Sites will complete forms to document these donations. Schools and districts have pledged their continued support through their willingness to match in any way possible.

Budget Adequacy

The proposed budget supports the program and reflects the program goals and mission of "Read. Graduate. Succeed.". The cost per MSY of \$ 12,836.00 which is significantly lower than the Corporation determined amount of \$13,300 per member. This demonstrates commitment to run a lean and cost effective program. The match requirements are well within the parameters of the grant. All costs are directly related to the support of the program; they are consistent and are aligned with national focus areas.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

Not Applicable

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

N/A

Continuation Changes

N/A