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Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) brings people together to build homes, communities and hope. Since its founding in 1976, HFHI has served more than 600,000 families around the world through construction and other housing support services.

Under the AmeriCorps program outlined in this proposal, three hundred fifty AmeriCorps members will serve with HFHI host sites across the country to help us significantly increase the number of families served in the U.S. in line with HFHI's 2014-2018 Strategic Plan. The members will provide direct services, such as building, repairing and rehabilitating homes, family support, management of volunteers and community outreach and, by the end of the 2013-2014 service year, will leverage more than 200,000 volunteers to help provide affordable housing for 5600 individuals. Our program model dovetails with the Serve America Act's focus on Economic Opportunity Strategic Plan Objective 2 -- Housing, with Disaster Services Objective 3 as the secondary focus. The CNCS investment of \$4.55 M will be matched with Habitat's projected match of \$7 M million.

Rationale and Approach

NEED: The critical housing situation across the U.S. plagues millions of Americans, even as signs of an economic recovery are emerging. More than 43.6 million people in the U.S. live in poverty and an estimated 95 million people currently face housing problems including unaffordable mortgages or rent payments, foreclosure, unhealthy and dangerous living conditions and homelessness.

As the number of homeowners and renters who cannot afford decent housing escalates, those living below the poverty line are particularly vulnerable. The recent recession has been especially hard on low-income households as reflected in the plight of the severely cost-burdened renters and homeowners--those paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing. Between 2007 and 2010, the number of cost-burdened households earning between \$15,000 and \$29,999 shot up a staggering 19 percent. (2012 Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard.) The extended length of unemployment characterized by this recession has also impacted middle income workers. An estimated 18 million Americans are now paying 50 percent or more of their income for housing which reduces their average spending on food by 35 percent, 52 percent on healthcare and 72 percent on transportation. (Ibid.) The shrinking supply of affordable housing further adds to the crisis. Nearly 12 percent of low-cost rentals tied to subsidies available in 1999 were lost by 2009--some 700,000 units offline since the mid-nineties. (Ibid.)

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Natural disasters, including tornadoes in Joplin, Mo. and Tuscaloosa, Ala. and Hurricane Katrina along the Gulf Coast and most recently Sandy in the Northeast have created additional shortages of affordable homes. Of Hurricane Sandy, New Jersey Governor Christie estimates a total of \$36.9 billion in damage, much of it housing, in his state and in New York, Governor Andrew Cuomo called the housing problem "massive", saying it is a housing crisis similar in scale to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Our veterans stand as a poignant reminder of the critical need for adequate, affordable housing. With an additional 68,000 troops returning to the U.S. in the next two years, and a total of more than 300,000 leaving service in the next three years, those numbers are expected to spike as the returning troops face joblessness and poverty. 30.2 percent of veterans ages 18 to 24 were unemployed in 2011. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Situation of Veterans, 2011). Even those employed veterans working in some of the main jobs available through the Department of Labor's specialized training programs do not earn enough to afford to buy a median-priced home in many markets. (Paycheck to Paycheck 2012: Can Veterans afford housing in your community? Center for Housing Policy Studies.)

Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) is a non-profit, ecumenical Christian organization dedicated to eliminating substandard housing and homelessness worldwide and to making adequate, affordable shelter a matter of conscience and action. With more than 1,500 U.S. affiliates, HFHI has traditionally focused on single family, new home construction, providing low-income families living in substandard housing with volunteer-built homes with no profit mortgages. HFHI projects are located in both rural and urban communities and target those communities' most vulnerable populations. Primary criteria for the selection of the beneficiary families includes: low-income [25 to 60 percent of area median income] and high percentage of income to housing costs ratio and/or overcrowding; the ability to pay a mortgage; and, a demonstrated willingness to partner with the HFHI affiliate to participate in trainings such as financial literacy, debt reduction, and volunteer to help construct their home, known as sweat equity.

In 2010, many HFHI affiliates/host sites began integrating HFHI's Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI) into their operations to help transition from the traditional single family construction model to a broader, more holistic approach, increasing the number of families served and improving the overall quality of life within the communities. NRI engages the community-at-large in defining its goals and helps meet those goals through an expanded array of products, such as home rehabilitation, preservation, critical repairs, weatherization, and A Brush with Kindness (ABWK), an exterior home preservation service that provides painting, landscaping, weather stripping and minor repair services

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for entire neighborhoods.

Since 1998, Habitat's Disaster Recovery Initiative has supported the recovery, rebuilding, and repair of homes following a disaster by designing programs that incorporate HFHI's disaster response technical expertise and our neighborhood-focused programs. AmeriCorps members will play a critical role in helping to scale Habitat's repair and reconstruction program to assist with addressing the housing crisis created by SuperStorm Sandy. Habitat will target four areas in New York, including: Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and the Rockaways as well as six communities in New Jersey including Keansburg, Union Beach, Neptune, Belmar, Ocean Gate and Toms River. Additionally, members will support continuing recovery efforts along the Gulf Coast, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and Joplin, MS.

Through this proposal, AmeriCorps members will also support Habitat's Veteran's Build Initiative which supports programming to integrate more veterans and military families as partner beneficiaries of HFHI housing solutions and to provide employment and service opportunities for veterans to continue to serve their country and communities as volunteers, AmeriCorps members, and staff. Habitat for Humanity VetCorps received the 2012 Service Impact Award from CNCS for its work in providing adequate and affordable housing in partnership with veterans and military families. Since 2006, HFHI has increased the number of families served globally by a remarkable 300 percent. The need for affordable housing, however, has never been more urgent, and Habitat's strategic plan for 2014 -- 2018 envisions doing more, doing it faster and with more impact to help address the local and global housing crisis. Under this plan, AmeriCorps members will continue to play a key role in helping HFHI transition into this more integrated, high impact approach as they serve as the hearts, hands and voices for the cause of adequate, affordable housing.

b) Members as highly effective means to solve community problems - HFHI will facilitate a meaningful and supervised 10.5 month, full-time national service field placement for 350 AmeriCorps members in 2013-2014. These members will be deployed to host sites (aka service sites) in over 120 communities in approximately 30 states and Washington, D.C.

Under this program, members provide direct services, such as building, repairing and rehabilitating homes, family support, management of volunteers and community outreach. Members serving as Construction Crew Leaders are responsible for knowledge of construction tasks and leading crews of skilled and unskilled volunteers and partner families in those tasks; Deconstruction Coordinators assist with management and execution of the deconstruction of existing homes and/or as part of renovation projects and provide leadership to volunteers while promoting an environmentally friendly

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community by decreasing the amount of items thrown into landfills and increasing awareness around the value of sustainable building practices; Family Service Coordinators are responsible for recruiting and supporting partner family applicants and partner families selected for traditional homeownership opportunities; Volunteer Services Coordinators help recruit, train, coordinate, recognize and support individual and group volunteers and serve a critical role in helping to build the local affiliate's volunteer base and strengthen their capacity to serve more in need; and, Community Outreach Coordinators help the host sites raise community awareness of what can be done to improve neighborhoods through activities such as mapping community assets, cultivating partnerships with faith-based and other community organizations, identifying potential properties for repair and rehabilitation and promoting the work of Habitat through speaking engagements.

Our host sites consistently report that AmeriCorps members are essential to Habitat's mission and ability to achieve its annual goals, representing much more than additional support for projects. In HFHI's 2010-2012 evaluation report provided by Education Northwest, 97 percent of the Host Site managers (HSMs) reported that members made an important contribution to the affiliates and a real difference in the lives of the partner families they supported. Members helped the host sites build more houses in their roles as construction crew leaders, recruit more volunteers and helped in volunteer retention efforts. In addition, host sites agree that having members significantly increased effectiveness of the host sites' program services. Partner families agreed that their new homes were safer and allowed them to feel more hopeful and secure about their future. Families reported that they valued the support and help of the Habitat AmeriCorps members.

c) Evidence-based/informed and measurable community impact: Habitat AmeriCorps members serve as a highly effective means of addressing the need for affordable housing by engaging communities, developing resources and supporting families. These interventions result in Habitat affiliates building capacity, developing sustainable infrastructure, increasing the number of families served and increasing ability to serve families more comprehensively. This ultimately leads to changes in family condition/quality of life and changes in communities and neighborhoods.

HFHI's National Service's proven program design has evolved over the past 19 years through continuous improvement efforts to gather feedback and input from stakeholders, on-going data collections and evaluations. Combined, this experience and feedback-informed process helps ensure the right interventions are used to solve the community needs and allows HFHI to refine members' roles to better engage with the communities and strengthen the impact of the interventions. In the past five years, the number of U.S. families HFHI has served has jumped 47 percent, from 5,986 in

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FY2008 to 8,844 in FY2012. Approximately 35 percent of the families served by Habitat can be attributed to community volunteers leveraged by national service members.

Overall Change Expected: HFHI has chosen Economic Opportunity Strategic Plan Objective- Housing as our primary performance measure, with Disaster Services Strategic Plan Objective: Disaster Assistance Provided, as the secondary focus. By the end of the three year grant cycle, AmeriCorps members will have helped HFHI : Provide housing services to 5600 economically disadvantaged individuals; Provide safe, healthy, affordable housing for 5600 economically disadvantaged individuals; Provide 1600 housing services to individuals recovering from disaster; and Transition 1600 individuals recovering from disaster into new homes or restored existing homes.

HFHI also seeks additional outputs and outcomes not reflected in the National Performance Measures. We are collecting indicators of family and community impact and support of AmeriCorps as a transformative experience for members. As part of our 2014-2018 Strategic Planning process, HFHI is implementing an Impact Initiative to define, measure and communicate impact with the goal of fostering a results-based organizational culture that focuses on setting, tracking, evaluating, analyzing, learning from and communicating the outcomes and the impact of our work. As part of this initiative, HFHI is working with the University of North Carolina, The Urban Institute and the Morehouse School of Medicine to develop research focused on the overall impacts of low-income home ownership on the household and social costs, the impacts of HFHI's NRI and other interventions on overall community stability, and the impact of the foreclosure crisis on adolescents and mental health. This project includes the development of a database of homeowner families to track indicators of economic opportunities over time, including those regarding health and education.

As part of our evaluation plan for the next 3 year grant cycle, HFHI will be able to link the national service programmatic interventions to HFHI's strategic plan outputs and outcomes, and better inform our methodology and impacts.

Performance during last cycle: HFHI met or exceeded our performance measures in the 2010 -- 2013 cycle. To date, we have built, repaired or renovated 3060 homes, 672 over our goal of 2388 for the current 3 year grant cycle. Our measure in volunteer recruitment reflected that members would recruit, train and lead 331,250 volunteers, contributing just under 2 million hours toward the completion of HFHI homes. In fact, to date, a total of 544,228 volunteers have contributed over 3.2 million hours--an almost 60 percent increase over our original goal.

Measure and report impact: HFHI National Service reviews its logic model and theory of change annually in anticipation of preparing AmeriCorps members and Host Sites for data collection, which is

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completed using our online grant management system (OnCorps). The collection of quantifiable and qualitative data through OnCorps, however, can tell only a portion of the story. HFHI also relies on internal and external evaluation of our program. Not only does HFHI conduct an external evaluation as required by CNCS, we have also established a data, reporting, and evaluation plan to capture program impact using results from available program tracking data, data comparing National Service participating Habitat affiliates to non-participating affiliates, national program documents and stakeholder surveys and interviews. We expect the results of this plan to support the benefits of National Service to HFHI affiliates by building capacity and increasing the number of families served, the impact that National Service has on partner families, and to affirm that AmeriCorps is a transformative experience for AmeriCorps members prompting them to continue to act as HFHI and housing agents post-service.

d) Member Recruitment - Recruitment for AmeriCorps members is conducted at both the local and national levels with HFHI's robust HR department partnering with host sites to provide access to HFHI's extensive recruitment experience and resources. HFHI launches a national advertising campaign each spring which targets members of the general and underrepresented populations. The cities range from large urban areas which have traditionally exposed HFHI opportunities to new Americans, low income families, youth, veterans, people of color, and those with disabilities, and to smaller cities and those which have been impacted significantly by the economic collapse. That focus directly targets low income families, youth, rural citizens, older individuals, veterans, people of color, and Native Americans. Additionally, all of HFHI's member opportunities are posted on the AmeriCorps.gov website, the HFHI AmeriCorps website, and targeted websites such as Idealist.org, numerous veteran hiring initiatives websites and any other specialized websites that help enhance and diversify recruitment. HFHI staff also attends job fairs, and college campus fairs in both large and small cities.

HFHI HR also holds recruitment training seminars with all of our host sites and provides support for local recruitment, which is coupled with the local expertise that host sites already have recruiting in their communities. Many sites seek out candidates from within the communities where they work, building both capacity and sustainability within those environments. By recruiting locally they use their connections with low income communities, faith-based organizations, veterans' organizations, and their local knowledge to proactively seek candidates in the neighborhoods within which they work. In many cases these areas encompass the entire range of underrepresented populations.

For example, residents of Laredo, Texas, a city of 200,000+ on the U.S.- Mexico border, have faced

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a 61 percent increase in the cost of housing between 2000-2010, yet the estimated per capita income remains below \$14,000. (<http://www.city-data.com/city/Laredo-Texas.html>.) The Laredo-Webb County Habitat for Humanity actively recruits their members from the local, predominately Hispanic, lower-income neighborhoods, providing professional training and support and helping establish a long term commitment to service and affordable housing within these communities. In a case representing a large urban area, Greater Dallas Habitat for Humanity also recruits members directly from the communities and partner families who own homes in the neighborhoods within which they build. Similar to Laredo, this model also provides job training and support within these communities. Both affiliates have been host sites for several years now and have seen those members have a great AmeriCorps experience and complete their service successfully.

e) Member training - HFHI mobilizes, develops, and cultivates AmeriCorps members as hearts, hands, and voices for the cause of adequate, affordable housing with the outcome of lifelong housing leaders, advocates, and community change agents. To this end, each AmeriCorps member creates a Member Development Plan (MDP) for the service year in partnership with their local host site. This plan endeavors to help members gain a deeper understanding of housing as critical foundation for breaking the cycle of poverty, connect to the larger movement of Habitat and have information / connections to continue their engagement with HFHI after their term of service, develop technical and leadership skills that will build organizational capacity in their service year and beyond, and gain the confidence, resources, and abilities to communicate and to serve as powerful ambassadors of housing and HFHI. The MDP includes an On-Site Orientation Training (OSOT) which provides members with an overview to how non-profits, specifically HFHI, operate, the background, purpose, and structure of the host site, the roles and responsibilities of the members, specific member assignments and skills needed to accomplish tasks, and the background of the local community and identification of community leaders. OSOT takes place immediately after the members report to the host site. Members may access Habitat Learns, an online learning environment that introduces them to Habitat's mission and principles and other Habitat trainings. Members are required to attend "General Safety Training and Volunteering on a Habitat for Humanity Job Site" hosted by Lockton Insurance company. Members are required to be or become first aid/CPR certified within the first quarter of their service year. Throughout the service year, members will receive position-specific training to ensure they have the skills, knowledge, and resources appropriate to their specific service.

The host sites help the members set goals for the service year and are responsible for the initial

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member on-site training and on-going positions specific training. HFHI also conducts in-depth trainings for the members at the National Service Leadership Conference (NSLC) held each fall, providing members with additional position specific workshops (i.e., volunteer management, home construction, repair and rehab, family selection/ support, community outreach) as well as trainings on HR, NRI, engaging veterans, social media, social networks along with members' benefits. More importantly, the conference helps set HFHI's expectations for their service year and beyond...that members embrace their AmeriCorps service and HFHI to engage in the cause of adequate, affordable housing.

During their term of service, members learn valuable construction trade skills, develop good employment habits, and learn how to communicate effectively with volunteers and partner families and the community at large. They also develop strong personal and professional management skills that serve them well after their HFHI/AmeriCorps service.

HFHI continuously supports and builds the host sites' capacity to train and manage their members through trainings focused on program expectations, HR issues, CNCS compliance at the local level and online tutorials covering the use of OnCorps, and various safety programs, among others. Each host site signs a binding agreement outlining, among other things, prohibited activities under this grant and trainings on prohibited activities are continued throughout the service year for host sites, members, and volunteers where appropriate. HFHI closely monitors all host sites and members to ensure adherence to the program guidance.

f) Member Supervision - HFHI's Host Site Support Model (HSSM) provides the framework for members supervision and program accountability. A foundational component is the Host Site Participation Agreement. This executed contract between HFHI and each host site establishes the overall program guidelines including member recruitment, enrollment and supervision, prohibited activities and outlines all required trainings. Under this agreement, the host site identifies an appropriate and qualified Host Site Manager (HSM) to act as the point of contact at the host sites and serve as a strong foundation for effective communications and monitoring in partnership with HFHI. Together, the HSM and a HFHI NS program specialist are committed to ensure each member receives adequate support and guidance throughout the term of service.

HSMs and key host site staff receive training from HFHI in the following areas: HFHI and CNCS Strategic Direction, Capacity Building and Sustainability, Program Management Member Development and Supervision, Prohibited activities, and Communication and Program Promotion. In-person training is required for all HSMs annually and provided by the HFHI NS team. This multi-

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day training is scheduled prior to member placement to ensure that HSMs are prepared in advance to adequately supervise members.

HSMs are responsible for the day-to-day supervision of each AmeriCorps member on their team. Each HSM manages the members' specific program activities, time and attendance and resolves conflicts and ensures that each member is receiving project-specific direct supervision. Members are encouraged to discuss issues with HSMs and HFHI NS program specialists if they have concerns they feel cannot be addressed at the local level. When situations are elevated, HFHI NS program staff and HFHI human resource teams work closely with HSMs and members to seek resolution.

HFHI NS program specialists also provide the ongoing training, oversight and support to the HSM throughout the program year. Specialists utilize the host site monitoring plan, which includes check in calls, desk reviews and site visits with host sites and members to check progress towards goals, assess compliance with programmatic expectations, and identify and address any support needs. Host site and HFHI staff coordinate on member relations, as needed promoting the utilization of the Member Assistance Program, a benefit provided at no cost to members that provides short term, professional counseling to address a wide variety of concerns including stress management, work concerns, conflict resolution, financial concerns and many other counseling services. Also included in the HSSM is the accountability plan which guides HFHI NS program specialists in addressing compliance issues with host sites. Specialists provide continued training/technical assistance to HSMs in identified areas of compliance, risk or continuous improvement.

g) Member Experience - Connecting members to service: AmeriCorps members are welcomed to their year of service at HFHI's NSLC in the fall. In 2012, more than 400 Habitat AmeriCorps and VISTA members came together under the conference theme, "Why We Serve". This annual event provides training for AmeriCorps members at the outset of their service year along with opportunities to network and engage in peer learning. In 2012, NSLC included an additional service learning project in partnership with the local Talladega Habitat affiliate wherein 50 returning AmeriCorps members performed home repairs and minor exterior home repairs in partnership with local families. These events are highly regarded by AmeriCorps members who appreciate the continued orientation to AmeriCorps and Habitat as well as the interaction with members from across the nation it affords. It helps set the stage for ongoing member-networking throughout the service year, and in many instances, for lifelong friendships as well.

A signature event of HFHI AmeriCorps service year, the annual AmeriCorps Build-a-Thon is a weeklong (Monday -- Friday) marathon build bringing together currently serving members from

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HFHI's National Service programs. It provides a unique opportunity for AmeriCorps members to share ideas and meet others committed to service and to eliminating poverty housing. It also highlights the value of the AmeriCorps program in developing a long-term spirit of service, with many members committing to a second year of service by the end of this powerful week

Days of Service: For MLK Day 2013, members planned or participated in the President's MLK Day of Service--a national call to service initiatives. MLK Day is an important event for our members and HFHI encourages the host sites to host events for their communities. For AmeriCorps Week, HFHI will help members connect with each other and alumni to feel a part of the larger movement of service. In addition, host sites will recognize members and alumni for their commitment by highlighting the extraordinary impact they make within HFHI and across our nation every day. HFHI also participates annually in the September 11th Day of Service and Remembrance and are helping to establish the 9/11 Day as an annual volunteer day across our national network of 1,500 Habitat affiliates and to build our capacity to meet the unique service and housing needs of veterans and military families. Under our 2010 - 2012 evaluation, nearly all members agreed that they benefitted from their service experience and many stated that the job specific skills they learned in construction and volunteerism were valuable now and in the future. Ninety percent of members said they fully intended to volunteer and become involved in their community. This is underscored by a recent survey of national service alumni in which more than half (55 percent) of respondents indicated they are still involved in affordable housing in some capacity.

h) Volunteer Generation - Every year HFHI mobilizes almost a million volunteers around the globe to share ideas, mobilize constituencies, build networks, raise funding, construct homes and revitalize communities. AmeriCorps members support the development and build the capacity of local volunteers as they serve as host site volunteer coordinators, construction crew leaders, participate on the board's volunteer committee, and develop tools to increase volunteerism including public service announcements, creation or improvement of HFH websites, promotion of special volunteer days, (e.g. Women's Build), and many more related activities. As stated earlier, more than 35 percent of all HFHI partner families served are supported by volunteers leveraged by AmeriCorps members.

i) Organizational Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification - HFHI remains committed to its close alignment and identification with AmeriCorps. All host sites understand and agree via the signed participation agreement to guidance regarding identification involving member activities. Host Sites are required to post AmeriCorps signs and acknowledge AmeriCorps (CNCS) as a partner and donor in published materials including website/pages, newsletters, annual reports, etc., as well as in press

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releases, on stationery and fax coversheets, when appropriate. They must identify AmeriCorps members as such and not as staff or volunteers and should encourage members to wear service gear when possible on the worksite and at special events. Host sites are encouraged to contact the media to publicize special AmeriCorps events, recognize AmeriCorps members in special interest stories and promote the AmeriCorps program where possible. HFHI displays the Habitat AmeriCorps lock-up logo prominently on our website and frequently releases media materials to tell the story of National Service.

Organizational Capability

a) Organizational Background: Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope. Since its founding in 1976, HFHI has served more than 600,000 families around the world through construction and other housing support services. In the U.S. HFHI stands as the number one affordable homebuilder and is currently ranked as the sixth largest U.S. homebuilder overall, according to Build Magazine's 2012 annual survey of home construction.

Since 1998, we have responded to disasters worldwide and served more than 100,000 families, providing integrated, well-informed approaches to housing recovery. HFHI's capacity to manage large scale disaster recovery was demonstrated in the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina in 2005 where HFHI built more than 1,300 new houses--constructing the most single family homes in Biloxi, MS, and New Orleans by any organization over a five year period. Habitat also plays a leading role in collaborating with other nonprofits when disaster strikes, sits on the Board of Directors for the National Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) and is part of the coordination effort among nonprofit organizations for Sandy recovery.

HFHI has over 1,500 local affiliates in the U.S. which are independent, locally run, grassroots non-profit organizations that mobilize community members and financial and social capital to help achieve HFHI's mission. These affiliates deliver a broad array of housing solutions, vacant house rehabilitation, home repair and weatherization and housing counseling services for families. Our network also includes 23 State Support Organizations (SSO) that support local affiliates in specific states with resource development and housing advocacy. HFHI, as the parent organization, supports them through use of the brand, training and technical assistance and the provision of resources. HFHI began working with CNCS in 1994 and has successfully managed more than 20 AmeriCorps National, State and VISTA grants. In 2006, HFHI formalized an internal organizational structure creating the National Service Department, bringing the management for all the CNCS programs

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under one roof. This structure has allowed HFHI to provide improved oversight and compliance support, strengthen the partnerships and support to our host sites and enhance the overall experience of the participating members through the development of the innovative Host Site Support Model and Member Development Plan. The fact that more than 40 percent of HFHI's national service department's staff are Habitat AmeriCorps or VISTA alumni bears witness to the ability of HFHI's programming to cultivate members as leaders, advocates and change agents for adequate, affordable housing.

Since 1994, HFHI has provided opportunities for more than 6,500 AmeriCorps members to support our work and estimate these members have mobilized more than 2 million volunteers, contributed over 10 million hours of service, helped more than 12,500 families and raised tens of millions of dollars in cash and in-kind funds, adding to our increasing success in providing assistance to more families.

HFHI stands as the largest recipient of the HUD Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP) funding in the nation, having received more than \$196.6 million since our first award in 1996. Under an assessment by the Office of Management and Budget, we received the designation of "Effective"--the highest rating for a federal program. In addition, HFHI participates in the HUD Section IV Capacity Building Grant program; having received grants of more than \$70.4 million since 1998. HFHI has also received and successfully managed multiple USAID grants and sub-grants for work in numerous challenging overseas locations.

Staff/Role/Experience: Peter Rumsey, Director--National Service. Mr. Rumsey has more than 23 years of program and grant management in both the private and non-profit sectors. He joined HFHI in 2000 and has spent the past 12 years directly supporting CNCS programs. He currently directs a staff of 21 supporting the current placement of 300 AmeriCorps National and 110 VISTA members serving with Habitat in the US. Under Mr. Rumsey's guidance, the program has grown from multiple and separate programs to an integrated department and streamlined grant management structure.

Maureen O'Leary, Associate Director--National Service. Ms. O'Leary, with HFHI for more than 16 years, maintains responsibility for all program operations, including the online grant management and monitoring systems, program promotion and branding, event coordination, and budget tracking. Ms. O'Leary, an HFHI AmeriCorps VISTA alumnus, brings 20 years of experience in management and supervision.

Alice Jackson, Programs Manager--National Service. Habitat VISTA alumni, Ms. Jackson has

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spent 14 years in the non-profit sector with the last 8 years working with Habitat's national service programs. Prior to joining HFH NS, she served as the community development officer for the American Red Cross Savannah Chapter and as executive director for Habitat's Walton County Affiliate (FL) from 2002 - 2004. Ms. Jackson manages a staff of 13 -- three Senior Program Specialist and ten Specialists who directly support, train ,and monitor the our host sites in the implementation of this program at the local level.

Mesfin Amanew, Director of Grant Compliance and Donor Reporting (Finance)--HFHI. Mr. Amanew has been with HFHI for more than seven years and provides oversight and coordinates HFHI's GCDR staff in monitoring all financial aspects of grants and preparing, reviewing and issuing financial reports for all U.S. and international grants, including CNCS. Mr. Amanew has more than 26 years experience with managing national and international federal grants management and has extensive knowledge and understanding of the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars.

Host Site financial, programmatic training and technical assistance: All HFHI NS staff have been trained in grant compliance and program accountability. In addition, their skills are continuously updated through trainings (program and position specific), an annual week-long workshop for all program staff members, and technical assistance provided by appropriate HFHI departments (such as HR, LOD, Finance).

Capacity for training/skills development: Training and skills development stands a one of HFHI's core competencies. As best practices are continuously identified, HFHI's Learning and Organizational Development (LOD) department develops training and resources to serve the more than 1,500 affiliates and state support organizations in the U.S. and national offices in more than 80 countries around the world. The LOD staff works closely with HFHI program staff to ensure all trainings reflect reliable, consistent processes and approaches and the impact and results are based on CNCS and HFHI's strategic priorities. In addition to developing the affiliate training programs, LOD has built the capacity of the HFHI program staff to develop and implement the training components for the National Service Leadership conference and facilitate conflict resolution and sustainable building sessions for all members.

Evaluation Capacity: HFHI conducts annual external evaluation to assess the integrity of our processes and programs. We issue an RFP and follow standard procurement procedures in awarding the evaluation contract. For the past two evaluations, Education Northwest, an organization with solid CNCS experience, has managed our evaluations. We provide the evaluating organization with a

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single point of contact (evaluation project manager) who supports the process through regular meetings with the evaluator and by providing access to host site staff, members, alumni, families and others as requested. This system allows us to be more responsive to the needs of the evaluator and ensures easy access to all information required.

Management Structure: The HFHI board of directors is unpaid and volunteer, comprising a broad range of community, business and housing sector leaders. They are responsible for HFHI's fiscal and strategic oversight and have endorsed national service as key part of HFHI's 2014-2018 strategic plan. The senior leadership team consists of experienced professionals committed to realizing Habitat's mission. A U.S. Council, appointed by the board of directors and consisting of representatives from our affiliates and SSOs, oversees operations and serves as the planning and policy development body to guide the growth of HFHI's work in the U.S.

In addition, a host site council, made up of representatives from participating affiliates and SSOs, provides feedback on the program's successes and challenges and supports our continuous improvement processes.

AMC integrated/supported: HFHI is a volunteer driven organization and, as reflected in its 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, plans to deepen its impact by intentionally cultivating and developing members to mobilize as the hearts, hands and voice for the cause of affordable housing, thus helping to increase the number of families served. National Service members have played an integral role our program since 1994 as reflected in the fact that AmeriCorps/VI STA alumni now make up 40 percent of the program department's staff and 20 percent in the field. AmeriCorps members serve as invaluable assets to their host sites as they historically leverage additional volunteers at the rate of more than 300 to one--directly impacting the number of families each site serves and making lasting changes within the local communities.

HFHI continues to receive high marks for the overall management of its National Service programs. Since the beginning of HFHI's participation, financial audits, such as the annual A-133, and the CNCS monitoring audits conducted tri-annually, have reflected consistent adherence to CNCS/HFHI financial policies and procedures. In its' 18 year history, no audit has returned any major findings against the HFHI AmeriCorps program.

HFHI holds our host sites accountable for management of the program through our Host Site Support Model and provides in-depth trainings and ongoing monitoring to ensure compliance with CNCS/HFHI programmatic policies and procedures. Prohibited activities garner special emphasis in our trainings and oversight and management processes and HFHI NS staff leverage their

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relationships with both the host site managers and members to identify and correct any potential issue before it reaches non-compliance. If problems do arise, HFHI staff works in partnership with the host sites to most appropriately address the concerns, building the capacity of the sites to continue benefiting from the NS program.

HFHI's annual external evaluations continue to highlight HFHI's NS successes, and on those occasions when issues are highlighted--from any source, the HFHI National Service team maintains a reputation of aggressively responding to and/or addressing concerns. Most recently, in response to host sites' concerns regarding a sluggish recruitment process, a HSM from the Host Site Council was identified to work with our HR recruitment liaison to better understand all the steps involved from the HFHI and CNCS perspective. Based on feedback, HFHI implemented a major change to the process which included forwarding applications to host sites immediately instead of pre-screening all candidates. HR staff then screened only those candidates the sites were interested in placing. This change eliminated a bottleneck and met with positive feedback from the host sites.

b) Sustainability - HFHI has consistently secured its portion of the project funding; over the past three-year grant cycle, the AmeriCorps National program provided more than \$20 million in cash and in-kind resources in support of the project. This serves as evidence of significant leveraging of federal funds and makes our program (and affiliates) less dependent on federal funds.

Host Sites: Each qualified HFHI host site pays a participation fee to be included in the National Service program. This fee helps cover the HFHI portion of the program and supports HFHI operational and staffing costs and events. Additional funds and In-kind support: HFHI host sites adeptly develop and rely on a mix of traditional and innovative partnerships with a broad range of community stakeholders and have a proven record in cultivating relationships with those who share our commitment to civic participation and the development of quality volunteer programs. Developing strong partnerships with faith-based and community organizations, universities, colleges, for-profit organizations and other non-profit organizations helps create sponsors and donors to the Habitat mission. HFHI host sites also obtain additional in-kind and cash support through individuals and community foundations and from Habitat ReStores. National strategic partners, such as Home Depot, Lowes, Valspar, Dow, Citigroup and Thrivent Financial also provide significant support to both HFHI and host sites across the U.S.

Sustainability: The route to community sustainability centers on building the capacity of our partner affiliates. The presence of AmeriCorps members allows more individual and group volunteers to serve at local Habitats, which directly increases organizational efficiency and production. Trained

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members increase the ratio of skilled crew leaders to volunteers which supports a better quality of construction as well as increased quantity. Member support also enhances the volunteer experience and greatly increases the chances of local volunteers becoming future donors and sponsors. As affiliates meet the housing needs of more families, the number of homeowners paying off their mortgages increases. Habitat homes are built at cost and at no profit and sold to families as such. Mortgage payments are recycled back into Habitat's "Fund for Humanity" to sponsor another home. When enough homeowners are paying their mortgages regularly, local affiliates can become economically independent and self-sustaining. Homeowners also contribute to the local tax base and become potential donors.

c) Compliance and Accountability - Again, it's the HFHI's Host Site Support Model that provides the guiding framework to ensure all aspects of the CNCS program are implemented with strong adherence to programmatic and financial compliance and accountability. The Host Site Participation Agreement serves as the cornerstone of the model and informs the host sites of all their programmatic and financial responsibilities. The binding agreement includes guidelines for the recruitment and enrollment of members, listing and explanation of prohibited activities, rules for the administration of the program (both programmatic and financial), lists of required trainings, including safety. The host site also agrees to identify a Host Site Manager (HSM) to serve as the point of contact between the host site and the HFHI program specialists--with this single point of contact serving as a strong foundation for effective communications and monitoring. The HSM must demonstrate that s/he has the ability to give sufficient attention and support to the project, attend specialized HSM training, make use of the HFHI program guidance documents, In addition, they maintain ongoing and frequent communications with their assigned HFHI program specialist, including conference calls, email, quarterly reports and site visits.

As outlined in the Host Site monitoring plan, a team of 10 HFHI program specialists, who oversee 10-15 sites a piece, conduct annual desk or site based monitoring for programmatic, compliance and program quality and performance reviews. In addition, the program specialists, under the Member Management plan, also serve as the HFHI point of contact and secondary support to members assigned to the host sites. This communication structure provides each program specialist with a greater picture of the host site's program activities as well as the member's program participation and individual development progress and is designed to help the specialist identify and correct potential issues.

If issues arise, HFHI staff respond quickly to support any host site with identified problems and if

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necessary bring to bear the resources of the larger HFHI organization to help not only problem solve, but build the capacity for the site to become successful in the implementation of the AmeriCorps program.

All financial activities are managed by HFHI's Finance Department. HFHI's financial management system, including its fund accounting system, has been tailored to ensure compliance with US government federal grant requirements. HFHI has the necessary controls, policies, procedures and business processes in place to ensure that funds received from HFHI's donors, both public and private organizations, are spent in accordance with the donors' intentions and all the requirements attached to the funds are met. HFHI Finance administers all grants in accordance with the U.S. Federal government Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations and Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations.

Recruitment and Retention: During the past three-year funding cycle, HFHI successfully recruited 100 percent of allotted msy's. Of those 911 members in service, 818 members have successfully completed or are on track to complete their AmeriCorps service.

State Commission Consultations: HFHI routinely consults with state commissions in the anticipated states/districts in which members will be placed and adheres to the processes developed by the Commission Consultation Working Group tasked by CNCS to provide feedback on the combined competition aspects of the Serve America Act. HFHI first sends letters of intent to the appropriate state commissions' liaisons and includes consultation forms and a link to the HFHI NS home page. The program staff then conducts conference calls with each liaison to ensure all communications are in order. Additional outreach may occur as opportunities arise throughout the year. These consultations are very beneficial as they have resulted in shared training events for staff and members, participation in state commission committees for special initiatives and a general sharing of available resources and promotion of the programs.

For this (2013-2014) proposal, we anticipate approximately 80 potential sites and are in the process of completing consultations with the following commissions: Washington DC, AL, AR, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, HI, ID, IL, LA, MA, ME, MD, MS, MO, NE, NY, NC, NJ, OH, OR, PA, SC, SD, TX, TN, VA, WA, WI

Host Site selection: HFHI places AmeriCorps members at qualified host sites within HFHI's network in the U.S. The four primary types of sites include: 1) Habitat local affiliates, 2) HFH State Support Organizations (SSOs), 3) HFH internal departments and 4) strategic partners such as

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Advanced Energy or other community partner non-profits. A competitive AmeriCorps host site application selection process ensures host sites are equipped with adequate programmatic and financial capabilities to comply with CNCS regulations and HFHI policies, provide members with a satisfactory service experience and to have a sustainable impact in distressed communities.

Host sites submit formal applications to HFHI, which are vetted for "good standing" within the organization and, if re-competing for members, assessed on their host site programs. Applications are scored based on the following: compelling local community need; project proposal with defined outcomes; effective and strategic use of AmeriCorps members; sufficient capacity to host requested number of members; strong commitment to and understanding of national service; commitment to building diverse community partnerships; ability to recruit a diverse corps of members; strong organizational leadership; community support; and financial stability, sound systems and practices and ability to meet program costs.

Special consideration is given to those sites whose projects incorporate veterans as volunteers, members and families served, innovative NRI projects in distressed urban neighborhoods as well as those that identify projects to support rural families and communities. Final selection is completed by senior leadership and the selected sites are then integrated into our Host Site Support Model, and begin the basic host site training program, including a focus on recruitment, member supervision and support and program requirements. Once HFHI receives notice of the CNCS award, the members are allocated among these eligible host sites. HFHI and each site enter into a binding participation agreement which outlines the commitments and expectations of the partnership in the management of the program. The agreement includes the approved budget and required cost match, scope of work and reference to all applicable AmeriCorps program rules and regulations.

The 2012-13 application cycle yielded more than 167 host site applications requesting more than 701 members.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

a) Cost effectiveness - HFHI's budget is cost effective as reflected in the implementation, monitoring, and impact of our program. Local affiliates leverage their partnerships with a broad range of community stakeholders such as faith-based and community organizations, institutions of higher learning, for-profit organizations and other non-profit organizations to create sponsors, strategic partners, volunteers, and donors.. HFHI host sites also obtain additional in-kind and cash support through individuals and community foundations and from Habitat ReStores.

HFHI is committed to making an impact at the local level by strengthening national partnerships

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and funding sponsorships and providing those resources directly to the local affiliates. HFHI also focuses on keeping the cost of these resources at a minimum as well. With respect to our program cost, our administrative costs are kept at a minimum by keeping our AmeriCorps program at a national level instead of multiple state and local grants. Examples of lower administrative cost include consolidated and streamlined 1) Staff support and program supervision; 2) Training events for both host site support staff and members; and, 3) Recruitment and promotional plans. Cost savings in these areas directly impact the cost for the local host site so they can direct additional funding and resources back into the local community. At the local or community level, when AmeriCorps members are engaged with volunteers and community partners, there is a cost efficiency created. The training and engagement by the members to the local volunteers develops new and deeper skill sets in areas such as construction, social services, budget management, and project management, to name a few, that has an impact on quality of work product and time efficiency performed by a volunteer. Not only does this produce cost efficiencies, but also benefits the community by the new skills gained by the volunteers.

b) Budget Adequacy - As an organization overall, HFHI has a practice of maintaining a diverse portfolio of funding resources. The HFHI Resource Development team has developed a comprehensive, multi-year funding plan to support HFHI strategic initiatives. HFHI's previous proposal committed to serving more families by expanding the scope of our model to include community development, sustainable building, and a broader array of housing services. Through the continued strong partnership with AmeriCorps, HFHI has been able to achieve this goal including the ability to diversify the funding base by leveraging support from both traditional donors (such as foundations, corporations and individual) to nontraditional Habitat donors (such as micro-financing entities, small businesses, and community development organizations).

Under this proposal, HFHI requests a federal investment of \$13,000 per MSY for 350 members for a total request of \$4.55 million. While this request stands at the maximum amount of funding allowed, it remains cost effective for both HFHI and CNCS because of the widespread and increasing impact. Under HFHI's expanded model, the AmeriCorps programs have enabled us to serve 12.5 percent more families on a national level. HFHI and participating host sites contribute approximately \$7 million cash and in-kind resources to support the program. Not only does each host site support HFHI's operation costs, they must demonstrate their ability to financially support the program as well. This is confirmed through a "good standing" review of all host site applicants that evaluates affiliation compliance and fiscal audit worthiness. One fiscal criteria within the good standing

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requirements is that each affiliate must post a cash reserve of one-quarter of their annual debt to safeguard against non-payment by an affiliate. In addition to the review, all awarded host sites must sign the binding host site agreement with HFHI, committing to provide approximately \$12,000 per member as well as additional cash and in-kind local program support approximating an additional \$3,000 per member. This host site funding provides a total of \$5.25 M for HFHI's AmeriCorps program and is secured through a variety of sources, including community and faith groups, local corporate partners, the service sector, foundations and individual donors. Several host sites, especially those in areas with a higher cost of living, also provide members with housing, utility and transportation subsidies.

We have estimated the total program cost at approximately \$11.55 M. This includes the \$4.55 M request from CNCS and the \$7 M provided by HFHI and the awarded host sites. The total program cost was calculated on administrative and operating cost which includes but is not limited to staff and member compensation and benefits; training and monitoring; criminal background checks, program promotion and member gear. This diversified plan leverages the government funding to increase and/or secure additional funding from the private sector to support this AmeriCorps program that is aligned with Habitat's strategic plan to serve more families and get us closer to our vision of a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

Evaluation report provided via email to americorpsgrants@cns.gov with evaluation plan attached as an appendix per instructions from CNCS Program Officer, Oksana Jensen.

Amendment Justification

n/a

Clarification Summary

n/a

Continuation Changes

n/a