

PART I - FACE SHEET

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE		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: 25-APR-13															
2b. APPLICATION ID: 13AC150121		4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY: FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: 13WCHMA0010001															
5. APPLICATION INFORMATION																	
LEGAL NAME: Springfield College DUNS NUMBER: 066979188		NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Shannon Langone TELEPHONE NUMBER: (413) 748-3610 FAX NUMBER: (413) 748-3904 INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: slangone@springfieldcollege.edu															
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 263 Alden St Grants & Sponsored Research, Marsh 01 Springfield MA 01109 - 3797 County: Hampden																	
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 042104329		7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Higher Education Organization - Private 7b. 4-year college National Non-Profit (Multi-State)															
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: Corporation for National and Community Service															
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: 94.006 10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps State		11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Springfield College School Turnaround AmeriCorps															
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Springfield, MA (Hampden County)		11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):															
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 08/12/13 END DATE: 08/11/14		14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="MA 002"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="MA 002"/>															
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															
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">a. FEDERAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 352,283.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. APPLICANT</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 564,028.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. STATE</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d. LOCAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e. OTHER</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f. PROGRAM INCOME</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g. TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 916,311.00</td> </tr> </table>		a. FEDERAL	\$ 352,283.00	b. APPLICANT	\$ 564,028.00	c. STATE	\$ 0.00	d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00	e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00	g. TOTAL	\$ 916,311.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
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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: Linda L. Marston		b. TITLE:	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (413) 748-3654														
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:			e. DATE SIGNED: 06/18/13														

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Executive Summary

The Springfield College School Turnaround Initiative will place 48 AmeriCorps members, 5 full-time, 43 half-time (26.5 MSY), in 9 SIG/Priority schools in Springfield, MA. Members will serve in teams as Academic Coaches, Academic Support Specialists, and School Counselors, supporting School Turnaround Plans by addressing academic and nonacademic risk factors that affect student achievement, dropout, and graduation rates. Members will serve more than 500 at-risk students, utilizing student data to implement targeted interventions to improve attendance, academic achievement in literacy and math, behavioral/social-emotional health, and academic engagement.

Rationale and Approach

PROGRAM DESIGN

NEED: There are 41 SIG and Priority schools in Massachusetts. Eleven of these schools--schools that are the least improving and lowest performing 2% of schools in the state--are located in Springfield, MA. Springfield is the largest city in Western Massachusetts and one of the Commonwealth's poorest, with a poverty rate of 27.8%, more than double the state's rate of 11.6% (2011 American Community Survey (ACS), U.S. Census Bureau). The city faces many of the socio-economic challenges common to the nation's largest cities, including lost jobs, state and city budget cuts, and high student dropout rates. In 2011, the city's graduation rate was only 52.1%, the second lowest in the state; the dropout rate was 11.7%, more than three times the state average ("Quick Facts About the Springfield Public Schools, 2012-13," www.sps.springfield.ma.us). In addition, according to the English Language Arts (ELA) Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), only 40% of students were able to read proficiently in third grade.

Since 1997, the AmeriCorps program at Springfield College (SC) has been working with the Springfield Public Schools (SPS) to meet the various needs of their low-income and diverse student body. The majority of students are Latino or African American, with significant immigrant communities from Southeast Asia and Russia, and 87.2% qualify for free or reduced lunch ("Quick Facts"). In addition, the city's child poverty rate is 40%, the sixth highest among all cities in the nation (2011 ACS, U.S. Census Bureau). The average percentage of low-income students in the SIG/Priority Schools in Springfield is 89% ("School Report Cards, 2011-12," www.sps.springfield.ma.us).

With high rates of poverty come more than just financial difficulties: families and children often face issues related to hunger and homelessness, neighborhood violence and gang activity, alcohol and drug abuse, and unsafe home environments. These problems affect the social-emotional and

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intellectual health of children and their ability to focus on academic success, and Springfield schools with high populations of students who are experiencing the effects of poverty often lack appropriate resources to provide holistic support to every child who needs it.

CURRENT AMERICORPS PROGRAM AT SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE: In an effort to increase SPS capacity and address the needs of Springfield students, the College is currently operating a 60-member AmeriCorps program--the Student Success Corps (SSC). Members of the SSC currently serve as Academic Coaches, School Counselors, and Literacy Tutors in Springfield pre-schools, middle schools, and high schools, where they facilitate interventions and identify resources that target risk factors for dropping out, including poor early literacy skills, low attendance, behavioral problems, and course failure in English and math. At the pre-K level the SSC is replicating the Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) pre-K model in 6 classrooms in Springfield. The MRC is the largest and one of the most successful State AmeriCorps programs in the country, with more than 1,000 AmeriCorps members serving in 750 schools throughout Minnesota. Literacy Tutors are trained to support the development of preschool children's early language and literacy skills using research-based intervention techniques.

At the middle and high school level, teams of Academic Coaches and School Counselors serve in 6 high-need schools, including 3 SIG schools (Commerce High, Chestnut Middle, and Kiley Middle), providing targeted interventions around attendance, behavioral/social-emotional issues, and course failure in English and math. The model and interventions are adapted from the Check and Connect dropout prevention program, which research has shown to improve attendance, academic achievement, and odds of graduation. Check and Connect is one of 27 dropout prevention programs that have been shown by the U.S. Dept. of Education's "What Works Clearinghouse," to have a positive effect in keeping kids in school. The SSC model is also based on research on what works to increase academic engagement, including caring adult advocates, support around transition from middle to high school, counseling support, community engagement, and behavior/attendance monitoring (Dynarski, et al, 2008; National High School Center, 2007). Each team member has a caseload of 10 to 15 students, all of whom are identified as at-risk, high-risk, or very high risk according to the District's Dropout Early Warning System (DEWS). Members use the data provided by the DEWS, such as attendance, grades, disciplinary incidents, and suspensions, to identify problem areas and tailor interventions and supports.

PROPOSED TURNAROUND INITIATIVE: The Springfield College (SC) School Turnaround Initiative will expand service in 3 SIG/Priority schools and will bring the successful SSC model to 6

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additional SIG/Priority schools, aligning interventions and services in 9 of the highest need schools in Springfield. The SSC, with its current formula grant, will continue to provide support at 4 other high-need Springfield schools and will expand its MRC Pre-K Model to serve 14 classrooms. Together these programs will impact 15 schools and more than 900 students in grades pre-K--12.

AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN SCHOOL TURNAROUND: The SC School Turnaround Initiative will place 48 AmeriCorps Members, 5 full-time, 43 half-time (26.5 MSY), in 9 SIG/Priority schools in Springfield, those that have the capacity to adequately support a team of AmeriCorps Members. Partner schools include Brookings, DeBerry, Gerena, and White Street (Elementary Schools); Zanetti Montessori (K-8); Chestnut, Kennedy, and Kiley (Middle Schools); and the High School of Commerce. AmeriCorps Program staff collaborated with the Assistant Superintendent to determine needs based on feedback from principals of these "Turnaround Schools" as well as the goals of Turnaround Plans. Each school's plan has some unique elements, but all cite the following objectives: provide a safe learning environment in which students feel valued; increase academic engagement and achievement in literacy and math; increase attendance; provide additional social/emotional support and wraparound services; and improve behavior. These goals highlight proven risk factors for dropout: poor attendance, course failure in English (literacy) and math, and behavioral/social-emotional issues (Balfanz, 2009). Teams of AmeriCorps Members serving as Academic Coaches, Academic Support Specialists, and School Counselors in the SC School Turnaround Initiative can holistically address these academic and nonacademic risk factors that affect student achievement, dropout, and graduation rates.

Springfield College has a long history of recruiting and training AmeriCorps Members for service in the Springfield Public Schools and has placed Members in a variety of Springfield schools for the past 16 years. Half-time Members are recruited and selected from among the College's graduate students, who have knowledge, skills, and experience in a variety of fields relevant to their AmeriCorps service roles: education, school guidance counseling, human services, mental health, marriage and family counseling, and social work. Seniors and recent graduates from Springfield College, as well as from surrounding private, public, and community colleges, with backgrounds in education, psychology, and other relevant fields will be recruited to serve as full-time Members. These Members can utilize what they have learned through in and out of the classroom experiences, in their AmeriCorps training, and at district and school-based trainings to meet the needs of at-risk students. The existing staff in the Turnaround Schools cannot meet the demand for one-on-one interaction with every student who is

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struggling either academically or emotionally--caseloads and classes are simply too large. In addition, volunteers in the schools are well-intentioned but often receive little training and are unable to commit a significant and meaningful amount of time each week. AmeriCorps Members represent a dedicated, skilled, and well-trained source of human capital that can enhance the school district's capacity to provide targeted attention, resources, and evidence-based interventions to the students that need it the most. The AmeriCorps School Counselors are an especially valuable asset: graduate students from well-respected counseling programs that can, under the supervision of an experienced clinician or counselor, offer specialized support for students experiencing trauma, grief, and mental/social-emotional health issues.

MEMBER ROLES: Part-time Academic Coaches serve 23 to 25 hours per week targeting 10 to 15 students identified as at-risk or high-risk by the SPS Dropout Early Warning System (DEWS). DEWS is triggered by factors such as absence for more than 10% of completed school days, a current GPA of less than or equal to 1.00, and a discipline count that is 7% of days enrolled. Academic Coaches focus primarily on providing support for students with poor attendance and academic challenges, but are also equipped with tools to handle behavioral issues. Coaches build relationships with students on their caseload, monitor grades and attendance, and facilitate basic and intensive interventions at least 3 times per week. Basic interventions include check-ins with students in hallways/during lunch; check-ins with teachers regarding class attendance, performance, and engagement; and providing information on the importance of school attendance and academic achievement. Intensive interventions include contracting with students for attendance, behavior, and grades; formulating catch-up plans in collaboration with teachers and students; communication with parents regarding attendance and performance; one-on-one and small-group instruction in literacy and math, study skills, organizational skills, etc.; mediation and conflict resolution; parent engagement; transition support; providing wake-up calls or texts; incentive programs around improved attendance and grades; goal-setting; community service; college and career awareness and prep; and in-class observation and support.

Part-time School Counselors also serve 23 to 25 hours per week serving 10 to 15 students identified by the DEWS as at-risk or high-risk. School Counselors focus primarily on behavioral and social-emotional issues, but are also trained in attendance and academic interventions. School Counselors--students from SC graduate programs in School Guidance, Social Work, and other counseling-based programs--also provide both basic and intensive interventions as outlined above but are specially

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trained to also offer college and career guidance, crisis intervention, and one-on-one and small-group counseling, guided by professional guidance/adjustment counselors and other clinicians. School Counselors are able to support students experiencing trauma, grief, homelessness, mental health issues, and other factors affecting their ability to succeed in school.

Five (5) full-time Academic Support Specialists serve approximately 40 hours per week, and 5 part-time Academic Support Specialists serve 23 to 25 hours per week. Academic Support Specialists work in pairs in the District's highest need Turnaround Schools. In 2012-13 these schools were in danger of slipping into Level 5 status, which would require state intervention; however, the district has hired an education management organization, EdLabs, to manage and restructure these schools and to increase academic achievement and engagement. Academic Support Specialists will support these efforts, focusing primarily on providing daily instruction in literacy and math to those students who are identified as at-risk due to academic failure in these core subjects. Full-time Academic Support Specialists have a caseload of 20 to 25 students, while part-time members serve 10 to 15 students. While their main goal is to foster improved academic achievement in literacy and math, they will also be trained in the basic and intensive interventions utilized by Academic Coaches. Full-time Academic Support Specialists will not be SC students and therefore may not have as strong a connection with the other part-time members, all of whom attend SC. The part-time Academic Support Specialist will act as a bridge between part-time and full-time members ensuring team cohesion and communication.

MEMBER PLACEMENT: Chestnut, Commerce, DeBerry, Kiley, and Kennedy will each host 6 AmeriCorps Members--2 half-time School Counselors, 2 half-time Academic coaches, 1 half-time Academic Support Specialist, and 1 full-time Academic Support Specialist. Commerce will receive 2 additional Academic Coaches to meet the specific needs of at-risk student athletes who face the additional pressures of balancing athletics and academics. (These student-athlete-focused Academic Coaches are an extremely successful part of the current SSC model operating at Commerce. In 2010-11, 100% of senior student athletes who received support from these Academic Coaches graduated, 88% of graduates went on to college or prep school, and 7% entered the workforce [5% unknown].) Chestnut, Commerce, and Kiley, which currently receive services from SSC members, will no longer be SSC sites and will only receive members serving with the School Turnaround Initiative.

These 5 schools are receiving additional members as a result of the extreme need. Identified by the District as the "Forward Five," these schools are the lowest achieving of the currently identified SIG/Priority Schools in Springfield. These five schools have been unable to make adequate progress

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and were in danger of slipping into Level 5 status, or "chronically underperforming," and requiring state intervention. In an effort to support these schools, the District has partnered with the Education Innovation Laboratory (EdLabs), an education research and development laboratory devoted to closing the achievement gap. For the 2013-14 academic year, EdLabs will control all managerial and operational tasks at each of the Forward Five Schools with a goal of increasing academic engagement and achievement. The EdLabs turnaround model uses five "key practices": 1) human capital management, which includes frequent classroom observations and feedback; 2) high-dosage differentiated instruction in small groups that focus on students' trouble areas; 3) increased instructional time that provides more class time in core subjects; 4) data-driven instruction that calls for teachers to track student progress and reach objectives that are not mastered; 5) a culture of high expectations that promotes and celebrates accountability for students, staff, and leadership. AmeriCorps members will be integral to the best practice delivery of the EdLabs model, providing added capacity that will allow more at-risk students access to interventions.

The remaining schools--Brookings, Gerena, White Street, and Zanetti--will each host 4 AmeriCorps Members--2 half-time Academic Coaches and 2 part-time School Counselors.

Although each AmeriCorps member has a defined role and a specific focus area, all members are trained to address a wide range of risk factors and to provide an array of interventions. This cross-training allows members to provide holistic support to students who are experiencing multiple risk factors and promotes working as a team to share best practices, problem-solve, and share best practices on a daily basis and at monthly student/data review meetings with Program Coordinators and Site Supervisors. All members will also work together to engage students on their caseloads in planning and implementing a school or community service project.

STUDENT REFERRAL AND CASELOADS: Each of the 9 schools will identify a Program Coordinator to provide overall guidance to all americorps members placed at the school and to ensure members are meeting the goals identified in the School Turnaround Plan. Schools will also assign members day-to-day Site Supervisors who are responsible for referring at-risk students for intervention, facilitating weekly supervision meeting with their AmeriCorps member(s), verifying timesheets, and assisting with intervention plans and resources.

Based on areas of improvement outlined in the Turnaround Plan, Members will set up an intervention toolkit for specific risk factors and will work with school administration and Site Supervisors to implement school-wide strategies around parent engagement and college preparation

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and awareness. As Members are assigned at-risk students, they will use data, observation, and collaboration with teachers and staff to determine the students' needs. Members will then implement the interventions that are best suited to that particular student, and will monitor the students' progress monthly, utilizing different strategies if progress is not being made.

Students are referred to members by Site Supervisors based on their DEWS risk level: those who are categorized as at-risk or high-risk are eligible for referral. When deciding which students to refer, several factors are considered, including whether or not the student is already receiving services, the student's age, and caseload capacity. The goal is to target students who may not be receiving the support they need. Once a student has been referred, Members enter baseline data from the previous school year in an online database: attendance rate, number of suspensions (in and out of school), number of disciplinary incidents, and Fountas and Pinnell leveled reading assessment, Achievement Network (ANet) assessment scores, Kindergarten Reading and Math Assessment (KRA and KMA) scores, and District Benchmark Assessment (DBA) scores in literacy and math for school year 12-13, as recorded in the SPS Data Warehouse. Members initiate an introductory meeting with students on their caseload, gathering information on the student's schedule of classes, goals for the year, areas of concern, and requests for support. The Members also have the student complete a Student Engagement Survey (SES). The member meets with each student on his or her caseload for at least one hour per week and monitors daily attendance in school and in class, as well as behavior. These weekly meetings and data inform the member's choice of interventions, and as interventions are implemented, the member "progress monitors" the student monthly to determine effectiveness. Members also track the time and type of interventions they complete. The SES is re-administered at the end of the year, and is analyzed to measure improvement in student engagement.

EVIDENCE-INFORMED AND MEASURABLE IMPACT: The SC School Turnaround Initiative will expand on and enhance Springfield College's current SSC model, which is working to improve student engagement, attendance, behavior, and achievement by providing targeted interventions that focus on risk factors that are predictive of dropping out.

Programs that show positive effects on enhancing engagement and decreasing student dropout include attendance/behavior monitoring; tutoring; counseling; progress monitoring; tiered interventions; career/college awareness; community engagement; and 8th--9th grade transition programs (National High School Center, 2007). AmeriCorps members in the SC School Turnaround Initiative will be given the tools to provide support in all of these areas, not as a blanket measure but

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based on each student's needs and progress as revealed by available data. In addition, Members become knowledgeable advocates for at-risk students, a consistent force for change who provides academic and social/emotional support. Research shows that this type of influence can improve attendance, grades, engagement, and feelings of belonging, all of which relate to school success (Dynarski, et al, 2008). All of this research suggests that a holistic approach that incorporates monitoring, counseling-based support, and academic interventions is needed to make an impact.

The SC School Turnaround Initiative also complements EdLabs' turnaround effort, with support around additional specific, need-based instruction for students, relationship-building that fosters engagement and promotes high expectations for students, using data to determine student needs, and continually monitoring progress. All members will receive training from EdLabs in delivering daily instruction in literacy and Math. EdLabs has applied this model in turnaround public schools in Houston and Denver. First-year results showed that gains made by students in EdLabs schools rivaled, and in certain instances were greater than, those made by students in some of the highest-performing charter schools in the country.

The Turnaround Initiative will utilize national performance measures ED1, ED2, ED5, and ED27. In 2013-14, 530 students will begin participation in the School Turnaround Initiative. 480 students will complete participation in the School Turnaround Initiative, receiving a minimum of 20 and up to 30 hours of intervention during the year (approximately 1 hour per week). Members will track the time they spend with each student and the types of interventions administered in an online Intervention/Time Log.

Of the 480 students who receive 20 hours or more of intervention, 336 (70%) will demonstrate increased academic engagement based on one or more of the following factors: increased attendance, decreased disciplinary referrals, increased interest in school, improved perspective on school climate, increased attachments to school, and/or increased educational aspirations. Members and AmeriCorps staff have access to the Springfield Public Schools Data Warehouse, allowing them to see data on attendance and disciplinary incidents in real-time as well as for the previous academic year. This data will be consulted throughout the year to gauge progress and at the end of the academic year to measure changes in attendance rate and disciplinary referrals.

To measure increased interest in school, improved perspective on school climate, increased attachments to school, and/or increased educational aspirations, members will administer a pre/post Student Engagement Survey, adapted from the Student School Engagement Survey (SSES) from the National Center for School Engagement (NCES). The SSES was designed to measure engagement in

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three areas: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive and has been used with low-income and diverse populations to evaluate truancy reduction interventions. According to a report from the Regional Educational Laboratory at SERVE Center UNC, Greensboro, in collaboration with the Institute of Education Sciences, the SSES is reliable and valid, with NCES data showing "evidence of criterion-related validity of the subscales" of emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement.

Of the 480 students who receive 20 hours of intervention, 300 at-risk students will receive interventions supporting English (literacy) and/or math. Seventy percent, or 210 students, will achieve grade level or will gain 2 grade levels in literacy and/or math as measured on District-based Kindergarten Math and Kindergarten Reading Assessments (KMA and KRA); DBAs, or District-Based Assessments, for grades 1-12; Fountas and Pinnell assessments (grades K-2), and the math and Literacy ANet assessments (grades 3-8). Each of these assessments is given periodically throughout the year, providing ongoing data for progress monitoring. Members will compare the first fall assessment with the final assessment in the spring. ANet formative assessments provide usable data that is aligned with state standards and identifies gaps in learning. The ANet is especially effective when assessing low-income students. Fountas and Pinnell is a leveled reading assessment that research has shown to be both valid and reliable for measuring student reading levels.

HISTORY OF SUCCESS: The SSC program began in August 2012 and has not yet completed its first full year; however, at midyear 70% of students who were chronically absent in 2011-12 (attendance rate under 80%) had improved their attendance rate; academic data is currently being collected and analyzed. In the last full year of operation, 2011-12, the AmeriCorps program at SC also demonstrated success in keeping students in school and getting them to graduation, as well as in improving attendance, grades, behavior, class participation, and attitude. In the last full year grant cycle, AmeriCorps Members serving in Springfield Public Schools as counselors provided counseling and support to 987 students. At midyear, 66% of responding site supervisors indicated that 33% or more of those receiving services had improved their attendance. At year's end, 100% of responding site supervisors indicated that 33% or more of those students demonstrated improvement in one or more of the following areas: grades, behavior, class participation, and attitude and that 33% or more showed improved school attendance. The program met all performance measures, except in community volunteer recruitment: members recruited 1,892 volunteers, falling just short of the goal of 2,000.

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AMERICORPS MEMBER RECRUITMENT: Graduate students at SC have the knowledge and skills to be effective AmeriCorps Members based on their academic program, previous experience, and dedication to service. Springfield College Students will be recruited to fill half-time positions as Academic Coaches, School Counselors, and Academic Support Specialists. AmeriCorps recruitment brochures are included in Admissions packets, incorporated into student orientations, and available on the College's website and at the Career Center. Students receive recruitment letters and are exposed to AmeriCorps presentations at Open Houses. AmeriCorps Program staff will recruit full-time Members from Springfield College and other area colleges, targeting students graduating from programs related to psychology and education. Staff will visit career centers, fairs, and other events to recruit; advertise open positions in school newspapers, newsletters, and websites; and connect with campus volunteer office staff. In addition SPS will disseminate recruitment materials within the central SPS office, at various schools, and at district-wide events. Springfield School Volunteers will also display recruitment materials and post the full-time AmeriCorps Academic Support Specialist positions on their website.

Through a written application and interview process, Members are chosen from those who meet selection criteria, including a strong desire to serve the community, skills matching the issues being addressed, and the ability to perform the required hours and training. All applications are assessed first by AmeriCorps program staff, using the Application Assessment Form. The best candidates are then contacted by current Members, whose experience as a member makes them uniquely qualified to understand what it takes to provide effective service in the Springfield Public Schools. Members and staff collaborated to develop standard questions for each candidate, as well as position-specific questions for these pre-interview calls. Members fill out an Applicant Recommendation Form and discuss their impressions with AmeriCorps program staff. AmeriCorps staff then interview candidates using questions developed by both AmeriCorps program and school staff. Interviews are scored using the Interview Assessment Form. AmeriCorps staff determine possible placements for top candidates, who are then interviewed by SPS Program Coordinators and/or Site Supervisors at potential service sites to ensure a good fit for the member, the Site Supervisor, and the school. Schools provide feedback to AmeriCorps staff and final acceptance decisions are made. Accepted applicants are sent a letter stating that acceptance is contingent on passing the state and FBI background and SORI checks. The acceptance packet also includes a document reiterating the responsibilities of the AmeriCorps member, and that document must be reviewed, signed, and returned to the program office.

AMERICORPS MEMBER TRAINING: Members arrive three weeks early to campus and begin with

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a 2-week orientation/training program in August. In week 1, Members are trained in AmeriCorps 101, including the history and current state of national service, AmeriCorps program requirements, enrollment/exiting, and prohibited activities. Members learn about the community they will be serving through workshops on the history of Springfield; diversity; and SPS culture, challenges, and statistics. They are also trained in mentoring/relationship building; college-positive volunteering; resources for college- and career-bound students; civic engagement; professionalism; reflection; safety; data collection and progress monitoring; and student confidentiality. Former and returning AmeriCorps Members as well as Site Supervisors from SPS participate in a session on what it means to be an AmeriCorps member and also meet with AmeriCorps teams to discuss best practices and challenges. Through role-playing and case studies, Members learn and practice interventions around attendance and behavior, and all Members receive training on providing academic support in math and literacy from the District's Tutor Director. Members also go to their schools for a day-long orientation with supervisors and school leadership, which includes a tour of the building and identification of space for the AmeriCorps Members, introduction to the school's philosophy and mission, discussion of current successes and challenges, and meet-and-greets with school staff and administration. In week 2, Members attend District-wide professional development with their school staff, where they begin integration into the school culture and community. Training topics may include common core standards for literacy and math, positive behavioral interventions and supports, and ANet data.

After orientation, Members complete a Training Needs and Skills Assessment. Results of the assessment drive the training schedule for the first half of the year, with trainings provided at monthly member meetings, the Midyear Training, and through SPS district opportunities. Training topics include conflict resolution, mediation, crisis intervention, learning styles, communication and listening skills, intervention strategies, planning and implementing service projects, and promoting academic engagement. The assessment also allows Members to identify their own areas of expertise that can be shared with other Members throughout the year. At the Midyear Training, Members complete a second Training Needs and Skills Assessment, which reflects their needs after completing 5 months of service. All Members receive Life After AmeriCorps training, which covers job hunting, interviewing, putting AmeriCorps on their resume, MyAmeriCorps, utilizing the Education Award, and serving another term in AmeriCorps. In addition, Members in the School Guidance, Social Work, and other counseling-based programs receive training in their graduate classes from experienced faculty.

After one week of training with Springfield College AmeriCorps staff, the AmeriCorps Members will

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spend one week in district professional development with their school staff. They will become familiar with the Turnaround Plan at their school, reviewing each school's plan with the assigned Program Coordinator and Site Supervisors; exploring past and current strategies and outcomes related to improving attendance, behavior, and achievement in English and math; and determining a focused strategy for impact.

AMERICORPS MEMBER SUPERVISION: Members receive comprehensive supervision. Each school identifies a Program Coordinator, preferably an administrator such as an Assistant Principal or Director of student services or guidance, and day-to-day Site Supervisors. Day-to-day Site Supervisors for Academic Coaches and Academic Support Specialists may include guidance or adjustment counselors, graduation coaches, attendance officers, instructional learning specialists, or, in the Forward Five schools, EdLabs tutor coordinators. All School Counselors will be supervised by licensed guidance/adjustment counselors, school social workers, or other in-school clinicians with appropriate credentials.

The Program Coordinator meets with Members and their Site Supervisors biweekly to gauge progress and ensure alignment with the School Turnaround Plan. Site Supervisors provide ongoing daily supervision and will meet formally with their Members at least once per week to provide feedback, to ensure Members are not engaged in prohibited activities, and to address challenges. Academic Support Specialists receive additional guidance from EdLabs, the school's EdLabs Tutor Coordinator, and the district's Tutor Director. Program Coordinators and Site Supervisors attend an orientation on AmeriCorps requirements, expectations of supervisors and Members, prohibited activities, data collection, and other areas. They also attend bimonthly Site Supervisor Meetings led by the AmeriCorps Program Director (PD) and Assistant Director (AD), where they share goals, successes, challenges, and other feedback. All AmeriCorps Members are required to write weekly online journal entries, which serve as a tool for both reflection and supervision. The AmeriCorps PD and AD monitor journal entries to stay informed regarding the member's experience and to ensure he or she is not participating in any prohibited activities. The PD and AD can immediately respond to journals with constructive criticism, positive feedback, and encouragement. Members also have one-on-one meetings with both AmeriCorps staff and their SPS Site Supervisor for a formal Midyear Evaluation and an End-of-Year Evaluation. Site visits are conducted twice per year by the AmeriCorps PD and/or AD, once in the fall and once in the spring. The AmeriCorps PD and AD have an "open-door policy;" members are encouraged to check in with the AD and PD frequently, and the

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location of the AmeriCorps Office in the SC Campus Union ensures accessibility throughout the week.

MEMBER EXPERIENCE: The Turnaround Initiative provides a strong foundation of training, structured reflection, and group service projects that foster a powerful member experience and a lifelong commitment to service. At orientation, Members learn about the history of national service and AmeriCorps. They are taught the mission and functions of both the Corporation for National and Community Service and the MSA, and are provided with service gear that they are required to wear at their site and at all AmeriCorps events. They are encouraged to educate others about their AmeriCorps service and the role AmeriCorps plays in the Springfield community and across the country, and are given opportunities to do so at events on and off campus. Members participate in community events that put them in direct contact with community Members, such as the annual MLK Jr. Day community service fair at the Eastfield Mall, where they showcase the work of AmeriCorps in Springfield. On campus, Members discuss AmeriCorps in their classes, at Open Houses, and at Career Center events focusing on national service opportunities.

In November, Members are required to attend Opening Day, an event hosted by the MSA that brings together more than 1,200 AmeriCorps Members from Massachusetts to kick off the year of service. Here they build esprit de corps, serving side by side as proud representatives of the School Turnaround Initiative; network with other Members; and hear about the service provided by other AmeriCorps programs in the state, further reinforcing their sense of belonging to a national service movement. There are also many opportunities to connect with fellow Members through social events and team service projects. The Esprit de Corps Committee plans monthly socials to encourage support and team building, giving Members a chance to build meaningful relationships. Members are also required to perform two team service projects. The first, an all-Corps project, provides logistical and leadership support for the College's "Humanics in Action Day," a college-wide day of service when more than 1,500 college volunteers participate in more than 100 service projects, and more than 600 volunteers complete projects in the City's Schools. Members work together to manage and prepare equipment; to recruit, train, and manage college volunteers; to plan and implement projects in the Springfield Public Schools; and to lead groups of college volunteers out into the community.

The second team service project is one that Members complete at their sites. Members are required to work with the students from their caseload to plan and implement a community service project. Getting students involved in service shows them that they are valuable assets to their school and their community and can lead to increased academic engagement, especially if tied to skills they

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are learning in the classroom (Bridgeland, 2008). This year, Members and their students have planned and implemented a school-wide career fair, a school-wide sock drive for homeless families, and are engaging students in a Rebuilding Together neighborhood cluster build during National Volunteer Week.

Reflection is a key element of the member experience. Members are required to reflect on their service weekly. They respond to prompts that challenge them to reflect on their sites, those they serve, and their growth as Members of the community. The PD reviews the journals weekly and responds when necessary: either to praise member efforts, offer support, or discuss problems. In addition, twice a year, Members share their stories of service by writing "Great Stories" that are shared with the State Commission in progress reports.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION: Springfield College is dedicated to promoting the AmeriCorps brand and the impact of national service. All Members are required to wear service gear with the AmeriCorps logo while at their service sites or engaging in any type of service related to their AmeriCorps position. Members are provided with either a shirt or vest to wear regularly as well as an AmeriCorps badge. Members are also educated on national service and AmeriCorps so that they can eloquently relate their own and the country's story of service to others.

SC's Student Success Corps AmeriCorps program has its own presence on the Springfield College website, complete with AmeriCorps and MSA logos, and a new page will be added to describe the Turnaround Initiative and the collaboration with SPS. A link to this page will be posted on the SPS website. The program also will produce a newsletter to be distributed at the Turnaround Schools highlighting the AmeriCorps Program. This will be a tool to not only promote AmeriCorps, but also to connect with parents and guardians and keep them informed about the services being provided and the effort being made to support struggling schools. In addition, all AmeriCorps sites will be required to post a sign with logos for AmeriCorps, Springfield College, and MSA. The sign will include information regarding how to contact AmeriCorps staff and school representatives for more information on the program, as well as links to MSA and americorps.gov.

In addition, AmeriCorps staff will collaborate with SPS and public relations/marketing professionals from both organizations to tell the story of AmeriCorps and its role in improving the academic success of children in Springfield through press releases, news articles, and media presence at special events.

Organizational Capability

BACKGROUND AND STAFFING: Springfield College is in its 16th year of successfully managing an

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AmeriCorps Program. The College's mission--to educate students in spirit, mind, and body for leadership in service to others--represents its commitment to community service as a part of every student's experience and reflects the holistic approach to education and support that members of the Turnaround Initiative will take with at-risk students in Springfield. In addition to its commitment to service, the College also has a strong track record of implementing, managing, evaluating, and enhancing its service programs based on the needs of the community. The AmeriCorps program has changed significantly over the past 16 years in response to requests from the community and from the school district. In the 2010-11 MSA Site Visit Report, the program was cited for BEST PRACTICES in 8 of the 10 systems related to program management, including member Recruitment, Training, Selection, and Supervision. Since 1995, Springfield College has responsibly managed a number of grants to support community service and outreach initiatives, including projects funded by CNCS (Learn & Serve: Higher Education), Massachusetts Campus Compact (AmeriCorps*VISTA), the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. AmeriCorps staff are experienced users of the CNCS e-Grants online application and program management system. The College's financial statement is independently audited annually with a consistent unqualified opinion, and the AmeriCorps Program successfully completed a three-year audit in 2005 by the U.S. Inspector General.

Shannon Langone serves as Program Director, and reports to Dr. Jill Russell, Executive Vice President, who serves as the program's Executive Director. With the AmeriCorps Program since 2007, Ms. Langone is currently pursuing a master's degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. She has developed quality relationships with community partners, provided excellent oversight to Members, and is skilled at organization and writing. Dr. Russell has been with the AmeriCorps Program since 2006, and has previous experience as an AmeriCorps Program Co-Director at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Serving as Assistant Program Director is Nicole Gauthier, a graduate of Boston College, who has been with the program since 2008. She has an M.Ed. in Psychology, with a concentration in Student Personnel Administration in Higher Education.

The AmeriCorps staff also receive extensive support from other campus departments, including the Business Office, which tracks and manages grant finances; Human Resources, which processes I-9s, W-4s, and payroll; the Student Volunteer Office, which provides added operational support and training; Academic Affairs, which helps with recruitment and training needs; Admissions, which also assists in recruitment; and Grants and Sponsored Programs, which manages grant writing, grant

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submission, and additional fundraising. The SSC, through its formula grant, will also be adding another staff member, a Master Literacy Coach, to add capacity in managing that program and to assist with the MRC Pre-K Model expansion.

Springfield College is a widely-recognized leader in community collaborations. It was named one of 25 "best neighbor" urban colleges that have strengthened the economy and quality of life in their community. The College has been named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for the past 5 years, received the Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement classification, and was recently named one of the top 20 community-focused colleges in the United States by USA Today. For the past seven years, the College has secured matching funds for AmeriCorps from the City, the Springfield Public Schools, and the College, meeting and exceeding match requirements. Now in our 16th year of operating an AmeriCorps program, the College has developed a model that enables it to leverage significant resources to meet community needs effectively and collaboratively.

SUSTAINABILITY: Springfield College is respected in the community and known for its commitment to community engagement and to sharing its educational and institutional resources with its neighbors in the city of Springfield. This includes collaboration with public schools, nonprofit agencies, and other community organizations where students perform more than 120,000 hours of service each year.

Although the AmeriCorps program has gone through many changes over the past 16 years, the one constant has been the sustained partnership with the Springfield Public Schools. SC AmeriCorps collaboration with the district and the individual schools being served is a key component of this relationship, as it allows program and member activities to be driven by school and student needs. SPS Assistant Superintendent Lydia Martinez, who is responsible for all SIG/Priority Schools, has been an avid supporter of AmeriCorps and advocated for the expansion of AmeriCorps support in the district. AmeriCorps staff worked with her to redevelop and enhance the SSC model for the Turnaround Initiative, taking into account the specific requests for support from each Turnaround School, the needs of each Turnaround Plan, and the capacity of each school to host and supervise an AmeriCorps team. Principals from the 9 SIG/Priority schools targeted by the Turnaround Initiative are familiar with the success of the SSC in other schools and are eager to welcome the AmeriCorps program as a way to provide additional support for more at-risk students. The SSC AmeriCorps members are regarded as valuable assets, and as their presence and impact has increased over the past

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16 years, the relationship between the Springfield Public Schools and AmeriCorps at Springfield College has become stronger.

Springfield College has continually met match requirements with cash and in-kind contributions from community partners such as the Springfield Public Schools, and increased in kind and cash contributions from the college itself. The program has reached the maximum match percentage of 50%, and is able to meet and exceed this match through continued financial support from the Springfield Public Schools.

The program will be continually evaluated to measure progress and gauge impact. Evaluation data will be shared with community stakeholders and Site Supervisors to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. By sharing information regarding the program's impacts and challenges with the larger community, we can explore and foster new partnerships with other organizations committed to similar goals, eventually reducing the amount of federal support needed to sustain the program.

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: In 2010-11, the Springfield College AmeriCorps Program had a 100% enrollment rate and a retention rate of 97.6%. Two Members were exited for cause, one who decided to move to another state and one who had trouble balancing the demands of graduate study and AmeriCorps. The program will continue to utilize its successful recruitment and retention strategies, and to offer trainings such as time management and self-care to ensure Members are able to handle the responsibilities of being an AmeriCorps Members and a college student.

During orientation, AmeriCorps Members receive training on the Prohibited Activities, as well as any other federal regulations regarding appropriate service. The Prohibited Activities are outlined in the member Handbook, the member Contract, and in the member Service Description. The member Service Description is an addendum to the contract that outlines member and site responsibilities and is reviewed and signed by the member and Site Supervisor at the beginning of the service term. Site Supervisors also receive training on the Prohibited Activities at the Site Supervisor Orientation, and Members are continually reminded of the Prohibited Activities at member meetings and the Midyear Training.

AmeriCorps program staff monitors member activities through the weekly journals and through site visits twice per year, or as needed. If AmeriCorps staff discovers a member or supervisor has engaged in a Prohibited Activity, her or she is contacted immediately, instructed to stop the activity, and reminded of the Prohibited Activities. Members who violate Prohibited Activities will be subject to

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the program's disciplinary process, which includes a verbal warning for the first offense, a written warning for the second offense, and release for cause for a third offense. Sites and Site Supervisors found to have engaged in prohibited activities are subject to the same process, with the third offense resulting in loss of the AmeriCorps member. Any violation of Prohibited Activities would be reported immediately to the MSA by AmeriCorps program staff.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: Data and feedback from SPS, school administration and staff, Site Supervisors, students, and Members will be utilized to make continuous improvements throughout the year. Members will monitor student data on attendance, disciplinary referrals, and class performance/grades in English and math on a regular basis and will use this data to decide how to modify interventions if improvements are not being made. The Assistant Superintendent will disseminate program evaluation surveys to school administrators, staff, and supervisors regarding AmeriCorps member performance and impact. At midyear and end-of-year, Site Supervisors will distribute surveys to at-risk students on their Members' caseloads to determine the effects of the member/student relationships and the effectiveness of interventions. The results of the midyear survey will be utilized in data review meetings with the Site Supervisor, along with other data around assessments, attendance, behavior, etc., to determine plans for intervention. The end-of-year survey results will be shared with AmeriCorps program staff to be utilized in planning for the next service year. In addition, feedback is regularly gathered from Members and Site Supervisors via training evaluation forms, midyear SWOT analyses (strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), and midyear and end-of-year evaluations with members.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

COST EFFECTIVENESS: Springfield College has successfully raised and sustained funds for its AmeriCorps Program for the past 16 years. In addition to providing cash match, the Springfield Public Schools contribute substantial staff time for member supervision and training. The College has reached the maximum match requirement of 50%, and the College and SPS are providing a 60% cash and in-kind match for Year 1. Resources may be utilized in school to provide additional support for SIG-funded initiatives but will not replace those initiatives or programs.

BUDGET ADEQUACY: The cost per MSY is set at \$13,294. This cost reflects an increase of \$294 per member to support health care for full-time members, enhanced training, and startup costs for the new initiative. Springfield College has many years of experience in delivering an outstanding

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AmeriCorps Program within budget that meets the needs of our Members and the community. The requested budget allows for appropriate training materials, assessment tools, supervision, and data collection.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

Hanover Research conducted an external evaluation of the AmeriCorps program at Springfield College in 2011. The evaluation focused on the impact of AmeriCorps service on current and former Members' sense of civic engagement, dedication to service, and career choice; the Member experience; and on the quality of the Members' site service. An online survey instrument was administered to current Members and to alums from the previous program year. Overall, survey results were positive: Members reported that the AmeriCorps experience made them more engaged citizens, and more likely to work with underserved populations. Site Supervisors reported that Members provided services that would otherwise have not been possible. The Hanover report of results and recommendations has been filed with the Corporation for National and Community Service. For 2013-14, our our School Turnaround request is less than \$500,000. Therefore, the Program will continue to conduct its established internal evaluation processes, which include regular feedback from Site Supervisors, Member Reflections, and progress reporting to the MSA State Commission. The program will also take part in any national evaluation conducted by CNCS and the department of Education.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

N/A

Continuation Changes

N/A

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Letter of Support

Sent

Evaluation

Sent

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable