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Executive Summary

Reading Partners respectfully requests a Fixed Award grant of \$390,000 from OneStar Foundation to support our proven literacy intervention program in 23 Title I elementary schools throughout the greater Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas area. Support at this level will enable 30 full-time Reading Partners AmeriCorps Members to recruit and manage 1,265 community volunteers to provide one-on-one literacy tutoring to at least 1,035 K-5 struggling readers twice a week during the 2013-14 program year. 65% of students who complete the program will advance their literacy skills by at least one full grade-level. This project will support the Education Focus Area for CNCS and OneStar Foundations State Focus Area: Youth Educational Attainment.

Rationale and Approach

a.NEED

In fourth grade classrooms across the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) and the Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD), students from low-income communities are overwhelmingly failing to meet grade-level standards for reading and failing to keep up with their peers. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that in 2011, 88 percent of economically disadvantaged fourth graders in DISD failed to demonstrate proficiency in reading. According to 2011 Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) data for FWISD, economically disadvantaged students performed three percentage points lower than the grade-level average (75 percent) and up to 20 percentage points worse than their white peers. Students from low-income communities are not the only ones who are struggling to master the mechanics of reading; an absence of strong reading skills is pervasive amongst minority communities, especially in Dallas, as well. 27 percent of fourth graders in DISD are African-American, and yet only 12 percent of these children were reading at or above grade level in 2011. Hispanic students comprise 67 percent of the total student population in DISD, and again, only 12 percent achieved proficient or advanced status on the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress test.

The real grievance of our students daily struggle is that the defeat they feel in 4th grade will follow them throughout their academic careers. In a 2011 report, the Annie E. Casey Foundation found that students reading below grade level in third grade were four times as likely as their peers to exit school before earning a diploma. Indeed, it is critical to support struggling readers during the elementary years when targeted, data-driven, and personalized intervention can maintain them on a path towards future academic and employment success.

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Reading Partners (RP) targets students from low-income homes and/or minority children because we believe that every student regardless of their socioeconomic and demographic background deserves the opportunity to flourish throughout school and life thanks to strong literacy skills. Moreover, we work with the conviction that community service and volunteerism are powerful yet under-utilized forces when it comes to enacting positive change in our schools and for our children. To that end, we are dedicated to mobilizing community volunteers to become advocates for educational opportunity in their local communities. Our program is designed so that no matter a volunteer's prior experience with education or children, he or she can learn to use our research-based curriculum and support a student's concrete skill mastery. In this way, RP empowers everyone and anyone to become a change agent for their local schools.

b. AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

With RP, AmeriCorps Members (ACMs) will serve in one of three roles: Site Coordinator (SC), Regional Site Coordinator, (RSC), or Outreach Coordinator (OC). Under the supervision of RP staff, these positions work together to recruit, train, and manage community volunteers to provide personalized literacy tutoring to K-5 students who are reading below grade level at each of our partner school sites. Altogether, these members will recruit and manage 55 volunteers per school to serve 45 students at each of our 23 schools. ACMs allow RP to have an effective scaling model, allowing more students to be served. More schools on our waitlist and ultimately more students will be served utilizing ACMs versus hiring staff or volunteers for these positions. Because all of our members will serve as volunteer recruiters and managers, either supervising tutoring or providing community outreach, we will not duplicate or displace any existing employees at our program sites. We have consulted with the school districts we serve to receive confirmation on this matter.

Site Coordinators: SCs are school-based positions and are responsible for managing the delivery of our tutoring program for 30-75 students Monday - Thursday at that specific school site. Fridays are used for professional development trainings, service days, or tutoring make-up sessions. Under the supervision of a RP Program Manager, SCs are responsible for three dominant activities: cultivating and stewarding relationships with their school teachers and administration, training and coaching volunteer tutors to ensure each session is maximally productive, and collecting and recording data on students literacy development. To elaborate on each of these areas of work, SCs are responsible for maintaining close and consistent communication with teachers and administration to share school events, schedules, student availability for tutoring, student data, and student progress. In regards to

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volunteer tutor management, SCs are responsible for teaching volunteers how to use our research-based curriculum, pairing them with a student, observing tutoring sessions and coaching tutors with new strategies or activities to facilitate learning, and monitoring tutors completion of progress monitoring notes. Data collection and management is the third major component of this role and it entails: assessing each student at entry into the program, again at mid-year, and end-of-year; developing a Individualized Reading Plan for each student and adapting it as needed (with input from the Program Manager), and collecting school-based assessment data and recording that in our database. SCs also coordinate the production of Home Connection Events such as twice annual Reading Recitals, as well as monthly newsletters. A SC's schedule is 9am to 5pm, Monday through Friday. RP plans to place 23 SCs in 2013-14.

Regional Site Coordinators: RSCs are also school-based positions, but unlike SCs, RSCs are not assigned to one particular school. Rather, RSCs rotate between our larger school sites to provide additional direct service support. Working closely with their Program Manager, RSCs determine which schools need their help in a given week and when they arrive on site, they are tasked with specific duties such as performing make-up sessions with students who were previously absent, offering more intensive coaching to novice tutors, and supporting the SC with data collection and management. RP looks to hire 5 members to serve as RSCs.

Outreach Coordinators: With guidance from a RP Outreach Manager, OCs are responsible for designing individual tutor recruitment plans for each school site and then executing those plans. OCs have desk space in the Dallas office, but they spend much of their time at community centers, schools, businesses, and civic organizations to recruit tutors. Once a volunteer has expressed interest in RP, the OC guides the volunteer through the orientation and application, ensures the volunteer completes a background check, and schedules the volunteer to attend an on-site training with an SC before becoming a tutor. OCs also focus on renewing the commitment of current tutors and partners for the following program year. Finally, OCs are also tasked with developing volunteer appreciation events or strategies to ensure our volunteers feel connected to their commitment. RP plans to place 2 OCs who will serve from 9am to 5pm Monday through Friday.

RP is requesting 30 full-time slots: 23 members will serve as SCs, 5 as regional SCs and 2 as OCs. Our service year runs from approximately August 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

c. EVIDENCE-BASED/EVIDENCE-INFORMED AND MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT

The RP program is both evidence-based and evidence-informed. In regards to the former, our model is based studies from educational research that supports community-driven one-to-one tutoring

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programs as a cost-effective and outcomes-successful way of improving student achievement (Slavin, Lake, et al., 2009; Elbaum, et al., 2000). As a grantee of the Social Innovation Fund, RP is also obligated to conduct independent evaluation studies to verify the efficacy of our work and to suggest further improvements. We recently completed one such study with the Stanford University School of Education. This study included an experimental evaluation and reported that our program demonstrated statistically significant differences in reading skill gains for participants compared to control group students and had a moderate effect size (0.55), based on the Rigby PM Ultra assessments, RPs current literacy assessment of choice. To build on the findings of the Stanford study, RP is currently contracting with a nationally recognized social policy research firm, MDRC, to conduct a randomized control trial (RCT) at nearly 20 RP school sites nation-wide. The study, which will include over 1,000 students, will probe the efficacy of our program design, our service fidelity across state lines, and suggest ways to improve our program. Results from the study will be ready in summer 2014.

In addition to being evidence-based, RP prides itself on being evidence-informed. To monitor and improve our program internally, RP has created a Research and Evaluation department. This department focuses on assessment, curriculum and program updates to reflecting changing policies such as the implementation of Common Core State Standards, and managing internal and external studies. The Research and Evaluation department also supervises our internal data collection cycle includes. This cycle includes: at least literacy assessments of each enrolled students to determine baseline literacy skills and growth; twice annual tutor, teacher, and principal surveys; collection of school-administered performance data; and qualitative notes from tutors on students real-time breakthroughs and challenges. We record all data in our online database, Salesforce, so that our program staff and Research and Evaluation Department can analyze the data and progress-monitor. Each summer, we report students gains to our funders, outreach partners, and tutors via emails and reports so that everyone involved in creating that success for students knows exactly how the school year progressed.

Investment by OneStar will allow RP to have an academic impact on more than 3,000 Texas children over the next 3 years. OneStar funding for 2013-14 would allow RP to serve 1,035 students in the Dallas and Fort Worth areas. Our primary goals are to see 80% of target students accelerate their rate of learning and 70% narrow their achievement gap to their peers by the end of the program year. These performance measure targets have been selected based on internal trend analyses on assessment data collected over the last five years.

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Performance Measure targets have been selected based on internal trend analyses on assessment data collected over the last 5 years. RP has maintained consistently strong outcomes even while scaling to serve many more students. RP selects participating students by meeting with principals, teachers and literacy specialists at each site to develop a tactical plan for identifying potential RP students. RP's education performance measure is based off of the requirements for the Education National Performance Measure.

d. MEMBER RECRUITMENT

45% of our first-year ACMs elected to serve a second term with us in 2012-13. RP has filled 100% of our AmeriCorps (AC) positions each year for the last 3 years, and has retained at least 94%. We received 103 applications last year for our 10 available positions in Dallas. We are currently at 100% enrollment and retention in the Dallas region. Additional recruitment strategies include: 1. Partnerships. Close partnerships with community institutions like colleges and universities, community centers, volunteer centers, and other AC programs help us promote our program; 2. Web presence. Our website clearly explains our AC program. We post opportunities on bulletin boards like idealist.org, VolunteerMatch, and americorps.gov. Candidates submit applications online; 3. Tutor conversions. This year, 22% of our AC cohort were volunteer tutors from last year.

RP's Diversity in Recruitment Initiative ensures that each region attends Diversity Career Fairs and posts hard copies of the ACM position description in our regional low-income communities as part of our recruitment strategy. We recruit in our service neighborhoods by making AC recruitment materials available at all of our sites, advertising open positions in those communities, and working with organizations like Teach for America to recruit individuals who are passionate about community service. In 2012-13, the population of our members nationwide is comprised of the following: 40% Caucasian; 16% Multi-ethnic/Other, 14% Latino; 11% African American; 9% Asian American; 2% American Indian; 2% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; 6% declined to state.

e. MEMBER TRAINING

Training for ACMs is designed to scaffold members into their service experience by teaching them about their service commitment and service environment, supporting their transition into the service environment, and providing ongoing and consistent coaching to ensure that members are thriving. Training begins with 3 weeks of pre-service orientation planned by RP program staff. This training consists of: 1. AC Training & RP Orientation: All members meet at 1 location for one full week of training in August. Staff provide training on AmeriCorps-specific topics like the history of national service, prohibited activities and RP AmeriCorps policies and procedures. ACMs sign their contracts

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during this training. Additionally, PMs train members on RP-specific topics like literacy and pedagogy, student and tutor support, and reading assessments. 2. Center-based Training: After leaving Orientation, members spend two weeks in their regions prior to the start of tutoring. During this time, they conduct community mapping exercises to learn more about what it's like to live and serve in the community where they will be serving, receive 1:1 coaching and orientation at their site from their manager, and set up their Reading Center. They meet with school personnel to discuss the program structure and review the Rigby student assessment processes. Members then complete classroom observations, schedule volunteers for orientations, and conduct student assessments before scheduling tutoring sessions. Training throughout the year include 1. Weekly on-site coaching with staff 2. Friday Team days to come gather as regional teams to discuss training topics. 3. Professional development days (every other Friday) coordinated with Days of National Service. Managers cover topics such as: goal setting; public speaking; and Life after AmeriCorps. Each prohibited activity is outlined in our Member Contracts, which members must initial, and sign.

f. MEMBER SUPERVISION

RP integrates multiple levels of support for our ACMs. OCs are supervised by Outreach Managers (OMs) who have 3-6 years of volunteer management experience. SCs are supervised by Program Managers (PMs), all of whom have classroom teaching experience with at-risk youth and/or a TX teaching credential. In addition to constant contact over email and phone, PMs visit each ACM at their school site at least once a week to provide in-person guidance. Members also receive support from their AmeriCorps Program Manager (ACPM). The ACPM provides prohibited activities supervision and surveys member satisfaction with the RP AmeriCorps program. The ACPM accomplishes this through training, surveys, and 1:1 check-in meetings with members. PManagers are supervised by the Regional Program Director (RPD), who reports directly to our Texas Regional Executive Director (RED). Program and Outreach Managers are hired based on their experience with volunteer outreach, education, and/or direct service. All managers attend a comprehensive orientation and training in June/July, participate in weekly check-in meetings with their direct supervisors, and participate in bi-weekly team meetings. National staff such as the CEO, COO and AmeriCorps Director also join PMs on school visits to ensure program quality and fidelity to the program model. The RP program is compliant with the CNCS tutoring guidelines in the following ways: 1. RP requires that all members have at least a high school diploma or its equivalent and successfully complete a 120-hour training program prior to the start of the program and regular in-service trainings during the program year. Community volunteers also undergo a training program that is focused on in-

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school instruction. 2. RP uses the Rigby PM assessment kit to track student progress and measure student outcomes. Students are assessed three times per year and tutors use the data to guide instruction. On a weekly basis, members review tutoring notes and conference with PMs to adapt student intervention plans. 3. Upon entry into RP, every student is assessed and placed into one of the three curricular programs depending on the student's academic needs and reading skill level. 4. RPs training program is designed by expert educators to prepare tutors and members for their work in reading centers. 5. Members are supervised by PMs who have at least 5 years of experience in education and/or have a current TX teaching credential and/or a masters (or higher) degree in education.

g. MEMBER EXPERIENCE

RP connects our members across the country during Orientation, fostering a sense of national team pride. Members connect on a regional level each week through trainings and team building. They stay connected on a national level throughout the year by receiving a monthly newsletter with current events in AC or CNCS as well as AC accomplishments at RP. RP partners with other AC programs such as Citizen Schools and PlayWorks and Dallas AfterSchool Network on National Days of Service to give our members a sense of connection and identity to the AC brand and mission.

OCs gain in-depth experience in community partnership development, and they see the impact community volunteers can have. SCs have meaningful service experiences as they assess and report on the measurable improvements their students make with the support of volunteers.

RP is clear on our commitment to continuous improvement and learning during Orientation. Each month, ACMs submit a reflection on an area for growth and a story of pride along with their timesheets. Friday trainings start and end with discussion questions designed for self-reflection. ACMs participate in MLK Day and AC Week each year designing and leading service projects in their neighborhoods. ACMs identify as such to community members and partners, by wearing their RP AmeriCorps gear that prominently displays the AC and RP logo at sites and events. ACMs are trained to abide by all regulations outlined in their member contracts and handbook. Pins, jackets, and polos with RP and AC logos are distributed after the AmeriCorps Pledge is complete. All members participate in a Life After AmeriCorps training in June before they graduate.

h. VOLUNTEER GENERATION

The RP model is a unique approach to helping struggling readers from low-income communities. Local community volunteers are empowered by our ACMs through training and personalized coaching to tutor their own students. This begins by OCs developing volunteer outreach strategies for

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each school. As of November 27, 2012, our Dallas OCs have already recruited 302 volunteers in Dallas. Because OCs dedicate so much time to fostering relationships with volunteers, we expect to retain over 50% of our volunteers next year based on past trends, contributing to the 2013-14 goal to recruit 1,265 volunteer tutors. SCs focus on serving students through our volunteer tutors by creating Individualized Reading Plans (IRPs) for tutors to follow in order to best support their student. Our student-tutor pairs work together for 45 minutes twice a week, following an Individualized Reading Plan tailored to that student's particular needs and strengths. To execute the plan, tutors use a multi-level, research-based curriculum developed in partnership with the Stanford University School of Education. RP ACMs are directly responsible for volunteer recruitment and management throughout RP. Volunteers are trained on prohibited activities and asked to sign a Tutor Code of Conduct before tutoring. Tutors are held accountable to this under the supervision of ACMs and their supervisor.

i. ORGANIZATION COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION

Being an AC program is central to the RP brand, and we display the AC logo throughout each regional office and on our marketing collateral. We also partner and connect with other AC organizations for National Days of service, training, and organizational strategy. Members receive gear such as polos, jackets, and pins and are educated on the history of AC during orientation and training during the year. The AC logo is clearly displayed on our website, recruitment table banners and pamphlets, and promotional videos.

Organizational Capability

a. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING

Provide the organization's mission and a brief history: The RP mission is to help children become lifelong readers by empowering community volunteers to provide individualized instruction that produce measurable results. RP was founded in 1999 by three retired California teachers. The teachers recruited a small group of volunteers to tutor the students at their local elementary school who they saw falling further behind each year. RP was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) under the name YES Reading in 2001. The organization changed its name to Reading Partners in 2008 and has grown exponentially since then, shifting from a local Bay Area organization to a national organization that is serving over 5,000 students from over 100 schools throughout Texas, California, Washington, D.C., New York, Maryland, and Colorado during the 2012-13 school year. RP received a \$3.5M Social Innovation Fund investment from CNCS via the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation in April 2011. This investment, along with high demand from the Dallas Independent School District, the Mayor's office and several Dallas-based community organizations and businesses, enabled us to expand to

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Dallas in January 2012. We launched our program at George W. Truett Elementary School and Roger Q. Mills Elementary School, serving 84 students. In 2012-2013, we added 8 schools for a total of 10 school sites.

The administration of the AC program falls under the purview of our AC department. RP created this department when it received our first AC grant, allowing us to support members directly and to ensure compliance with all federal regulations. Our Director of AC Programs, Kristarae Flynn, oversees national grant management regulations and member support structures. She came to RP in 2010 after serving as the Director of Community Development at Public Allies, where she supervised ACMs and partnerships in San Francisco. Our AC Program Managers (ACPMs), Jeremy Exell and Brittany Prince, manage partnerships with CaliforniaVolunteers, National Direct, and VISTA grants in 3 CNCS state offices, including Texas. Jeremy served with AmeriCorps NCCC and as a VISTA. Most recently, he managed member outreach for AmeriCorps Alums in Washington, D.C. Brittany was an ACM at RP as a Site Coordinator for 2 years before being promoted to this position. Jeremy and Brittany provide another level of knowledge, accessibility, and support for members beyond their direct supervisor. Members are encouraged to reach out to their ACPM with any questions or concerns about AC or their service year. An ACPM based in Dallas would manage this grant. This person will have experience working or serving in a branch of CNCS and have strong coaching and organization skills.

As a national program, RP has a staffing and organizational structure that has proven to be effective over the past 5 years as an AC program in 6 states across the country. A full-time RP Program Manager is responsible for overseeing a portfolio of 5-6 school sites and their SCs. RP PMs are experienced educators who in addition to being experts in elementary education, must have professional experience coaching and supervising adults. PMs are also responsible for managing relationships with each school's principal and administration to ensure the achievement of strong outcomes in student learning. Since our model relies on volunteer tutors, RP has a robust Outreach team comprised of full-time Outreach Managers (OMs) who supervise 2-4 Outreach Coordinators (OCs). OCs recruit volunteers for 10-12 school sites in their portfolio. Managers conduct twice-monthly trainings for their members to enhance their knowledge of best practices in education, as well as volunteer recruitment and management techniques. In 2013-14, Managers in Texas will report to a soon-to-be-hired Texas Regional Program Director (RPD), who in turn reports to the Regional Executive Director (RED), Kaitlin Guthrow. The RPD supervises the PMs and manages field operations such as program quality, member training quality, and the development of PM

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professional development training. He/she will work closely with the national office to set programmatic goals in alignment with the regional strategic plan and to ensure that these goals are consistently met or exceeded.

The Texas RED works closely with the Dallas regional board as well as with the national board of directors, as well as overseeing the RPD. Specifically, Kaitlin meets with the national office to set fund development goals in alignment with the Dallas launch plan and ensures that these goals are consistently met or exceeded. Kaitlin coordinates RPs relationship with school districts and spearheads the process of selecting and launching new reading centers. She also develops local fundraising initiatives to ensure regional sustainability. Prior to joining the RP team Kaitlin worked in leadership roles at Communities in Schools of Central Texas, Childrens Defense Fund of Texas, and was founding Executive Director of the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition.

Our program in Dallas is currently fully staffed and does not have any vacancies. Looking ahead to the 2013-14 program year, if fully funded, RP will hire the RPD and two new PMs. Our program's success depends upon thoughtful and strong investments in human capital, and the responsibility for staff recruitment falls to Reading Partners Director of Talent Recruitment, Lois Bukowski. Specializing in talent development for education-focused nonprofits, Lois directs our hiring strategy and seeks out candidates with a blend of expertise in education as well as nonprofit sector experience. To inform Lois work at the regional and national levels, RP also has a detailed forecast for each departments growth in human capital, including succession plans for key members of the management team. RPs national Board of Directors regularly reviews and approves these forecasts.

RP provides both initial and ongoing support to full-time staff members in the realm of financial and programmatic orientation and technical assistance. Initial support constitutes a week long Program Orientation each July to train new and returning staff on RP culture, structure, and expectations. Trainings include an introduction to the RP program model, accounting policies, AmeriCorps history and regulations, and best practices of managing AmeriCorps members. During the year, Program staff participates in bi-weekly conference calls to preview upcoming program events, review AmeriCorps regulations and procedures, and share management techniques and problem-solving strategies.

Following Orientation, members are given the training schedule for the year. Trainings take place every other Friday and are facilitated by managers or an outside expert in the topic. Training topics are aligned to happenings in the program calendar in order to provide ACMs with the most helpful and relevant skill set for that time period. In addition to the topics listed in Member Training, other

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topics include: The Five Domains of Literacy, Working with English Language Learners (ELLs), Cultural Awareness, Engaging Families, Learning Styles and Childhood Development, Stewarding Partnerships, and Professional Communication with Difficult Conversations. Using online survey tools, RP has the capacity to survey and analyze member feedback for each of these trainings, enabling us to improve the training calendar and topics year over year.

Reading Partners prides itself on being an evidence-based and evidence-informed organization. Spearheading our various evaluation efforts is our Research and Evaluation Department, lead by Senior VP of Research and Evaluation Dean Elson and staffed by Director of Curriculum Lindsay Barrett and Data/Research Manager Rebecca Sutherland. The departments responsibility falls over two domains: planning and supervising our annual cycle of internal program assessments and acting as liaison with external evaluators. As exemplified by the successful execution of the Stanford University School of Education study and the randomized controlled study currently underway in partnership with MDRC, Reading Partners is equipped with in-house expertise to follow through on multiple evaluation projects at a time. Consequently, RP is well positioned to execute the evaluation requirements of AmeriCorps.

RP has five years of experience managing AmeriCorps members, as well as managing multiple federal grants in the same program year. In 2012-13, we are supervising 112 AmeriCorps members in the following combination of AmeriCorps grants: 63 FT slots through CaliforniaVolunteers, 18 FT slots with National Direct, 10 slots with CA VISTA, 6 slots with NY VISTA, 5 slots with TX VISTA, and 10 FT Education Award Program slots. We currently have 5 ND members serving in Dallas. In 2011-12, Reading Partners secured a National Direct (ND) grant and Social Innovation Fund (SIF) grant (\$1M of this investment comes from CNCS). RP also managed 84 AmeriCorps members that year. In 2010-1, Reading Partners secured a CaliforniaVolunteers grant and continued as a host site. We managed 33 members through CV with a retention rate of 94%. In 2009-10, we managed 18 members as a host site for three different agencies in CA. In 2008-09, we managed 8 members as a host site.

b. SUSTAINABILITY

RP's budget has increased by 11 million dollars in the past 2 years. There are several key measures in place to support program capacity in managing this growth and ensuring RP's long-term viability. Our fundraising plan is to increase regional fundraising in order to ensure each region is self-sustaining from local support rather than subsidies from the national office. We are also seeking to grow our national fundraising pipeline to secure larger foundation grants to fund Research and

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Evaluation and other national programmatic costs. As a SIF grantee, we have been able to approach these larger foundations that would not have funded an organization of our size or evidence-base pre-SIF. Lastly, as RP continues to grow its impact across the country, recruiting and hiring high-caliber candidates for our AC and staff manager positions becomes an ever-greater priority. RP hired Lois Bukowski to join our team as Director of Talent. A veteran of the inaugural Teach for America cohort, Lois human resources expertise centers upon talent development for education-focused non-profits. Her charge will be to spearhead internal professional development opportunities and to lead on external recruitment efforts.

Reading Partners traditional fundraising strength has been in foundation relations. In Dallas, that tradition is evident in the following foundations that have made a leading investment in our program: Boone Family Foundation, the George and Fay Young Foundation, the Meadows Foundation, and the Rainwater Charitable Foundation. We work closely with our foundation partners to discuss our future plans and to outline sustainable growth. As we expand, we are also diligently working to expand non-philanthropic partnerships such as our current collaborations with the Dallas Independent School District and the Dallas Citizens Council. In regards to in-kind resources, our school partners donate classroom space for us to use for our reading centers. These in-kind donations of space are elemental to our program design. In Dallas for FY13, we have over \$500,000 already committed and roughly \$100,000 pledged and pending. Volunteer recruitment partners are also vital to our current and future operations. To maintain a stable pipeline of tutors, we seek out relationships with work-study programs, employee engagement programs, and civic volunteerism opportunities that we know will have long-term potential. Our volunteer recruitment partners include: Bank of America, Commit!, the Dallas Regional Chamber of Commerce, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, the Volunteer Center of North Texas, and the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas.

Reading Partners recognizes that in order to sustain our impact in the community we need to cultivate a local, loyal, and long-term base of funders and champions. Furthermore, we recognize that we must build a diversified network of individual, corporate, and foundation supporters that can complement the ebbs and flows of one another. With the guidance of RP development staff, our Texas RED is currently engaged in building this network so that no one grant expiration threatens our operations. A major priority for Kaitlin is to build her local board of directors, which we see as an integral piece to raising our regional profile, to connecting with potential corporate partners, and to executing future individual giving campaigns. Beyond our efforts to secure our impact from the funding perspective, we are also dedicated to fortifying community interest and involvement in public

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education. Reading Partners volunteers become advocates for increased citizen involvement in public education as they share their tutoring experiences with friends and families tutoring and realize that student achievement is a shared responsibility, not the sole duty of teachers or principals alone. RP surveys showed that 85% of volunteers are more interested in public education issues after their service, and 90% intended to continue volunteering in their community.

RP ensures that stakeholder meetings take place with appropriate community members and organizations to make certain that everyone is contributing to the bigger solution. For example, this past October RP hosted a Spelling Bee fundraiser in Dallas that included Mayor Rawlings, DISD Superintendent Mike Miles, and representatives from funders at Chase, Ernst and Young, and Gordon and Rees law firm. Thanks to the support and participation from Dallas the community, politicians, news anchors, DISD staff, and corporate partners RP raised \$75,000, including a donation directly from the Office of the Mayor of Dallas. It's this type of stakeholder support and collaboration that contribute to long-term sustainability.

RPs success depends on strong relationships with several stakeholders; including principals/superintendents/teachers, volunteer partnerships, and community families. Regular monthly meetings allows RP to maintain close communication with teachers and school district administration throughout the school year to ensure students receive maximum academic support. Through specialized training of our local community volunteer tutors, we align our instructional practices to mirror what the teachers are working on in the classroom and to reinforce what students are learning. Other community partners include: 1. Education Institutions - High schools, universities and colleges; 2. Private Foundations; 3. Corporations; 4. Regional Advisory Boards. Our stakeholders donate their time, funds, and/or in-kind resources and RP guarantees and delivers results within a year.

c. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

RP holds itself accountable to compliance regulations by utilizing a Federal Grants Manual that outlines policies and procedures for all major federal grants regulations and deadlines, including CNCS and AC. RP holds itself accountable to instances of risk by conducting multiple internal audits conducted each year in regards to member files, hours, health benefits, and payroll. For instance, the AC Program Director conducts a quarterly member file check for all AC grants to ensure that member files are complete and updated. The ACPM and AC Director meet on a quarterly basis to analyze and audit member hours and timesheets for accuracy and to determine if ACMs are on track to meeting their 1700 hour commitment. The accounting, development and AC department meet monthly to

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discuss the fiscal progress of each grant, follow-up on upcoming grant program or fiscal deadlines, and announce updates of new CNCS regulations.

To hold members and service sites accountable to compliance regulations, RP trains members and staff on prohibited activities and acceptable conduct, followed by the signing of contracts. Principals sign MOUs that outline AC expectations. Staff, members, and partners receive training on the AC prohibited activities so they are able to recognize any violation of prohibited activities and report to RP immediately. Tutors must sign a code of conduct that outlines relevant AC regulations before they can begin tutoring.

Members are required to ask their manager or ACPM if an activity they are unsure about is within compliance of the grant. Weekly site visits and formal check-ins by PMs and the ACPM allow RP to continually monitor site and member compliance. ACMs and managers receive a 2 hour timesheet training during Orientation focused on allowable and unallowable activities. Members submit bi-monthly time sheets that are checked and approved by managers and audited on a quarterly basis by the ACPM and AC Director. If there is any uncertainty about RP's compliance, the AC Program Manager will immediately seek advice and guidance from the our OneStar Program Officer. RP has never been on corrective action status for any grant received and support a culture of establishing strong communication with each of our grant Program Officers early on in the grant year.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

a. COST EFFECTIVENESS

RP is applying for a Fixed Amount Award. Cost Reimbursement questions are not applicable: Questions applicable to Fixed Amount Grant questions have been combined and outlined below with Budget Adequacy questions.

b. BUDEGT ADEQUACY

Please list all sources of organizational funding and what percent the proposed AmeriCorps project represents in your budget. What percentage of your total operational budget does your proposed funding request from CNCS represent?: Organizational funding sources breakdown: 46% Foundations, 15% Government (CNCS and AmeriCorps), 14% Government (Social Innovation Fund and CNCS), 14% School fee-for-service, 5% Corporate, 5% Individuals. RPs growing operating budget is \$13,144,384 for FY13. The proposed RP Texas project will cost approximately \$1,171,740, representing approximately 9% of RPs_i total operating budget. \$390,000 from OneStar Foundation would represent 3% of the RP total operational budget.

Explain how the requested funds do not exceed the maximum cost per Member Service Year (MSY):

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RP is requesting \$13,000 per MSY (30) and is not exceeding the maximum cost per MSY for a Fixed Award grant. We have requested the maximum cost per MSY because RP has a very high-touch supervision and professional development model, which we believe is critical to equipping our members with the skills they need to effectively engage the thousands of community volunteers that we do. We provide our members with an unusually high degree of support with a low program manager to member ratio (1:5 average).

If you have received support from CNCS during the last five years, please specify what type of support you received: RP receives 15% of its revenue from the CNCS and AmeriCorps; this includes our CaliforniaVolunteers, National Direct, and VISTA grants. We have a dedicated department for our relationship with AC and it is their charge to grow our collaborations with partner state commissions. 14% of our revenues come from a \$3.5M Social Innovation Fund (SIF) investment, administered by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (EMCF) for CNCS. SIF will allow RP to scale nationally more quickly than previously anticipated. The investment focuses exclusively on capacity building and infrastructure development in areas such as research and development, evaluations, policy advocacy, and accounting and fundraising.

Explain how the budget is clear, reasonable and in alignment with the program narrative. Discuss the adequacy of your budget to support your program design including how it is sufficient to support your program activities and desired outputs and outcomes:

RP utilized an AC program budget template that mirrors our program operating costs in other states to provide clear planning for all RP Texas AmeriCorps expenses. The budget takes all AC and OneStar requirements into account, while building in the programmatic needs of RP. To align with the narrative, we invested 64% of our Texas budget into our personnel including staff and ACMs, allowing RP to be fully staffed and provide a high level of program oversight at each placement site. We offer our Texas ACMs more than the minimum living allowance required by CNCS, as well as go beyond the minimum health benefit requirements to invest in the members to ensure that they are appreciated and valued. RP has created project budgets for new AC regions for three years, so we are familiar with requirements and true costs. Although not required for Fixed Award grants, RP has continuously met and exceeded our contracted match requirement, proving the adequacy of our past AC budgets. This budget template is similar in expenses and has proven to support our record of meeting all of our Performance Measures on all AC grants.

Identify the total amount you have budgeted to operate the program, including the fixed amount from CNCS and grantee share and how your program determined that amount:

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The 2013-14 budget for the RP Texas project is \$1,171,740. In addition to OneStar funding of \$390,000, RP will raise \$781,740 to support this project. For this particular budget, RP budgeted for the following major expenses: 1: Personnel Salary and Benefits (\$258,519); 2: Staff Travel to OneStar and CNCS events and trainings (\$8000); 3: Member Travel (\$7,590); 4: Member Gear (\$2,100); 5: Supplies and equipment such as books, curriculum and computers for new centers (\$62,450); 6: Member Training Costs for OneStar required disaster preparedness training, as well as RP recommended CPR Certification Training (\$5,250); 7: Fingerprinting Costs for all staff, members, and volunteers (\$39,000); 8: Rent (\$115,000); 9: Member living allowance, FICA, Worker's Compensation, and Health, Vision and Dental coverage (\$494,291); 10: Federally Approved 18.1% Indirect Cost Rate (\$179,580). Together, these expenses total to \$1,171,740.

Demonstrate how your program has or will obtain diverse resources for program implementation.

Indicate the non-CNCS resource commitments (in-kind and cash) that you have obtained to date and the sources of these funds. Indicate what additional commitments you plan to secure, and how you will secure them. Indicate how much funding your program needs from non-CNCS sources to support the project. Discuss how you will raise the additional resources you will need to manage and operate an AmeriCorps program beyond the fixed amount:

The proposed Reading Partners Texas project will cost approximately \$1,171,740. OneStar Foundation funding would account for 33.2% of revenue, and beyond that we expect to raise \$781,740 in support of this project. These remaining funds will be a combination of private philanthropy (foundation support, corporate giving, and individual donations) and support from our school partners through fee-for-service contributions. To demonstrate their investment in our program, each RP school partner contributes a fee-for-service, which is expected to be approximately \$460,000. This figure accounts for 39% of our overall RP Texas budget in 2013-14. RP expects private philanthropy to be at least \$211,000, accounting for 18% of the RP Texas project in 2013-14. Despite our being new to the Dallas area, RP is confident in our current and future ability to meet our local fundraising goals. Currently, we have raised 71% percent of our \$705,000 Dallas goal for FY13. RP anticipates that our lead investors from FY13 will renew and/or increase their support in FY14. Our top FY13 foundation investors include: The George and Fay Young Foundation (\$100,000), the Boone Family Foundation (\$75,000), the Meadows Foundation (\$50,000), and the Citizens Council (\$30,000). Additional foundation donors include: the M.B and Edna Zale Foundation, the Harold Simmons Foundation, the Mike and Mary Terry Foundation, and the Rainwater Charitable Foundation. We are also cultivating government and corporate supporters, such as the Office of the

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Mayor of Dallas and Bank of America. In regards to individual giving, many of our tutors are also donors. Thus far in FY13, our tutors and local supporters have donated \$20,000 in cash or in-kind donations (e.g., books or office supplies). We have hired additional development staff to focus on individual giving and are innovating our annual solicitation events and strategies to more precisely target our various stakeholders with giving potential.

To further build a network of individual contributors, the Texas RED is prioritizing the creation of an advisory board composed of local business, philanthropic, and civic leaders who are champions for education. In addition to helping to raise Reading Partners profile across Dallas and Fort Worth, board members will be donors and tutors themselves and ultimately facilitate a major gifts campaign. Board members are also a crucial component of our special events strategy. They help to increase ticket sales and drive publicity for our events, such as the Celebrity Spelling Bee we hosted in October 2012 at which local celebrities such as Mayor Mike Rawlings competed.

In addition to our philanthropic and fee-for-service revenues, RP also has significant in-kind resources. To operate our program, we ask each school partner to donate classroom space that we can transform into our reading centers. With 23 schools in 2013-14, we expect the value of this donated space to be roughly \$115,000, 9.8% of the RP Texas budget. These conservative projected cash and in-kind donations are currently \$850,000 - exceeding our current goal to manage and operate the RP Texas program beyond the fixed amount.

Explain how the budget is cost effective. Discuss how your program is a cost effective approach for addressing the community need(s) identified in your application:

Reading Partners is a cost-effective approach for improving elementary literacy proficiency across Dallas and Fort Worth because our model leverages community volunteerism to increase instructional capacity at Title I elementary schools. By recruiting, training, and continuously coaching private citizens as reading tutors, RP is able to help more children receive individualized attention than our school partners might otherwise be able to do on its own. Last year across all of our regions, nearly 5,162 volunteers collectively donated over 120,000 hours of tutoring, which is valued at \$1.44M if we were to pay volunteers a \$12/hr tutor wage. With school, municipal, and state budgets forced to do more with less resources, RP is able to bring more personnel into schools without burdening school budgets. The RP model will cost OneStar Foundation \$377 per child to increase her literacy skills, thereby altering their life trajectory. RP is also cost effective because we transform unused classroom space into reading centers at no additional cost to schools. Schools may donate the use of classroom space, which we project to be worth \$115,000 from our Dallas and Fort Worth partners. RP thus

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saves on expenses by not needing to rent space and schools incur no additional cost through the in-kind donation of space.

Consider the total costs and benefits of the program and, to the extent possible, document the costs and benefits: Overall a highly cost effective model for improving elementary literacy, Reading Partners most significant cost is personnel. In 2012-13, 60% of our Dallas budget went to personnel. RP elects to invest so heavily in personnel because our ability to help students make measurable and lasting gains in their reading achievement depends upon our tutors having the coaching, problem solving help, and instructional resources they need to be effective. Accordingly, our model requires ample staff to maintain a low staff-to-tutor ratio and so provide that support. Each school site has a dedicated full-time ACM to manage tutoring and we limit our PMs to a maximum of six schools to supervise. To attract and retain passionate and engaged staff, RP intentionally offers ACMS more than the minimum living allowance required by CNCS.

While personnel may be our most major cost, the present and future benefit that we accord to minority and/or children from low-income communities merits the expense. According to our internal data, 89% of students who participated in RP in 2011-12 accelerated their rate of learning. By gaining an average of 1.6 months of skills for every one month of tutoring, our students received the boost in confidence and competence they need to realize short and long-term academic achievement. According to our 2010-2011 commissioned study from the Stanford University School of Education, there is a statistically significant correlation between student performance on our internal literacy assessments and students performance on the California Skills Test (CST). By ensuring that our children have the literacy skills they need to succeed in elementary school, we are laying the foundation for their success and in high school, college, and the workplace. The future prosperity of our students and our communities is intimately tied to their ability to read, write, and thrive in school. Compare the cost effectiveness of the program with the costs and benefits of alternative models or approaches (if available), and demonstrate how your program model is most cost effective:

A growing number of nonprofit organizations are committed to improving youth literacy rates. To execute our program, we rely on a budget model that maximizes the cost benefit to our school partners. By leveraging private philanthropy and AmeriCorps dollars, RP assumes a majority of operational costs at 61%. We ask our school partners to demonstrate their investment in our program by contributing the remaining 33 percent through fee-for-service, the average contribution being \$20,000. With this cost model, schools receive literacy intervention services for 40-75 students without having to overextend their already tight budgets. Moreover, RP is free to students and

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constitutes no additional costs to families. Jumpstart for Young Children, Everybody Wins!, and READ Alliance are examples of organizations committed to improving youth literacy rates that deploy volunteers to help emerging readers solidify their skills. However, RP is the only scaled nonprofit in the US with its program model: the complete package of in-school, one-on-one literacy instruction by volunteers who are trained and supported by staff and ACMs. Compared to other literacy nonprofits that encourage reading through book donations or group read-alouds, RP increases the quantity of literacy resources in our partner schools, as well as the personnel required to guide students through those resources. We equip our school partners with a dedicated full-time member, a multi-leveled and research-based curriculum, two additional libraries, and a data collection cycle that augments teachers' knowledge of their students' strengths and needs. Compared to other organizations working in this field, RP is the only one that offers such a comprehensive package of resources and support. Finally, because our program model is more intensive than other organizations, our outcomes are stronger. No other program can deliver evidence-based results at a low cost, while efficiently utilizing a low number of ACMs. Our performance measure model makes it clear and simple to report our outcomes to our state commissions and CNCS. RP was invited by CNCS in December to present at the national conference in 2013. RP has been identified as a strong program model for reporting outcomes and we plan to share our process in creating strong performance measures and the tools we use to determine accurate results.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

N/A

Continuation Changes

N/A