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Executive Summary

In each year of the grant, 3,200 YouthBuild AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 5,400 volunteers to build or repair at least 650 affordable housing units for low-income individuals and families in 94 low-income urban and rural communities across the country. During the 3-year grant period, at least 1,950 units of affordable housing will be made available to at least 4,500 low-income individuals. In addition, 4,900 economically disadvantaged YouthBuild AmeriCorps members who were unemployed prior to their term of service will secure employment during their term of service or within one year after finishing. 2,030 economically disadvantaged YouthBuild AmeriCorps members who have not obtained their high school credential prior to the start of their term of service will obtain a GED or HSD while serving or within one year after finishing the program. 2,400 economically disadvantaged members will enter post-secondary education during or within one year after completion. This project will focus on the CNCS focus area of Economic Opportunity. The CNCS investment of \$9,011,385 will be matched with \$9,011,385.

Rationale and Approach

NEED: YouthBuild AmeriCorps programs will address both the shortage of affordable housing in 94 low-income urban and rural communities, and the need for pathways into employment and post secondary education for economically disadvantaged unemployed 16 to 24 year olds who will serve as YouthBuild AmeriCorps members.

Countless studies have supported the assessment of affordable housing as a general societal need. A 2012 report by the Urban Institute states that the Great Recession has hit the poorest Americans the hardest, leaving more families homeless. Communities served by proposed subgrantees represent this problem: e.g. South L.A., CA reports the highest rate of homelessness in any district in the county, with 19,380 homeless individuals; Venice, CA reports 51,430 homeless; Red Lake, MN reports a homeless rate over 50%; Washington, DC reports 18,500 homeless; in Covington, KY, there are over 1,000 households on the waiting list for section 8 housing. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, 3.5 million people live in low-income communities that lack adequate affordable housing. The shortfall of affordable units of housing doubled to 5.1 million units by 2010, according to the 2012 State of the Nation's Housing report, prepared by the Joint Center for Housing Studies. Access to permanent, affordable housing is a necessary component of a strategy to enable low-income people to emerge from poverty. The general well-being of individuals lacking permanent housing is impacted significantly as demonstrated by a 2012 Urban Institute report, which states that

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homelessness and housing instability can prove detrimental to children's academic outcomes. Expanding the supply of affordable housing to low-income Americans is a critical need, both to ensure quality of life for those families and to repair the social fabric of entire communities damaged by the recession.

YouthBuild AmeriCorps addresses another critical need through the members it trains, educates, and inspires to lead and serve. According to a 2009 Congressional Research Service report, there are 1.9 million low-income 16 to 24 year olds who are out of school and out of work who need opportunities to learn and serve and rejoin society. Nearly 1.2 million students drop out of high school each year in the United States and 6.7 million young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 are out of school and unemployed, according to a 2012 report by Queens College, "The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth." The average graduation rate in communities served by the programs in this application is 50.3%, compared to the national average of 71.7%. Gaining a high school diploma is a critical step to avoiding poverty. A 2009 report by the Center for Labor Market Studies states that over a working lifetime, high school dropouts earn \$400,000 less than those that have graduated. Further, teen employment rates fell from 45% in 2000 to only 26% in 2011, according to a 2012 study by the Center for Labor Market Studies. Only 12% of black teens living in low income households were employed in 2012. There is a great need for both education and job placement strategies for disadvantaged under-educated youth. Enormous talent is being wasted among America's low-income young people.

One hundred percent of YouthBuild AmeriCorps members are economically disadvantaged; at least 90% lack a high school diploma and 85% lack employment at entry. Members serve their communities by building or repairing affordable housing, thus addressing the lack of affordable housing. While in the program, they also receive academic instruction, job preparation skills and career preparation counseling. Near the end of their term of service, members are placed in jobs and/or post-secondary education, thus addressing unemployment and college access among low income young adults. YouthBuild's unique design gives hope and purpose to unemployed and under-educated youth. When the community witnesses previously idle and aimless young adults now walking with book bags and tool belts and building beautiful homes for the homeless while improving their own lives through education and job placement, the whole neighborhood is infused with hope and pride.

All proposed YouthBuild AmeriCorps subgrantees are located in economically distressed areas. They serve 71 urban and 23 rural communities. The average median annual household income for a

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family of four in the neighborhoods served is \$38,256, well below the national median annual income of \$52,762. Seventeen programs serve communities in which the average income is below the 2012 HHS poverty guideline of \$23,050 for a family of four. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, families need an income of about twice the federal poverty level just to afford basic expenses. The average community poverty rate of programs applying is 22%, 8 percentage points above the national average of 14%.

MEMBERS SOLVING COMMUNITY PROBLEMS: The YouthBuild AmeriCorps program is a full-time, 9- to 24-month program where members spend half their time constructing affordable homes and half their time in academic classes earning a GED or high school diploma. They gain valuable job skills, learn leadership and citizenship skills, participate in additional service activities, and receive personal counseling and mentoring toward setting and fulfilling their life goals. Their primary service activities include building or rehabilitating a home from start to finish, including demolition; framing; drywall, window, door, and floor installation; roofing; introduction to electric, plumbing, and HVAC tasks; and painting. Members also provide home repair service to low-income individuals including wheel-chair ramp installation and weatherization. Some members will refurbish computers for low-income individuals and/or provide technology skills and resources to non-profit organizations. A small number will provide healthcare to low-income individuals in non-profit healthcare facilities. Secondary service activities include events such as removing graffiti from public buildings, offering meals in shelters or reading to school children.

Receiving an AmeriCorps grant dramatically enhances the capacity and impact of the applicant programs. First, earning the AmeriCorps education award is the first time that post-secondary education has become feasible for members and that they have purposefully planned to pursue it. This award allows them to conceive for the first time of going to college and fulfilling their highest aspirations. Second, as AmeriCorps members, the YouthBuild students become part of a nationally known initiative that is significantly larger than themselves and their communities and that is valued publicly by the President of the United States. This decisively influences their new and lasting identity as service-givers rather than service-receivers. Third, AmeriCorps gives YouthBuild programs an emphasis on generating volunteers, creating partnerships, and providing secondary service opportunities to YouthBuild members which broadens their impact on the community. Fourth, without AmeriCorps funding, approximately 25% of these programs simply would not operate, or would have dramatically fewer participants. The net loss would be approximately 800 fewer members

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and 163 fewer homes built or repaired per year.

YouthBuild USA is requesting 3,200 YouthBuild AmeriCorps members at 94 programs in 32 states. They will be a mixture of full-time, half-time, reduced half-time, and quarter-time slots. Members spend 50% of their time in academic classes run by the YouthBuild program. Since only 20% of their total service time is permitted by the AmeriCorps regulations to be hours spent in academic classes, they must be considered HT, RHT, or QT members. The average program length is 11 months during which they can log 880 service hours if they have perfect attendance and spend 50% of their time in academic studies. It is challenging to achieve 900 service hours and impossible to log 1700 in the time given. Programs with FT members recruit graduates who have achieved their GED/HSD in year one and are eager to earn a FT award. They serve as volunteer generators, partnership builders, or construction team leaders.

EVIDENCE-BASED MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT: YouthBuild AmeriCorps members build or repair affordable housing. Building affordable housing for low-income and homeless individuals has an immediate, obvious impact on the recipients of that housing, but also on the community in which the housing is built. A given program may spend 9 months building a brand new home from the ground up, while another program may repair over 100 units of housing during the same time period. The net result is that more units of affordable housing are made safe and available to low-income individuals. Moving into homeownership is often associated with better social and economic outcomes, thus promoting upward economic mobility, according to a 2012 Urban Institute report. A 2011 literature review by the Center for Housing Policy demonstrated that affordable and stable housing has been linked with improving health, education, and economic outcomes for families and children.

The other 50% of program time is spent on the members' own pathways out of poverty into productive and responsible adulthood. The members participate in individualized academic courses towards the achievement of a GED or HSD and take part in career development and leadership training with an ultimate goal of placing them in a job or post-secondary placement upon program completion and inspiring them to a lifetime of leadership and service. Thirty-five years of experience implementing this model, coupled with 15 independent research studies on its efficacy, tell us that this is the right balance of education, career development, counseling, leadership development, and service to achieve the greatest impact. A 2012 study by Tufts University touted YouthBuild as an effective pathway into community leadership. Regarding ROI, a 2009 study by Professor Mark Cohen looking

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at members in 34 YouthBuild programs versus a generic comparison group concluded that every dollar spent on a YouthBuild member produced a minimum lifetime return of \$7.80 based on academic gains alone. In 2012 a number of studies and reports were written about "opportunity youth," defined as 16 to 24 year olds who are disconnected from education and employment. Every YouthBuild AmeriCorps member is an economically disadvantaged "opportunity youth" at entry. According to a 2012 Columbia University study, every 20 year old "opportunity youth" will directly cost the taxpayer \$236,000 over his/her lifetime and will produce \$704,000 in social costs if not reconnected to education and/or employment. Thus, each successful YouthBuild AmeriCorps graduate will directly save the taxpayers \$236,000 over his or her lifetime.

In all 94 YouthBuild AmeriCorps programs, members will build and repair affordable housing; in 12 they will also refurbish computers; in 13 they will also provide healthcare services to low-income individuals. During the 3-year grant cycle, YouthBuild AmeriCorps members will produce 1,950 homes for at least 4,500 low-income or homeless people. The building of houses will make a difference: in spirit - seeing young people who had previously been drains on their communities, now rebuilding them; physically - witnessing the conversion of boarded up buildings from eyesores and havens for illegal activity to beacons of hope; and economically -- low-income and homeless individuals will obtain safe, affordable, beautiful housing.

Over the course of the 3-year grant period, 8,160 economically disadvantaged YouthBuild AmeriCorps members will enter the program without a job, and 4,900 will secure employment during their term of service or within one year of completion. Of the 8,115 members who enter the program without a high school diploma, 4,050 will earn a GED or high school diploma or advance 2 grade levels. 2,400 members will enter post-secondary education during their service or within one year of completion. 2,080 will engage in environmentally-conscious training. 5,760 will earn an education award, providing most with the first real hope of pursuing post-secondary education. Based on the formula from the Cohen study showing every dollar spent on every YouthBuild member generating a return of at least \$7.80, the ROI of each year's proposed \$9.9M grant would be at least \$77.2 million.

The basic measures toward which we manage our subgrantees are housing units produced, individuals provided with safe and affordable housing, job placement, academic gains, education awards earned, post-secondary placements, and environmentally-conscious training provided. Beyond outcomes, to estimate partial return on investment, based on the 2012 Columbia University study, the lifetime savings to the taxpayer will be at least \$1.1 Billion and the decreased social cost will be \$3.4 Billion if just half of the 9,600 "opportunity youth" enrolled in YouthBuild AmeriCorps are

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reconnected in a lasting way to employment and/or post-secondary education. This calculation does not take into account the additional value that is generated through the members internalizing the ethic of service and becoming pro-active members of their communities. When we recently asked 14 graduates how many people they had already helped since graduating, the total number was over 10,000. We are currently capturing this more qualitative impact through surveys of members in our current grant cycle.

YouthBuild USA asks subgrantees to set performance objectives, based on past performance and anticipated construction projects. We have developed template housing logs, volunteer logs, and job and college placement logs for local programs to track their outputs and outcomes. Twice a year, programs report their outputs, outcomes, and great stories in our web-based data system, WebSTA-Q, so that we can track their progress, provide technical assistance if needed to meet the deliverables, and populate our reports to CNCS.

CURRENT GRANTEES: YouthBuild USA has successfully met or exceeded all objectives set. In the first 2 years of our current grant, YouthBuild AmeriCorps programs built or repaired 1,594 units of housing, providing over 3,500 low-income individuals with safe and affordable housing. This is 56% more units than the target. Programs have recruited 11,269 non-AmeriCorps volunteers that served 218,708 hours. 3,909 YouthBuild AmeriCorps members have participated in environmentally-conscious training, and 1,139 have earned a certificate as a result of that training. 1,633 YouthBuild AmeriCorps members have earned a high school diploma or GED (46% more than the target), and another 1,467 have improved two grade levels in literacy and numeracy. 3,067 were placed in jobs. 2,559 members have earned an AmeriCorps education award. If we use the return on investment calculation from the Cohen study, the ROI on the \$16.8M spent would be at least \$131M. (\$7.80 x expenses)

RECRUITMENT: YouthBuild has always recruited 100% economically disadvantaged 16 to 24 year olds, at least 75% without a diploma or a job, to serve as AmeriCorps members in their own or nearby communities. Because most programs are located within low-income communities of color, 78% of our members are African-American, Latino, or Native American. Over 90% enter without a diploma, 37% have been court-involved, and 73% are young men. All have untapped talent needed by society.

Recruitment is not a challenge because "opportunity youth" are eager to find a pathway to a productive life style. The 94 proposed YouthBuild AmeriCorps programs have a total of 3,005

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individuals on waiting lists. Members are recruited through radio spots, newspaper ads, and fliers. However, word of mouth is the most effective tool. When members find this opportunity to obtain education, employment, and a way to serve their communities, they spread the word.

TRAINING: Each program begins with a 2- to 4-week intensive orientation called "Mental Toughness" which allows members to truly test their readiness to commit a year to YouthBuild AmeriCorps. Activities relate to punctuality, team building, rising to difficult challenges, goal setting, community service, and citizenship. An introduction to AmeriCorps is presented along with information about the community's needs for housing, computer access, and health care. Because they are recruited from the community where the service will occur, members are already embedded in the community, knowledgeable of its culture, and eager to change the conditions from which they and their loved ones have suffered.

Skills training begins immediately. Skills are taught both through hands-on experiences under skilled supervision and through classroom curriculum. They learn construction site safety, demolition, rough carpentry, roofing, framing, taping, and finish carpentry. In the vocational education classroom, supervisors teach the NCCER (National Center for Construction Education and Research), HBI (HomeBuilders Institute), and/or the AFL-CIO MultiCraft Core Curriculum, providing members with industry recognized certifications.

The YouthBuild AmeriCorps members' academic instruction supports the construction skills needed for their service activity. In math classes, members learn geometry and measurement. In social studies, they study poverty and housing. The curriculum includes all of the basic subjects required to earn a high school credential: reading, writing, math, social studies, and science. Training in life skills and job preparation is done by counselors or job developers and includes interview and resume writing skills, money management, and relationship skills. Personal guidance is important because members may be single parents, victims of abuse, living in a homeless shelter, children of prisoners, aging out of foster care, trying to get out of gangs, living in dysfunctional families, or on welfare or probation. YouthBuild provides group and individual counseling, helping members set and achieve personal goals and systematically overcome obstacles.

Regarding prohibited activities: YouthBuild USA includes a list of the prohibited activities in its subgrantee contracts and on its website. These are reviewed at the required AmeriCorps Management Conference. The site visit monitoring tool, used during on each site visit, reviews these activities as well. Our member contract template also includes the prohibited activities.

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SUPERVISION: While on the construction site, members serve under a ratio of 1 skilled site supervisor to 8 members, learning construction skills as well as basic employment skills. Site supervisors are skilled construction workers who receive additional training from YouthBuild USA authorizing them to award via NCCER, HBI, and/or MCCC certifications to members.

During academic time, teachers work with small groups averaging 11 students. Members report that the individualized attention and supportive group atmosphere in the YouthBuild classroom make it possible for them to learn and to enjoy school, often for the first time. Teachers participate in a variety of training opportunities offered by YouthBuild USA. Recently they have been trained in balanced literacy via two pilots and a teacher training track at our annual AmeriCorps Management Conference. Teachers are encouraged to attend our annual Instructional Leadership Institute and to join the Teachers' Fellows initiative. During the school week each member meets individually with a counselor.

MEMBER EXPERIENCE: YouthBuild AmeriCorps members develop an ethic of service and civic engagement through participation in service as well as leadership and citizenship classes. Members are able to see the impact of their service during ribbon cutting events, where they meet the recipients of the houses they have built, and by engaging with appreciative neighbors while turning a once blighted house into a now beautiful home. Seeing their impact leads to a powerful service experience because members realize that they have become a source of pride in their community. In the words of one member: "From hoodlum to hero! From ex-con to icon!"

Citizenship training uses CNCS approved curricula and/or a citizenship curriculum that was developed by YouthBuild USA. Members also participate in program governance through an elected policy committee in partnership with the director.

YouthBuild students are proud to be called "YouthBuild AmeriCorps members." AmeriCorps identity is the focus of program training from the opening of the grant, from webinars that emphasize the history of AmeriCorps and the importance of the member identity to conference sessions designed to ensure that service is implemented intentionally at the program, with an explicit focus on the impact that YouthBuild AmeriCorps members are having in their communities. Educating staff members on framing this identity is key to ensuring that the members themselves embrace this identity. During monitoring visits, members are asked questions designed to ensure that they identify as AmeriCorps members.

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YouthBuild USA trains subgrantees to engage in service learning. Sessions, designed to address the importance of reflection, are offered at each AmeriCorps Management Conference. In our monthly newsletter, YouthBuild USA shares best practices around structured reflection, including the use of service reflection journals, the incorporation of a post-service reflection circle, and the use of post-project reflection forms.

All YouthBuild AmeriCorps programs are expected to partner with their State Commissions. YouthBuild USA fosters this partnership by establishing contact between the Commissions and the subgrantees via the State Commission consultation form, and follow-up communication. Programs report on their interaction with their Commission twice annually. To connect our members with each other, we maintain a Facebook page for all YouthBuild graduates, organize city- and/or state-wide events for members, and organize a national Conference of Young Leaders designed to foster the YouthBuild AmeriCorps community, emphasize the importance of service, and provide valuable leadership development opportunities. All of this serves to ensure that members experience the importance of belonging to a larger service community.

VOLUNTEER GENERATION: All programs utilize a combination of staff and members to recruit volunteers. 33 YouthBuild programs will have a total of 101 FT AmeriCorps members who will focus on volunteer coordination through recruiting, supporting, and recognizing the volunteers. The less-than-full-time members will also support volunteer recruitment and retention by identifying themselves as AmeriCorps members, introducing AmeriCorps to the community with signage and community service, and inviting community members to identify community needs, participate in service activities, and celebrate partnership.

Each year we will recruit at least 5,400 volunteers who will give at least 108,000 hours of service. Programs will seek volunteers by developing partnerships with area businesses and other non-profit organizations. They invite friends and family to all program activities, including service day events, AmeriCorps Week events, ribbon-cuttings, and graduation ceremonies to cement the partnerships. Volunteers join YouthBuild AmeriCorps members in housing construction on special service days, and help with additional community service efforts such as urban gardens, weatherization projects, and park clean-ups. They serve as educational facilitators, mentors, and professional role models for members.

Volunteers will receive information on the AmeriCorps prohibited activities during their first service engagement with the program. YouthBuild AmeriCorps members and staff members will also

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receive extensive training on the AmeriCorps prohibited activities and the prohibition for volunteers to engage in these activities.

COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS BRAND: We are committed to branding national service through the use of the AmeriCorps "A" throughout all program and service sites. It is a visual reminder throughout our offices. We have participated in AmeriCorps since its inception and are deeply identified with it. Each year, YouthBuild USA sends a t-shirt to each member that co-brands YouthBuild and AmeriCorps with logos and quotes the final sentence of the AmeriCorps pledge on the back, "I am a YouthBuild AmeriCorps member, and I will get things done." We urge programs to budget for additional member service gear and AmeriCorps signage. YouthBuild USA uses the AmeriCorps logo on our website, in publications, and in press releases.

During site visits, YouthBuild USA monitors the use of the AmeriCorps logo at program and service sites. We ensure that the logo is present on published materials, service gear, signage, and member documents. We also conduct an annual photo contest of members in service. Both the YouthBuild and AmeriCorps logos must be visible in the photo.

Organizational Capability

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING: YouthBuild USA's mission is to "unleash the intelligence and positive energy of low-income youth to rebuild their communities and their lives." YouthBuild USA is a national nonprofit organization that has engaged public and private support to scale up an innovative program serving low-income communities. Through its leadership 120,000 low-income youth have produced over 22,000 affordable homes in 273 of America's poorest communities.

The first YouthBuild program was established in 1978 in East Harlem by Dorothy Stoneman, now CEO of YouthBuild USA. In 1984, it was replicated in 9 neighborhoods in New York City with City tax-levy funds. Between 1988 and 1992, it was replicated and evaluated nationally in 11 cities with private funds. In 1990, YouthBuild USA was established as the national support center and intermediary with the mission of bringing this program to as many communities and youth as possible. By 1992, federal legislation authorizing YouthBuild as a program under HUD's jurisdiction was passed, fueling expansion to 226 locations. In 2006 Congress transferred it to the jurisdiction of the US Department of Labor, fueling further expansion to 273 locations. Dorothy Stoneman was a founding board member of Youth Service America in 1981, and participated in advocacy for the creation of AmeriCorps. YouthBuild USA was first an AmeriCorps grantee in 1994. We have always

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linked YouthBuild with AmeriCorps as a way to strengthen the ethic of service, expand our reach, and access college for our members.

YouthBuild USA AmeriCorps staff have extensive backgrounds as grant administrators, are knowledgeable about federal funding requirements, and experienced in managing CNCS grants. Sara St. Laurent, Senior Director of AmeriCorps, will supervise the AmeriCorps staff and ensure program coordination and quality. She has 10 years of experience administering the AmeriCorps grant at YouthBuild USA. Matt Fisher, Director of AmeriCorps, has 5 years of experience administering our AmeriCorps grant and oversees the programmatic and financial components. Julie Beauchemin, Associate Director of AmeriCorps Finance, has administered the financial oversight of our AmeriCorps grant since 2002. Lisl Hacker, Joyce Coleman, and Matt Clerico are Portfolio Managers who will provide ongoing services to our subgrantees. Lisl and Joyce have 3 years of experience as AmeriCorps portfolio managers and Matt, an AmeriCorps alum, has had 1 year here and 4 years as program staff at a YouthBuild AmeriCorps program.

Subgrantee staff are provided consistent and regular training. Training begins prior to the opening of the grant, with a series of webinars designed to provide historical background on AmeriCorps and ensure that all subgrantees are familiar with basic documentation compliance requirements. Program manuals and template forms are provided on YouthBuild USA's AmeriCorps web page, ensuring that each program has easy access to resources and tools to implement the grant. Training continues with the 3-day AmeriCorps Management Conference at the beginning of the grant year, which has three training tracks: financial, programmatic, and executive. Ongoing technical assistance is offered via a monthly webinar series, monthly newsletters, bi-monthly conference calls, desktop monitoring, and site visits. Subgrantees submit progress reports twice annually and individual member data on a quarterly basis. Sites receive written feedback via a Quarterly Performance Summary from YouthBuild USA.

YouthBuild AmeriCorps programs provide training and skills development for their members on a daily basis through academic and skills training, leadership development and job preparation, and through the love and respect that they show to the young people. Programs have sufficient staff to provide ratios of 1 site supervisor for 8 members, 1 teacher for 11 members, and 1 counselor and 1 placement coordinator for 34 members. The specific skill development is described in detail in the member training section. YouthBuild USA offers an additional opportunity for leadership development via the Conference of Young Leaders, an annual conference of 120 YouthBuild AmeriCorps members.

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YouthBuild USA has successfully completed the required evaluation in each of the last three, three-year grant cycles. In addition, YouthBuild USA and 47 of our subgrantees are actively engaged in a collaborative random assignment evaluation of the YouthBuild model with the Department of Labor and CNCS, implemented by MDRC.

Since 1994 YouthBuild USA has administered federal grants and contracts including a total of \$77.2M from CNCS as a national direct AmeriCorps grantee; \$21.7M from DOL and \$13M from HUD as a TA contractor; \$26.7M from DOL for direct services to youthful offenders; \$24M in capacity building grants from HUD; \$8.9 M from OJJDP for mentoring programs in 55 communities; \$5.5M from DOL for a Welfare-to-Work program; \$2.9M from CNCS for Katrina Relief work in the Gulf; \$2.2M from CNCS under SIF and \$1.97M for a national VISTA contract; and \$1.4M from the Department of Energy for Innovative Weatherization Programming. No OIG or GAO review has ever reported any significant compliance issues at YouthBuild USA.

YouthBuild USA's 18 member board of directors has expertise in financial management, law, public policy, community development, youth development, and business. The board guides national priorities and accountability. Roy Priest, its chairman, was formerly CEO of the National Congress for Community and Economic Development and director of community development at HUD. The board includes four YouthBuild AmeriCorps graduates. The annual budget, audit, and any unexpected challenges are reviewed quarterly by the board's finance and audit committees.

YouthBuild USA's Senior Management Team consists of 12 individuals: Founder and CEO, President of YouthBuild International, Chief Program Officer, CFO, Senior VP of Public Policy, and VP's for Education, Asset Development, Training and Leadership Development, Knowledge Management, Career Development, Human Resources, and DOL Initiatives. We have a total of 95 full-time staff and a pool of expert consultants available to help with specific program needs.

Dorothy Stoneman, Founder and CEO, has overall management responsibility. She holds a PhD in education and has received MacArthur, Skoll, Harvard, and Independent Sector Awards for her outstanding leadership and service. Sangeeta Tyagi, Chief Program Officer, oversees the AmeriCorps Department as well as all program improvement strategies. She has served in leadership at YouthBuild USA for ten years, has a PhD in sociology, and has authored books on diversity. The AmeriCorps team works closely with other departments: Field Services, providing technical assistance to subgrantees regarding recruitment, retention, program design, and quality implementation; Training, providing training opportunities to subgrantee staff; Education, providing strategies to achieve impressive academic gains; Affiliated Network, providing performance standards for

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continuous improvement, data management, and leadership opportunities for members and graduates; Knowledge Management, providing resources for data analysis and program evaluation; Graduate Leadership Development, providing on-going opportunities for service and civic engagement for graduates; and Fiscal, providing overall financial management. Fiscal maintains impeccable records and controls. Each year since 2001 our independent auditor has given YouthBuild USA the official designation of "low risk auditee." Charity Navigator gives us its highest rating.

YouthBuild USA has deliberately built a national organization with a community-based perspective and diversity in racial, religious, cultural, and socioeconomic perspectives. 52% percent of the staff, 65% of the senior management team, and 69% of the board are people of color, reflective of the diversity of our members and their communities.

SUSTAINABILITY: YouthBuild USA has built national funding and partner relationships over 23 years with a broad set of foundations, corporations, individuals, and public agencies. Simultaneously, local programs work to achieve a diversification of public funding sources at all levels, and to attract local corporate, foundation, and individual cash and in-kind contributions. Several federal sources are appropriate for different aspects of the YouthBuild AmeriCorps program. Local programs seek targeted support from DOL YouthBuild funds, HUD CDBG; DOL Workforce Investment Act; DOL welfare-to-work and re-entry; HHS Individual Development Accounts; and USDA community development funds.

Programs obtain public funding at the state level via 3 pathways: public education, criminal justice, and general support. About 25% of YouthBuild programs have been certified to grant high school diplomas and to receive state average daily attendance funds for their educational component. Others will seek such authorization in the coming 3 years. This secures a high level of sustainability and allows programs to expand their number of members. YouthBuild AmeriCorps programs in NJ and WI have obtained state reimbursement for engaging eligible ex-offenders. Similar efforts are occurring in CA and OH. MA programs have obtained \$200K/year from state discretionary funds. Nine state coalitions are organized to seek funds.

YouthBuild USA builds national private funding relationships that benefit affiliates. Currently grants from Walmart, Bank of America, Saint-Gobain, JP Morgan Chase, Mott, Kresge, Starbucks, State Street Bank, Gates, OSF, American Express, Knight, and Annie E. Casey Foundations are supporting local YouthBuild AmeriCorps programs through direct grants and support for training. Partnerships with national nonprofits such as the Emerald Cities Collaborative, The Corps Network,

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LISC, Rebuilding Together, Habitat for Humanity, Public Allies, AFL-CIO, Year Up, and others, produce a variety of benefits including lower health insurance costs, joint service projects, focus on green building, joint construction projects, and access to leadership pathways for members. At the community level each program builds extensive partnerships with community development organizations, probation offices, public school systems, community colleges, employers, and more. Housing partners plan and oversee housing projects, education partners provide guidance and support in academic instruction, community colleges actively welcome graduates, and CDOs offer various personal services to members. In-kind support from local stakeholders include free construction materials; counseling, health, vocational, and educational services for youth; pro bono legal assistance; board participation; and space.

Each subgrantee works constantly to broaden support. By recruiting volunteers, building partnerships, and diversifying their funding bases, they strengthen sustainability regardless of what unpredictable changes may occur related to any one particular funding source. The inclusion of YouthBuild USA on the new Social Impact Exchange listing of 100 Best Philanthropic Investments will provide validation for programs to expand their own private fundraising.

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Monitoring of the service sites will focus on program quality, achievement of promised outcomes, and compliance with the AmeriCorps administrative policies and procedures. Sites are required to submit regular progress reports using YouthBuild USA's web-based reporting system, WebSTA-Q. The data from these reports are used to generate Quarterly Performance reviews, which graphically depict the program's performance against grant objectives. We provide written feedback on these performance summaries, and subgrantees are required to provide a written response to the feedback. This report enables AmeriCorps and program staff to review the program's strengths and weaknesses; provide assistance for improvement; chart progress towards objectives; and have the flexibility to make necessary adjustments to ensure a meaningful experience for their AmeriCorps members and quality service to their communities.

The program directors are required on the even months of the year to participate in individualized conference calls that address the AmeriCorps portal, AmeriCorps rules and regulations, prohibited activities, match documentation, and best practices, and are tailored to specific needs such as enrollment, retention, meeting outcomes, and general program quality. Our staff offer monthly webinars on AmeriCorps-specific topics that further connect subgrantee staff to AmeriCorps goals and regulations.

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Monthly financial submissions are thoroughly reviewed and offer an opportunity for financial training and technical assistance. One-on-one financial training is provided by the AmeriCorps Financial team as needed.

YouthBuild USA will conduct 60 on-site monitoring visits each year using a 37-page monitoring tool that was developed to measure AmeriCorps compliance. Each program completes this self-assessment in advance of a monitoring visit. YouthBuild USA staff then assess the same competencies while on site. Site visits are used to monitor compliance, identify situations to be corrected, and if necessary to provide specialized support to correct weaknesses and achieve the targeted outcomes. We also desktop monitor a selection of subgrantees each month.

YouthBuild USA staff attend all TA available through CNCS and ensure that this information is made available to subgrantees. To maintain a high level of staff inspiration and knowledge, YouthBuild USA provides a steady menu of training opportunities for all staff. The required YouthBuild AmeriCorps Management Conference offers program staff and financial staff an in depth orientation to AmeriCorps, including the review of AmeriCorps rules and regulations, common grant objectives, best practices, and other relevant YouthBuild AmeriCorps information. Other trainings provided through our match funds include Construction Certification; Leadership Development; Achieving High Attendance/Retention; Improving Academic Performance; Building Community Support for Sustainability; and Regional Multi-Site Gatherings on a variety of topics. Directors, teachers, and counselors may also participate in intensive YouthBuild Fellows programs with peers to deepen skills and insights. Excellent training capacity is one of YouthBuild USA's assets.

Participation in the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network is another way in which the programs engage in accountability and continuous improvement. They commit to operating in accordance with common program design and performance standards, submitting quarterly outcome data, and submitting their programs to periodic performance reviews. Becoming a YouthBuild AmeriCorps subgrantee is a reward that affiliates seek for successful performance.

Ensuring compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations began during the subgrantee application period. As part of the application packet, potential applicants received a 35-page information tool that lays out grant expectations and introduces some of the regulations. This information was further explored during a bidders' webinar, and will be revisited during an application clarification period in February. Subgrantees will be required to send three staff members to the AmeriCorps Management Conference. YouthBuild USA also makes several resources available on our website, including a Member Management Tool, a Financial Management manual, a Criminal

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Background Check manual, and template member file forms. Each subgrantee is required to submit all member position descriptions to YouthBuild USA for approval. YouthBuild USA has created sample position descriptions that we strongly encourage subgrantees to use in order to ensure compliance. During monitoring visits, our staff reviews member timesheets and interviews members to ensure that their activities are allowable. If instances of risk or noncompliance are identified, YouthBuild USA will institute a formal, written corrective action plan to which the subgrantee must respond with actions taken. Should instances of serious noncompliance be identified, YouthBuild USA will work with our CNCS program officer to identify the correct course of action.

YouthBuild USA was established in 1990 to orchestrate scaling of the YouthBuild model that was first developed and evaluated between 1978 and 1990. It has grown to 273 programs in low-income urban and rural communities. 23 of the 94 subgrantees in this application are rural. 84 serve communities with a poverty rate of 22%, 8 points above the national average.

DEMONSTRATED COMPLIANCE: The report from our August 2012 CNCS monitoring visit identified YouthBuild USA as a high-quality AmeriCorps program that incorporates meaningful service in the community and development of members. Members express pride in their service, and have a strong connection to the AmeriCorps identity. It reported that YouthBuild USA provides subgrantees with comprehensive support to manage the AmeriCorps grant, has strong organizational capacity, and is effectively integrating AmeriCorps into the overall YouthBuild program.

Compliance issues focused on member file documentation, primarily the criminal background check requirements. We have instituted plans for improvement by requiring subgrantees to complete a criminal background check self-audit checklist. Subgrantees must certify that member and staff criminal background checks are being completed as required. A criminal background check webinar is presented at least once annually, and additional training is provided at the annual AmeriCorps Management Conference. Member files are thoroughly reviewed during on-site monitoring visits and through desktop monitoring.

In 2011-2012, YouthBuild National Direct AmeriCorps programs achieved 101% enrollment. We have achieved 100% enrollment for the last 5 grant years. YouthBuild USA's AmeriCorps program has 54% retention for 2010, our most recent completed year. Typically retention levels increase across a 3-year cycle as new sites master all aspects of compliance, grant implementation, and performance achievement. Our retention rate in the final year of our previous cycle (2009) was 69%. There is the potential in 2011 of retention increasing to 73%, including those who are still enrolled and those who

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have already earned an award. We believe that the 2010 retention rate of 54% is an anomaly due primarily to 1/3 of our subgrantees having been new to AmeriCorps. We are focused on improvement. Each subgrantee submits an annual calendar showing the number of hours that members could earn each week if they maintained 100% attendance. Subgrantees are encouraged to provide at least 100 hours of "cushion" time to account for potential attendance issues. Each quarter, we issue a report to each subgrantee highlighting individual members who are not on track to earn their award. This pushes the program to address specific issues in a timely fashion. At the annual AmeriCorps Management Conferences, presentations on strong retention practices are offered, and panels of graduates share how they are using their AmeriCorps education awards which motivates staff to ensure individual members earn their education awards.

MULTI-STATE APPLICANTS: In December 2012, YouthBuild USA consulted with the 32 states in which we propose to have subgrantees, using the template state commission consultation form developed by CNCS or forms specifically required by the individual state commission. We have had follow-up communication with 10 state commissions, including thanking us for submitting the form, seeking to connect for a conversation, and/or supporting our application.

The proposed 94 National Direct YouthBuild AmeriCorps programs are located in: San Luis, AZ; Commerce, Fresno, Lennox, Los Angeles, Norwalk, Palmdale, San Jose, Stockton, Van Nuys, Venice, CA; Denver, CO; Hartford, CT; Washington, DC (2); Gainesville, Jacksonville, Orlando, FL; Atlanta, Forest Park, GA; Aurora, East St. Louis, Godfrey, Normal, N. Chicago, Rockford, Waukegan, IL; Gary, Indianapolis, IN; Covington, Jackson, Louisville, KY; Bogalusa, Convent, LA; Brockton, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, New Bedford, Roxbury, Springfield, MA; Detroit, MI (2); Redby, St. Paul, MN; Columbia, St. Louis, MO; Jackson, MS; Elizabeth City, NC; Camden, Newark, Paterson, Trenton, NJ; Santa Fe, NM; Las Vegas, NV; Albany, Bronx, Harlem, E. Harlem, New York, Poughkeepsie, Schenectady, Troy, NY; Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton, Franklin County, OH; Lebanon, Portland, Redmond, OR; Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, York, PA; Providence, RI; Lancaster, Spartanburg, Sumter, SC; Elizabethton, TN; Austin, Brownsville, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, TX; Petersburg, VA; Burlington, VT; Independence, Janesville, La Crosse, Ladysmith, Madison, WI; and Elkins, Kincaid, WV.

All YouthBuild affiliates were invited to submit an application, including narrative responses, program objectives, an outcomes rubric, past accomplishments, and a budget. Proposals were scored based on past performance, proposal strength, community needs, program leadership, commitment to

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service and citizenship, sustainability, and capacity to fulfill AmeriCorps administrative and financial requirements. YouthBuild USA took into consideration all of the criteria articulated in 45CFR 2522.475.

YouthBuild USA has experience working with all of the sites included in this application as affiliates and as participants in training or TA. In addition, 76 currently receive YouthBuild AmeriCorps national direct grants, and six more receive other public or private pass-through grants from YouthBuild USA.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

COST EFFECTIVENESS: Our requested cost per MSY is \$8,800 which is \$4,500 below CNCS's maximum cost per MSY, and represents a decrease in our \$8,906 cost per MSY over the previous 3-year grant period. Our programs work in distressed communities with the hardest to serve. The cost to work with our members and give them the opportunity to be service providers instead of being service recipients is more expensive than the average program. Despite that, we are still far below the maximum per member MSY due to our effectiveness in raising other funds. Furthermore, because of our emphasis on reconnecting "opportunity youth" to education in 50% of their program time, very few of our members are FT. This results in a very low cost per member to CNCS of just \$2,816, producing enormous value to the nation.

YouthBuild USA's organizational funding comes from public and private grants and contracts, donations from individuals, and endowment income. Major public funders are CNCS, DOL, USDA, and DoEnergy; major private funders are Gates, Mott, Walmart, Bank of America, Starbucks, Skoll, Open Society, Knight, Kresge, American Express, JP Morgan Chase, Annie E. Casey, State Street Bank, and New Profit. AmeriCorps funding would represent approximately 26% of the FY 2013 budget if funded. YouthBuild USA's total budget for 2013 is \$34.5M.

Over the last 5 years, YouthBuild USA has been the proud recipient of National Direct grants, VISTA cost share awards, Hurricane Sandy relief, and SIF funds via New Profit. If awarded, CNCS' total investment in YouthBuild USA will represent approximately 31% of our total budget.

All of YouthBuild USA's match portion (\$1.9M) is committed. It includes DOL and Mott, Kresge, Gates, Bank of America, American Express, and Walmart Foundations. Most of the subgrantees' match is also committed. Where not yet committed, subgrantees have identified alternative match available. All match sources are listed in the budget.

We propose to engage 3,200 members each year, an increase of 200 members/year for a minimal grant increase of \$51,923/year. An investment of \$9,011,385 each year by CNCS will allow 3,200

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YouthBuild AmeriCorps members to build at least 650 units of housing that will provide at least 1,500 low-income individuals with safe and affordable housing. 5,400 volunteers will be generated to serve alongside YouthBuild AmeriCorps members, providing an additional 108,000 hours of service. At least 676 members will earn a GED or high school diploma, and 1,632 members will be placed in a job within one year of their service. 800 will be placed in post-secondary education within one year of their service.

YouthBuild AmeriCorps is the only national model that engages economically and educationally disadvantaged "opportunity youth" in service to their community building affordable housing while reclaiming their own education on a path to college, career, and community leadership. We therefore have no basis for precise cost comparisons. However, it does cost substantially less per member than the other publicly-funded full-time options for young adults including Job Corps, Service and Conservation Corps, college, the military, and prison. The costs of building houses via YouthBuild are comparable to other approaches; labor costs are lower but this is balanced by the increased training time.

BUDGET ADEQUACY: YouthBuild USA proposes a cost per MSY of \$8,800, a decrease from our current grant cost per MSY of \$8,906. We propose to expand to an additional 14 communities and an additional 200 members per year; yet we are seeking only a minimal \$51,923/year increase in our grant request.

Our budget provides an operating grant for each proposed subgrantee to ensure that each has the capacity and resources necessary to implement the grant, meet compliance requirements, and support members. We have analyzed the budget of each program in depth to make sure they have appropriate staff ratios, sufficient construction funds, and adequate resources to implement the grant. Our own operating budget provides sufficient resources to monitor the grant and ensure continuous improvement, technical assistance, and training opportunities for staff and members. We have budgeted for a team of 11 staff to work 100% on grant implementation. This includes 4 portfolio managers who will each manage a portfolio of 20+ programs by providing comprehensive technical assistance through bi-monthly conference calls, monthly webinars, monthly newsletters, training events, assessing site success towards meeting objectives, and completing 7-8 annual site visits. The Associate Director and Director of AmeriCorps Programs oversee this team, ensuring that consistent TA and training are provided, while also maintaining a smaller portfolio of sites. The Coordinator manages and analyzes data, creates reports, and provides support to the entire team. Our staff also

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includes 3 financial staff members who each manage financial compliance for a portfolio of 30+ programs, performing detailed reviews of monthly financial reports, providing feedback and technical assistance, and performing desktop monitoring. The Senior Director is responsible for grant oversight, strategic planning, and grant reporting. Other YouthBuild USA staff support AmeriCorps sites via strategic planning and visioning, data collection and analysis, technical assistance, training opportunities, and ensuring that technology and communications resources are accessible to subgrantees. The budget includes resources to perform a total of 72 monitoring and technical assistance site visits annually, 2 AmeriCorps trainings for subgrantee staff, 2 trainings for YouthBuild AmeriCorps members, 6 additional trainings for subgrantee staff, AmeriCorps branded gear for members and programs, resources to strengthen program implementation, and resources to provide technical assistance via webinars, conference calls, and mailings. Costs for criminal history checks and FBI checks for members and staff are included in the budget, either as a direct expense or as match.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

We have submitted an evaluation report for the 2010-2013 grant. We have also budgeted \$50,000/year to further study, through surveys, the positive impact on service recipients' lives.

IN CLOSING: We look forward to inspiring 9,600 new YouthBuild AmeriCorps members to rebuild their communities and their lives in the next three years in partnership with CNCS.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

N/A

Continuation Changes

N/A