

PART I - FACE SHEET

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction															
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)																	
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS): 04/22/13		3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE: STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER: N/A															
2b. APPLICATION ID: 13ND150063		4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY: 04/22/13 FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: 13WNHKY001															
5. APPLICATION INFORMATION																	
LEGAL NAME: Berea College DUNS NUMBER: 001960566		NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Dreama Gentry TELEPHONE NUMBER: (859) 985-3853 FAX NUMBER: (859) 985-3920 INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: dreama_gentry@berea.edu															
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): Cpo 2185 Berea KY 40404 - 0001 County:																	
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 610444650		7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Higher Education Organization - Private 7b. 4-year college															
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> A. AUGMENTATION B. BUDGET REVISION C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER (specify below):		9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: Corporation for National and Community Service															
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: 94.006 10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps National		11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Partnering for Rural School Turnaround: AmeriCorps and Berea 11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):															
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Knox County KY, Leslie County KY																	
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 08/01/13 END DATE: 07/31/16		14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text"/> b.Program <input type="text"/>															
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: 1		16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS? <input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON: DATE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372															
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">a. FEDERAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 633,689.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. APPLICANT</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 203,148.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. STATE</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d. LOCAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e. OTHER</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f. PROGRAM INCOME</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g. TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 836,837.00</td> </tr> </table>		a. FEDERAL	\$ 633,689.00	b. APPLICANT	\$ 203,148.00	c. STATE	\$ 0.00	d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00	e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00	g. TOTAL	\$ 836,837.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
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18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.																	
a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Dreama Gentry		b. TITLE: Director	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (859) 985-3853														
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:		e. DATE SIGNED: 06/19/13															

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Executive Summary

Berea College Partners for Education, Knox Central High School and Leslie County High School have designed PartnerCorps, an AmeriCorps program that will support and sustain the school turnaround efforts at Knox Central High School and Leslie County High School by utilizing 40 ten-month AmeriCorps Members as mentors, college advisors and family connectors. These two high schools qualify as eligible schools and qualify as rural schools.

We have adopted and refined a research-based framework for delivering services with supporting activities that reflect generally-accepted best practices for engaging low-income and rural students. All our interventions will be targeted to students based on individual students' needs. Interventions will be documented. The Evaluator and Project Coordinator will continually assess student improvement connected to the services provided.

The National Performance measures have been utilized to determine outputs and outcomes. We have established two primary Performance Measures: 1) Implementation of Early Warning system with interventions that include Mentoring, College Preparation, Service Learning and Youth Engagement. The Output will be Disadvantaged Youth/Mentor Matches (90% of all students will be successfully matched) and the Outcomes will be 75% of students exhibit improved academic engagement and 94% of students exhibit improved daily attendance. 2) Parent Engagement with the primary intervention being Family Involvement. The Output will be Disadvantaged Youth/Mentor Matches (90% of all students will be successfully matched) and the Outcomes will be 94% of students exhibit improved daily attendance.

PartnerCorps will begin its three year term August 1, 2013. CNCS investment will be \$633,689 and partner match will be \$203,148. Program investment is reasonable in relation to the positive results.

Rationale and Approach

A. AMERICORPS MEMBERS ARE A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN SCHOOL TURNAROUND EFFORTS AT KNOX CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL AND LESLIE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL. Berea College Partners for Education, Knox Central High School and Leslie County High School have designed PartnerCorps, an AmeriCorps program that will support and sustain the school turnaround efforts at Knox Central High School and Leslie County High School by utilizing AmeriCorps Members as mentors, college advisors and family connectors. These two high schools qualify as eligible schools under the School Turnaround requirements in that both have been identified by the Kentucky Department of Education as priority schools that were implemented in the 2012-2013

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school year

(http://education.ky.gov/school/Documents/Priority%20Schools%20by%20Cohort%20map_corrected102312.pdf) More importantly, these two schools have an infrastructure in place for partnering with Berea College, they have leadership committed to whole school improvement, are prepared to make systemic changes necessary to support PartnerCorps, and are committed to financially supporting the program. Berea College Partners for Education has a history of strong collaboration with Knox Central and Leslie County high schools with the goal of increasing high school graduation and college going in these schools. Current collaborations include a US Department of Education GEAR UP program and a US Department of Education Investing in Innovation program. These high schools are not being served by a national service program.

GAPS OR WEAKNESSES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AND WILL BE ADDRESSED BY

AMERICORPS MEMBERS: Berea College staff and the leadership of our partner schools reviewed school improvement plans, school data, student and parent survey data; and interviewed administrators, counselors and teachers. From this comprehensive needs assessment, we identified the following gaps in services that will be addressed by PartnerCorps Members.

GAP=LACK OF EDUCATIONAL ADVOCATES: Cultural barriers--schools in which the curriculum and academic environment are alien to the rural poor--as well as physical barriers--the lack of transportation and long daily commutes to school--have perpetuated a condition of under-education and powerlessness in our region. Students in poverty and students from families with low education levels need more individual support and guidance than other students. Each of our students does not have an educational advocate. Our schools offer limited support and guidance targeted to individual students.

Success in school is not celebrated. Students are not motivated to have good attendance, good grades or college plans. Little or no time is spent mentoring students on the importance of academic success. We know, from experience and research, that a key to student success in our rural schools is individualized interventions. It is critical that each young person have an educational advocate -- a mentor that connects with them and assists them in successfully navigating the educational landscape. A strong educational advocate is even more critical in schools like ours -- low-performing schools, in undereducated communities and in high poverty areas.

GAP=LACK OF TARGETED INTERVENTIONS: A 2012 survey reports that our schools are unable to provide comprehensive academic success and college awareness interventions to 75% of our students. Fewer than 25% of students receive study skills instruction, test preparation, mentoring,

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college visits and admission information, post-secondary financial aid information, or individual counseling on post-secondary options (Berea College, Survey of Target Area, Nov. 2012).

GAP=PARENTS DO NOT HAVE INFORMATION OR SKILLS TO ENSURE THEIR CHILD'S SUCCESS: Our schools provide parents with limited information regarding college admission requirements, the cost of college and the array of financial aid available. Fewer than 25% of parents receive high school planning or post-secondary information, and no programs provide our low income parents the skills necessary for active engagement in their child's education. No schools have programs to explain to parents the importance of taking a pre-college curriculum or pre-AP courses (Berea College, Survey of Target Area, Nov. 2012).

AMERICORPS MEMBER ACTIVITIES: Working collaboratively with our schools, we have designed a program that meets the identified needs of our students and that will support our school turnaround efforts. A research-based, continuous improvement assessment model along with a thorough project evaluation, based on quantitative and qualitative data, will ensure our services have the desired impact. PartnerCorps will result in systemic change in the culture of our high schools and more low-income students will be successful in high school and enter college ready for success.

In designing PartnerCorps, attention was paid to the areas where Members could most be effective in filling gaps in services. The use of Members is a suitable and effective means for accomplishing objectives that we could not otherwise accomplish through existing staff and volunteers. Rural schools suffer from a lack of available mentors and volunteers and the fiscal times have resulted in fewer staff and faculty within our schools. PartnerCorps Members will prove to be a valuable resource and will be a critical player as we partner to turn our schools around. PartnerCorps Members will meet the identified needs by providing the following services designed to have measurable impact:

SERVICE PROVIDED=MENTORING: PartnerCorps Members will each have a caseload of high school students (approximately 30- 40 students per Member) and every high school student will have a mentor. In low performing, high poverty schools like ours it is critical every high school student have a mentor. The focus of the mentoring will be supporting the students Attendance, Behavior, and Course performance (ABCs). Mentors will connect with students on a weekly basis, one-on-one, and more frequently in small groups, to touch base, provide input and guidance and to ensure that the student is on track with their ABCs. Using the Berea College online database, Members will document all mentoring activities and services provided to their students. In addition, Members will document any relevant information that may be impacting their student's ABCs so that information can be used by other school personnel.

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SERVICE PROVIDED=COLLEGE GUIDANCE: Members will serve as college guides and will provide college going information to students both on an individual level and at a school level. Members will work with their mentees on developing an Individual Learning Plan that outlines the student's career and college goals and the steps necessary to achieve these goals. Working in teams, Members will develop and implement lessons that address the college going process but that can be integrated into the regular classes within the high school. For example, a team of Members may develop a college essay writing workshop that they then deliver in all 10th grade English Courses. Or, a team of Members may develop a workshop on college financing and implement the lesson in all 9th grade Algebra classes. These lessons will be documented via video and will be shared with other Members and with parents.

SERVICE=IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLY WARNING SYSTEM: Berea College and the partner high schools have established an Early Warning System that provides real time information on students at risk. Multiple reports provide lists of students identified as 1) at risk of dropping out of high school; 2) at risk of not graduating high school college and career ready; and 3) at risk of not entering college (two or four year) upon high school graduation. PartnerCorps Members will use this Early Warning System in real time to continually assess student data for their student caseload. PartnerCorps members will then meet with their student and/or their students' families and/or their students' teachers to develop intervention plans. PartnerCorps members will then follow-up on a regular basis with the student to ensure the plan is being implemented. At regular intervals, PartnerCorps members will re-check the student data to determine what, if any, progress has been made. At that time the intervention plans will be updated as necessary.

In our rural communities, schools do not have the staff or volunteers to implement the needed interventions. For example, while schools can identify those students who are chronically absent, there are no individuals dedicated to connecting with these students before absenteeism becomes a chronic problem. Daily PartnerCorps members will call their students who are absent to ensure a plan exists for getting missed course work and for letting the student know that they are missed at school. Their proactive approach will address attendance issues immediately. Another example, data is available on which students are struggling with their academic courses and the school does have tutoring available. Yet, no individuals reach out to individual students and ensure that they show up and participate in tutoring. Members will connect with their students who are having difficulty in courses, arrange for them to attend tutoring, and even attend the session with them the first time. They will continue to connect with their students to ensure they are persisting in the tutoring and that

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the tutoring is having the desired impact.

SERVICE=YOUTH ENGAGEMENT: Working in teams, Members will design and implement youth engagement programs designed to build student capacity and address issues with their ABCs. Youth will be engaged as leaders and provided with leadership skills and training. A key component will be sharing data and information with youth related to issues faced within the community (dropout rates, rates of drug use, teen pregnancy, chronic absenteeism, etc.) and supporting the youth as they develop programs to address these issues.

SERVICE=SERVICE LEARNING: Members will use service-learning as a high impact practice that can positively impact student ABCs. Working with teachers and with community organizations, youth and Members will co-design service learning projects. Projects will be both school based, perhaps a mentoring program that connects high school students with elementary students, as well as community based, perhaps a program through which high school students teach technology skills to senior citizens in the community.

SERVICE=PARENT PARTNERSHIP: It is critical that parents, or those serving in the parent role, be engaged as educational advocates. Members will develop one-on-one relationships with the parents of their caseload students. They will connect with these parents regularly to share the positives related to student behavior and, when necessary, work with parents to develop strategies to assist the students with ABCs. Working as teams, Members will develop parent workshops around topics such as financial planning for college, understanding the college going process, understanding the high school graduation requirements, etc. These workshops will be provided during school open houses and at community locations and events. In addition, Members will serve as part of the school's FAST (Families and Schools Together) team and work intensively with those families identified as having the most need.

NUMBER OF AMERICORPS MEMBERS IS REASONABLE: Berea College and our two high schools have designed a program that will effectively utilize 40 AmeriCorps Members for ten-month service terms. Fifteen members will be placed at Leslie County High School where there are 481 students enrolled in grades 9 -- 12. Placing fifteen mentors in this school will allow each Member to have a caseload of approximately 32 students. Twenty-five Members will be placed at Knox Central High School which has an enrollment of 836 students. This will allow each Member to carry a caseload of 33 students. A caseload of 30 -- 40 students will provide Members the time to connect weekly with each of their student's one-on-one and will provide them with opportunities to work in teams designing class workshops, parent and youth engagement activities, service learning activities and

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other relevant programming. Services and activities will be implemented only during the academic year, thus, the ten-month service period for each Member.

Our schools have no personnel that can provide the intensive mentoring, college guidance and family connections that our Members will be providing. There are no volunteers that could provide this service. Our high schools are located in two extremely rural counties. Business and industry is practically non-existent in these two counties. There are very few adults with a college degree in these two counties. As a result, there is no college educated volunteer base from which to draw volunteers that could assist the schools.

PartnerCorps will serve two high schools in neighboring rural counties. These high schools have a history of positive collaboration. They agree that it will be more efficient to share the program and the members. One Project Coordinator will work with both sites and the school Site Coordinators will share resources. Workshops and materials developed by members at one school will be shared by members at other schools.

B. EVIDENCE-INFORMED AND MEASURABLE IMPACT: We have adopted and refined a research-based framework for delivering services with supporting activities that reflect generally-accepted best practices for engaging low-income and rural students. Efforts focus on identifying activities that yield the most promising results. Following an exhaustive research and literature review and with input of students, parents, educators, partners and policy-makers, we have developed PartnerCorps, a proactive response, which incorporates the following research based practices and programs:

USE OF COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS TARGETS AND BENCHMARKS: College- and career-readiness performance targets are test scores that indicate if a student is on track to be academically prepared for college by the time he or she finishes high school (Dougherty, NCEA, 2008). Once college and career readiness performance targets have been set, services can be targeted to students based on the size of students' academic preparation gaps. We use the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks -- EXPLORE/8th grade, PLAN/10th grade, ACT/11th grade. The Kentucky Department of Education will provide us with Benchmarks for each high school student. Each Member will define a path to College and Career Readiness for each of their mentees and ensure that the student is accessing the interventions necessary to keep on track for high school graduation and college and career readiness.

LONGITUDINAL EARLY WARNING SYSTEM: Research has shown that students who eventually leave high school before graduating exhibit strong predictive warning signs, such as infrequent

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attendance, behavior infractions and course failure (thus our focus on these ABCs). These warning signs more accurately predict whether a student will drop out of high school than any other socioeconomic factors (Janosz, M. Archambault, School Engagement Trajectories and their Differential Predictive Relations to Dropout, *Journal of Social Issues*, 64(1): 21-40, 2009). In partnership with our schools and the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), Berea College developed a longitudinal early warning system that tracks individual student Attendance, Behavior and Course performance data. Members will access the system to produce academic early warning reports. This will enable Members to intervene early and consistently to ensure students are on-track. Our strong collaborative plan for collecting data, reporting outcomes and using data to target services will ensure impact on students.

RURAL SCHOLARS MENTORING PROGRAM: Research illustrates that student academic preparation initiatives alone are not enough for low-income, first-generation college students to achieve academic success (Oakes, J., *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. Yale University Press, 1985; McDonough, P. M., *Choosing colleges: How social class and schools structure opportunity*. SUNY Press, 1997). Social support services (e.g., networking, leadership experience, and college knowledge) are necessary to empower students to make the transition to college. College for Every Student (CFES), a national nonprofit organization, establishes partnerships between schools and colleges and deploys a model that utilizes college graduates as mentors to help students in high need rural communities prepare for, gain access to, and successfully make the transition to college. Berea College has partnered with CFES for more than 10 years to better serve rural Appalachian youth.

CFES has demonstrated a success record in rural communities. When CFES began working in 2001 with a rural district in the Adirondacks, the high school graduation and college-going rates were 54% and 43%, respectively. Eight years later, both rates exceeded 90%.

Members will universally implement the CFES program with fidelity. In low-performing, high-poverty high schools like ours, EVERY student must be provided mentoring, leadership through services, and college pathway information.

FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS TOGETHER (FAST): FAST is an evidence-based practice with a record of success with parents from low-income, rural backgrounds (Caspe & Lopez, *Lessons From Family-Strengthening Interventions: Learning From Evidence-Based Practice*, Harvard Family Research Project, 2006). FAST empowers parents in multi-family groups held after school, builds relationships among parents and between families and schools and improves family cohesion. FAST has been

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identified by SAMHSA (2008), the U.S. Department of Education (1998) and the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2006) as an exemplary, research-based model program.

PartnerCorps Members will be key members of the high school FAST teams. Members will assist in recruiting the rural Appalachian parents who have been alienated from the schools. Emphasis will be on recruiting the parents of students in danger of dropping out of high school or not graduating high school college and career ready. Through FAST Members will work intensively with families and provide them with the information needed to support their children in secondary success and college going.

MEASURES AND OUTCOMES: All our interventions will be targeted to students based on individual students' needs. Interventions will be documented. The Evaluator and Project Coordinator will continually assess student improvement connected to services provided.

The National Performance measures have been utilized to determine outputs and outcomes. We have established two primary Performance Measures: 1) Implementation of Early Warning system with interventions that include Mentoring, College Preparation, Service Learning and Youth Engagement. The Output will be Disadvantaged Youth/Mentor Matches (90% of all students will be successfully matched) and the Outcomes will be 75% of students exhibit improved academic engagement and 94% of student exhibit improved daily attendance. 2) Parent Engagement with the primary intervention being Family Involvement. The Output will be Disadvantaged Youth/Mentor Matches (90% of all students will be successfully matched) and the Outcomes will be 94% of students exhibit improved daily attendance.

Our Project Coordinator and Evaluator will work closely with our schools and Berea College staff to complete all reports and to meet all data reporting requirements related using the Berea database. Due to current work between Berea and the schools, an infrastructure (online database) is in place to measure and collect all data required to report on National Performance measure outcomes and outputs. The online data base provides a system for recording each service and includes up-to-date individual student attendance, behavior and course information.

C. AMERICORPS MEMBER RECRUITMENT: Berea College Partners for Education has a successful record of recruiting VISTA Members and AmeriCorps Members from Appalachian Kentucky, the high-poverty, rural area that includes our two partner high schools. Our recruiting is done in collaboration with local school systems and with area colleges and universities. Within the last year, we have assisted our partners as they placed 12 VISTA members in Appalachian elementary

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schools to work on family engagement and 12 AmeriCorps members in high schools as college coaches.

As we recruit PartnerCorps Members we will actively seek those from the communities we serve. Alternatively, we will seek members from rural, high poverty communities or those from low-income backgrounds. Our primary PartnerCorps recruitment will center on the eight post-secondary institutions, two and four year, within 100 miles of our program sites. We will utilize a strong social media presence and a centralized website with multi-media recruitment materials.

To ensure that our program is attractive, Berea College staff will assist in locating group housing options for service members and provide a base of social support within the community.

MEMBER SELECTION: All PartnerCorps members must have completed a college degree, either two-year or four-year, and must have an interest in turning around low-performing schools. We will seek Members with education and experience relevant to the services they will be providing. Our work in the Appalachian region and familiarity with the talent pool assures us that we will have ample qualified persons interested in the PartnerCorps positions. We have experienced no problem filling our positions in the region and have a waiting list of qualified individuals with two or four year college degrees. Priority will be given to those with degrees in education, counseling, or social work. We will look for Members who have worked in college access programs (Upward Bound, Talent Search, etc.) or in rural education programs. We will seek to develop a team with a diverse set of skills and interests. It is critical that each high school student we serve be able to find someone within the PartnerCorps team to which he or she can identify. Recruitment and interview teams will include members from schools, district offices, and Berea College. Members recommended for placement will undergo the same stringent background screening as paraprofessionals working in these high schools.

D. AMERICORPS MEMBER TRAINING: PartnerCorps will begin with an Orientation September 9-11, 2013. To leverage resources, we will use trainers from our schools, Berea College and our partners. The first day will focus on information related to service and service history, prohibited activities, administrative procedures, ethics and compliance and service activity training. Trainers will include professionals from Kentucky Campus Compact and Save the Children, organizations with experience with CNCS programs.

The second day will focus on skills and information needed to work effectively and to create change within low-performing schools. Our schools, the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority will provide information on the School Improvement plans, Kentucky Assessment, Kentucky Individual Learning Plans, and college planning

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and affordability. Families and Schools Together and College For Every Student will present their evidence-based programs and will address the high impact practices of mentoring, service learning, leadership development and college pathways. Berea College will introduce Members to the database and provide training on how to utilize the database to access student information and to record services.

It is critical that members be oriented to the AmeriCorps and Berea College commitment to service. Coinciding with the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance, the third day will focus on developing an ethic service and reflection. The afternoon will include a service project for school staff, Members and Berea staff.

Continual training will occur on a regular basis and is interwoven closely with our supervision plan as discussed below.

E. AMERICORPS MEMBER SUPERVISION: Our supervision plan is woven with our training plan. As concerns or challenges arise, staff will work to solve the problems and will share the lessons learned with Members. Upon notification of funding, Berea College will hire a Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator will be based at Berea, administer the program, file all required reports and oversee all elements of the program including the recruiting, training and supervision of Members. Qualifications include: a minimum of five years with grant management, familiarity with national service programs, knowledge of school turnaround best practices, extensive supervision experience and administrative experience including budget management and event planning. A Bachelor's degree is required for this position, but a Master's degree is strongly preferred.

The Project Coordinator will work collaboratively with two Site Coordinators to ensure the program is implemented effectively, that all Members are adequately supervised and that all Members receive the training and support necessary. Upon notification of funding, school leadership will designate a Site Coordinator, most likely the school guidance counselor. The Site Coordinator will serve as on-site supervisor and will ensure that Members are completing their service hours and activities on schedule. The two Site Coordinators will work closely with the Project Coordinator to ensure that the program runs smoothly. Together they will design and implement the ongoing trainings and deal with any performance issues that occur. On a weekly basis, via conference call the Site Coordinators and the Project Coordinator will touch base to ensure the program is meeting identified goals and objectives and to address any issues and concerns in a timely manner.

School leadership and staff are an integral part of the training and supervision plan. Within their school Members will be assigned to five-person teams. School leadership will designate a teacher or

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administrator as the lead for each team. The Team Lead will be the front line support to the members and will ensure the members are supported and that they are providing the necessary services and interventions. Teams will check in daily before school for 15 minutes. The daily meetings provide opportunities for the teachers to offer feedback to the members and identify any issues for follow-up or any areas where training is needed.

Twice monthly, Members will meet afterschool with the Site Coordinator, the Project Coordinator and school and Berea leadership. During these meetings, key service activities and interventions will be assessed and modifications will be made as needed, administrative procedures will be reinforced and regulations regarding prohibited activities will be reviewed. Quarterly trainings for all Members and school staff will be held at the regional Berea office in Clay County, located between the two project sites.

Topics to be covered throughout the year range from sessions on working with our target population, to hands on trainings on effectively facilitating groups, to a detailed session on how to plan a fieldtrip. Members will be actively engaged in identifying topics to be covered. Members will lead sessions to share their expertise and best practices.

F. AMERICORPS MEMBER EXPERIENCE: All Members will have service experiences that produce community impact and that will lead to their continued civic participation. Members will be provided uniforms that distinguish them as PartnerCorps, an AmeriCorps program. They will wear uniforms whenever they are serving in the school or in the community. The team based approach of PartnerCorps will foster a strong identity among Members. The uniforms will identify Members to students, parents and community members. They will be a conversation starter that will provide Members the opportunity to share their AmeriCorps experience.

Our Berea staff has extensive experience mentoring, motivating and encouraging college students to serve and to reflect deeply on their service. Berea staff will assist Members in reflecting upon their service experiences. Partners for Education has over 140 staff all focused on improving rural, low-performing schools and providing educational opportunities to students. The majority of staff is first generation college students. Many of them are doing this work to give back and serve their communities. Our staff will share their experiences serving schools and assisting schools in their turnaround efforts with the Members. Members will come to understand the importance of actively engaging in the public education system regardless of whether or not they have children in the public schools.

Members will have the opportunity to participate in Berea College events and trainings recognizing

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the importance of continued service and celebrating Berea's rich history of service. PartnerCorps will be provided opportunities to interact with other CNCS programs serving our region including other AmeriCorps programs, VISTA programs and Foster Grandparents programs. It is our goal that Members will connect deeply with the College's and AmeriCorps's commitment to lifelong service.

G. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION: Partners for Education at Berea College is committed to the work of AmeriCorps. We currently support the Kentucky College Coaches AmeriCorps program and have the AmeriCorps logo on all our work with that program. We will establish a PartnerCorps brand that incorporates the AmeriCorps logo and brand. Our uniforms will include the AmeriCorps logo and the logo will appear on the PartnerCorps webpage, brochures and materials. Our partner schools will include pages on their school websites promoting the program and will include the AmeriCorps logo.

H. STRATEGIC GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATION SERVING RURAL SCHOOLS: Knox Central and Leslie County High Schools put a face on rural poverty and emphasize the dire need for increased college and career readiness in rural America. In these rural Appalachian Kentucky communities, poverty levels are high and educational attainment is low, all exacerbated by the isolation of the area. To illustrate, in Knox County 49% of children live below poverty level as compared to 24% of Kentucky children. In Leslie County 22.5% of residents over the age of 25 have less than a 9th grade education compared to only 7.9% of Kentuckians. And, only 58.7% of Leslie Countians have a high school diploma, compared to 81.7% of Kentuckians (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates).

Daniel Boone National Forest covers a large part of these counties, greatly reducing the local tax base. The primary roads that bisect each county are well maintained. The winding secondary roads are rough and poorly maintained. Many of our students live on unpaved roads which are barely passable during inclement weather. Some students spend two hours per day simply riding school buses to and from the high school.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION PROGRAM WILL RECRUIT MEMBERS FROM LOW-INCOME OR RURAL BACKGROUNDS: We have experience recruiting Members from low-income or rural backgrounds. We currently host 24 Members via AmeriCorps or VISTA. Of these Members, 100% are either from rural backgrounds or low-income backgrounds. A key recruitment pool will be Berea College graduates all of which come from low-income backgrounds. Berea College professors, the careers office, and student organizations will introduce PartnerCorps to Berea College graduates. In addition, our target zone of a 100 mile radius of our schools includes college and universities that

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draw over 80% of their students from rural communities.

Organizational Capability

A. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING: Berea College, an independent, non-denominational college, provides a high quality education with a liberal arts foundation. Berea is dedicated to students who have limited economic resources and great promise. Eighty percent of Berea's students come from the Appalachian region and ALL Berea students demonstrate financial need. Each student is provided a full tuition scholarship, and in return the student works in the college's labor program.

Since the late 1800's Berea College has partnered with Appalachian communities to provide educational opportunities to low-income youth. Partners for Education at Berea College leverages the college's resource to improve educational outcomes in rural Appalachia. Current Partners for Education programs include GEAR UP, i3, Upward Bound Math and Science Center, Talent Search and Promise Neighborhood. With a staff of over 140 professionals working in rural Appalachian Kentucky and an annual budget close to 20 million dollars, Partners for Education has the organizational capacity to effectively and efficiently administer this AmeriCorps program.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI): PartnerCorps will be located within the Grant Services and Compliance division of Partners for Education. Heather Dufour, Director of Grants Services and Compliance, will serve as PI and will devote 25% of her time to this project. As PI, her responsibilities will include articulating PartnerCorps's strategic direction and theory of change, facilitating the partnership between Berea College and school partners, collaborating with the evaluation team, and aligning the program to other Partners for Education initiatives.

Ms. Dufour serves on the Partners for Education Senior Leadership Team, serves as PI for our sub-grantee contracts for our current AmeriCorps and VISTA members, and is coordinator for the department's college work-study program. Ms. Dufour has received training in grants management and fiscal management from CNCS and is familiar with the mission and goals of AmeriCorps. With a background in business, human resources and education, Ms. Dufour's leadership position, experience and education will ensure that PartnerCorps seamlessly fits within our organization and the program is implemented with fidelity.

PROJECT COORDINATOR (100% FTE): Upon notification of funding, Berea College will begin a search for a full-time, 12-month Project Coordinator (PC). The PC will be based at Berea and has responsibility for the management of the project, for developing and refining program operations, to ensure that objectives are met and to ensure that the program is in compliance with the CNCS

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guidelines. The PC manages the daily operation of the program by recruiting, supervising, training, and guiding Members in the development, implementation and evaluation of program activities. The PC reports to the PI. Qualifications include: a minimum of five years with grant management, familiarity with national service programs, knowledge of school turnaround best practices, extensive supervision experience and administrative experience including budget management and event planning. A Bachelor's degree is required for this position, but a Master's degree is strongly preferred.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (100% FTE): Upon notification of funding, Berea College will begin a search for a full-time, 12-month Administrative Assistant (AA). The AA will be based at Berea and will provide administrative support in all recruitment activities including updating the website and social media sites. The AA manages the daily flow of information to the members and assists in collecting and maintaining information to support members and to support the progress toward Performance Measures. The AA will provide Members with assistance needed with the database and the AmeriCorps system. The AA reports to the PC. Qualifications include: a minimum of five years experience working in an office including the use of online databases. A Bachelor's degree is preferred for this position, but extensive relevant experience may be substituted.

SITE COORDINATORS (SC): School leaders will appoint a SC at each school. It is likely that the SC will be the high school guidance counselor or an assistant principal. Site Coordinators will receive a small honorarium to compensate them for their extended service. The SC will serve as the primary on-site supervisor and will ensure that Members are completing their service hours and activities on schedule. SC will ensure that Members are integrated within the school, have access to students and student data and are mainstreamed into the work of the school and the school improvement plan. Based on previous experience implementing federal grants in partnership with rural Appalachian schools, we have developed an extensive plan for effectively managing PartnerCorps in two school districts.

TEAM LEADERS (TL): School leaders will appoint a TL to work with groups of five Members. TL will be teachers within core academic areas. TL will be responsible for providing guidance and support to their PartnerCorps Team.

Policies and procedures are in place for data collection, recordkeeping and reporting -- financial, student, and service. Berea College personnel, financial, and management policies are in place to ensure compliance with all federal and state regulations. In compliance with federal regulations, all personnel will maintain time and effort logs. Logs will be turned in monthly to the Principal Investigator, reviewed and signed and filed in the office. At the school level, each Site Coordinator will

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review and sign the Member's time and effort logs and submit to the PC.

All staff will stay up-to-date on current research and best practices in their specialty. Staff will participate in trainings conducted by CNCS, Ky. Department of Education, ACT, National Dropout Prevention Council and other credible service providers. Key personnel will complete the Collaborative Counselor Training Initiative online training provided by the Southern Regional Education Board. At monthly staff meetings, staff will share what they have learned and discuss ways to incorporate new knowledge into our practices.

Berea College Partners for Education has extensive experience administering federal funds. Currently our portfolio includes six U.S. Department of Education grants, one Office of Violence Against Women grant and one Office of Justice Grant. We also have contracts with Save the Children to place 12 VISTA members each year and with Kentucky Campus Compact to place 12 Kentucky College Coaches each year. We have never applied for or received AmeriCorps funding. We conduct annual A133 audits and have met all federal guidelines in regard to compliance, fiscal and programmatic. If received this funding would equal 3% of the Partners for Education annual operating budget.

We have a stellar record of implementing new initiatives and a strong history of scaling up these initiatives. We received GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Education) funding in 1999, the first year of the program. Our funding was for a partnership between Berea College and one school district (\$400,000 annual budget). In 2005, we re-applied and received funds to scale up the program to serve five school districts (\$2.8 million annual budget). In 2012, we re-applied and received funds to scale up the program to serve 19 school districts (\$10 million annual budget). In addition, we received funding for Promise Neighborhood in the first year of that program and were the only site to receive funding to work in rural America. We also received funding from the Office of Violence Against Women in the first year of their Strategies to Reduce Sexual Assault and Violence Among High School Youth initiative.

Within Partners for Education, we have strong fiscal and grants management leaders as well as strong program leaders. The organizational knowledge is present to ensure effective implementation of this new type of AmeriCorps program.

B. SUSTAINABILITY: Berea College and our partners developed PartnerCorps to assist in turning around Knox Central High School and Leslie County High School. Berea leadership and school leadership are committed to this strategy. Our review of successful AmeriCorps programs and their impact, including the work of City Year, convinced us that AmeriCorps Members can positively impact school turnaround.

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Our cohesive commitment to PartnerCorps will continue. Our stringent evaluation will ensure that we have the data necessary to show that PartnerCorps works and that we have the information to tweak the program to ensure even greater impact.

If the data reflects what we expect -- AmeriCorps Members implementing our PartnerCorps design positively impacts student outcomes and school turnaround -- we are prepared to replicate the program in our other rural, low-performing schools in Appalachian Kentucky. The Principal Investigator will work with Partners for Education leadership to seek funding to sustain the program in these schools and to replicate the program in other schools. We have a proven fundraising track record with federal and private donors.

At the local level, school leadership will work with the PI to solicit community involvement in PartnerCorps including the involvement of civic organizations, business and local government. Involvement will include funding local activities, hosting PartnerCorps members, providing supplies for service learning projects, etc.

C. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Berea College Partners for Education is committed to complying with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. We maintain a culture promoting stewardship and compliance to ensure funds are managed with transparency and integrity. Our commitment to compliance and accountability includes: 1) instituting and reviewing annual operational policies and procedures for purchasing, conflicts of interest and grant reconciliation; 2) providing training and offering grants management education to employees on a regular basis; and 3) conducting annual audits including A-133 audits, internal audits and periodic departmental audits. Within PartnerCorps special attention will be placed on ensuring that Members and all staff and partners are aware of prohibited activities. Not only will trainings regularly visit the topic of prohibited activities, site visits and program reviews will ensure that no Members are participating in prohibited activities.

The Program Coordinator will be responsible for monitoring site compliance with fiscal and programmatic requirements. Each host high school will be asked to sign off on a scope of work established by Berea College. The scope of work will clearly describe roles and responsibilities of each person involved. The Program Coordinator will conduct site visits to monitor member activities and to ensure compliance with all federal and state regulations. Schools will be responsible for confirming member service hours by signing the member time log. Time logs will be sent to the Program Coordinator who will review them and include them in the member files.

D. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: We have developed and will implement a continuous

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improvement and assessment model to refine services and service delivery to ensure that we continuously meet project goals and objectives. Components of our model include the following procedures and practices:

* All services will be evaluated using appropriate tools including facilitated debriefings, online surveys, and pre/post tests. Results from this continual evaluation of services will be synthesized by the Project Coordinator and shared with all staff on a quarterly basis. Data will be used to refine services and service delivery.

* Annually, all stakeholders - students, parents, staff, school personnel and partners - will provide feedback on the program and its specific services. Stakeholders will also have the opportunity to recommend new services and suggest services that may no longer be needed. The evaluator will utilize focus groups, interviews and online surveys to collect this information.

* We will rely significantly on individual student level data. We have a partnership whereby Kentucky Department of Education, with our partner schools' permission, provides us student data in a timely manner. All school partners have agreed to share data with us. Individual student level data, including EPAS scores, assessment data, attendance data and discipline referrals, will be available. The Program Coordinator will continuously review student data to ensure students receive appropriate services and services are having the desired impact.

This continuous improvement and assessment model will ensure that PartnerCorps does not work in a vacuum, that feedback is utilized to improve the services, and that the program continues to meet the needs of students and schools.

Our evaluation plan will include a mixed methodology, integrating quantitative and qualitative data. Instruments will be developed to measure program accomplishments and performance indicators, collect data for annual reports and implement a model for continuous improvement. Data will be collected to measure impact on students, parents, and schools, and analyses will be disaggregated by race, gender, and ethnicity, whenever possible, as well as by school. Data will also be collected to assess fidelity to the program design and organizational health to secure the vigor of program implementation.

Annually, the evaluation design will be revisited by the evaluator, project coordinator, and staff to ensure that the evaluation is meeting the needs of the program. The collection and effective use of both quantitative and qualitative data is essential in demonstrating the efficacy of PartnerCorps, assessing student outcomes, and taking immediate action toward improving student performance.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

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A. COST EFFECTIVENESS: A one-year budget detailing annual expenses is included with the proposal. The project supports turnaround efforts in two high-poverty rural high schools. The cost of the program is reasonable compared to the long-lasting, systemic change expected.

SERVING RURAL SCHOOLS: Our cost per Member Service Year (MSY) is \$15,842. This amount is well within the amount established by CNCS for programs that serve rural schools. CNCS considers a cost of up to \$17,500 per MSY in rural schools acceptable. All our Members will be placed within rural schools. Both Knox Central High School and Leslie County High School are in districts authorized under the Rural and Low-Income School program (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/reaprlisp/eligible11/index.html>).

All costs are reasonable and linked to allowable activities under the program components. The budget is reasonable in relation to the number of students served and provides a cost-effective solution for reducing the achievement gap of students living in poverty. The CNCS per student cost is less than \$481 which is adequate and reasonable to ensure students receive intensive, individualized services necessary.

The budget was prepared using Berea College's mature costing and purchasing principles. The budgeted costs do not supplant existing funding streams and the budget and cost analysis were prepared on the basis of actual costs, vendor quotes for goods or services and/or targeted research conducted for the specific purpose of effectively managing the grant budget. Detailed financial records are maintained onsite to satisfy reporting requirements and financial audits. The project budget is sufficient to implement the planned services and activities described in the project plan. The project includes support from partnering schools and community stakeholders. These collaborative efforts allow for program sustainability when federal support is no longer available.

Budgeted costs for salaries and wages are based on information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the state of Kentucky and Berea College's benchmarking process for similar positions. Fringe costs are based on Berea College's current fringe rates. Travel and training costs are based on research on the General Services Administration (GSA) website for standard rates, travel websites and on prior costs from previous travel and training events. Supplies are based on actual costs from vendors. Evaluation costs are based on proposals and quotes from vendors and on similar contractual agreements from other projects. Other program costs and member support costs are based on actual vendor quotes, research specifically conducted to determine the cost or costs from similar activities conducted in other projects.

B. BUDGET ADEQUACY: We have secured match commitments from Knox Central High School,

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Leslie County High School, and Berea College Partners for Education. Additionally throughout the grant term, we will collaborate with a diverse group of local, state and national organizations such as College for Every Student, Kentucky Department of Education and Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority, Kentucky Campus Compact and Save the Children to provide continuing support of the project. During the capacity building period, we will recruit volunteers and develop instructional and training resources for ongoing project sustainability and we will assist the partners with exploring other funding options.

The budget is designed to address gaps and weaknesses in services, infrastructures and opportunities for students living in poverty. The budget is sufficient to meet the stated goals and objectives and proposed costs are necessary to provide the interventions discussed in the project narrative.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Not Applicable

Federally Approved Indirect Cost Agreement

Sent

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable