

# PART I - FACE SHEET

<b>APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE</b>		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction	
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)			
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):	3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:  17-APR-13	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:	
2b. APPLICATION ID:  13AC149547	4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER:  13WCHMN0010002	
<b>5. APPLICATION INFORMATION</b>			
LEGAL NAME: Duluth Area Family YMCA  DUNS NUMBER: 071771380		NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes):  NAME: Melissa Johnston  TELEPHONE NUMBER: (218) 722-4745 107  FAX NUMBER:  INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: mjohnst@duluthymca.org	
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 302 West First Street Duluth MN 55802 - 1694 County: St. Louis			
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):  410693931		7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit  7b. Community-Based Organization	
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box).  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE  <input type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>  A. AUGMENTATION        B. BUDGET REVISION  C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER (specify below):		9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: <b>Corporation for National and Community Service</b>	
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: 94.006 10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps State		11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT:  True North AmeriCorps	
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc):  Duluth, MN and Proctor, MN (St. Louis County)		11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):	
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 08/16/13      END DATE: 08/15/16		14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF:    a.Applicant <input type="text" value="MN 008"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="MN 008"/>	
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: 1		16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?  <input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON:  DATE:  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372	
a. FEDERAL	\$ 149,954.00		
b. APPLICANT	\$ 193,655.00		
c. STATE	\$ 0.00		
d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00		
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00		
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00		
g. TOTAL	\$ 343,609.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.			
a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:  Blair Gagne		b. TITLE:  Project Director	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER:  (218) 722-4745 125
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:			e. DATE SIGNED:  06/13/13

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

True North AmeriCorps (True North) will place 15 AmeriCorps members in two School Improvement Grant recipient elementary schools that are also Priority schools. Priority schools represent the 5% most-persistently low-performing schools in the state: target schools demonstrate some of the lowest Multiple Measurement Ratings at 3.49 % and 7.07%. MMR uses three ratings to measure elementary and middle school performance: proficiency, student growth, and achievement gap reduction. Members support teachers in the classroom, connect in-school with Out-of-School-Time programs and build site capacity to leverage volunteers for sustainability. At the end of the three-year project, participants will demonstrate improvement in academic achievement and school engagement. Goals address the CNCS focus area Education: Succeeding in Kindergarten through 12th Grade. The CNCS request of \$149,554 is matched with local support of \$193,813 that includes \$131,713 cash and \$55,100 of In-kind.

## Rationale and Approach

### a. AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective

Needs identified by partner schools and LEA leadership

Minnesota received a waiver from No Child Left Behind and developed a new accountability system that uses multiple measurements. Unlike AYP, which measures proficiency, Minnesota's Multiple Measurements Rating (MMR) uses three ratings, weighted equally, to measure elementary and middle school performance: proficiency, student growth, and achievement gap reduction. Each rating category is equal to 25 Points: the most points available to a school is 75.

MMR is used to identify Priority Schools. The five percent most-persistently low-performing schools in the state are Priority Schools. Just less than half of these schools are identified through their participation in the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program with the remaining schools identified by the lowest percentages in the MMR. The target schools, Laura MacArthur Elementary (Laura Mac) and Bay View Elementary (Bay View) demonstrate some of the lowest percentages and are SIG as well as Priority Schools (1) . The MMR for Laura Mac is 3.49%, down from 8.78% in 2009/10. The MMR for Bay View is 7.07%. This rate means that Laura Mac received 2.6 points out of 75 and Bay View received 5.3 points out of 75.

District Needs: Minnesota has one of the largest achievement gaps in the nation: Duluth area schools reflect this but are dedicated to addressing the gap at all levels. The reading proficiency index is 84.02 for White students, whereas the proficiency index for American Indians and African Americans

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is 65 and 59; an 18- to 26-point gap (2). In math tests, the index for White students was 70.1 while the index for American Indians and African Americans was 52 and 44; an 18- to 26-point gap (2). The MMR gap between Laura Mac (3.49%), and Bay View (7.07%), which serve high-needs, high-poverty neighborhoods and Congdon Elementary (87.25%), which serves a predominantly affluent neighborhood, reflects an 80 - 83 point gap!

School Comprehensive Needs Assessment: School and District staff provided input through surveys, grade level meetings, leadership team meetings, and analysis/discussion of student behaviors affecting academic achievement. The process and results inform staff that student expectations, staff training and instruction have not adapted to adequately address the changing needs of the diverse students in three key areas: behavior, math, and reading. School Improvement Plans (SIP) include a focus on student behavior/ family/community engagement as well as ensuring standards-based reading and math instruction and continuous improvement using data.

### Description of AmeriCorps member activities

Fifteen full-time Members at two turnaround elementary schools provide direct interventions, support classroom teachers, and recruit, train, oversee, and support volunteers at their school. They provide resources to volunteers and document their impacts and hours. They conduct interviews and criminal background, sexual predator and reference checks. They implement evidence-based interventions, connect participants with caring adults, facilitate high-quality activities and meaningful service during school and Out-of-School-Time (OST), encourage appropriate behavior, and ensure school/OST connectedness.

> Rationale for number: 703 students at the two schools are not proficient in either reading or math or both. However, the schools are limited in their capacity to provide supervision and pay the cash match. Students range from failing to at-risk of failure. Schools requested Member help with students in the at-risk category. Experience over the years revealed that the optimum number of students each full-time member could oversee was 30 youth allowing True North to serve the majority (430) of at-risk students. As youth progress, others may be added.

> Suitable and effective: True North members are particularly support SIPs. Over 200 human service agencies representing the ten counties served by True North identified AC volunteer mobilization, mentoring, and academic support as critical needs for at-risk youth. The deep and sustained relationship between True North and its sites increases the number of people, organizations, and resources dedicated to success. True North's history is one of building collaborations that leverage resources to provide needed services.

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True North members are highly skilled, extensively trained, and committed to program goals. Many are licensed teachers, most are college graduates and some are working on or hold Master's degrees. Member training is extensive. Members serve along side of, and are supervised by, school teaching and administrative staff and provide the explicit supports that are beyond the resources of most schools. True North strengthens community connections to expand volunteer recruitment and support systems, and attracts diverse stakeholders to contribute in-kind and match support. Members organize and manage the volunteer recruitment efforts for all the community partners that support the SIPs.

>LEA needs addressed by True North: True North developed an effective methodology to create school/community partnerships that it disseminates throughout its service area. When Duluth Public Schools articulated the need for True North to provide additional support to teaching personnel, True North facilitated a process for community/school partnerships that incorporates academic achievement, family support and educational equity. True North aligned its service model with district policies and works with school districts to align Board volunteer policies with Members service. True North's volunteer policies and manual aligns recruitment, screening, placement, and training and on-going support of volunteers within schools. Comments from host sites illustrate the benefits:

"We depend on the service provided through True North for so much of our student related service. We could not provide this on our own."

"Without True North we could not service our scholarship schools as they bring 90 kids at a time -- we just don't have the permanent teaching staff to handle that many. Moreover, prior to True North involvement, our after-school program was essentially non-existent due to the same limitations in teaching staff. True North has been an absolute savior for our program."

> Coordinating turnaround efforts among sites: YMCA oversees all activities including the True North Program that coordinates Member and volunteer recruitment, training, and management for partner sites; participates in community-based efforts (See Sustainability - Delegation activities), and participates in or leads efforts to identify and secure funds and resources (See 2. Capacity - Fiscal/Fundraising).

>The number of AmeriCorps members requested: 15

>The types of slots: Full-time

Multiple student needs/alignment with comprehensive school turnaround plans

School Student Success Teams identify student learning needs and strategize interventions. Members and staff work alongside teachers to determine which OST activities are needed, create

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Student Progress Planning Forms (SPP Forms) to track needs and progress, review student data weekly and inform school staff of student progress and concerns. OST activities may include any of the interventions detailed in b. Evidence-informed Impacts below and include: Family and community engagement; Student acquisition of reading and mathematics skills through homework help and academic mentoring; Supporting school implementation of increased learning time by connecting OST to school time; Supporting a school culture and environment that improves school safety, attendance, and discipline; and Addressing student social, emotional, and health needs through mentoring and service learning.

### b. Evidence-Informed and Measurable Impact

>The evidence supporting the intervention.

Interventions are recommended by the US Dept of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide (Guide) or the published literature. Activities incorporate Guide recommendations to increase student engagement and include:

- \* Purposefully match mentors with appropriate backgrounds, training, skills, and low caseloads.
- \* Provide academics/enrichment with interventions that improve engagement.
- \* Implement programs to improve students' behavior and social skills.
- \* Personalize the learning environment and process to foster a climate where students, teachers and parents know one another, and provide academic, social, and behavioral encouragement.
- \* Align and strengthen: services and support for children & families; curriculum & academic expectations across grade levels; and communication between schools & OST programs.

#### 1) Academic Based Mentoring/Homework Help. Activity components:

- \* 3 times per week for 20-40 minutes per session.
- \* Enhance and support the work of the classroom teacher.
- \* SPP Forms guide activities and the YST reviews progress monthly.
- \* Employ district-specific interventions to support math/reading instruction
- \* Utilize explicit instruction to develop higher-order skills.

Evidence: The Guide states that intensive instruction should occur three to five times per week for 20 to 40 minutes. Explicit instruction should involve frequent opportunities for practice and clear and specific feedback. In math, the Guide recommends that struggling students regularly receive explicit instruction that ensures understanding of foundational skills & concepts.

#### 2) Connecting OST programming to the school day. Activity components:

- \* Link the school day and OST programs through the SSP Forms.

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- \* Recruit and train mentors to implement a "toolkit" of grade specific activities/ interventions.

Evidence: The Guide states, "OST programs can enhance achievement through learning outside the classroom." Recommendations that enhance the school experience include:

- \* Align the OST program academically with the school day.
- \* Maximize student participation and attendance.
- \* Adapt instruction to individual and small group needs.
- \* Employ experiential learning.

### 3) Family involvement. Activity components:

- \* Encourage family involvement: facilitate meeting school leaders, understanding the importance of parental involvement in academic engagement, training on activities/strategies to support their child(ren) and sharing time with other parent(s).
- \* Inform families about the SSP Form's and resources to address attendance and behavior.
- \* Coordinate bi-monthly family activities/events with PTA's and/or OST programs.

Evidence: At-risk families, especially American Indians, experience barriers to involvement, such as logistics and negative histories with or mistrust of schools (3). Family involvement boosts attendance, grades, and test scores, fosters social skills, and increases graduation and postsecondary education rates (4). Effective family/school relationships are associated with higher levels of school engagement, increased family assistance with homework, improved familial and child/adult relationships and improved implementation & outcomes for OST (5).

### 4) Service learning. Activity components:

- \* At least 15 hours per youth/school year.
- \* Utilize the seven principle of service learning best practice.
- \* Site-based activities connect a community need and project to the school and OST curriculum.
- \* Create school/community Service Learning projects as part of Global Youth Service Day.

Evidence: Social-emotional competence promotes resiliency and enables academic learning and service-learning is effective as a social-emotional intervention (6). Extensive research notes the positive effects of service learning in three areas addressed (7):

- \* Academics: students are more engaged with their schoolwork and more motivated to learn.
- \* Careers: students learn various occupations, career pathways, and workplace literacy.
- \* Personal/social: builds interpersonal skills, self-confidence, and cultural tolerance.

### 5) Community Based Mentoring. Activity components:

- \* 8-12 hours of contact per month in 9 areas; Healthy Lifestyle, Family, Values, Community, School,

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Communication, Decision Making, Friends and Self Concept.

Members implement research-based best practices developed by Mentor (2009) and include:

- \*Thoroughly screen mentors and implement a well-defined match process;
- \*Oversee program implementation, and pre-match and on-going training for mentors;
- \*Provide ongoing supervision, support groups and structured activities for mentors;
- \*Facilitate parent support/involvement in mentoring relationships and activities;
- \*Provide well-defined expectations for frequency and length of contact; and
- \*Participate in on-going evaluation and analysis.

Evidence: A meta-analysis demonstrates strong empirical evidence for mentoring as a preventive intervention for at-risk youth (8). Other research found increases in grades and better school attendance in mentored children; reported mentored youth were more likely to exhibit favorable academic outcomes and noted social-emotional connections between mentor and child enhance academic engagement and learning and promote resiliency (9).

National Performance Measure

ED 1: 450 children are identified by school staff and enrolled in True North. Participants failing or falling behind in core academics. Members work with school and OST staff to identify goals, interventions and track progress with SSP Forms.

ED 2: Ninety Percent (405) children will successfully complete a minimum of 60 True North sessions. Targets are in-line with past performance.

ED 5: 75 percent (305) children who successfully complete True north will show improvement in academic achievement.

ED 27: Eighty percent of the 405 children (324) who successfully complete True North will show improvement in academic engagement. Targets are in line with past performance.

> Plan for collecting data, reporting outcomes, and using data to target services.

Data collected: a) demographic data: age, gender, year in school, race, and socio-economic status as measured by free and reduced lunch, b) attendance at OST programs, c) OST activity logs, d) thrice annual tests of academic achievement (NWEA or AIMSweb) and grades, e) Federal teacher survey on school engagement, and f) progress towards goals based on Student Progress Planning forms.

\*Reporting: SPSS software is used to calculate outcomes and the inter-relationships among variables.

Site specific results and overall results are presented to school supervisors and other stakeholders.

Feedback from evaluation informs OST program quality for continuous improvement. True North brings OST data to school staff through school student success teams.

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\*Continuous improvement: The student success teams continuously assess performance data through Benchmarks as well as reflect on the "why" of student performance challenges. Team "Action Planning" informs next-step supports for student learning as well as teacher professional development. True North and other school and community personnel review weekly student data on academic achievement and engagement and monitor youth involvement and improvement over time. Partners meet regularly to assess the process and communication.

### True North Impact

True North has consistently exceeded performance targets. True North impact since 2003/04: 510 MSY's were filled by over 760 individuals, served 12,600 non-duplicated youth in 85 organizations in 26 rural communities with over 30,000 on-going and one time volunteers mobilized. Over 1000 service-learning projects. Capacity building increased funding streams and volunteerism throughout a 10-county area.

> True North performance for the last grant period:

Goal 1: academic mentoring = 750 children with 60% demonstrating improvement. Performance= 924 children with 66% demonstrating improvement.

Goal 2: mentoring = 1600 children with 70% improvement in developmental assets. Performance = 2,441 children with 75% increasing their developmental assets

Goal 3: Volunteer Mobilization = 3,500 one-time volunteers and 1,050 on-going volunteers.

Performance = 2,565 one-time volunteers and 4,367 on-going volunteers.

### c. AmeriCorps Member Recruitment

Ninety-five percent of placements serve in their home community; 85% are locals and 15% are college students who choose to relocate to their service area. Volunteers are retired or business people, family, college students including those in Education programs, veterans, baby boomers and people of faith. Recruitment strategies that resulted in 100% placement since 2004 include:

\* AC sites, schools, job agencies/web-sites, newspaper and Public Service Announcements

\* Service clubs, churches and non-profits, job fairs, and civic groups;

\* Senior Centers/Corps, RSVP, University for Seniors.

\* Partner and host web sites, school and university communications, the Corporate Volunteer Council, job search and social networking websites, AC national on-line system, and United Way of Greater Duluth Volunteer Center.

\* University of MN- Duluth, University of WI - Superior, College of St. Scholastica, and Lake Superior College.

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\* African American Men's Club, American Indian Studies program, Indian Tribes, the Hispanic Cultural Center, college disability offices and Northern Bridge, a disability services provider.

\* Referrals from past Members and returning Members.

### Underrepresented AmeriCorps member populations

True North recruits a diverse corps that includes those with disabilities, minorities and other under-served groups. True North includes 12.5% people of color, exceeding state and local averages of 6.7% and 10.6%, respectively. An Inclusion Specialist provides extra support to sites requiring accommodations. Activities to promote inclusion include training, education and evaluation for members/site supervisors on appropriate language, inclusive position descriptions and designing inclusive service projects.

### Coordinated recruitment and selection

True North handles and coordinates all recruitment, reference checks and training of Members. However, once selected for service, Members are interviewed and retained by their site. True North provides the support needed for Members and sites to find/maintain a good match.

### d. AmeriCorps Member Training

True North developed a thorough and evidence-based training program for Members that builds skills in the interventions as well as CNCS protocols and policies.

### Orientation

Candidates receive enrollment documents, an event calendar, training schedule and orientation agenda. True North conduct the initial interviews to ensure applicants meet CNCS eligibility and qualifications. Schools interview and approve candidates to ensure a suitable match. Each step stresses a full year commitment, the distinction between "service" and "a job" and participation in all training and meetings.

Supervisors spend 4 hours orienting new members on their first day and oversee a "discovery" activity to learn about people, procedures, policies, and history through staff interviews. The first week covers site policies & procedures, expectations, facility tours, school & neighborhood background, available resources, current & potential uses of volunteers, and specific schedule, activities and meetings with their supervisor. Members attend staff meetings & trainings and receive an updated site manual that details activities, resources, and tips.

### On-going training

Members receive extensive pre- and in-service training. True North tracks completion of required trainings and provides school-based training, monitoring and support. Mandatory trainings include:

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- \* 1-day overview: AC requirements, allowable/prohibited activities, procedures, guidelines.
- \* 3-day retreat: best practices and AC priorities presented by experienced education, mentoring and out of school time professionals.
- \* 1-day: best practices, working with rural youth, engaging families & volunteers, working with challenging behaviors, and developing leaders.
- \* 1-day: working with special needs and the Seven Steps of Service-Learning.
- \* 1-day: best practices of mentoring utilizing evidence-based operational standards.
- \* 2 half-day site based trainings: enhance professional development.
- \* 2-hours: diversity plus 2-3 follow-up sessions on intercultural competency training
- \* 2-day retreat: reflect on the first 8 months of service and prepare for "Life after AC".
- \* 1-day: networking and utilizing the service experience in a job search.
- \* SUCCESS Series: six 60-minute workshops on developmental assets, reading comprehension/ fluency, current trends in math/ math academic mentoring tips, cultural competency, relationships with youth and positive role models. Members receive certification and may become co-trainers.
  - >Members receive the True North toolkit to guide implementation at each grade level:
- \* Templates and suggestions for Student Progress Planning Forms..
- \* Templates for tracking mentor and volunteer hours, attendance and participation in activities.
- \* Service learning and experiential learning activities in academics for each grade.
- \* Grade specific interventions for reading and math.
  - >School specific trainings include:
    - \* Literacy and math interventions specific to their site.
    - \* Family strengthening principles using the 10 core competencies for family programs (10).
    - \* "Quality Mentoring Assessment Path" through the Mentoring Partnership of MN to assess best practice implementation and develop a continuous improvement plan. OST Training includes Youth Program Quality Assessment, Youth Work Methods, and connecting the afterschool experience with the school day.
    - \* Optional trainings: CPR/First Aid training and four workshops (3 hours) covering diversity, literacy, education crisis in America, and the impacts of Service. Returning members take advanced leadership training, mentor new members and serve as "Corps Group" leaders.
      - > Plans to coordinate the training of AmeriCorps members with school leadership and staff.
- Members are housed with teaching staff who promote and mentor Members. Members participate in Job-embedded professional development. Supervision by the teachers/administrators includes weekly

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meetings, on-going check-ins and data sharing and reporting are designed by the school to empower Members.

### e. AmeriCorps Member Supervision

>Supervision plan: School supervisors allocate at least 10hrs/month to coordinate program components. True North supports site supervisors through bi-annual site visits and on-going communication. Intervention Coaches meets with each school quarterly to assure model fidelity. Schools with a member requiring accommodations receive two visits from the Inclusion Specialist.

>Supervisor qualifications: School supervisors are District Data Coaches and licensed teachers.

### Supervisor Training and Support

>School Sites sign a Partner Site Agreement/MOU outlining program expectations, requirements for AC branding on all site communications, prohibited activities, & cash match/in kind commitments.

### Supervisors:

- \*Attend orientation on AC mission, regulations, prohibited activities, and recruitment.
- \*Attend a pre-service and bi-annual training on best practices in implementation, expectations of supervision, welcoming & coaching members, and allowable & prohibited activities.
- \*Attend a hands-on web training on the OnCorps Reporting system for timesheet approval and in-kind report submission and includes allowable and prohibited activities.
- \* Learn to coach and promote member leadership.
- \* Prepare a mid-year report card documenting completion of member and site requirements.

### Prohibited Activities

School and Member Service MOU's include policies and procedures to ensure compliance on prohibited activities. Members, site supervisors and volunteers receive training on appropriate activities during orientation and training. Program staff ensures compliance through ongoing communication and site monitoring. True North:

- \* Audits time sheets submitted by School Supervisors quarterly.
- \* Conducts at least three site visits per year ensuring model fidelity, ongoing supervision and support, and that AmeriCorps goals and site goals are met.
- \* Collects performance evaluations twice/year. Members evaluate themselves and their supervisors and provide feedback that they discuss with their Supervisor and True North staff.
- \* Provides reasonable accommodation training and follow-up throughout the service term.

### Supervision coordination with school leadership and staff

The True North Director and YMCA Community Services Director check in with school staff

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regularly. True North has a process for mediating disputes or problems and works with sites to maintain a good match or to re-assign a Member if necessary.

### f. Member Experience

#### Lifelong ethic of service and civic participation

True North develops citizens who are culturally sensitive, inclusive, and civically engaged for a lifetime through a transformative experience that meets community needs. The quality of the member experience is evidenced by high retention rates and 25% of members returning for additional terms. "My experience transformed my life. The opportunity to step out of my comfort zone and serve some of the community's most pressing needs opened my eyes.... to what I can do to tackle the problems of the world." (AC Member)

>Program components: Extensive training, team building and staff support give members the tools and confidence to make a lasting impact. Members gain professional skills in project management, facilitation, public speaking, leadership, and collaboration.

#### Commitment to AmeriCorps identity

> AC Awareness: Members and Site Supervisors are provided and expected to wear and use provided AC gear and accessories that help foster a sense of connection to the AC identity. Orientation and fall retreats stress members as national service representatives. Member connect to a "Corps Group" led by a returning member to provide peer support and build the AC identity.

> Member reflection: Fall and Spring retreats incorporate reflection through dialogue and writing. Returning members mentor new members monthly to reflect on their experience. Training, site visits, and reports provide opportunities for reflection as does the Final Celebration.

> AC Connections: AC programs in the region connect to expand their skills through Corps-wide initiatives (Nat'l AC Week, Nat'l Service Day, etc), networking opportunities such as Global Youth Service Day and Martin Luther King day, and training.

### g. Organizational Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

True North raised \$20,000 in capacity building funds to develop recruitment tools, a new web-site, and uniform practices for all AC sites. Supervisor trainings emphasize promotion of national service and host site MOU'S require all print and communication materials and signage to reference AC.

Regular site visits monitor national service promotion on web-sites, recruitment materials, physical buildings and program space.

### h. Strategic Consideration

True North members represent a higher percentage of people of color than are demonstrated in MN

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populations. Activities and training promote inclusion, and the majority of Members are economically disadvantaged. SIG/Priority schools are located in high-poverty neighborhoods in a large urban area. YMCA is non-profit with a faith-based mission.

### Organizational Capability

#### a. Organizational Background and Staffing

>Experience: The Duluth Area Family YMCA oversees True North and is fiscal lead. Mission: To empower all people to develop healthy relationships with themselves, their God, and their community. The YMCA has provided educational, youth, community and health programs for 128 years. The YMCA constantly works to develop new partnerships with schools, human service agencies, government and community. The YMCA employs a professional staff, offers quality services and programs, and practices financial integrity. It employs 39 FT and 150 PT employees, 70 AC members at 53 True North sites, and serves nearly 5,000 youth annually. The YMCA provides programmatic and fiscal support for 7 Mentor Duluth agencies and a 14 member youth-serving coalition. The YMCA partners with the Duluth Public Schools to operate OST programs at 10 sites that include six 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

#### > Staff Experience:

YMCA Community Services Branch Executive Director, Tracie Clanaugh: Oversees program success and grant guideline adherence; coordinates with YMCA accountants to provide fiscal oversight, directs quality control, adherence to best practices, coordinates evaluation, provides member training/support. She has 30 years of experience in the field of Youth Development, holds a Master's degree in Educational Psychology and has extensive experience in federal and state grant implementation including AmeriCorps, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, HRSA Rural Health Outreach and National Endowment for the Arts.

True North Director: Melissa Johnston, BA, Elementary Ed, minor in Social Studies, will manage implementation of the True North Program. With the YMCA for 12 years, Ms. Johnston served in True North as Coordinator since 2006 and as Director since 2010. She has extensive training in leadership and program development through the YMCA of the USA and CNCS. She recruits, screens, and enrolls AC members, and provides program support to members, site supervisors, and True North staff. She provides leadership to a variety of committees including Global Youth Service Day and the Cross Corps Leadership Team.

>Staff training capacity: YMCA believes that program quality is dependent upon superior staff development and evidence-based best practices in implementation. YMCA implements a

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comprehensive training plan that includes the importance of science-based interventions, model fidelity and the relational skills that meet the developmental needs of children. All YMCA staff participate in the National YMCA Professional Development process that includes supervision and leadership skills, team building, cultural competency, fiscal management, and volunteerism.

Staff participate in a one-day workshop each fall, a two-day workshop each spring and a three-day conference each summer. Topics include: child cognitive development; behavior management; professional relationships with schools/parent; diversity; evidence-based interventions; team/youth leadership development; and best practices in Project Based Learning, Service Learning, Mentoring, OST, Family and Volunteer Engagement.

>Member training capacity: YMCA expanded organizational and regional training capacity through two large Federal capacity-building grants and founded the Duluth Youth Agency Coalition that provides annual regional trainings to non-profits. Also see e. Member Training.

>Professional Evaluation: External Evaluator, Dr. Sandy Woolum, Ph.D. Psychology, is an Associate Professor of Psychology, past chair of the Psychology Department at the University of MN/Duluth, and a licensed MN psychologist. She has extensive program evaluation experience and has been affiliated with YMCA program evaluation for 15 years. Dr. Woolum presents on evaluation of mentoring programs at many conferences and co-authored articles on youth mentoring and service learning for university students (11).

> Fiscal and Fundraising Experience: The YMCA raised and administered millions of Federal and State dollars including \$4,784,000 from CNCS since 2003-04. Other funds include \$2.25 million from Federal Compassion Capital Funds; \$576,000 from the US DoE for mentoring; \$197,000 from OJJDP for Juvenile Mentoring; \$347,000 MN State Incentive Grant; \$1,100,000 in 2004 and secured \$2,375,000 for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers in 2012.

The annual operating budget is \$5.736 million. Programs receive \$400,000 annually from local foundations, an endowment through funds and trusts totals more than \$6 million, and assets are over \$13 million. Annual campaigns earns \$120,000. Memberships account for \$1.8 million annually, Community Services programs (including True North) account for \$2.3 million, camping programs \$540,000, Building Service \$650,000 and Administration \$446,000. A staff accountant and a bookkeeper administer grants and an independent firm audits finances yearly.

>Management structure: The YMCA Association operates under 2 active boards with well-defined roles: Governing and Trustee. Five committees provide support and oversight. The YMCA has 4 branches, Downtown, Camping Services, Cook County, and Community Services. Community

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Services oversees all mentoring and OST programs including True North, which is advised by a community board that provides staff & program oversight and coordinates the site selection process. United Way reviews the YMCA's organizational and board processes every 3 years and uses it as a model for other non-profits.

>AmeriCorps integration: The YMCA provides administrative support including HR services, PR/Marketing, accounting support, YMCA memberships for staff and AC members, training, general supplies, and direct financial support (see 3.b. Budget Adequacy).

### b. Sustainability

>Involvement of school and LEA leadership in design and implementation

YMCA has a proven track record with districts all over Northeastern Minnesota. For over 14 years, programs, including True North, have brought, and continue to bring, considerable people power and outside resources that improve student outcomes. Districts trust the YMCA and True North to provide quality, evidence-based interventions and highly trained staff and volunteers. The YMCA partners with Duluth and Proctor Public Schools to plan and operate a variety of programs before and after school and over the summer. Program development and implementation occurs in conjunction with the Superintendent, the Principal of each school and other neighborhood partners.

>Partnerships and capacity to support the project.

The Duluth region has mobilized to facilitate community-based solutions to address the economic, education, and social barriers that negatively impact school achievement. Local initiatives in progress include the Delegation for Educational Outcomes, a working group that investigates reviews and makes recommendations for strategies to positively impact academics and increase on-time graduation rates. The Delegation is a community-based collaboration of schools, youth and human service agencies, funders, businesses and families that identifies and secures resources.

> Raising funds to support service activities and initiatives.

See Organizational Capacity, Fiscal and Fundraising Experience, above as well as: In-kind and direct support from the Duluth community equals \$193,813 per year. Matching funds secured over the past six years include; \$24,000 from Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation for the Volunteer Promotion and Civility Project; \$6,000 from UWGD for Volunteer Center support; \$45,000 from the Northland Foundation for volunteer and business volunteerism and \$19,819 for True North capacity building; \$37,500 annually from ServeMinnesota Innovation Fund to support Members; \$2,000 annually from Youth Service America/State Farm for Global Youth Service Day; \$1,000 from Delta Dental for Youth Service Day; \$5,400 from the Points of Light Foundation for Volunteer Center

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support; \$3,000 from Youth Service America/State Farm for Semester of Service activities, \$1,000 from the National Service-Learning Partnership for the Service-Learning Young Professionals group and \$10,000 annually from ServeMinnesota for Inclusion support.

Host sites provide an annual cash match of \$6,500 per MSY member. Local support includes the Ordean, Northland, Johnson Foundations as well as the United Way of Greater Duluth for \$60,000 or more per year. In-kind resources include \$2,404 of in-kind support from each host site per MSY (\$36,053); UMD staff oversees service & program evaluation providing in-kind training & consultation (\$5,250).

### >Sustaining Impact Beyond the Grant

The District is committed to working with community partners to achieve higher levels of student achievement as evidenced by its extensive school/community collaborations. Members are key to building the capacity of schools to recruit and retain volunteers to support teachers and OST programs. YMCA OST staff is housed at MacArthur, allowing for ongoing coordination and partnering with school personnel. The program's Site Coordinator is employed by the school for ten years in a split position: 1/3 time teaching and 2/3 coordinating the OST activities. MacArthur's Literacy Coordinator is a former 21st CCLC Family Liaison as well. These established relationships ensure that AC Turnaround hits the ground running. The YMCA history with the Valley Youth Center, a neighborhood-based youth serving agency located within the school, has been strengthened with our presence in the school. Both programs cooperate to provide transportation, coordination of family services, and program scheduling and expect to grow this partnership through a summer program expansion. YMCA provides Proctor Schools and Proctor Area Community Ed with True North Members who split their appointment to bridge school and OST.

>The percentage of the applicant's total organization operational budget: < 1%.

### > Contribution to the Sustainability of School Turnaround Efforts

See Sustaining Impact above for sustainability of True North. Community commitment arises from the demonstrated contribution by True North to improve and sustain academic achievement at local schools including Meyer Wilkins Elementary (Meyer). Forty-seven percent of Meyer students are youth of color (18% of those American Indian) and over 80% are low-income. These at-risk populations improved their academic achievement based on three-year trend data using the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments and when compared with similar populations in other schools. True North builds capacity in volunteerism and community connections to provide the ongoing and holistic support at-risk students require to succeed.

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### c. Compliance and Accountability

> Monitoring Plan: Please see f. Member Supervision: Supervisor selection and training for oversight details. True North monitors all aspects of its program, including noncompliance and risk. Compliance is audited during each site visit and both members and supervisors are trained in allowable activities.

An outside evaluator audits practices, policies and procedures annually. Serve Minnesota bi-annual site visits have scored True North at the highest level of performance and accountability.

> Noncompliance accountability: The YMCA works with sites that are underperforming or struggle with retention to develop compliance plans and set a probationary period. Preventative practices developed via years of experience have curbed risk or noncompliance issues. Since 2004, only three organizations needed probationary periods for improvement. One was successful: two were unable to comply and did not receive Members the following year.

> Current Grantee demonstration of compliance: True North has no compliance issues. Monthly reporting and year-end closeout are accomplished on time. Annual A-133 audits are performed annually with no findings. Serve Minnesota's annual report has referenced True North as a program that excels in member experience and work with rural communities.

=Member enrollment and retention rate for the last full year of program operation.

>Enrollment: True North consistently enrolled 100% of slots.

>Retention: Past year rates: 96.8% with 20-25% of Members returning for a 2nd or 3rd year. Given the rural setting and commitment to diversity, these figures reflect a substantial commitment to energetic recruitment and rigorous support. Employment is the most prevalent factor for Members leaving: high unemployment and poverty rates compel Members to take employment when it arises. Members and their skills are highly valued.

### d. Continuous Improvement

= Using feedback from internal and external stakeholders to inform continuous improvement.

Please see Sustainability: Partnerships above for Delegation activities.

= Using student data to inform continuous improvement.

Please see Reporting and Improvement after the Performance Measures above.

## Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

### a. Cost Effectiveness

The budget exhibits cost effective programming of \$764 per child supported by extensive partnerships and cash/in-kind support. Comprehensive OST program costs nationally range from \$1,200 to \$2,000 per child (12). Using these estimates, True North could expect to have a budget of \$540,000 to

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\$900,000 based on serving 450 children. True North requests a fraction of this because of its extensive ability to leverage resources while maintaining high standards. Coordinated services and partnerships enables True North to make the best use of its resources; a key variable in its ability to meet critical community needs during a time of continued economic constraints.

= Supplement not supplant =

The Duluth and Proctor SIP's outline budgets for assessment, interventions by licensed or certified staff and teacher professional development. Both list wrap-around services during and out of school in their comprehensive needs assessments as unfunded needs.

= Higher cost per MSY than previous years: N/A =

### b. Budget Adequacy

> Non-CNCS resources needed and secured: Host sites provide an annual cash match of \$6,500 per MSY member. Local support is \$193,813 which includes \$131,213 of local cash match (site cash match and foundations), \$7,500 from ServeMinnesota Innovation fund, \$33,713 or more per year from the City of Duluth, and \$55,100 of In-kind.

In-kind resources include \$2,404 of in-kind support from each host site per MSY (\$36,053); UMD staff oversees service & program evaluation providing in-kind training & consultation (\$650). The YMCA will provide an additional \$18,397 of In-kind support. Cash and in-kind match = 54.05%.

> Adequacy: True North draws on a decade of experience to keep per/ child costs low while consistently exceeding performance targets. Program, management, and fiscal staff are experienced in program implementation and management and require none of the start-up costs associated with new or novice programs. Evaluation, reporting, training, and OST program materials/procedures to implement interventions have already been developed and are in place. The community relationships that leverage resources are in place, secure, and require less time to maintain.

>New resources: As noted in Fiscal and Fundraising Experience above, YMCA and its partners are continuously investigating and procuring local, state, and national resources to build capacity and support programs.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

Student selection: School personnel select students based on poor academic achievement in reading and/or math as determined by benchmarks and or a tiered intervention model.

Data collected: a) demographic data: age, gender, year in school, race, and socio-economic status as measured by free and reduced lunch, b) school records: attendance, incidence reports and grades for

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each period, c) periodic standardized tests of academic achievement (NWEA or AIMSweb), d) participation in True North activities: hours of academic mentoring, community based mentoring, service learning and academic enrichment activities, e) number and type of goals selected for Student Progress Planning forms and percentage of goals attained, f) academic/school engagement.

ED 1: 450 children are enrolled in True North. Participants are failing or falling behind in core academics based on test scores, teacher referrals and or a tiered intervention model Members maintain a Student Progress Planning form for each child.

ED 2: Ninety Percent (402) children will successfully complete a minimum of 60 True North sessions.

ED 5: 75 percent (305) children who successfully complete True north will show improvement in academic achievement.

ED 27: Eighty percent of the 405 children (324) who successfully complete True North will show improvement in academic engagement.

ED-1 Instrument: Enrollment forms, Student Progress Planning forms and a data base utilized at all sites. Student Progress Planning forms track: 1) logs of child and mentor activities, 2) attendance and duration at OST programs, 3) parent contacts and participation, 4) educational enrichment activities, and 5) service learning activities

Target number 450 students

ED-2 Instrument: Enrollment forms, Student Progress Planning forms, Attendance logs. These tools will include 1) logs of child and mentor contacts/activities, 2) logs of member contact/activities, 3) attendance and duration at OST programs, 4) parent contacts and participation, 5) educational enrichment activities, and 6) service learning activities.

Target number: 402 students

ED5: Instrument: NWEA (Duluth Public Schools) and AIMSweb (Proctor Pubic Schools)

Target number: 305

ED-27 Instrument: Federal Teacher Survey from 21st Century Learning Communities

Target number: 324

SPSS software is used to calculate outcomes and the inter-relationships among variables. Site specific results and overall results will be presented to site supervisors and other stakeholders. Feedback from

**Performance Measure: Improvement in academic engagement**

the evaluation will monitor program quality for continuous improvement. School Student Success Teams, comprised of principals, data coaches, teachers, social workers, AC members, and OST representatives, meet weekly to assess interventions and modify as necessary.

Endnotes

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11. Pedersen, P., Woolum, S., Gagne, B., Coleman, M. 2009. *Children and Youth Services Review*.  
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12. Mentoring Partnership of MN 2008.

# Required Documents

**Document Name**

**Status**

Evaluation

Already on File at CNCS

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable