

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

In the upcoming year, 92 AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 120 volunteers to serve 840 economically disadvantaged students from Title I elementary schools in Charleston County and the Pee Dee region in South Carolina and Fulton County in Georgia. Members will implement the WINGS social and emotional learning curriculum directly with the students and provide additional support to parents and family members. At the end of the three-year period, students will demonstrate improved academic engagement as shown by improved classroom behavior, increased school attendance, and better academic achievement. This project will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education. The CNCS investment of \$522,786 will be matched with \$969,623.

## Rationale and Approach

### A. Need:

WINGS is working to solve the community problem of poor high school graduation rates in our targeted communities, which are the economically disadvantaged areas of Charleston County and the Pee Dee region in South Carolina and Fulton County in Georgia. The impact of failing to graduate high school is devastating. According to the U.S. Department of Education study *“Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rate in the United States: 1972-2008”* Compendium Report, failure to graduate high school leads to an average personal lifetime income loss of \$630,000 and costs society an additional \$240,000 in social welfare and crime related expenses. Furthermore, one in 10 young male high school dropouts is in jail or juvenile detention on any given day, compared with only one in 35 young male high school graduates (Center for Labor Market Studies) and teenage parenthood is significantly higher for those that fail to graduate high school than those who do (America’s Promise Alliance).

Failure to graduate high school is a severe problem in low-income and economically disadvantaged communities. Our AmeriCorps members will serve with elementary students from these communities, which is an effective means to addressing the high school dropout problem. To illustrate the need, all of our elementary schools feed into certified “dropout factories,” as identified by Johns Hopkins University. The average on-time graduation rate of those high schools is under 50%, well below the national average of 75%, and significantly lower than their own district averages. All of our students come from low-income Title I elementary schools. More than 97% of the students we will enroll are economically disadvantaged, receiving free or reduced lunches and living at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. Approximately 90% of our students come from single parent

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households.

We selected economically disadvantaged elementary school students because these students are already lagging behind their middle- and upper-income counterparts in their academic and social development, and an intervention at this age is an effective way to improve long-term outcomes and graduation rates. When evaluating cognitive scores of preschool-age children, there is a 60% difference in achievement between the highest and lowest socioeconomic groups. Further studies show that 10-year-old students living in the poorest families are already 18 months behind their higher-income counterparts. These early-childhood trends then continue into high school, where low-income students drop out at a rate 4.4 times greater than high-income students (National Center for Children in Poverty).

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

We are proposing a program for seven Full Time, seven One-Year Half Time, and 78 Reduced Half Time members, for a total of 92 members and 40.21 member service years (MSYs). Member role descriptions are given below:

Reduced Half Time members will serve in the role of WINGSLeaders. Each member will be assigned a small group of students (10-12) where they will implement our social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum, lead the WINGS activities, and facilitate small group discussion sessions. Other activities include leading students in service learning activities to develop their sense of community service, providing one-on-one and small group academic support, communicating with teachers and parents, observing school-based classroom sessions, and learning how to design curriculum. WINGS participants and their families view WINGSLeaders as role models, mentors, and after school counselors.

One-Year Half Time members will serve in a specific behavior management role and help coach the reduced half time members with evidence-based behavior management techniques. Additional duties include providing one-on-one and small group lessons to improve student behavior, developing individual behavior improvement plans, providing crisis intervention, and communicating with parents and teachers. Each school site will have one-year half time member.

Full Time members will serve as liaisons among the school, parents, and the WINGS program; perform leadership and coaching duties within WINGS; and handle program logistics. Examples of liaison duties include leading parent education and literacy events, attending parent/teacher conferences, meeting with the school principal, attending faculty meetings, and communicating regularly with parents about their students. Examples of program logistics include curriculum design

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under the guidance of the Site Supervisor, creating specific behavioral and academic plans for kids, and assisting in the enrollment of students. Full Time members will closely monitor students with attendance issues, and then communicate with teachers and families to resolve those issues. The Full Time members will also help with volunteer retention and assist community partners as they become involved with the WINGS program. Full Time members will be college graduates and have a strong interest in serving at-risk and/or economically disadvantaged students. While these members will have leadership and coaching duties during the day, they will not supervise other members.

We are requesting three different member slot types, and each slot type has a unique service description that requires a different number of hours and duties. AmeriCorps members allow us to accomplish greater service with our students than would otherwise be possible with existing staff and/or volunteers. WINGS does not have the human or financial resources to deploy enough paid employees to effectively implement our program. We cannot rely on volunteers to effectively deliver our program due to the intense training and commitment required. AmeriCorps members and the CNCS culture of service are a natural fit with WINGS. Members who make the year commitment to serve with WINGS are more dedicated to the service they are performing than the general population or intermittent volunteers. Serving daily with at-risk students is not an easy role, but we have found that AmeriCorps members have the motivation and drive to do what it takes to succeed in this type of service.

### C. Evidence-Based/Evidence-Informed and Measureable Community Impact

The interventions the AmeriCorps members will be involved with are both evidence-informed and evidenced-based.

Evidence informed: our model is rooted in our research-based social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum. SEL curriculums have been shown to improve academic performance, behavior, and attendance in students, all of which lead to increased graduation rates (Borghans, Heckman, Duckworth, & ter Weel, 2008; Cunha & Heckman, 2007). Further research in economics suggest these non-cognitive skills may predict higher educational attainment and long-term income as strongly, if not more strongly, than direct achievement gains, such as traditional test scores and academic grades (Heckman, 2008; Heckman & Rubinstein, 2002; Bowles, Gintis, & Osborne, 2001; Bowles, Gintis, & Osborne, 2002). It has also been documented that significant improvements in social and emotional development and emotional intelligence can occur throughout elementary school and into middle and high school, unlike changes in more traditional cognitive measures such as IQ (Tough, 2012). It is through this research that we developed our Theory of Change: when kids

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attend WINGS they develop strong social and emotional skills. These skills improve behavior and school attendance in elementary school, and lead to better behavior and school attachment in middle school. This leads to the future hope and expectation of graduation from high school and avoiding jail and teenage parenthood. By serving students in elementary school, the WINGS AmeriCorps program is inoculating these at-risk students against future failure.

Evidence based: WINGS has gone through external evaluations by researchers from the University of Virginia and Yale University to document measureable community impact. Students enrolled in WINGS demonstrated significantly higher math and reading scores, better grades, and improved school attendance when compared to non-WINGS students at the same schools. WINGS students also reported higher self-esteem and less anxiety than non-WINGS students. Finally, executive function skills improved 21 percentile points and applied problem solving skills improved 8 percentile points for the students enrolled in WINGS. Increases in these areas are strong predictors for positive long-term outcomes, such as improved academic achievement, positive high school graduation rates, higher income, and reduced rates of criminal behavior.

At the end of the three-year grant period we expect our students to demonstrate improved academic engagement as shown by improved classroom behavior, increased school attendance, and better academic achievement. Longer term, we expect WINGS kids to graduate from high school and to avoid jail and teenage parenthood. We worked with education and child development experts to create specific measures and targets to track our impact.

\*Goal: Students will develop strong social and emotional (SE) skills.

\*Measure: Students will be rated weekly on five specific SE skills by their WINGSLeader (reduced half time members).

\*Measure: Each quarter students will be asked seven to nine open-ended questions about the specific SE skill(s) taught during the preceding quarter.

\*\*Goal: During their second year of WINGS, students will improve their behavior during school.

\*\*Measure: Weekly classroom behavior assessments will be completed by WINGSLeaders during academic time.

\*\*Measure: Quarterly teacher behavior assessments will be completed on each student.

\*\*\*Goal: During their second year of WINGS, kids will show high attachment to school. In other words, WINGS kids will frequently attend school.

\*\*\*Measure: School attendance on report cards.

We will keep track of student progress in our online performance management system, called

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Efforts to Outcomes. We will report on our impact annually in our annual report and partnership reports.

### **D. Member Recruitment**

A regimented recruitment plan is used to generate a qualified applicant pool. Upon notice of the grant award, we will contact college career offices, education and psychology departments, relevant student clubs and organizations, and begin on-campus recruitment events and presentations. We will also post available member positions on web-based and college job boards, flyers, and social media. From the pool of applicants we will carefully screen and evaluate each applicant to ensure the strongest fit with WINGS. Potential members will be required to complete a written application with essay questions, complete a program visit (when possible), and go through two rounds of interviews with one or more Site Supervisors.

WINGS is committed to maintaining a diverse group of individuals to serve our kids. WINGS kids come from low-income, predominantly African-American families. During recruitment, emphasis will be placed on targeting a diverse applicant pool and individuals who are from the communities we serve. In our existing GA and SC programs, more than 75% of our members are African-American and nearly 50% come from traditionally underrepresented populations.

### **E. Member Training**

During the recruitment and interview process, members will be oriented to the community and population they will be serving. When feasible, prospective members will go through site visits so they can experience the WINGS AmeriCorps program and communities first hand. They will also meet with former and current State AmeriCorps members to discuss program specifics and expectations.

Members will acquire many skills during their term of service, such as social and emotional development, how to provide and receive feedback, communication skills, working in teams, and understanding the needs of at-risk youth. The skills our AmeriCorps members develop will be useful within the WINGS program and in their lives after AmeriCorps.

We constantly evaluate the skills our members need and the best way to train our members in order for them to be successful within WINGS. Members will attend a week long, 40 hour pre-service training camp to get them ready for their service with the students. Topics covered include the developmental stages of childhood, behavior management, serving special needs children, academic skills-building, curriculum design, implementing state standards into daily activities, and social and emotional learning theories and practices. Training will be led by our AmeriCorps Program Director,

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Site Supervisors, and professionals in their respective fields. Additional training sessions will be led by the WINGS staff and outside partners throughout the service year. For example, workshops will be led by teachers on how to assist with homework and to give individualized instruction and trainings may be led by mental health professionals on dealing with challenging students and child abuse. The projected timeline of training is: 40 hours of pre-service training in August; 8 hours of in-service training in Sept.; and 3-4 hours of in-service training in Oct., Nov., Jan., Mar., and Apr.

During the pre-service training sessions members will receive their full AmeriCorps orientation, covering such topics as prohibited activities and opportunities for additional service. Members, Site Supervisors, and volunteers will be reminded of the rules regarding prohibited activities throughout the year during in-service training sessions.

### F. Member Supervision

Members are supervised at each school by their Site Supervisor. Members will meet with their Site Supervisor at least twice a week to discuss individual strengths and weaknesses in order to improve the overall program, specific member performance, and kid performance. Site Supervisors will also provide members with support and guidance.

Site Supervisors are carefully screened and trained before being placed in their roles. They must be college graduates and have had at least one year of WINGS experience, social and emotional learning, or youth development experience. Once hired, Site Supervisors must successfully complete a week-long professional development institute where they learn and practice different managerial styles, how to deliver training, and the administrative and supervisory requirements of their positions. Regional Operations Directors (RODs) directly oversee the Site Supervisors, providing on-going coaching and professional development. All RODs have previously been Site Supervisors.

### G. Member Experience

Members deliver the WINGS social and emotional learning program three hours per day, five days per week for the entire school year. Our students receive more than 500 hours of high quality programming. Students attend daily since each week's lesson builds upon the previous. Members serve a consistent and small group of 10-12 students for an entire year to teach skills, which the members also develop within themselves, creating a powerful service experience and leading to continued civic participation.

The WINGS curriculum instills 30 learning objectives intentionally embedded into every activity to develop self-awareness, relationship skills, social awareness, self-management and responsible decision making. The learning objectives and curriculum are the same at each school site to maintain

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program fidelity. AmeriCorps members will lead the following key components of WINGS:

Community Unity ∫ the first 30 minutes of each day are focused on creating a caring community, teaching specific social and emotional skills, and providing kids with a nutritious snack. Students are in small groups, with one AmeriCorps member to 10-12 students. During this time the WINGS Creed is said, which is SEL in kid-friendly language.

Choice Time Activities ∫ 9- and 18-week blocks of art, music, sports, and innovative activities that the kids select. Choice Time Activities occur twice a week and incorporate our social and emotional learning objectives and academic standards.

Academic Centers ∫ 60 minutes Monday-Thursday where students receive academic support. Use of time is guided by the school principal in order to maximize impact. WINGS leverages community volunteers to assist in Academic Centers.

WINGSWorks ∫ 60 minute Wednesday service learning activities focused on helping others, strengthening attachment to school, and further developing a sense of service and community involvement.

WildWINGS ∫ 90 minute Friday activities that include innovative games, discussions, academic enrichment, and role-playing to reinforce the weekly learning objective.

Discussions and Assessments ∫ SEL objectives are taught and reinforced through the use of age-appropriate discussions. Social and emotional skills development and behavior assessments are also given to measure student progress.

Family Activities ∫ WINGS holds parent literacy and educational activities a minimum of once each quarter, and typically more often.

Parent/Teacher Interactions ∫ Since WINGS straddles the school day, our members and staff are in frequent communication with both teachers and parents about their students. This position allows us to facilitate communication between the school day and home.

Our program provides daily structure for both the members and the participants. Members are also provided additional support opportunities so that they can reflect on and learn from their service. Every week site supervisors will lead member meetings to provide constructive feedback to the service being provided and to highlight the impact being made.

In the recruitment of members we will clearly identify that WINGS is an AmeriCorps program, discuss the benefits of service within our program and beyond, review AmeriCorps language, and communicate the importance of our members' service. WINGS will connect our members with other AmeriCorps members and national service participants in our communities through Day of

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Service activities, common trainings, and networking driven by the Program Director. WINGS believes strongly in the mission of the Corporation and we are proud to be able to already call ourselves an AmeriCorps program through our state grants in GA and SC. As we grow our scope and become a National Direct Program, we will continue to connect our identity to the AmeriCorps brand.

A final component of the member experience, the impact on our members, is expressed in our member Theory of Change: if AmeriCorps members serve with WINGS for one year or more, they will develop and improve their own social and emotional skills and build meaningful relationships with kids. Members will then utilize those skills in everyday life after WINGS to achieve high levels of success professionally and personally as educators, youth leaders, business leaders, and in other careers, as well as parents and youth mentors.

### H. Volunteer Generation

Volunteers are an important component to WINGS, and we have experience in recruiting and managing them within our schools. Our volunteer recruitment plan targets senior citizens, high school students, and other members of the community. We target members of the communities in which we serve since it helps build a stronger connection between our program and our constituents. We advertise our volunteer opportunities online, with the United Way, web-based sites such as Idealist.org, and at local high schools, senior citizen centers, centers of worship, and other common meeting places. We also have an AmeriCorps\*VISTA further refining and improving our volunteer plan for the future.

Volunteers typically serve as one-on-one academic assistants during academic center, provide support during activities, help with family programs, and serve dinner. By serving in these roles, they are assisting the members and staff in meeting the identified community needs. Volunteer recruitment will not be a primary role of our members. Staff members will be in charge of volunteer recruitment, retention, and management. However, members will be encouraged to solicit volunteers through their personal and professional networks.

All volunteers will receive training and background checks by program staff. During their training they will be briefed on prohibited and unallowable activities. By carefully outlining allowable volunteer opportunities and providing proper supervision from the WINGS staff, we will ensure our compliance with AmeriCorps regulations.

### I. Organizational Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

WINGS is highly committed to branding national service. The AmeriCorps Program Director and members of the WINGS communication team will ensure that all of our service locations and

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affiliates will use the AmeriCorps name and/or logo on websites, service gear, public materials, application forms, recruitment brochures, on-line position postings and other recruitment strategies, orientation materials, member curriculum, signs, banners, press releases, and other items related to our AmeriCorps program. As a state program we have already made this commitment, with AmeriCorps branding found on many of the aforementioned items.

### Organizational Capability

#### A. Organizational Background and Staffing

The mission of WINGS is to teach at-risk, economically disadvantaged kids how to behave well, make good decisions, and build healthy relationships. We do this by weaving a comprehensive social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum into a fresh and fun after school program. We run our after school programs directly in the elementary schools for at-risk students. Kids get the life lessons they need to succeed and to be happy, and they get a safe place to call home after school. Through the use of grant resources, such as AmeriCorps, and philanthropic funding, students are able to attend for free.

WINGS was founded in 1996 in Charleston, South Carolina. We initially started as a camp, but by 1999 we moved into the after school setting to spend more time with our students, thus deepening our impact. We were able to fulfill two unmet needs: 1) students received our SEL curriculum and 2) they were provided with high quality after school care. From 2000 to 2007 we experimented with a variety of program models. By 2007 we charted a more strategic plan to further our impact. Dr. David Hunter, former Director of Evaluation at the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, helped us formalize our Theory of Change and curriculum and to implement a performance management system to track and measure student progress. We then put together a detailed expansion plan to carefully grow our programs and organizational capacity. Since the 2007 to 2008 school year we have grown from one program to six, now operating in Georgia and South Carolina. We also have been able to carefully track student outcomes and maintain high program fidelity.

The WINGS staff and management have the necessary experience to plan and implement the proposed program. Over the past decade we have been recognized for our program and management practices, demonstrating our strong organizational capacity. A few examples include: 4-star rating by Charity Navigator; GuideStar's Transparency Seal; featured by Edutopia, George Lucas's education foundation, featured in Mario Morino's *Leap of Reason: Managing to Outcomes* and Paul Bloom's *How to Scale Your Social Venture* as an example of a performance-driven, outcome-oriented nonprofit organization; awarded the SC Association of Nonprofit Organizations' highest award for

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excellence in nonprofit management; and was profiled by Scholastic magazine.

Our staffing and management structure is well equipped to handle the proposed program. The following individuals will be used to staff the AmeriCorps program:

CEO: Bridget Laird ; Bridget has worked with WINGS for kids since 1998. As a former Chief Program Officer and a Site Supervisor, Bridget has experience in all areas of nonprofit management. Bridget was instrumental in developing the WINGS Theory of Change, oversaw the local replication of WINGS within Charleston, and led the out-of-state expansion in Georgia. Bridget's role within the AmeriCorps program is to provide oversight to the staff, work with the Chief Program Officer in curriculum and training development, work with the Chief Strategy Officer to develop and to maintain relationships with our partner schools, and to solicit additional funding to support the program. Bridget has an undergraduate degree in parks and recreation from North Carolina State University and a master's degree in education, with a concentration in school-age development, from Concordia University in St. Paul, MN.

Chief Program Officer (CPO)/AmeriCorps Program Director: Nicole Lovecchio ; Nicole joined WINGS in 2002. Prior to coming to WINGS, Nicole worked with the SC Department of Mental Health as a behavior counselor. Nicole has served as a Site Supervisor, where she opened two new WINGS programs, and as the Charleston based Regional Operations Director (ROD). As the ROD, Nicole directly oversaw the Charleston Site Supervisors, designed the AmeriCorps program training, led member recruitment, and updated the WINGS curriculum. Nicole also served as the AmeriCorps Program Director for our South Carolina grant, where she has received exemplary feedback from the SC Commission staff. As the CPO and National AmeriCorps Program Director, Nicole will oversee all program operations and compliance with AmeriCorps requirements and program reporting. She will assist with member recruitment, training, and retention and the training of the Site Supervisors. Nicole has a degree in juvenile justice from Shippensburg University.

Chief Strategy Officer (CSO): Julia Rugg ; Julia joined WINGS in 2011. Julia came to WINGS with prior nonprofit experience, nearly four years of legal work, and four years of small business ownership experience. Julia played a key role in opening and supervising the new GA programs, updated and improved professional development for full-time program staff, and serves as the primary point of contact for the WINGS randomized control trial evaluation. Julia's role within the AmeriCorps program is to focus on long-term strategic issues and growth; to oversee program management, internal quality control and fidelity; and to spearhead external evaluation efforts. She has a B.A. from the University of Maryland Baltimore County and a J.D. from the University of

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Maryland.

Chief Financial Officer: Adam Pomerantz ¿ Adam joined WINGS in 2009. Adam has experience managing the finances of WINGS, leading the organization through clean audits in his tenure, including two OMB A-133 Single Audits. Adam will serve as the dedicated AmeriCorps Program fiscal agent, provide human resources and information technology support, and assist on long-term strategy and program evaluations. Adam holds Masters of Business Administration, Masters of Teaching, and BA degrees from The University of North Carolina.

Director of Development: Liz Mester ¿ Liz has worked for WINGS since 2007. Liz will indirectly be working with the AmeriCorps program as she raises funds for the long-term sustainability of the program. Liz graduated from the College of Charleston in 2004 with a degree in Arts Management. Please note, per regulations, no federal dollars will be used on fundraising efforts.

Regional Operations Directors (RODs ¿ one per region, two total): The ROD positions have not yet been filled. RODs must be college graduates (Masters level preferred), have had more than two years of supervisory experience, and prior WINGS experience. RODs will lead regional member and staff recruitment and training, evaluate program metrics, and develop local partnerships and volunteer opportunities. Qualified applicants must be able to effectively manage and train staff and members, work with school officials, and develop effective community partnerships.

Site Supervisors (one per school site, seven total): All Site Supervisor positions have not yet been filled. Site Supervisors must be college graduates (Masters level preferred) and have had at least one year of WINGS, social and emotional learning, or youth development experience. Qualified applicants must be able to effectively manage programs, provide coaching and feedback to AmeriCorps members, and possess strong communication skills.

WINGS takes professional development seriously. Site Supervisors go through an intensive week-long professional development training institute to prepare them for their duties within our AmeriCorps program. Training is provided by more experienced staff members and outside consultants. Site Supervisors and senior staff members will attend additional professional development opportunities throughout the year, such as after school conferences, fiscal management seminars, and AmeriCorps financial and programmatic orientations and workshops. Each year we evaluate, update, and document training methods based on the prior year¿s program success to provide the best possible training and skills development for our members.

WINGS is proud of our evaluation efforts and our history of performing meaningful program evaluations. Internally we document program outcomes through our online performance

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management system. We are able to track individual, small group, school, regional, and organizational outcomes in order to identify impact and make program modifications. We also have experience working with external evaluators, as documented by our work with Yale and UVA. Our evaluation experience and results have been so positive that the UVA researchers wrote and received a \$2.8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to perform a randomized control trial study on WINGS, the gold standard in evaluation. The first cohort of students started in August 2012, and the research will continue for another three years. We are ready and able to complete an evaluation and support external evaluators.

WINGS has ample experience administering AmeriCorps grants and other federal funds. During the 2010-11 school year we were awarded our first AmeriCorps grant, a South Carolina Formula grant for \$203,059. The following year (2011-12) we were awarded a State Competitive grant, and it was continued for the current year (2012-13). During our most recent program visit, it was noted by the South Carolina AmeriCorps representatives that “no areas of concern were identified.” In 2012-13 we received a Georgia Formula grant for \$155,906. Additional experience planning and managing federal funds include: seven 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) grants, community development block grants, U.S. Department of Juvenile Justice funding, inclusion in South Carolina’s ABC program (funded by Federal TANF funds) since 1998, qualified for the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program since 2001, included in Federal Work Study programs since 2002, and Title I school district funding.

WINGS is governed by a Board of Directors and a set of registered bylaws. The management and strategic planning of WINGS is vested with the Board, and the Board holds the staff accountable for the goals and objectives of WINGS. The WINGS Board will provide on the ground support, particularly with our sustainability efforts. Reporting directly to the CEO are the Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Program Officer (AmeriCorps Program Director), Chief Financial Officer, and Director of Development. The Regional Operations Directors report to the CPO and the Site Supervisors report to the Regional Operations Directors. This structure is designed so members receive the proper support, training, and supervision needed to perform their duties to their highest capabilities. Policies and procedures are put in place to allow members to confidentially discuss problems, challenges, and hurdles to their service.

### B. Sustainability

Our staff is responsible for securing commitments and monitoring available financial support during and after the AmeriCorps grant period. We anticipate needing \$969,623 in match funding to

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support our AmeriCorps program. We have already secured \$436,700 in federal 21st CCLC funds and \$125,000 from the Trident United Way, and we have a strong plan to secure the remaining funds necessary:

\*Further develop in-kind support: Continue to benefit from USDA Child and Adult Food Care Program and from contributions funded through Federal Work Study programs. We project \$105,680 in funding from these programs. We are also expanding our supplies donation program.

\*Continue to raise funds from individuals, corporations, foundations: WINGS is in the midst of a strong outcome documentation study, which will demonstrate the positive effects of WINGS on our kids. There is a trend in philanthropy to support organizations with documented outcomes.

\*Strengthen financial partnerships with the school districts in which we operate: We have a history of working with the local school districts as a funding partner and we project \$285,000 in funding for our program, which is our current funding level.

\*Secure state and community level grants: Examples include Governor's Grants, Community Development Block Grants, and Community Assistance Grants.

\*Continue to seek additional government funding: Potential sources include the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, Title I funds, School Improvement funds, Supplemental Educational Services (SES) reimbursable funds, ABC vouchers, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, and Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities funding.

\*Utilize the 'Meet WINGS' program, where numerous community leaders, politicians, and philanthropists have the opportunity to experience WINGS. These relationships will be cultivated in order to provide sustainable funding.

Recent examples of funders that will support our long-term sustainability include: \$75,000 from the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta, \$50,000 from the NoVo Foundation (a foundation started by Peter and Jennifer Buffett, noted businessman and philanthropist Warren Buffett's son and daughter in-law), \$50,000 from the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina, and \$40,000 from the Belk Foundation. As we move through our randomized control trial and become recognized as the premier social and emotional learning program we anticipate larger and more stable foundation funding sources to become available, thus supporting our long-term sustainability.

The following is our plan for ensuring that the impact of our program in our communities is sustained beyond the grant period:

\*Develop strong relationships with local philanthropists by bringing individuals and groups on program visits and networking at community meetings.

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\*Diversify our funding sources so that we can sustain programming in the absence of any one revenue source.

\*Further develop the spirit of volunteerism within our communities to increase the number and quality of volunteers serving within WINGS and other service organizations.

We have a diverse set of community stakeholders and partners. Our *clients* are the students and families that we serve through our program. Our *customers* are those who support our program financially. Additional stakeholders include teachers, principals, and school administrators who all have a vested interest in the success of our program. Our partners include other nonprofit organizations, community groups, and businesses who are interested in supporting and working within our program.

In order to get the best program in place, we developed school based advisory committees of our constituents. This is to better understand the specific needs of each community, to recognize the other community services already in place, and to develop how the WINGS program can improve what is already being done. Through these committees we are able to further engage key stakeholders and partners to contribute to our long-term sustainability.

### C. Compliance and Accountability

The most effective way for WINGS to ensure compliance is to set strong policies and procedures that follow AmeriCorps rules and regulations, and then establish a monitoring plan to ensure policies and procedures are being followed. As a current state AmeriCorps grantee, we have a very good understanding of the regulations associated with AmeriCorps, and we have already incorporated them into our standard operating processes.

Monitoring plan: the Site Supervisor is accountable for ensuring compliance at the program and service site level. Site Supervisors will be training on the rules and regulations of AmeriCorps during their annual training institute. Site Supervisors will be directly supervised and monitored by our Regional Operations Directors (RODs) and the AmeriCorps Program Director. Our Program Director is currently in her third year as an AmeriCorps Program Director, where she has been in compliance on all reports and site visits. The Program Director and RODs will make frequent visits to each service location and discuss compliance issues and concerns with the Site Supervisors. The WINGS Chief Financial Officer will provide an additional layer of oversight.

Compliance with prohibited activities is a key component of our monitoring plan. At pre-service training all AmeriCorps members will review and sign official member handbooks and service agreements that list the prohibited activities. Prohibited activities will also be discussed during

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training. Member duties will be described and reviewed during training, all of which have been vetted by the Program Director and senior management team to ensure they are allowable activities. Members will be instructed how to report concerns to supervisors and senior management if they fear they may be engaging in prohibited activities. Members may report concerns confidentially.

An independent CPA firm will perform an annual audit to monitor financial compliance. At the end of our most recently completed fiscal year (fiscal year 2012) we went through OMB's A-133 Single Audit procedure. The independent auditor found no material weaknesses or reportable conditions with our internal controls and federal programs.

If an area of risk or noncompliance is identified, we will take immediate action to remedy the issue. If necessary, we are willing to take drastic measures, such as terminating employees who are unable to meet compliance standards.

Special Circumstances √ Over the past six years we have codified our program and expanded within South Carolina and replicated to Georgia, increasing the number of kids we serve by more than 400%. We still only serve students living in extreme poverty. To date, we have primarily served students in urban settings; however, we are proposing to replicate in rural Florence, SC in the upcoming grant period.

Multi-State Applicant √ We consulted and submitted documentation of our intent to apply for a National Direct Grant with Amieko Watson of the Georgia State Commission and Emily Thompson of the South Carolina State Commission. In both cases we were encouraged to pursue this path, with the caveat there could not be duplication of CNCS resources √ if we were to receive a National Direct Grant we would not be eligible to receive state funding.

Operating Sites and Member Service Sites √ We have currently identified six of our seven proposed member service sites. All sites will be economically disadvantaged elementary schools. Four are in Charleston and North Charleston, South Carolina, where we are currently operating as a South Carolina AmeriCorps. Two member sites are located in Fulton County, Georgia (Atlanta metro area), where we are currently operating as a Georgia AmeriCorps grantee. The final school site, in rural South Carolina, will be identified in the coming months. We also will have staff based out of our headquarters in Charleston.

We used a weighted assessment to evaluate potential program sites, incorporating the criteria required by the AmeriCorps regulations. The WINGS senior leadership made multiple site visits and had numerous conversations with local stakeholders before selecting our locations. When considering sites, only distressed communities and high poverty elementary schools were considered. Once

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communities of need were evaluated, we looked at our ability to develop long-term sustainability and to provide proper programmatic oversight. As a result of our site visits we are becoming sustainable within each region. For example, in the past year we raised \$285,000 in local school district support, \$200,000 in United Way support, and more than \$150,000 from foundations within the local communities. Programmatic oversight was another key consideration when selecting service locations. We are headquartered in Charleston, which makes it easy to provide direct supervision of our South Carolina programs. The Georgia schools were selected due to their proximity to Charleston. Since opening our Georgia schools, we have averaged semimonthly trips to ensure proper oversight. Additional selection factors included individual school needs, principal and teacher support for WINGS and innovative programs, and long-term partnerships with other community organizations.

We anticipate having the final site selected and Site Supervisor hired by May 2013. This will allow us enough time to recruit members and students to our program.

### **Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy**

#### A. Cost Effectiveness

WINGS is a cost effective program. We are able to document meaningful outcomes and produce a significant return on investment. The total project cost for the proposed program is \$1,492,409. The requested amount from the Corporation is \$522,786, or \$13,000 per MSY.

Our projected operating budget for the proposed grant year is \$3,436,207, with the proposed AmeriCorps project making up 43% of the total budget. Additional sources of organizational funding comes through other government grants (21st CCLC, school district support, USDA donations, etc.) and philanthropy (foundations, corporations, and individuals). Over the past five years, current grant year included, we have received state formula funding from Georgia and formula and state competitive funding from South Carolina. Our Georgia funding is for \$155,906 this year. In South Carolina we received one year of formula funding for \$203,059 in 2010-11 and we are in our second year of state competitive funding, having received \$203,059 in 2011-12 and \$201,600 in 2012-13. We will apply for continuation funding in both Georgia and South Carolina; however, our preference is to become a National Direct grantee, thus forgoing the state commission funding.

WINGS has a diverse funding stream to meet the match requirement and fund our program. We will need to raise \$969,623 through non-CNCS sources. Current commitments include \$436,700 from the 21st CCLC program and \$125,000 from the Trident United Way. Based on historical funding levels, we anticipate receiving \$285,000 in local school district support, \$85,680 in USDA snack donations, and \$20,000 in federal work study funds. The remaining \$17,243 will be raised

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through foundations, corporations, and individuals. Please note, per an agreement with the U.S. Department of Education and the USDA, both 21st CCLC funds and snack donations are permitted as match funds for AmeriCorps projects. We have a history of meeting our revenue goals, and we do not anticipate this changing.

WINGS is a cost effective approach for addressing the poor graduation rates found in disadvantaged communities. Research from Dr. James Heckman, a Nobel prize winning economist, has shown social and emotional education programs produce high rates of return and are cost effective solutions to alleviate inequality, especially programs that work with children. When looking at WINGS specifically, our long-term outcomes predict higher graduation rates and lower teenage parenthood and jailing rates. As noted, failure to graduate high school leads to an average personal lifetime income loss of \$630,000 and costs society an additional \$240,000 in social welfare and crime related expenses. Early WINGS data suggests an improved graduation rate of 40% over a comparison group, which graduates at a rate of less than 50%. Of the 840 kids that go through WINGS during our initial program year, we anticipate seeing 168 more graduates over baseline (588 vs. 420 graduates). With a total program cost of \$1,492,409, those 168 students will generate an additional \$105,840,000 in income and save \$40,320,000 in social welfare costs over their lifetimes. Over a 65 year period, this creates an internal rate of return of 20.4%, which is a more effective use of capital than almost all documented social and financial investments. This rate of return does not factor in multiplier effects that we expect to be realized, such as our students becoming positive influences in their communities, which may lead to additional graduates and more community investment, and the continued service and work of our AmeriCorps members in their lives after AmeriCorps.

Special Circumstances  $\zeta$  WINGS has an established program model, as documented by our service in Charleston. Now that we have our programs fully codified, we would like to expand into one additional rural, low-income school this program year, with the intention of further replication in the following years of the grant cycle. In all of our schools we are serving resource-poor communities and our programs serve kids in areas of extreme poverty. As such, we must go beyond our geographic borders when soliciting donor funds. This requires us to spend time and energy introducing philanthropists to WINGS who otherwise would not step into these locations.

### B. Budget Adequacy

WINGS has extensive experience designing and implementing social and emotional education programs in the after school setting. This experience allows us to accurately budget the costs to run, support, and supervise our AmeriCorps program. Each category has been allocated to WINGS or the

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Corporation. Allocations are based on restrictions on CNCS and match resources. The following is a clear and reasonable line-item breakdown of all necessary expenses:

**Personnel Expenses:** The positions of CEO (1 position x 20% FTE), Chief Strategy Officer (1 x 90% FTE), Chief Program Officer/AmeriCorps Program Director (1 position x 100% FTE), Regional Operations Directors (2 x 100% FTE), and Site Supervisors (7 x 100%) are necessary to provide the support and supervision required of our AmeriCorps program. All positions have established salaries in place. Total personnel is anticipated to be \$467,500, with WINGS providing \$162,000 and the Corporation providing \$305,500.

**Personnel Fringe Benefits:** All full-time employees have access to benefits. Benefits are calculated as 18% of salaries allocated to the AmeriCorps Program. The benefits calculation includes FICA (7.65% of salaries), health insurance (7.9%), unemployment insurance (0.3%), retirement benefits (1%), and workers compensation insurance (1.15%). Total fringe benefits are 84,150, with WINGS providing \$54,179 and the Corporation providing \$29,971.

**Staff Travel:** Travel to Corporation events and travel between Charleston and Atlanta have been budgeted. We anticipate sending two employees to two multi-day CNCS conferences. We anticipate there being semimonthly trips between Charleston and Atlanta. Travel is budgeted at \$18,745, with WINGS providing the full amount.

**Member Travel:** Full-time members may need to travel between service locations within their region. Local member travel is budgeted using the standard IRS vehicle mileage reimbursement rate. Total member travel is budgeted at \$1,443, with WINGS providing the full amount.

**Equipment:** At this time, items that qualify for this category are not anticipated to be purchased.

**Supplies:** Program and member supplies are projected from historical costs. Member service gear includes t-shirts, sweatshirts, and fleece jackets with the AmeriCorps and WINGS logos. Service gear is to be worn every day while serving in the WINGS AmeriCorps program. Activity and snack supplies are based on the number of kids involved with the WINGS program and the number of weeks the program runs. Office supplies are based on historical projections. Supplies are budgeted at \$139,130, with WINGS providing the full amount.

**Contractual and Consultant Services:** The primary services needed to support the WINGS program next year are payroll and human resources services, student bus transportation, program activity partners, and the WINGS performance management system. Historical costs were used to project these items at \$39,860, with WINGS providing the full amount.

**Staff Training:** Funds for Site Supervisor training and further fiscal management training have

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been included. Training is budgeted at \$1,700, with WINGS providing the full amount.

Member Training: Member training is primarily provided by the WINGS staff. We included first aid training for members and supplies to be used during our pre-service and in-service training sessions. Member training is budgeted at \$5,100, with WINGS providing the full amount.

Evaluation: WINGS will use an external evaluator to perform a formative evaluation on the programs. The cost is an estimate based on the projected scope of work. Evaluation is budgeted at \$2,500, with WINGS providing the full amount.

Other Program Operating Costs: Additional items include staff and member background checks and phone expenses. Background checks include criminal history, sex offender, and FBI checks. The budgeted cost per set is \$75. Phone expenses are based on historical costs. Other program operating costs are budgeted at \$5,400, with WINGS providing the full amount.

Member Costs & Living Allowance: Our program calls for 7 full-time members with stipends of \$15,000, 7 half-time members with stipends of \$8,000, and 78 reduced half-time members with stipends of \$4,500. Stipends will be paid in even installments throughout the term of service. The total living allowance cost is \$512,000, with WINGS providing \$362,264 and CNCS providing \$149,736.

Member Support Costs: Payroll taxes and workers compensation are percentages of total member costs, workers compensation insurance has been included for eligible members (Georgia members only), accident insurance is included for all members, and health insurance has been budgeted for the full-time members. Member support costs are \$55,458, with WINGS providing \$44,003 and CNCS providing \$11,455.

Indirect Costs: The 5% fixed administrative cost option was used to find the CNCS allocation of indirect costs. Ten percent of total costs were used to find the WINGS allocation.

The total program cost is \$1,492,409, with the Corporation providing \$522,786 and WINGS matching with \$969,623.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

### Amendment Justification

N/A

### Clarification Summary

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N/A

### Continuation Changes

N/A