

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

450 AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 12,000 volunteers to provide tutoring and small group instruction to economically disadvantaged students in grades K-12 and to economically disadvantaged adults, in 23 different urban and rural communities across the country. These communities include: Apopka, FL; Atlanta, GA; Baltimore, MD; Bend, OR; Boston, MA; Boulder, CO; Chicago, IL; Cincinnati, OH; Dayton, OH; Hartford, CT; Los Angeles, CA; Thoreau, NM; New Orleans, LA; New York City, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Phoenix, AZ; Rochester, NY; San Francisco/Redwood City, CA; Seattle, WA; Washington, DC; Watsonville, CA; Wilmington, DE; and Youngstown, OH. At the end of the one year grant period, 7,700 children will demonstrate improved academic engagement, and 1,200 adults will either gain employment or advance to the next level in their personal job readiness plan. This project will center on the CNCS focus areas of Education and Economic Opportunity. The CNCS investment of \$4,815,000 will be matched with \$4,478,365.

## Rationale and Approach

### a. Need

Notre Dame Mission Volunteers-AmeriCorps (NDA) was created by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SND) who since their founding in 1804 have been engaged in education of the poor around the world. This rich history of commitment to education is the foundation for NDA's mission of creating holistic educational programs for at-risk children and adults in economically disadvantaged communities. NDA has chosen to address these needs because we believe that education is the fundamental tool in the struggle of the poor for human dignity, self-esteem and self-determination. The communities we serve have problems including high rates of poverty and unemployment that we believe are linked to low educational achievement. These communities exhibit high dropout rates, sub-proficient performance on standardized tests, and failing schools. Many of the children and adults we serve are English language learners, adding to their challenges.

Apopka, FL -- Our program in Apopka primarily serves the education and economic opportunity needs of the migrant farmworker community. In the census tracts we serve, between 23% and 34% of the population between the ages of 16 and 19 were neither enrolled in school nor had they achieved a high school diploma. Poverty related to unemployment or under-employment is a significant factor in our target census tracts; the percentage of families with no wage or salary income ranged from 10% to 21%.

Atlanta, GA -- Members will serve children in a city where the public school graduation rate is 52%

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and 34.9% of persons under 18 years of age are living below the poverty level. One site where members will serve, Drew Charter School, was the subject of a 2008 report by the University of Georgia Terry School of Business Selig Center for Economic Growth, Chance to Succeed, that found while Drew students score lower than statewide averages on standardized tests, the longer they stay at Drew Charter the closer they come to those performance levels.

Baltimore, MD -- In the seven neighborhoods where our partnering schools and adult education centers are located, 2010 census data show the percentage of residents with incomes below the poverty level ranges from 20% to 49%. Unemployment is between 9% and 12%. Last year the Maryland Department of Education reported a 4-year graduation rate of only 65.8% for Baltimore City public schools.

Bend, OR -- The Boys and Girls Club, our partnering site for education, reports that 70% of its participants are below the poverty rate. Its 2012 Impact Guide reports that its participants both need and benefit from extra academic attention. ([www.bgcco.org/BGCCO\\_YthImpactGuide](http://www.bgcco.org/BGCCO_YthImpactGuide))

Boston, MA - NDA partners with schools and adult education centers in neighborhoods in South Boston, Dorchester and Roxbury where there is a high concentration of poverty and low educational attainment. According to a 2011 report funded by the Boston Foundation called The Measure of Poverty, ([www.bostonindicators.org](http://www.bostonindicators.org)) approximately 42% of children in these areas live in poverty, and in some of our census tracts, 40%-50% of adults lack a high school diploma.

Boulder, CO -- Our NDA program partners with the I Have A Dream Foundation of Boulder in providing educational support to low income youth, mostly Hispanic. The 2011 graduation rate in the Boulder Valley School District for students eligible for the free lunch program was 61.2% (The Status of Children in Boulder County 2012. [www.bouldercounty.org](http://www.bouldercounty.org)). Post-secondary attendance rates for low income youth are also a major concern in Boulder and the state of Colorado, especially for the Hispanic population. For every 100 Latino 9th graders in a Colorado public school today, only nine will go on to graduate from college ( Boulder County TRENDS report 2011. [www.commfound.org/trendsmagazine](http://www.commfound.org/trendsmagazine)).

Chicago, IL -- We will be focusing our education efforts in public charter schools in Chicago. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the children in Chicago public schools are from low income families, and 12.2% have limited English proficiency. The Chicago Public School District is not making adequate yearly progress in reading or math, and according to the Chicago Sun-Times, the dropout rate is 40% ([www.suntimes.com/news/steinberg/15122873-452](http://www.suntimes.com/news/steinberg/15122873-452)).

Cincinnati, OH -- Our members will be providing education services to low income children and

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adults in some of the poorest neighborhoods in Cincinnati, including Corryville, Lower Price Hill, and Over-the-Rhine. Census data indicate that in these neighborhoods, the percentage of households with incomes below the poverty level ranged from 34% to 66% in 2009. The median household incomes ranged from \$9,810 to \$19,370. In Cincinnati, 18% of the population over the age of 25 had not completed high school, versus 12.8% for Ohio as a whole.

Dayton, OH -- According to census data, 31% of the population in Dayton had incomes below the poverty level, and 77% of students qualify for the free lunch program. According to the Ohio Department of Education, Dayton public schools have not met adequate yearly progress in reading or mathematics proficiency.

Hartford, CT -- Thirty-nine percent (39%) of children in Hartford live below the poverty level according to census data, compared to 11.9% for Connecticut as a whole. In one school where we will be serving, English is not the primary language spoken at home for 38% of the students. Only 32% of students were proficient in math and only 20% were proficient in reading as measured by 2011 state standardized testing. (School data source: Grace Academy.)

Los Angeles, CA -- In Los Angeles where we will be serving children and adults, a new tracking system for LA public schools found that in 2011 more than 17,000 8th graders left school and did not return for 9th grade (Howard Blume, August 12, 2011, Los Angeles Times.) The high school dropout rate is 18%. Census data show that for the neighborhoods where our members will be serving, between 25% and 40% of families live below the federal poverty level.

New Orleans, LA -- Members will be providing education services to children in public schools, a majority of whom are African-American. Census data indicate 26% of families in the city live below the poverty level. The State school district achievement report states that although the gap between white students and African-American students was narrowing, only 53% of African-American students were performing on grade level in 2011.

New York City, NY -- Members will be providing education services to children in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Although graduation rates have been rising, approximately 10% of students in New York City graduated with a local diploma which allowed them to graduate despite scoring under 65 on the Regent's exam ([www.gothamschools.org/2012/06/11](http://www.gothamschools.org/2012/06/11)). Students are also not well-prepared for college. At City University of New York community colleges, 74% of students required remedial help prior to starting college level work in 2010. ([www.nydailynews.com/new-york/education/new-york-city-high-school-graduation-rate](http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/education/new-york-city-high-school-graduation-rate)).

Philadelphia, PA -- Our members will be working with disadvantaged school children in Philadelphia,

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where according to the Office of Accountability of the Philadelphia School District, the on-time graduation rate in 2009 was only 56% compared to 70% in Pennsylvania as a whole. Twenty-one percent (21%) spoke a language other than English at home compared to 10% in Pennsylvania.

Census data indicate that 26% of the population in Philadelphia lives below the poverty level.

Phoenix, AZ -- Our program will serve children and adults in South Phoenix, where census data indicate that 27% of the population is foreign-born as opposed to 19% in Phoenix as a whole. Sixteen percent 16% of residents in this neighborhood do not speak English proficiently. The percentage of the population under the poverty level in South Phoenix is 25%, contrasted with 16% for Phoenix.

Rochester, NY -- Only 45.5% of students who started high school in 2007 in Rochester graduated on time in 2011. That is the lowest graduation rate of the largest city school districts in New York. There are 72 different languages spoken in Rochester schools, and 10% of students have limited English proficiency. Census data show that 18% of Rochester's population lives in households with income under \$10,000.

San Francisco and Redwood City, CA -- Members will provide education services to children in these two cities, where only 57% scored proficient in English/Language Arts in San Francisco and 55% in Redwood City. Forty-five percent (45%) speak a language other than English at home in San Francisco, and 44% in Redwood City.

Thoreau, New Mexico -- Members will be providing education services to children on the Navajo Reservation around Thoreau, where census data shows 60% of families live below the poverty level. In 50% of families a language other than English is spoken at home. The unemployment rate is 42%. Only 56% of Navajo children in Thoreau graduate from high school.

Washington, DC -- Our program will provide education services to children in schools and community centers in some of the poorest sections of the District. According to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, in DC as a whole only 61% of high school students graduated on time in 2011-2012. Census data showed a child poverty rate of 30% for children under 17, and the unemployment rate in the city is 8.6%. In Ward 8 where our members will provide GED tutoring, the unemployment rate is 22%.

Watsonville, CA -- Members will be providing education services to disadvantaged children. According to census data, 76% of the population in Watsonville emigrated from Mexico, and 48.5% of the population over 25 lacks a high school diploma. The dropout rates reported by California's Department of Education for the high schools where our members will serve ranged from 11.2% to 11.5%.

Wilmington, DE -- At the schools where our members will be providing education services, 100% of

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students qualify for free or reduced cost lunch. According to census data, 22% of the population in Wilmington lives below the poverty level, and 26% of the population over the age of 25 lacks a high school diploma.

Youngstown, OH -- Members will provide education services to children and adults in Youngstown, where the concentrated poverty rate is 49.7%, a 36.3% increase from the previous five-year period ([http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2011/11/03%20poverty%20kneebone%20nadeau%20berube/1103\\_poverty\\_kneebone\\_nadeau\\_berube.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2011/11/03%20poverty%20kneebone%20nadeau%20berube/1103_poverty_kneebone_nadeau_berube.pdf)). The local graduation rate is 67.8% and 87.5% of students qualify for free and reduced price lunch.

### b. AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems

Notre Dame-AmeriCorps is requesting 450 full-time members. NDA member activities will address two main areas of focus: Education in grades K-12, and Economic Opportunity for adults with emphasis on remedial education, job readiness and skill development to improve employability.

K-12 Education: Our education program will focus on improving academic engagement as an intermediate outcome that ultimately will lead to improved academic performance and higher high school graduation rates, addressing the problems in our target communities cited above.

With the overall goal of increasing school engagement for disadvantaged students, members will serve in public schools, many of which are SIG or Priority schools. They will also serve in alternative schools such as our Nativity affiliates which are middle schools serving economically disadvantaged children with top quality education via small class-sizes, individualized instruction, a longer school day and year, summer programming, and a commitment to see the students through high school and beyond. Members' education services will also take place in community-based after-school programs.

Members will engage in the following activities:

- Providing in-school academic tutoring and small group instruction for students identified by teachers as being disengaged in school and needing remedial academic attention. Members will work with small groups of children at the direction of the teacher and will also tutor specific students outside the classroom.
- Providing after-school academic tutoring and small group instruction for students needing remedial attention, focusing on homework assistance and more in-depth exploration of academic subjects.
- Creating and managing out-of-school enrichment programs in areas such as drama, visual arts, creative writing, science, environmental education, and service-learning.
- Providing intern teaching services for small groups of students, typically 15 in number, under the

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direction of a master teacher. This activity will take place primarily at Nativity affiliate schools which utilize the model of very small class sizes.

- Recruiting, training and supporting parents and other volunteers to provide tutoring and personal support to students during the school day and in after-school programs.

The schools and community centers where our members will serve lack the manpower necessary to provide the level of individualized attention disengaged students need in order to become more engaged in school and achieve greater academic success. A survey of some of our partnering middle and high school sites indicated classroom sizes ranging from 22 to 35 students. The presence of AmeriCorps members will make it possible for schools, regardless of their size, and community centers to offer small group instruction and tutoring, the intervention model we are proposing. With the training that NDA will provide, detailed in the section on Member Training, our members will be well-prepared to provide effective services.

The amount of time a member will spend with an individual child will vary. Members who serve as intern teachers at our Nativity affiliates will work with the same groups of students every day in class sizes of approximately 15 for the entire year, while members providing tutoring and small group instruction in our partnering public schools and community centers may see students on a more episodic basis according to the teacher's directions or the children's attendance in after-school programs. Based on our experience we project that all children will receive concentrated service from our members at least once a week totaling at least 24 hours of tutoring or small group instruction over 2-3 months. Our own impact evaluation and performance data described below have demonstrated that this is enough frequency and total time to have a positive influence on the child's academic engagement and performance.

**Adult Education:** Members will serve in community-based adult education centers that help adults from low-income neighborhoods develop and implement a path to employment. Members' basic activities will be one-on-one tutoring and small group instruction in topics including: Adult Basic Education; GED; ESL (English as a Second Language); citizenship; computer skills; resume preparation; job search skills; and professional certifications training. These activities are designed to address problems such as the lack of high school diplomas, unemployment, and poverty in our target communities.

As community-based programs that rely on grants and contributions to operate, the sites where our members serve have limited staff capacity. Notre Dame-AmeriCorps members help these organizations reach many more individuals than they would otherwise be able to serve.

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Generally, the adult learners served by our members will receive tutoring or group instruction once or twice a week for approximately two hours at a time. In most cases, the adults will be engaged in their skill-development program for at least eight weeks, for a minimum of 16 hours.

### c. Evidence-Based/Evidence Informed and Measurable Community Impact

NDA uses the intervention model of one-on-one and small group instruction to effect positive change in the level of school engagement that will lead to higher academic achievement and higher graduation rates. One-on-one and small group instruction is an evidence-based and evidence-informed model that achieves greater engagement and higher academic performance. Tennessee's Project Star (Student Teacher Achievement Ratio) is a statistically significant longitudinal evaluation that has shown that smaller classroom size and individualized attention has a significant positive impact on students, boosting their academic success, and abating the socio-economic inequalities (Achilles, Finn, & Bain, 1997 Using class size to reduce the equity gap. *Educational Leadership*, 55(4), 40-43 and Biddle & Berliner, 2002; Small class size and its effects. *Educational Leadership* 59(5), 12-23). This research shows that classes of 12-17 students produced higher student achievement and better student behaviors. Nativity network middle schools which implement our model fully with class sizes of approximately 15 track their students longitudinally and report that more than 90% of their students go on to graduate from high school in four years. Research studies have also found that one on one and small group instruction is especially beneficial for minority and low-income students (Finn, Pannozzo & Achilles, 2003. The 'Why's' of Class Size. *Review of Educational Research*, 73(3), 321-368). One hundred percent (100%) of the students we serve are from families with low incomes, qualifying for the free and reduced cost lunches. The vast majority are African-American, Hispanic and Native American Indian.

In addition to the external research cited related to class size, our own recent impact evaluation points to the effectiveness of our intervention. The Report of the Evaluation of the Notre Dame -- AmeriCorps Program 2008-2009 by Dr. Mickey Fenzel, Ph.D. and Professor of Education at Loyola University Maryland states: "These findings provide support for the notion that students in the programs that took place during the school day demonstrated an improvement in their satisfaction with school and their perceptions of their academic self-competence as a result of their involvement with the Notre Dame AmeriCorps members."

Our performance measure data also provide evidence of the impact of our intervention. During our 17 year history with the AmeriCorps program more than 65% of students every year have improved their

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academic performance and school engagement as evidenced by grade level advancement, improved attendance and/or on-time course completion.

The effect of tutoring and small group instruction for adults has not been well researched, but our approach is evidence-informed. The centers where our members serve demonstrate a solid track record of impact. Data from the Academy of Hope in Washington, DC for example, where our members provide GED tutoring, indicates that 77% of program graduates go on to enroll in college, certificate programs or vocational programs. Seventy-one (71%) percent of graduates earned between \$15,000 and \$30,000, and 32% earned more than \$30,000 after graduation. ([www.aohdc.org](http://www.aohdc.org)).

NDA performance measurement also points to the impact of the tutoring and small group instruction we offer adults. Since we expanded our adult education services in 2000, NDA has provided tutoring and small group instruction to between 1,000 and 3,000 low income and unemployed adults every year, with more than 60% advancing at least one level in their personal education plans.

In the majority of cases NDA members work with different children and adults every year. Therefore we measure our impact on an annual basis. Each year of the three-year grant period we expect the following results:

- \* 11,000 students in grades K-12 identified by schools as being disengaged in academics and needing remedial attention will receive tutoring and small group instruction. This will be measured through class attendance logs and student tracking logs.

- \* 7,700 students will demonstrate increased academic engagement and participation, as measured through teacher pre- and post-service surveys measuring behavioral and emotional indicators.

- \* 1,700 low-income adults will receive tutoring and small group instruction from NDA members, measured through class attendance logs and student tracking logs.

- \* 1,200 adults will advance to the next level of their employment readiness plan, measured through a variety of instruments including the GED exam, professional certification exams, CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System) tests, or gaining employment.

We developed our performance measure targets by consulting with the NDA Site Directors of every operating site and our Director of Nativity Affiliates, asking them to collect projections from their individual partnering sites and to develop intermediate outcomes based on their experience. We then aggregated and analyzed this data within the framework of our national experience to create our overall targets.

During the 2011-2012 program year, NDA had the following impact:

- \* 7,920 disadvantaged students in grades K-12 completed our education program. (TARGET: 7,002)

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\* 7,612 students achieved on-time course completion in reading/language arts and/or math. These were students deemed by their teachers to be at risk of falling behind and not passing the courses on time. (TARGET: 4,551)

\* 2,885 adults received education and job readiness skills tutoring and small group instruction from NDA members. (TARGET: 1,340)

\* 1,789 adults advanced to the next level of their personal education plans including passing the GED, obtaining a professional certification, and/or finding a job. (TARGET: 871)

In addition, our members recruited and supported more than 16,000 volunteers, coordinated after-school enrichment programs for 4,548 children, and provided basic life skills training to 3,900 economically disadvantaged adults during the 2011-12 program year.

### d. Member Recruitment

We recruit both nationally through the AmeriCorps website and locally through community bulletins, our SND network, our operating sites and our partnering sites. Because our operating sites and partnering sites are well-rooted in their communities, this helps insure a diverse group of members including people of color, new Americans, and low-income individuals, many of whom will come from the very neighborhoods in which they will serve and in some cases were once served by the partnering sites. Local recruitment will also involve making ourselves visible in the community by participating in public events and inviting community members to participate in or observe our programs throughout the year, as well as encouraging current members to share their experiences and recruit through their networks.

### e. Member Training

Members serving through NDA operating sites will receive orientation to the AmeriCorps program and to their local communities at a 3-4 day orientation meeting held at each operating site during the first week of service. In these meetings there will also be workshops to provide initial training in members' service activities. More in-depth training is then offered at each partnering school and community-based organization when members begin their actual service. Our Site Directors work with teachers and program administrators at each site to insure that the training provided to the members is very specific to their activities at that site. For members who serve as intern teachers at Nativity affiliate schools, initial orientation and ongoing training is provided by the school administrators and master teachers who supervise our members. All members receive initial training

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regarding prohibited activities during their initial orientation, and Site Directors and our Director of the Nativity Affiliate Partnership make periodic partnering site visits to ensure the rules are being observed by members and the volunteers they support.

Members serving as tutors are required to have at least a high school diploma. We provide training on tutoring skills prior to their service and then regularly throughout the service year. These trainings are in accordance with local content standards and draw heavily from the national service resource center, employing models and methods consistent with AmeriCorps requirements on research-based methods. Some strategies include The Tutoring Toolkit for AmeriCorps Program Applicants and Master Tutor: A Guidebook for More Effective Tutoring. Additionally, NDA has developed a wikipage for NDA staff and members with a section devoted to evidenced-based tutoring strategies from the US Department of Education's website as well as states' education department websites.

Training for members will be a regular feature of bi-weekly meetings at our operating sites. The training offered by Site Directors and local experts during these meetings will impart knowledge and skills in areas such as Classroom Management; Effective Teaching and Tutoring Strategies; Assessing and Working with Different Learning Styles; Multicultural Awareness; Working with English Language Learners; and Working with Volunteers. Members serving at our Nativity affiliates will follow a carefully designed process of training offered by Nativity staff which includes an intensive orientation, detailed training on tutoring and teaching techniques, and practice in teaching and tutoring side by side with a master teacher mentor.

We will hold a national midyear training event, providing another opportunity for more in-depth training so members can sharpen their skills. All members will come together for this event, which will feature workshops on varied topics including Teaching Math through Song and Game; Effective Lesson Planning; Addictions and Solutions; Empowering Youth through After-School Programming; Conflict Resolution; and Life after AmeriCorps.

### f. Member Supervision

Our NDA Site Directors provide general oversight of our members who serve through NDA operating sites. Members will be supervised in their day-to-day service at their partnering sites by master teachers if they are serving in schools, or by program directors if they are serving at local community-based organizations. Members serving at Nativity affiliates are supervised by the master teachers at each school, with additional support provided by our Director of Nativity Affiliates who provides guidance to members and helps members resolve any issues.

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NDA Site Directors are selected by the NDA Executive Director who looks for knowledge about the local community, knowledge about effective teaching and tutoring techniques, a passion for service, and experience in working with young adults. The Executive Director provides training to new Site Directors, as do the national Recruitment Coordinator and Associate Director. In addition, new Site Directors are linked with more experienced Site Directors who mentor them through their first couple of years.

The Executive Director and Associate Director will provide oversight and support to NDA Site Directors informally throughout the year through phone and email, and also in a more structured manner through three Site Directors meetings to be held in October, February and May. At these meetings Site Directors will receive training and support in areas such as performance measurement, evaluation, budgeting, communications, and AmeriCorps policies and procedures. Site Directors and the Director of Nativity Affiliates will be responsible for overseeing and supporting partnering site supervisors in their roles with our members.

### g. Member Experience

The components that empower our members include the bi-weekly meetings during which there will be periodic exercises involving oral and written reflection; local community service events where members will wear their AmeriCorps gear with pride and serve alongside members from other local AmeriCorps groups; and our national midyear training event where hundreds of NDA members from across the country will share their experiences and see they are part of something much larger. Team-building experiences will be a significant element of all our meetings with members. Our Site Directors are trained in how to nurture the ethic of service, and every year on their year-end surveys more than 95% of our members have stated they are "very likely" to continue in community service after AmeriCorps.

### h. Volunteer Generation

Volunteer recruitment is an integral part of the NDA program. Whether serving at schools or community-based centers, our members will be engaged in one-on-one outreach and presentations to parents and community residents to draw them in as volunteers. Some members likely will be asked by their partnering sites to set up volunteer management systems and provide ongoing training and support to community volunteers who may be serving as tutors and mentors to children and tutors for adult learners. We will train our members and partnering site administrators in what constitutes

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prohibited activities, and our Site Directors will visit partnering sites to make sure these rules are observed in the case of volunteers recruited and supported by members. In the past several years NDA members have recruited and supported more than 10,000 volunteers annually.

### i. Organizational Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

Notre Dame Mission Volunteer program brands itself as Notre Dame-AmeriCorps, and we display the AmeriCorps logo at our national office and each of our operating sites. We also incorporate the AmeriCorps name and logo on our website and all written materials. We are pleased to feature AmeriCorps in all of our press releases and have been successful in gaining local press coverage for NDA and AmeriCorps several times each year. NDA members wear AmeriCorps gear at all public events.

## Organizational Capability

### a. Background and Staffing

Our organization was established by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SND) in 1992 as the Notre Dame Mission Volunteer Program, Inc., beginning with just six volunteers in the northeast that first year. We then joined with AmeriCorps in 1995 in order to extend our impact. Reaching out across the country through the SND network and our Nativity affiliates, we have grown steadily through the years to have a strong and broad national presence. Our mission is to create holistic educational programs for at-risk children and adults in economically disadvantaged communities.

We have managed an AmeriCorps grant successfully every year since 1995 and have responded creatively to new issues and opportunities, both at the national level by incorporating new operating sites introduced to us by the Corporation, and at the local level by finding new partnering sites that fit our mission and local priorities.

The staff that will manage the AmeriCorps program possesses a valuable blend of experience and fresh approaches. Our Executive Director, Sr. Katherine Corr, has the overall responsibility for the AmeriCorps program and supervises the other management staff and the Site Directors. Sr. Katherine was an early board member of the Notre Dame Mission Volunteer Program, developed the partnership with the AmeriCorps program in 1995, and has managed the AmeriCorps program ever since. She has an MA in Sociology and a BA in education. Her prior administrative experience includes a position as executive director with a community-based organization in Baltimore and an administrative position with the Sisters of Notre Dame.

Sr. Kathleen O'Brien is Director of Nativity Affiliates. Sr. Kathleen joined NDA in 1998 as director of

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what was then our Education Awards Program. She came to NDA with broad administrative experience and expertise in education, community services and program development and has overseen steady growth of our partnership with the Nativity schools. She provides oversight of the AmeriCorps program at most Nativity affiliate schools and assures a good experience for members, impact for the students, and compliance with all AmeriCorps regulations.

Adrienne Andrews is Associate Director with responsibility for financial management of the AmeriCorps grant. Adrienne is an AmeriCorps alumna who joined the administrative staff of NDA in 2006. She has a bachelor's degree from Case Western Reserve University and has received training from the Certified Public Accountants of the NDMVP Board of Directors.

Courtney Geib is Recruitment Coordinator and also coordinates progress reporting and performance measurement for the AmeriCorps grant. Courtney joined the national staff after serving as an AmeriCorps member in San Francisco/Redwood City from 2007-2009. She holds a BA in Mathematics from Case Western Reserve with minors in statistics and psychology.

NDA has a year-round schedule of orientation, training and technical assistance for staff. New staff receives an orientation at the national office or the relevant operating site and visits multiple partnering sites to see our mission in action. Training and technical assistance continue at our Site Directors meetings also attended by administrative staff. At the Site Directors meeting that occurs in late spring, we review the forms and procedures for completing progress reports for the current grant as well as provide training on the requirements of the new grant, including budgeting, progress reporting, performance measurement, and the status of member recruitment. At the fall Site Directors meeting we provide technical assistance on any issues that may have arisen with the new grant and share ideas on member training, community service projects and other aspects of member and partnering site support. We review data collection procedures and also begin planning for the midyear training event in February. At the February event, we hold another Site Directors meeting at which we discuss midyear progress reporting, budget status, and recruitment strategies for the upcoming year, among other topics.

NDA has a special commitment to staff development and is continually striving to enrich the experience and knowledge of our staff. As an example, this past year we engaged a consultant to provide training to staff on how to incorporate the ethic of service into every aspect of our AmeriCorps program. Site Directors have used this training very creatively in how they discuss even such routine tasks as time sheets and monthly progress reports with members.

We have a very strong track record in providing effective training to members, as detailed in the

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Member Training section of this application. Many of our Site Directors are experienced educators, and we also bring in local resource people to provide training to members. Each year we ask our members to rate the degree to which their skills and knowledge increased; the average scores are 4.5 or better each year, on a scale of 1 to 5.

NDA successfully completed an independent evaluation in 2009 and is currently engaged in a new study under the leadership of Dr. Peter R. Litchka of Loyola University Maryland.

The Notre Dame Mission Volunteer Program has a dual governance structure, which includes the NDMVP Corporation board, and the NDMVP Board of Directors, which is the chief operating oversight body. The NDMVP Board of Directors includes representatives from the business community, the academic community and the Sisters of Notre Dame. The board is involved in resource development, program oversight and evaluation, and financial monitoring of the organization. Both the Corporation and the Board members are involved in publicizing the AmeriCorps program and identifying potential operating and partnering sites.

The AmeriCorps program and our goal of empowering people through education is vitally important and hence fully supported within our organization. In fact we are piloting an international program through which we send six volunteers abroad each year after the AmeriCorps program model. The AmeriCorps program requires the full attention and commitment of our staff and Board and it is given wholeheartedly. We have fulfilled all the obligations of each grant and have been good stewards of the funding in leveraging other support and producing strong results.

Since our partnership with AmeriCorps began, we have provided education services to more than 78,000 at-risk children and 27,000 low-income adults. Historically every year more than 65% of children have advanced at least one academic level, and in the most recent year 96% achieved on-time course completion. For the adults, every year at least 60% have advanced to the next level of their personal education plans, and last year 73% made that progress. In addition to our long-established educational programs, since partnering with AmeriCorps we have served more than 85,000 people in non-traditional ways, including, but not limited to: re-building homes in post-Katrina New Orleans, environmental education and stewardship programming in parks and recreation programs, mentoring children of incarcerated parents, and providing men and women transitional aid as they prepare to leave the prison system.

### b. Sustainability

Our primary strategy for securing the necessary resources for program implementation is the

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partnering site contributions by the schools and organizations where our members will serve. Not only will this produce approximately \$4,478,365 in private support for our AmeriCorps program, but it also insures that the partnering sites are invested in the successful experience of our members and achieving a real impact on children and adult learners.

Beyond the grant period, the recruitment of volunteers and establishment of sound volunteer management systems by our members will help the schools and community centers continue our intervention of tutoring and small group instruction in the future. In addition, both nationally and locally, faith-based entities such as the Sisters of Notre Dame Leadership and local provinces, colleges and universities, and foundations and businesses have been generous in providing financial and in-kind support for our program. We would hope that this support would continue for our local partners in the future after the grant ends.

### c. Compliance and Accountability

Our primary means of monitoring operating sites' compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations will be site visits which we will conduct at least once a year, utilizing a site monitoring tool developed with the assistance of a former AmeriCorps program officer. Our Executive Director, Associate Director and Recruitment Coordinator are in frequent contact with Site Directors via phone, email and a computer-based "desktop monitoring" system. Compliance topics will also be discussed at our Site Directors' meetings. Site Directors will conduct regular monitoring visits of every partnering site. Because of the careful training and support we provide to our Site Directors and the frequent communications, we expect that issues at operating and partnering sites will be rare. If they occur we will implement an immediate corrective action plan.

There was only one compliance issue cited during our 2011-12 program year, a 6% rate of exiting members passed the 30-day regulatory period. Some of those members had been exited on time initially but various circumstances required reopening of their files to make changes, which caused erroneous changes to their exit dates. Taking that into account, we were within the adequate allowance of 5%. We have made adjustments to our procedures and communicated with all Site Directors to strengthen this process.

NDA had a 100% recruitment rate in 2011-12, and a retention rate of 93.8% which we believe is a very strong rate. There were varied reasons why members left before completing their service, including mental health issues, the need to seek more income in order to provide family support, and special opportunities like scholarships and compelling job offers. Our Site Directors will continue to make

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every effort to ensure prospective members understand the nature of the commitment they are making, match members to the partnering sites that fit them best, and provide a high level of support to members to help them weather the challenges of service.

### d. Consultation with State Commissions

NDA uses the AmeriCorps Grantee Meeting each fall to meet with state commissions that we are considering or are continuing to apply to for the coming year. NDA sends out the AmeriCorps approved State Consultation Forms to each State Commission in which we project to send members with a cover letter explaining the mission of our organization, details of our members service in the state, and budget for our members in the state.

### e. Operating and Service Sites

The majority of our operating sites are in cities and rural areas where the Sisters of Notre Dame have been present for decades, and in some cases for more than 100 years. The Sisters live and work among the poor and disadvantaged in these communities, and have a deep understanding of their needs and their assets. In addition most of our operating site directors are based at local faith-based and community-based organizations such as the Office for Farmworker Ministry in Apopka, FL, the I Have a Dream Foundation in Boulder, and the Church Council of Seattle. These local organizations are skilled at identifying partnering sites where our members can serve effectively. Many of our partnering sites are Nativity affiliate schools. These are schools that serve low-income, disadvantaged children and exemplify our model of tutoring and small group instruction. Except where indicated, NDA has had a multi-year relationship with our partnering sites, assuring their fit with AmeriCorps criteria. NDA Site Directors have carefully researched the capacity and activities at all new sites to make sure they incorporate AmeriCorps criteria. The partnering sites will make financial contributions to the program. Below are operating sites and current projected partnering sites, with notations regarding SIG or Priority Schools:

Apopka, FL -- Lovell Elementary; Wolf Lake Elementary; Zellwood Elementary; Apopka Memorial Middle; Apopka High; Wekiva High; Sheeler High (new; SIG school); Apopka Family Learning Center; Hope CommUnity Center; Academy Prep

Atlanta, GA -- Drew Charter School, Southern Children's Network, Young Adult Guidance Center

Baltimore, MD -- Westport Academy (SIG); Alternative Directions; Boys Hope, Girls Hope; Caroline Center; Julie Community Center; Mother Seton Academy; Village Learning Center; KIPP Through

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College; St. Ignatius Loyola Academy

Bend, OR -- Boys and Girls Club; Neighbor Impact; Saving Grace

Boston, MA -- Greater Egleston Community High (new; SIG school); Mission Hill Elementary (new; successor to closed SIG school); Notre Dame High; Notre Dame Education Center; Jewish Vocational Service; Nativity Prep; Our Sisters' School; Esperanza Academy; Nativity School of Worcester; Mother Caroline Academy; Epiphany School; Paraclete Center

Boulder, CO - Arapahoe Ridge High School (SIG); Boulder Prep Charter High School (SIG)

Justice High Charter School (SIG); Olde Columbine High School (SIG); Spangler Elementary School (new; SIG); Boulder Prep (expelled, suspended and adjudicated youth); YWCA

Chicago, IL -- KIPP Create Middle School; KIPP Ascend Elementary; KIPP Ascend Middle; Learn Charter School; San Miguel School; St. Joseph Services; Marillac House; The Miracle Center

Cincinnati, OH -- Corryville Catholic Elementary; Santa Maria Youth Program; International Welcome Center; Starfire; Power Inspires Progress; Oylar School (Priority); Roberts Academy (new; SIG)

Dayton, OH -- Wogaman Elementary (Priority); Edge Teen Center; Adventure Central; Wesley Center

Hartford, CT -- Grace Academy; St. Martin de Porres Academy

Los Angeles, CA -- US Dream Academy at Markham Middle (SIG); St. Columbine School; St. Sebastian School; Holy Trinity School; CARECEN; St. Margaret's Community Center; Nativity Prep Academy

New Orleans, LA -- KIPP Believe College Prep (SIG); Langston Hughes Academy (SIG); KIPP McDonogh School (SIG); Clark Preparatory High (SIG); Boys Hope Girls Hope

New York, NY --Brooklyn Jesuit Prep, Cornelia Connelly Center

Philadelphia, PA -- US Dream Academy- George W. Childs Middle School; Catholic Social Services; St. James School

Phoenix, AZ -- Conchos Elementary; St. Vincent de Paul Center; Southwest Key

Rochester, NY -- St. Joseph Neighborhood Center; Nativity Prep; Aquinas Institute

San Francisco/Redwood City, CA -- Roosevelt School; Fair Oaks Elementary; Garfield School; Taft School (new); J F Kennedy School (new); Sequoia High School; Hawes School (new); Epiphany Elementary; St. James Elementary; St. Anthony Elementary; St. Finn Barr; Sacred Heart Nativity

Thoreau, NM -- St. Bonaventure Indian Mission School

Washington, DC -- US Dream Academy; Moten Elementary (new; Priority); Washington Middle

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School for Girls; Academy of Hope; For Love of Children; Mary House; San Miguel School  
Watsonville, CA -- Calabasas Elementary (SIG); Alianza Charter School; Cesar Chavez Middle;  
Watsonville High (new; SIG); Lakeview Middle; Landmark Elementary; Starlight Elementary  
Wilmington, DE -- Nativity Preparatory School; Serviam Girls' Academy  
Youngstown, OH -- East High School (new; SIG); Beatitude House (new)

### **Budget/Cost Effectiveness**

Our request is \$10,700/MSY for 450 AmeriCorps members, totaling \$4,815,000.

NDA has a successful track-record of working with partnering sites in the local communities to raise the funds necessary to adequately run an effective program. We have been able to develop relationships to create a sustainable funding stream consisting of partnering site contributions, in-kind contributions, as well as grants and donations. Site Directors work with local partners to build their capacity by assisting these community organizations and schools to budget appropriately or by encouraging them to apply for local grants.

The bulk of the program expenditures consist of member support costs including living allowances, health insurance, member training, and program staff who work directly with members to ensure that they have the proper support needed to serve. NDA has also worked to ensure that all members undergo a complete National Service Criminal History Check in compliance with AmeriCorps regulations. To ensure these expenses are met, NDA will raise over \$2.3 million in cash contributions as well as \$2.1 million in in-kind contributions. Of the cash contributions, \$2.1 million will come from partnering sites, while the remaining \$200,000 will be raised through donations and foundations such as the Frank J. Lewis Foundation, Bank of America foundation, and the Sisters of Notre Dame. We are also working to gain support from our alumni base as well as potential corporate partners. NDA's request is well below the maximum grant request of \$13,000/MSY. Our administrative expenses are 4% of our budget, leaving the rest of the funds to cover member support and development. NDA has also developed strong partnerships with over 16 Nativity affiliate schools throughout the country. These schools are able to provide significant in-kind support to the members at their sites.

Our program is a cost effective approach to addressing the community issues of low school engagement and educational achievement levels and high drop-out rates among economically disadvantaged children, and high unemployment rates among economically disadvantaged adults. With a program investment of \$9,293,365, we will be able to provide educational services to approximately 11,000 children and 1,700 adults, as well as leverage an additional 12,000 volunteers,

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for a cost of \$10,700 per MSY.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

An outside evaluation of the program, "Report of the Evaluation of the Notre Dame -- AmeriCorps Program" was completed by Dr. L. Mickey Fenzel in January 2010. A copy has been submitted according to the application instructions.

For the purposes of this grant, Dr. Peter R. Litchka was hired by Notre Dame-AmeriCorps in May of 2012 to conduct an independent evaluation of the success of the programs found throughout the United States. The anticipated completion date for this evaluation is August, 2013. Below is a summary:

A mixed-method research study will be used to collect data, from which the evaluation will occur. The overall objective will be to assess success in school and attitudes toward school of those students involved in the AmeriCorps programs-both in-school and after-school. In order to accomplish this, the following specific methodologies will be used:

1. All students will be asked to complete a Pre-Survey of their attitudes toward school, teachers, and peers (October, 2012). Surveys were coded in a manner in which the matching of students from the pre to the post survey can readily occur.
2. Students in focus groups from four selected program cities will be interviewed regarding their attitudes toward school, teachers, and peers as well as their perceptions of the quantity and quality of assistance they receive from AmeriCorps. Selected staff members at sites will also be asked to report on their functions and roles in supporting student academic achievement including clear, unbiased evidence of such support.
3. All students will be asked to complete a Post-Survey of their attitudes toward school, teachers, and peers (May, 2013).
4. Data will be collected from all sites regarding student academic success, which has been identified for this study as "student has passed the English/Language Arts/Math course they are enrolled in on time", or they have "passed from one grade to the next on time".
5. Once both the pre and post surveys have been completed, a correlation study will occur in which the differences between the pre and post surveys will be correlated to student academic success. Thus, the research question will be: Is there a strong, positive correlation between changes in student attitudes toward school and their academic success, and has the Notre Dame-AmeriCorps program improved student attitudes and contributed to on time course completion.

As of January 28, 2013 the following have been completed:

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\* Pre-surveys:

o A total of 2,032 surveys from English-speaking elementary students from the programs across the nation. In addition, 174 surveys were completed by Spanish-speaking students in elementary grades, for a total of 2,206 responses.

o For students in secondary schools involved with AmeriCorps, 2,345 responses were received from English-speaking students, and 43 from Spanish-speaking students, for a total of 2,388 responses.

\* Arrangements have been made by the evaluator to visit four (4) program sites during spring, 2013. These programs are in Boston, Boulder, Chicago, and San Francisco. Again, the purpose of these visits is to gather anecdotal evidence from both students and staff in a clear and unbiased manner. This data will then be used to support/refute the results found in the surveys and the academic success portion of the evaluation.

### **Amendment Justification**

N/A

### **Clarification Summary**

N/A

### **Continuation Changes**

N/A