

Narratives

Executive Summary

Stony Brook University is seeking to impact the community through expansion of the services through the AmeriCorps Education Award program starting on 9/15/2013 and ending on 9/14/2016. Fifty members will impact underserved population in the Long Island community by leveraging additional 500 volunteers. At the end of the first term of the new cycle 1000 beneficiaries on average will receive needed support. This project will focus on the CNCS focus area of Healthy Futures. The CNCS investment of \$8,464 will be aided with the University resources to efficiently manage the program. In the last two years of the current cycle community sites reported 100% satisfaction from work conducted by members, 3,127 volunteers were recruited completing 43,449 hours of service. In addition to these accomplishments, our members served 2,026 disadvantaged children and youth, 5,877 clients who participated in health education programs and 5,108 individuals who received services to alleviate hunger. Next cycle we fully expect AmeriCorps members will prove to be an even greater invaluable asset to the Corporation and local community as a low-cost program.

Rationale and Approach

Need

Recent 2011 U.S. Census figures documented approximately 168,000 people in Nassau and Suffolk counties living below the poverty line (Winslow, 2011). Currently, the poverty line is around \$22,000 for a family of four (Winslow, 2012). Winslow (2011) also cites an increase in the overall poverty rate across Long Island for almost a decade. Before the 2005 economic recession, the poverty rate on Long Island rested at around 5 percent; since then, it increased to 5.3 percent in 2009, and now stands at around 6.1 percent. With the current national poverty rate at 15.1 percent, some may feel that Long Island's below-average percentages are a positive sign of economic growth in the region. However, Long Island's high cost of living offsets the true face of poverty for community members (Winslow, 2012). Pearl Kramer, chief economist for the Long Island Association, the region's largest business group, recently cited a study done by the Economic Policy Institute that determines the actual amount of available income families need to cover all basic necessities. According to the Institute's Basic Family Budget Calculator, a family of four would need approximately \$75,000 a year in annual income to live on Long Island, just to cover basic needs. The facts and figures also largely discount the number of families on Long Island that make just enough to be ineligible for subsidized housing and other means of assistance, about 468,000 people in both counties combined ("Struggling in the Suburbs"). When adding this group to the mix, the number of those affected by poverty swells to

Narratives

636,000 out of a total population of 2.7 million ("Struggling in the Suburbs," 2012). According to a recent article in the New York Times, "Struggling in the Suburbs," (2012) Nassau and Suffolk have the second- and third- highest foreclosure rates in New York State, after Queens. Nonprofits and social service agencies have been overwhelmed with those in need, trying to accommodate not only the severely poor and homeless, but middle-class individuals that have lost their jobs and can no longer provide for their families. With fewer and fewer resources each year, agencies have to meet increasing demands for efficiency while meeting the needs of their clients.

When the Suffolk County Legislature met in May and June 2012 to outline recommendations to alleviate poverty, they cautioned that "low-paid social services employees [will be] buried under growing caseloads while heading toward the brink of poverty themselves" ("Struggling in the Suburbs," 2012). Additionally, Nassau County Executive Ed Mangano and former County Executive Steve Levy recently called on New York State Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and Charles Schumer to provide solutions for the \$1 million in cuts to federal assistance provided to Long Island nonprofits, homeless shelters, and food pantries ("Mangano and Levy Call on New York Senators to Return Critical Anti-Poverty Funding to Long Island," 2010). With the need on Long Island higher than ever, there is no greater resource available to nonprofit agencies than the unwavering dedication and support received from volunteers. In fact, the 2010 Hunger in America report that 56 percent of food pantries and 57 percent of food assistance kitchens on Long Island have no paid staff and rely entirely on volunteers.

While many agencies like Island Harvest and Long Island Cares work tirelessly to bring nutritious options to hungry children and families, the demands are too great to accommodate. Applications for food stamps have risen to an average of 40,000 per month, compared to around 26,000 two years prior ("Struggling in the Suburbs"). Other facts that have recently surfaced are just as startling. According to the recent Hunger in America report (2010), 47 percent of clients seen by Island Harvest and Long Island Cares report having to choose between paying for food and utilities or for heating fuel. Additionally, 49 percent had to choose between food and paying their mortgage or rent, and 36 percent reported having to choose between food and paying for medications. Emergency housing also hit its 10-year peak in January, with 261 individuals and 488 families living in shelters and motels ("Struggling in the Suburbs"). Paule T. Pachter, Executive Director of Long Island Cares -- the Harry Chapin Food Bank, further illustrates this grim reality, saying that the average apartment on Long Island is now over \$1,500 per month in rent, not including the cost of utilities, food, and gas (Pachter, 2011).

Narratives

With escalating costs across the board, it becomes even more challenging for individuals and families to manage their health. According to the Suffolk County Department of Health Services' Community Health Assessment 2010-2013, over 150,000 individuals are currently uninsured. Service-based occupations, including housekeeping and lawn maintenance, do not offer health benefits, nor do they generate enough income for people to purchase affordable health plans. Recent college graduates and displaced professionals struggling to find employment also fall through the cracks. Those with health insurance have challenges as well; many policies, including Medicare, do not cover much-needed preventive services. Preventive services typically include immunizations, screening tests, and counseling about making health choices. The Community Health Assessment (2010-2013) also states that "finding specialty care may be especially challenging for those who are uninsured, as well as for persons on Medicaid, since many specialists do not accept Medicaid coverage, or charge a full fee to those who are uninsured" (131). Other issues around lack of adequate health care on Long Island include a limited number of physicians in high-poverty areas, a "limited ability to address cultural and language barriers," and a lack of public transportation for low-income individuals to gain access to community health centers (132). Together, SBU AmeriCorps VCS and its community partners will work to help people gain access to quality health services, create programs on disease prevention, health promotion initiatives, health literacy providing disadvantaged individuals with necessary health assistance to live independent and healthy lives, access food and alleviate hunger on LI .

Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems

Healthy Futures Focus Area with national performance measures will be the primary area where SB AmeriCorps members and volunteers recruited by members are needed. More than 250,000 Long Islanders are either medically underserved or do not have health insurance, which leads to a burden on families, health care facilities and communities, as chronic illness and dependence on emergency care increase (unitedwayli.org). Stony Brook AmeriCorps members and volunteers are needed to coordinate essential programs and volunteer with community-based nonprofits that are committed to accessing medical care for those who previously had little. The SBU is a perfect location for the AmeriCorps Program. Proximity of Stony Brook University Medical Center and Center for Prevention and Outreach are excellent grounds for building new and expanding existing health related programs. According to the United Way of Long Island, 165,334 Long Islanders are currently living below the federal poverty level. During the winter of 2010 and due to recent economic crisis, these people will have to choose between putting food on the table and paying for heating bills (unitedwayli.org). Therefore, there is a great need for members to engage in local hunger initiatives and food drives for

Narratives

local food pantries. Approximately 259,000 Long Island residents - 93,000 of them children and 39,000 seniors - turn to soup kitchens, food pantries or shelters for help each year. 45% of these Long Islanders are in households where at least one adult is employed; this speaks of the high cost of living on Long Island (unitedwayli.org).

Essentially, the AmeriCorps Education Award Program that we wish to continue at Stony Brook University will be built upon the structure and successes achieved by our AmeriCorps VCS program conducted in previous cycles. To address Suffolk County's pressing needs, especially in relation to health care, hunger, poverty and homelessness, the central focus and aims of SBU's AmeriCorps efforts will be devoted to placing our AmeriCorps members and volunteers recruited by the program in health education programs, health care facilities, food pantries, non-profit organizations and community and family centers. Primarily, the work of Stony Brook's AmeriCorps members will be directed towards improving awareness in disease prevention and health promotion initiatives, decreasing health disparities as well as addressing hunger issues and serving special populations. We will call this continued initiative AmeriCorps VCS-Volunteers for Community Service.

The SBU AmeriCorps Program will have a team-based structure to decrease the number of single sites and to improve coordination of the multi-site program. Fifty AmeriCorps members in minimum-time slots (300 service hours) supporting Healthy Futures and Capacity Building priority areas will consist of six to eight teams of members focused on meeting health needs of vulnerable populations and communities. Members will be assigned as follows: Access to Care- 25 members, Access to Food -- 10 members, and Capacity Building -- 15 members.

To name a few:

Adaptive Aquatics AmeriCorps Team -- Access to Care: The Adaptive Aquatics Program will be providing preventive services dedicated to the introduction, teaching and advancement techniques offered to children and adults with physical disabilities who have no access to these services from other source. 8-10 AmeriCorps members will serve the disadvantaged population with a broad range of disabilities. Adaptive Aquatics Programs will help develop and refine social and motor skills. In addition, members will recruit and train volunteers who will be partnered on one-to-one basis and are needed to assist the child/adult in developing motor skills. The team will be supervised by the Adaptive Aquatics Program Director, Dr. Peter Angelo.

CURRENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 10 AmeriCorps members assisted more than 150 individuals with disabilities. They also recruited 25 volunteers for the program who are being managed on a regular basis.

Narratives

AmeriCorps Preventive Health Team -- Access to Care: Along with community agencies like Suffolk Perinatal Coalition or the Elsie Owens Health Center, SBU 12 AmeriCorps members will provide services and programming addressing health care access, preventive health services, and health/wellness education. By working with the SNAP, our AmeriCorps team may add-on a new initiative to provide services focused on the prevention of HIV/AIDS, reduction of racial and ethnic disparities in sexual health outcomes, and promotion of sexual health among male and female adolescents, ages 11-19. Stony Brook University AmeriCorps members will be barred from providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services to comply with the Serve America Act.

Hunger Prevention Team -- Access to Food: 10 members will offer assistance to homeless population, and individuals affected by hunger as well as recruit volunteers to support organizations serving underserved populations. These members will carry out programs that seek to eliminate hunger in low-income communities through service in food campaigns by partnering with agencies like Island Harvest, Hope House/Pax Christi, Long Island Coalition for the Homeless and more. Some of the members will be placed with community partners to build capacity of services provided to individuals at risk, ex. SNAP Program (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).

CURRENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS: In the fall 2011, five members from the Stony Brook AmeriCorps program organized the Hunger Banquet open to community agencies and brought on campus many non-profit organizations in need of food donation and volunteers. In addition to collecting food for the homeless (totaling 350 pounds), organizations were able to recruit volunteers to assist underserved populations.

Volunteer Recruitment Team - Capacity Building: To address Corporation's mission to mobilize more volunteers and engage students in communities, at least 15 SB AmeriCorps members will participate in volunteer recruitment initiatives to support community agencies on LI. Members will advertise and promote the benefits of volunteering and the need for volunteers at a wide variety of organizations from the community. Many members of the SB AmeriCorps program will participate in and will recruit other volunteers to take part in community service activities geared to Healthy Future focus area.

CURRENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Some teams operated by AmeriCorps members like SBVAC (14 AmeriCorps members recruited and managed close to 80 volunteers last year), the Alternative Spring Break Outreach Program (3 members recruited 80 volunteers to go to New Orleans, LA for rebuilding activities), or SB Blood Bank (10 members recruited 1615 blood donors), and our program plans to expand on these successful activities.

Narratives

To address the Corporation's mission to improve lives, strengthen communities and foster civic engagement through service, members will primarily focus on satisfying the unmet health needs within communities through projects affiliated with access to health care, disease prevention, health literacy, health promotion initiatives and hunger prevention. Members will develop promotional materials, organize workshops, outreach activities offered to individuals at risk to benefit them. AmeriCorps members will also carry out programs that seek to alleviate the food insecurity experienced by the individual/family in low-income communities through support, education and referral services by partnering with agencies like Island Harvest, Pax Christi, Long Island Coalition for the Homeless and more. Members will be placed with community partners to provide food, offer needed services in nutrition and build capacity of services provided to individuals at risk of hunger. Stony Brook AmeriCorps members will also recruit other volunteers to take part in developing health campaigns, hunger awareness programs and food donation campaigns available for low-income families. AmeriCorps Members will participate in this activity, 2 days per week, and 3hrs-6hrs per day. All the members will report to supervisors from non-profit organizations/programs and the program director.

Evidence-Based/Evidence-Informed & Measurable Community Impact

Past Accomplishments -- Performance against Objectives

In the last two years of the current cycle community sites reported 100% satisfaction from work conducted by 70 members. All targets were exceeded and accomplishments are as follow: 3,127 volunteers were recruited completing 43,449 hours of service. In addition to these outcomes, our members served 2,026 disadvantaged children and youth, 5,877 clients who participated in health education programs and 5,108 individuals who received services to alleviate hunger. Evidence-based data was collected for all mentioned performance measures. Next cycle we fully expect AmeriCorps members will prove to be an even greater invaluable asset to the Corporation and local community as a low-cost program. Impact - The AmeriCorps VCS Program has several strong community partnerships. The assessment of the impact was identified through the long-term relationships with community based programs and non-profit organizations primarily on Long Island in both counties. Over the years, working closely with agencies serving individuals in need and seeing how much assistance they need to be able to provide basic services, there is no question that AmeriCorps members through their service will only add value to the services provided by these agencies increasing the number of clients and support services offered. Surveys conducted with community partners will provide a measurable community impact. Selected organizations that SB AmeriCorps

Narratives

program currently works with: Elsie Owen Coram Clinic, Suffolk Perinatal Coalition, Island Harvest, Long Island Cares, Long Island Coalition for the Homeless, Suffolk Department of Health and more. Self-Assessment and Improvement - Through data collection and assessments, we will measure the number of individuals served, the number of service projects as well as the number of programs completed. Within the Healthy Futures focus area, we will track the number of health related programs conducted, amount of individuals served and services provided. We will also evaluate the value of community partnerships established and/or maintained by the AmeriCorps program. To track and evaluate our program toward meeting and achieving our performance measures on hunger, the number of individuals receiving emergency food from food banks or food pantries will be collected. As an aligned outcome measure, the count of individuals that reported increased food security of themselves and their children will allow us to determine whether we have met the target stated in our work plan. The constant communication between community partners, members and stakeholders will ensure the effectiveness of the program and will help to identify any issues or challenges.

Member Recruitment

SBU is a perfect location for a highly achieving program like AmeriCorps. Our institution has a great enrollment of students interested in health clinical and non-clinical fields as well as helping professions in the health care and human service industries. Healthy Future priority area makes a perfect sense due to the fact that we have an ideal population for it. All of the health related projects will not only let future members assist underprivileged population but also explore their career development process. With more than 24,000 undergraduate and graduate students, SBU presents an ideal location for member recruitment and development of highly diverse population. Community service and volunteerism are becoming a tradition at Stony Brook, with many service activities taking place on- and off- campus involving students, faculty, and staff. The program will screen a diverse set of student applicants for AmeriCorps positions. Applicants are required to have a good overall academic standing and must demonstrate strong communication skills. An essay and interview will be required as part of the application process. Applicants will be recruited from the Stony Brook University student body. 34% of current members are Pell Grant recipients. We anticipate having a similar number of members who would be Pell Grant eligible. However, we're not able to estimate the changes in the budget and Pell Grant funding. AmeriCorps members differ from regular volunteers because of the nature of their positions - they need to have skills and abilities to manage, direct others and take charge in certain situations. Although the program is open to all the students, we will be looking for these specific skills to make the program more effective as a whole. For that reason, we would like to

Narratives

target students who are in leadership roles already and who are committed to service. This process not only will add value to our program but also will help to manage 50 members more efficient.

Member Training

All members will be required to attend an Orientation session, where they will learn about the history and mission of AmeriCorps, opportunities for participation, requirements, policies, and begin the process of their volunteer training. AmeriCorps members will receive daily supervision from their site supervisors, as well as weekly supervision from a Program staff and designee (faculty or administrative staff). If extensive training is necessary for particularly sensitive issues such as crisis intervention, sexual abuse and violent crimes, it will be provided by the partner organization. Bi-weekly training sessions will allow members to discuss and process experiences, share successful strategies, provide mutual support and teach them how to use their experience in the career development process. In terms of volunteer generation, all members will utilize volunteer guidelines and booklets employed by the program. The AmeriCorps director will allow the free flow of communication between herself, supervisors and AmeriCorps members in need of advice, guidance, and/or information through various techniques including Blackboard, a web based system. Bi-weekly meetings/trainings will last 2-2.5 hours and they will be conducted during the core of the program concentrating around each academic semester ranging from October to the end of May. Some topics include: Building Leadership Skills, Resume and Cover Letter Writing Skills with AmeriCorps Experience, Power of Networking, etc. Based on the recent experience, members were able to talk to each other about their service assignments, the meaning and impact of their work on the community. These trainings create a teamwork environment and teach members how to work together more effectively; they were highly evaluated by members this year. Training sessions will be planned throughout the AmeriCorps term to comply with the requirement of not exceeding 20% of service hours devoted to training. None of the AmeriCorps members will exceed 10% of their time devoted to fundraising activities. All hours dedicated to fundraising will be minimal and will be closely monitored by the Program Director. Unified time sheets that are designed to track the total number of served hours, training hours and fundraising hours are utilized by members and provided to supervisor at each site for their approval on monthly basis. If an additional training is being conducted at the main site, the training will be recorded in the "Training" column on the separate time sheet for the same month and approved by Program Director. This system will assist the Program Director to closely monitor the amount of hours spend on training for each member and to comply with the rule of devoting a maximum of 20% of the total amount of served hours to training activities. In the

Narratives

beginning of the Program, the Program Director meets with each site supervisor to discuss the assignment, involved training and fundraising rules and regulations including the allowed amount of hours for each activity. Both parties plan training sessions for the entire term. Criminal history checks will be conducted on all AmeriCorps members and grant funded staff in compliance with the most current Regulation on this subject as required by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Please note that the Stony Brook University AmeriCorps Program is the Education Award Program only and we don't have grant-funded staff. Stony Brook University Police Department provides finger printing services that the AmeriCorps VCS program will utilize. The finger printing service is open to all Stony Brook University Faculty, Staff and Students (<http://www.stonybrook.edu/police/programs/finger-printing.shtml>). They must present a valid Photo ID or State issued ID card to have their fingers printed. All finger printing results will be sent to appropriate organization for the final criminal history checks verification. Portion of the AmeriCorps budget will be devoted to cover the expense for this service. The three part check will include: *Sex offender registry check (NSOPR) *State criminal history registry check(s) *FBI fingerprint-based check

Member Supervision

To manage the AmeriCorps Program at Stony Brook University more efficiently, we decided to divide 50 members into teams. This process will allow better communication, meaningful accomplishments, and professional supervision. Each team will have a designated supervisor who not only will be responsible for providing adequate support but also guidance throughout each term. All supervisors are informed about prohibited activities and are mandated to exclude them from job descriptions. Site visits occur on bi-weekly and monthly basis. The goal of the program was to divide the group of 50 members into teams to manage the site supervision more effectively and reduce the number of sites. In addition to site visits, we plan to have weekly/bi-weekly conference calls, and video chats to maintain an effective and ongoing communication. Program Director will be in charge of maintaining constant contact between site supervisors to ensure success of the program. Majority of the site visits will be conducted by the Program Director but occasionally site supervisors will come to the main program location.

Member Experience

SBU Career Center is the perfect location to manage the AmeriCorps Program and assess members' experience. Career planning is another component of professional development - members will learn about the career development and decision-making process, as well as learn how to research career

Narratives

options and explore possibilities through discussions with professionals in the field. ePortfolio and StudentVoice are two tools that the SBU AmeriCorps Program will utilize to assess accomplishments, impact, and learning process. Members will be encouraged to recognize the benefit of their efforts on a social and personal level, and will be made acutely aware of the positive impact of volunteering on their professional future. The huge success in our program lies in the fact that we provide meaningful experiences that our members seek to expand. SBU AmeriCorps Program has established AmeriCorps Facebook account to exchange communication between members and showcase programs' accomplishments. SBU is a member of Campus Compact, a national coalition of more than 1,000 college and university presidents representing some 5 million students dedicated to promoting community service, civic engagement, and service-learning in higher education. This relationship will also assist the AmeriCorps VCS program in creating connections with different programs, and build upon our mutual experience. We also established a strong partnership with the LI Volunteer Center that is supported by the Corporation and we plan service projects involving our members. The most recent tragic events connected with hurricane Sandy create a vast number of ways to work together as one team.

Volunteer Generation

To address Corporation's mission to mobilize more volunteers and engage students in communities, SB AmeriCorps members will participate in volunteer generation initiatives by working towards the goal of increasing the number of students volunteering at the higher education level. Members will advertise and promote the benefits of volunteering and the need for volunteers at a wide variety of organizations from the community. AmeriCorps members will also work closely with marketing groups to increase the number of service projects and individuals volunteering on campus for those who don't have access to transportation as well as with non-profit agencies from the Long Island community. Our program utilizes various tools for volunteer recruitment including the Volunteer ListServ with more than 800 students interested in community engagement and/or ZebraNet, the main Career Center recruiting database. Since all members participating in the program are under full-time school schedule constraints, we request a minimum time-term of service of 300 hours to be completed within one year. Our plan is to sustain and build upon the successes achieved by the programs described above.

Organizational Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

As an AmeriCorps grantee we must identify the Program as an AmeriCorps Program and members eligible for a Corporation-approved service education award as AmeriCorps members. The

Narratives

AmeriCorps Name and Logo -- members and the program director use the AmeriCorps name and logo on service gear and public materials such as stationery, application forms, recruitment brochures, orientation materials, signs, banners, press releases, internet sites and publications created by AmeriCorps members in accordance with Corporation requirements. To establish the relationship between the Program and AmeriCorps, our program uses the phrase "an AmeriCorps Program" on such materials in accordance with Corporation guidelines and requirements. AmeriCorps Service Gear -- although with a limited operating budget, our program provides the AmeriCorps Service Gear for each member including T-Shirt and sweatshirt. The program Director encourages members to wear their service gear at officially designated AmeriCorps events and may allow members to wear their service gear at other times consistent with Corporation guidelines.

Organizational Capability

Organizational Background and Staffing

SBU, set on northern Long Island and 60 miles from Manhattan, is the premier research campus of the State University of New York system and serves approximately 24,000 students. Established in 1962, Stony Brook has risen rapidly in terms of scholarly excellence across the Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities. Stony Brook is the first public university in NY State to be ranked as a "Type I Research University" by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and was one of ten universities selected for the National Science Foundation's Recognition Award for Integrating Research and Education. In May 2001, SB was elected the 63rd member of the Association of American Universities, the top 2 percent of U.S. research institutions. More recently, SB has been ranked in the top 100 National Universities by U.S. News & World Report and was added to the President's Honor Roll for Higher Education & Community Service with Distinction in 2008 and 2010 and was recognized each year since 2008. SB is dedicated to diversity and to fostering greater cultural understanding; it is now the most diverse campus of SUNY's University Centers. More than half of the student body identify themselves as non-European, with 23% of Asian origin, 7% of Black origin, 9% of Hispanic origin, and 8% self-identified as international.

Dr. Peter Baigent serves as the VP for Student Affairs at SBU and plans to continue and expand service initiatives on campus and in the local community. Dr. Baigent supports the expansion of service-oriented programs on campus including a virtual center for community service and service-learning which features AmeriCorps heavily and will be used as one of a few vehicles of the promotion of service on campus.

Urszula Zalewski will serve as the program administrator that will be responsible for overall program

Narratives

implementation, fiscal reporting, report preparation, and supervision of interns. Urszula served as the program director for the AmeriCorps Education Award Program at SB from 2004-2012 and achieved great successes with the program during that period. Urszula leverages her experience with the AmeriCorps program to recruit and develop sites, works closely with site supervisors on training and orientation and conducts weekly/bi-weekly meetings with site supervisors and AmeriCorps VCS members to discuss progress. She develops and maintains close relationships with faculty and administrative staff involved in campus community service and service learning efforts by organizing a steering committee to discuss issues, develop strategies for sustainability and engage in long term strategic planning. She also leads group reflection sessions on campus with AmeriCorps VCS members, involving faculty and community partners. The presence of the AmeriCorps program on campus had a clear impact on the campus community between 2004 and 2012. Students at SB are traditionally first generation college students and are often operating under tight budget restrictions. There is little doubt that students who could not have previously served for 300 hrs during the academic year could because of the incentive of the \$1,147 tuition voucher. SB also increased the number of non-profit partners it has throughout the 2004-2012 grant period and plans to continue these successes between 2013 and 2016.

Multi-Site Program - With the multi-site program, it is important that every supervisor understands program's enrollment, attendance procedures and completes data reports, time sheets and other forms in a uniform way. Member data from each particular site needs to be sent to a central office where program director will key the data into a designed computer application. All forms must be legible, complete and delivered in a timely manner. AmeriCorps Program Director regularly communicates with each site supervisor to ensure effective cooperation. Site visits are performed on regular basis to guarantee adequate programmatic capabilities. To improve even more the programmatic structure of our program, we designed a team- based program to decrease the amount of multiple sites. The selection of the service sites is based on the long-term relationships with our community partners. However, if a new site is selected, the initial communication will be more frequent to ensure adequate programmatic and financial capabilities. In order to meet all AmeriCorps rules and policies, the program will reduce the amount of members from 70 to 50 to manage the multi-site structured program more effectively.

Board of Directors, Administrators and Staff - The AmeriCorps program is fully supported by the administrators and staff of SBU. The AmeriCorps VCS program director, Urszula Zalewski, is a Career Counselor holding an MBA and MS who has been with Stony Brook for 9 years. She has spent

Narratives

these years counseling students interested in health care/non-profit organizations, partnered with such organizations, and garnered support for service initiatives like AmeriCorps from university administrators and community leaders.

Urszula is supported by the Director of the Career Center, Marianna Savoca. Marianna is a Fulbright recipient who holds a MS from the Department of Higher Education & Student Affairs, Indiana University. Throughout her 14 year tenure at SB, Marianna has expanded the number of local and national organizations partnering with SBU and has emphasized community service as an essential component of a college student's resume. She manages 14 staff members and designated one more full time staff in addition to the program director to support the administration of the AmeriCorps program.

Marianna works directly under the Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Peter Baigent. Dr. Baigent fully supports the service oriented efforts put forth by the departments he oversees and is also in the process of advocating for a stronger spirit of service on campus and in the local community.

Technical Assistance - Financial and programmatic assistance will be supported by SBU as well as individual member sites as needed. Ongoing training will be provided through bi-weekly sessions among members and the program director including the effective communication through Blackboard, web based technical system. SBU provides a vast of technical support including several computer applications and communication tools like Blackboard and ePortfolio.

Volunteer Generation and Support - SBU is constantly recruiting and supporting a diverse group of volunteers throughout the academic year. In 2012 there are more than 850 students who are interested in community service/service-learning activities on the official Community Service ListServ. 71% of these students are ethnically diverse. Besides Career Center, there are hundreds of student groups and organizations that are involved in service-oriented programs on regular basis. Each year all 6 undergraduate colleges coordinate service projects for all the freshmen to create a service oriented community. On a professional level, United University Professions at SB, affiliated with NY State United Teachers (NYSUT), The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the AFL-CIO, is fully supporting community service efforts. With collaboration with other departments, they conduct service projects open to staff members at the university.

Sustainability

SBU was selected for the 2007 & 2010 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction, also recognized each year and received Community Engagement Classification by

Narratives

Carnegie Foundation. This recognition was based on the efforts the University has put forth in the recent years to improve the level of community service output by the organization. Locally, Urszula Zalewski serves on the board of directors for Response of Suffolk, Inc (a non-profit crisis center) and is the representative from SB serving on the advisory committee for the NY chapter of Campus Compact. SBU was also recognized for outstanding involvement in Habitat for Humanity each year. Our institution serves communities including high school students, veterans, special populations and seniors through a vast of remarkable programming.

As support for various community service initiatives on campus increases, we anticipate increased financial support in the future from administrators of the University. President of the University, Samuel L. Stanley, Jr., MD, fully supports service initiatives and community outreach. For the AmeriCorps Education Award Program only we don't have a match requirement. However, since the financial support to manage the program is limited, the University offers more resources to maintain the program at the highest level of performance.

Community Collaboration - SBU has many partnerships with non-profit and healthcare organizations. One such collaboration is with Island Harvest, a non-profit organization that fights hunger. In honor of opening weekend at SBU, 400 incoming freshmen from the Undergraduate College of Leadership and Service hosted Island Harvest, Long Island's largest hunger relief organization. There, the undergraduates prepared 2,456 nonperishable food packages for Island Harvest's Weekend Backpack Program, which provides supplemental food to public school students and 1,200 hygiene kits for homeless population. In addition to packaging food for students in need across Long Island, SBU also collected much-needed school supplies for children in recognition of the back-to-school season. Both initiatives highlight SBU's efforts to give back to the community through leadership, outreach, and experiential learning. Another example of a great partnership is RESPONSE of Suffolk County, Inc., a crisis hotline. This fall members assisted the agency with coordination of 4 volunteer trainings consisting of 60 volunteers. Also, Urszula Zalewski is on the Board of Directors with this organization providing excellent venue to communication and improving ties with the university. Every semester local non-profit organizations donate, in kind, the time of their staff members to educate Stony Brook students on community needs and what they can do to fill them during workshops held on campus.

Because close to 40% of SBU students hail from NYC and the surrounding boroughs, the director of the AmeriCorps program has expanded the repertoire of organizations associated with the University to fit student needs during winter and summer breaks. The benefit of this effort is twofold,

Narratives

organizations in the city benefit from the dedication of more students, and students are able to volunteer when they return to their homes on weekends and during holidays. Therefore the geographic reach of students involved in the AmeriCorps program is extensive, ranging from the east end of Long Island to NYC. Furthermore, because of these extensive and diverse relationships, the possibility of increasing the number of volunteers in general in support of volunteer generation goals is greatly increased.

Compliance and Accountability

Monitoring program and service sites for compliance -- Constant communication with site supervisors and members will ensure compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations. Our program established service site monitoring procedures. Based on SBU AmeriCorps VCS program's risk-based monitoring strategy, a programmatic site visit will be made to every site one time per year, or more often as may be appropriate. The purpose of the visit is to assess the program's compliance with federal regulations and to help the program improve systems of operations if needed. Also, all AmeriCorps members are provided with the list of prohibited activities during the orientation before the official start of the term. During the first training, members are tested on a type of activities that are not allowable. This process creates a culture of awareness and acknowledgement of the CNCS Policy. Background Checks - per Corporation's mandatory policy, as of April 21, 2011 all AmeriCorps members and staff will successfully complete a three-part Criminal History Check before they begin service/employment. Prohibited Activities -- to make members and site supervisors aware of Prohibited Member Activities, the policy must be included in the signed AmeriCorps Member Contracts; included in all signed Host Site Agreements/Memorandums of Understanding; reviewed thoroughly during all AmeriCorps Member and Host Site Supervisor Trainings, and communicated through the maintained verbal/electronic communication with supervisors from multiple host sites to ensure compliance with policy on prohibited activities. The host site monitoring and assessment tool will assist with identifying any instances of risks or noncompliance that would need to be addresses immediately by implementing corrective actions.

Enrollment -- we are proud to report that we maintained 100% enrolment rate throughout all the years of operation of the AmeriCorps Program at SBU.

Retention -- in the last full time term, two out of 70 members were unable to continue the program

Narratives

bringing us to 97% retention rate. One member withdrew from the university and out program had no control over the circumstances that have caused it. The second member was overwhelmed with the academic load and decided not to complete her service hours. Corrective action plan to ensure that members do not leave their term due to challenging requirements of the academic semester: Stony Brook University AmeriCorps Program conducts orientation and training sessions for potential and current members of the program. All these sessions include a part on commitment and the importance of completion of the program and its effects on other members and potential future funding. Students who are officially enrolled in the AmeriCorps program go through serious of trainings emphasizing professional development and time management. Although our program has no major problems with commitment, but to ensure that members do not leave the term due to challenges connected with academic challenges, we'll incorporate more sessions on time management and stress management to prepare members for the year-long obligation and an effective time management of all responsibilities that lie on students enrolled in the full-time academic terms. Professional staff from the Center for Prevention and Outreach, department on the Stony Brook campus, will conduct these trainings to guarantee more success in completion rates.

Special Circumstances

While Long Island would not be considered an area ridden with a deep poverty, a look at the median household income for students attending SBU tells a very different story. Students attending the University often come from difficult financial backgrounds and are first generation students who are often responsible for contributing money and time to their families. Close to 40 percent of Stony Brook undergraduate students are eligible for Federal Pell Grants and a very small amount of students are actually receiving them. Because of this fact the \$1,147 tuition voucher offered by the AmeriCorps program is a highly valued commodity to student who can pay their partial tuition with this award.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

Cost Effectiveness-Corporation Cost per Member Service Year

The Corporation cost per MSY is \$800; therefore, we seek a support from the Corporation for \$8,464.00 each term for 50 minimum-term members (300 hours of service) -- 10.58 MSY.

Program grant request

50 minimum time slots X 0.21= 10.58

10.58 MSY X \$800/MSY \$8,464

Subtotal \$8,464.00

Narratives

Budgetary Expenses:

1. Travel \$1,000.00
3. Supplies & Miscellaneous \$1,214.00
4. Mandatory Background Checks \$6,000.00
4. Evaluation \$250.00

Subtotal: \$8,464.00

Diverse Non Federal Support

The AmeriCorps VCS program receives and will be highly supported in the future by a variety of on-campus and off-campus partners, including corporate sponsorship. There are several grant opportunities focused on service that are offered by various corporations. In the future, we plan to seek additional funding to support service projects through these small grants. As a member of NY Campus Compact, our program would be eligible for some community service oriented grants.

Division of Student Affairs will continue providing all resources to the program to ease implementation and increase program's effectiveness.

Decreased Reliance on Federal Support

The program constantly works on expanding the horizon of its reach to increase the number of partners year after year. In addition, by working closely with student clubs and organizations, our program will be able exceed program goals even further. The AmeriCorps members will collaborate with student groups and organize service projects on campus utilizing their financial assets and University's resources. One of the great examples would be the HOPE Program, a high school outreach initiative that offers exposure to Healthcare Careers for underrepresented students and inspires students to plan and prepare for a college education through exposing students to academic life. PAR FORE is another gang-prevention program that AmeriCorps will be involved in, providing university's resources and opening academic horizons to underprivileged youth. The academic and counseling staff assigned to these programs will provide a variety of services that will enable middle- and high school students to achieve academically, socially, and receive information relative to post-secondary and career opportunities.

Budget Adequacy

For the first, second and third AmeriCorps Education Award program cycle, SB University supported most expenses incurred in establishing and coordinating successful community partnerships,

Narratives

including partial salaries of the program director and supporting staff (approximately \$25,000), equipment, supplies and administrative costs including marketing/promotion activities. The program has received tremendous support from a variety of on-campus and off-campus partners, including corporate sponsorship. We are therefore willing to once again, carry the burden with the intent to secure additional funds through applications to local corporate and private foundations, and local community organizations. Through the three previous cycles, we mastered task of managing a cost-effective program at Stony Brook University. Staff travel includes money to fund Program staff travel to Albany and other locations for meetings, training sessions and site visits. Additionally, the Program Administrator or other staff member will make monthly visits to monitor members on-site and will host monthly site debrief meetings with members and/or their supervisors. Supplies and miscellaneous would include AmeriCorps premiums (t-shirts, pens, notebooks w/logo), as well as costs of posters, flyers, brochures and other marketing materials needed to recruit members and showcase the program on campus and in the communities that members serve. Finally, a small percentage of budget will cover evaluation expenses. Finally, the largest portion of the Corporation funding will cover mandatory background checks expenses.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

2011-2012 Stony Brook University

AmeriCorps VCS Program Internal Evaluation Report

AmeriCorps Program Information

Date: 10/12/2012

Program Name: SBU AmeriCorps VCS

Grant Program ID:09ESHNY0010002

Legal Applicant: Stony Brook University/Research Foundation

Contact Person: Urszula Zalewski, AmeriCorps Program Coordinator

Phone/email: 631-632-6814 Urszula.Zalewski@stonybrook.edu

Evaluator: Marianna Savoca, Director

Phone/email: 631-632-6810 Marianna.Savoca@stonybrook.edu

Evaluator qualifications:

Marianna Savoca, Director and PhD student is an educational assessment specialist. She is a consultant that works with several higher education institutions in and out of state doing strategic

Narratives

planning, programmatic assessment design and implementation. She has 10 years of experience evaluating numerous departments/programs and conducting assessment analysis on these institutions. Marianna Savoca has been recognized for her assessment work and high accomplishments through several professional associations and higher education institutions. She has no prior affiliation with the administration of the SBU AmeriCorps VCS Program and has stated that she has neither a conflict of interest nor vested interest of any kind in the outcome of this evaluation.

Evaluation timeline and completion of evaluation report:

Year Two of the grant was dedicated to planning and taking the general evaluation approach outlined in this report, operationalizing it, as well as finalizing our data collection tools and systems. The data collection portion of the evaluation began in the first quarter of Year Two and ran through the full program year. The data collection in Year Three will be focused on data analysis and the preparation of the findings and recommendations for the final report. The final report will be completed by the internal evaluator by September 30, 2013 and will be submitted with the new term AmeriCorps application and a post-evaluation action plan will be implemented in the future AmeriCorps terms.

This evaluation plan aims to serve the following purposes in addition to meeting AmeriCorps funding requirements:

To determine effectiveness of program's administrative procedures

To assess program outcomes

To evaluate data collection procedures

To measure AmeriCorps members' personal and professional development

Evaluation Questions

Key Evaluation Questions to be answered by this evaluation:

In consultation with our internal evaluator, we identified the following key questions that our evaluation will address. Additional detailed questions will be determined when our evaluation plan is refined.

Administrative Procedures Questions:

Are the program's administrative procedures effective and efficient?

Are members' files complete and include all documentation and contracts?

Narratives

Are there any modifications needed for collection of documents based on our findings?

Outcome Evaluation Questions:

Did program services result in verifiable effects or specifically-defined changes (outcomes) to the recipient of the intervention?

What other causal factors have an impact (positive or negative) on the desired program outcomes?

Data Collection Questions:

How often data is being collected?

Who is responsible for providing the data?

How to ensure that all relevant data has been collected?

AmeriCorps Members Personal and Professional Development Questions:

Did members improve specific skills as a result of their service experience?

Did members understand the impact of their service on the community?

Evaluation Summary

Our evaluation approach employed a variety of assessment designs, including exploratory, descriptive, and quasi-experimental designs. Based on these designs, appropriate data collection methods and instruments were used to gather information for evaluating the attainment of the program objectives. These designs were identified in consultation with our internal evaluator.

An exploratory assessment was conducted to verify the need for health prevention services in the community, what population needs this service, and if community members needing help participated in the health prevention and hunger reduction programs. This review informed us of the most effective program designs and performance measures structure to consider in the future terms.

Data Types

We collected two kinds of data: (1) Annual performance measures. This data include the number of people who received assistance in healthcare education and support to alleviate hunger, the number of volunteers who were recruited to support the service activities, etc. (2) Program compliance assessment .

There are several data sources for this evaluation.

Information on service implementation has been collected from AmeriCorps members and their supervisors.

Narratives

Data on member learning outcomes has been collected through StudentVoice, online survey tool, and the end year evaluation.

Information on administrative procedures has been verified through file inspection.

Findings

Assessment of effectiveness and efficiency of program's administrative procedures:

Contract Compliance

All member eligibility documentation and contracts are included in files.

Prohibited member activities are included in a contract.

Filing System Administration

Well-designed time recording system for all AmeriCorps members, i.e. monthly and annual Excel worksheets corresponding with each member, divided into direct service, fundraising, and training categories.

Criminal history checks are included on file and stored with a few agencies due to confidentiality issues.

Member time records are accurate and on file.

Fiscal Management

Expenditures recorded by Research Foundation staff in the RF SUNY and accessible to AmeriCorps Program Director for further review.

Cost of background checks decimated out budget.

Assessment of program's outcomes:

Quantitative Assessment:

1,356 volunteers of all ages were recruited, coordinated, or supported our program.

5,128 hours of service were completed by non-AmeriCorps volunteers.

2,585 clients participated in health, prevention, and wellness programs (targets exceeded by 3%).

1,223 clients participating in health, prevention and wellness programs increased knowledge and skills in order to leave healthy lives and access necessary health resources (targets exceeded by 29%).

2,482 individuals were provided with support and services to alleviate long-term hunger (targets exceeded by 1%).

601 individuals affected by hunger and poverty indicated improvement in economic status because of hunger related service projects (targets exceeded by 20%).

Narratives

95% of AmeriCorps members indicated an enhanced knowledge of transferable skills learned through service (targets exceeded by 12%).

95% of AmeriCorps members indicated a better understanding of the impact of their work (targets exceeded by 19%).

80% of AmeriCorps members improved their presentation skills through their service positions.

100% of members increased their commitment to service as future public service leaders.

Recommendations:

Data collection procedures need to be amended to ensure receipt of data from all members while respecting confidentiality of clients served.

Data Collection (Methods, Instruments, Source and Timeline)

Data Collection Methods and Instruments:

Tally sheets: sign in sheets

Questionnaires: Distributing surveys by hand, postal mail, or Internet.

Interviews: Conducting face-to-face or telephone surveys.

Excel sheets: Tabulating all numeric data.

Observation: Recording actions using checklist and notes.

ePortfolio: platform where members showcase their achievements

Data Source:

Members

Volunteers

Agency/program supervisors

Community beneficiaries

Data collection timeline:

Community member outcome data will be collected three times during the term.

Process data will be analyzed quarterly.

Data Management and Analysis

Data management:

Based on findings from the evaluation, we plan to use the following data management methods:

Online survey tool

Narratives

Stony Brook ePortfolio

Excel spreadsheet

Data analysis strategies:

The following data analysis strategies are proposed:

Basic display: frequency, percentage, charts.

Measurement of central tendency: Mean, Mode, Median.

Comparisons using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Person responsible for data analysis:

AmeriCorps Program Coordinator

Strategies for Using Evaluation Findings

Reporting:

The internal evaluator will compile an additional report outlining all our process and outcome findings and the resulting recommendations for improvement after the end of term. This complete report and any future reports will be made available to NY State Commission/Corporation as part of our next grant application. We will compile a one page fact sheet highlighting the results of our evaluation to share with other stakeholders (community partners, members, etc.). With strong findings, we will also release a press release to our community to promote our work.

Evaluation Debriefing:

The AmeriCorps Program will hold sporadic evaluation debriefing meetings during the current term to review the evaluation methodology, implementation, findings and recommendations.

Post-Evaluation Action Plan:

The SBU AmeriCorps VCS Program Coordinator will prepare a post-evaluation action plan based on recommendations made by the evaluator, debriefing meetings, and staff members, partners that will be included in the new cycle grant application.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

N/A

Continuation Changes

N/A