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Executive Summary

The Blueprint Fellows Program (BFPF) will enlist AmeriCorps members to serve as full-time tutors (Fellows) in historically low-performing public schools in Denver, CO and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. BFPF is operated by the Blueprint Schools Network (Blueprint), a nonprofit organization that partners with public school districts to turnaround their lowest-performing schools. Fellows are placed in chronically underperforming schools, most of which are undergoing some form of School Improvement Grant (SIG) turnaround. Fifty (50) AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional fifty (50) volunteers to support the work of accelerating student achievement in mathematics and improving school culture. At the end of the 3-year grant period beginning August 1, 2013, and ending July 31, 2016, Blueprint anticipates an average improvement of greater than one year's growth in achievement in mathematics for participating students each year. This initiative will address the CNCS focus area of Education. Blueprint seeks an investment of \$349,598 annually as a cost-reimbursement grant from CNCS that will enable Blueprint to 1) recruit service-oriented talent to participate in BFPF, 2) provide high quality professional development to Fellows, and 3) expand BFPF to serve new communities in Massachusetts.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

NEED: Blueprint developed BFPF as a comprehensive tutoring program designed to accelerate mathematics achievement in failing schools where racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps are prevalent and persistent. BFPF meets the critical community need for this type of support as evidenced by data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). This data shows socioeconomic and racial achievement gaps in the United States have remained largely unchanged for the last two decades (NCES, 2011). For instance, according to the United States Department of Education (USDOE), by the time students in low-income communities reach 4th grade, they are already nearly three years behind their peers in high-income communities (USDOE, 2003). Wide and persistent gaps exist in mathematics performance, in particular. For example, results from the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Mathematics exam show that 17% of 8th grade students who qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL), a school-level measure of poverty, scored proficient or above, compared to 47% of those students who do not qualify for FRL (NCES, 2011). Because Hispanic, African American, and Native American children are more than three times as likely to grow up in poverty, the low-achievement statistics attributed to socioeconomic status carry a racial context with them (USDOE, 2003).

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Blueprint's current work includes recruiting, training and placing Fellows in ten schools in Denver Public Schools (DPS) in Colorado, and 20 schools in the Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Texas. In the 2013-2014 school year, Blueprint will expand BFPF to serve students in chronically underperforming school districts in Massachusetts. All schools identified are undergoing some form of federal or state mandated turnaround, and all schools exist in historically underserved communities. Blueprint Fellows currently serve over 4,500 students in ten Denver schools. Prior to the implementation of our program, more than 75% of students in these schools were not proficient on the 2010 Colorado State Assessment Program (CSAP) mathematics exam. In fact, not a single school in the network achieved more than a 40% proficiency rate in any subject area. The schools in Denver where Blueprint Fellows work are located in one of the poorest and most ethnically diverse regions of Denver. In this community 86% of students qualify for FRL, 92% are minority and 35% are English Language Learners (ELL).

The 20 schools in our Houston network serve 12,995 students, 95% of whom are African American or Hispanic, and 90% of whom qualify for FRL. Prior to implementation, the rate of enrollment in a 4-year college for students from the Class of 2010 ranged from 19% to 29% at the four high schools we serve. On the 2010 Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), approximately two out of five of the students in our target schools did not achieve a passing score in math.

In the 2013-14 school year, under an agreement with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Blueprint expects to place Fellows in a network of schools in Massachusetts designated as Level 4 or "chronically underperforming." Level 4 schools represent the lowest 4% of schools in the Commonwealth in terms of student performance. For example, in Boston Public Schools (BPS), twelve (12) schools have been identified by the DESE as Level 4. These schools, which represent a subset of potential schools that Blueprint could partner with, currently serve approximately 6,400 students. Of these students, 75% qualify for FRL, 38% are Limited English Proficient (LEP), and 93% identify as either African American or Hispanic. Student proficiency rates in mathematics in these schools currently range from 17% to 52%, all below the statewide average of 59%.

Blueprint is explicitly addressing the need for improved math achievement in Denver and Houston by successfully providing interventions and services, including BFPF. Blueprint also has an established relationship with state education leaders in Massachusetts, who support the implementation of BFPF in Level 4 schools with poor math achievement. Therefore, we selected these populations to serve through AmeriCorps because they have a documented need for BFPF, and we are confident they

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would benefit from the added support an AmeriCorps investment can provide.

MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: Members will serve as Fellows, working full-time to provide mathematics tutoring in historically underperforming public schools in Denver, Houston, and Massachusetts. Members will be placed at schools in teams and managed by a school-based Fellow Coordinator. They will meet daily with two or three students at a time for a 45-60 minute tutorial. These sessions are an ongoing part of each student's daily schedule. Members will work with students in grades 4, 6, and 9, which represent critical transition years for students. The lesson structure for tutorials includes a 5-minute warm-up activity, 15-25 minutes of practice in foundational skills (i.e. computation and problem-solving), 20-30 minutes of support in grade-level content, and an end-of-lesson

assessment. Members will deliver lessons to different pairs of students each period. Each day has one period reserved for planning and professional development facilitated by their Fellow Coordinator. Blueprint is requesting support for 70 full-time AmeriCorps members each year for three years to participate in BFPF.

VALUE-ADD OF AMERICORPS: Support from AmeriCorps will make a dramatic difference in Blueprint's ability to close the achievement gap in our partner schools. As an AmeriCorps grantee, Blueprint will be able to:

- 1) Attract additional high-quality talent to BFPF. An AmeriCorps award will help ensure the recruitment of high-caliber, service-oriented individuals into high-need public schools to serve in a role designed to directly impact student achievement. As Fellows in BFPF, AmeriCorps members will provide tutoring to accelerate students' achievement in mathematics, serve as role models in the school community, and build strong, motivating relationships with students. AmeriCorps members are uniquely suited to thrive in this capacity, as they have already demonstrated a commitment to service and a desire to aid struggling populations through their participation in the AmeriCorps program. In addition, we anticipate that AmeriCorps will help us attract a more diverse pool of applicants from across the country to BFPF, enabling us to reach our goal of at least 30% of the corps being from socioeconomically or ethnically diverse backgrounds.
- 2) Increase the human capital pipeline to high needs schools. BFPF will introduce members to the education sector, and, more specifically, to the critical work of improving high-needs schools. Through BFPF, Fellows become deeply invested in their students' progress and invested into the culture of their school, which inspires many to continue working in the education field, specifically in high-needs schools. Over 70% of Fellows who participated in BFPF during the 2011-12 school year reported that

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they plan to pursue careers or a degree in the education sector. We expect that AmeriCorps' investment in BFPF will help increase the pipeline for qualified applicants into traditionally difficult-to-staff positions in high-need schools.

3) Enhance the professional development offerings of BFPF. AmeriCorps will strengthen the impact of BFPF by building the capacity for increased professional development opportunities for Fellows. We have allocated funding in our proposed budget to support a more comprehensive professional development structure that will support Fellows in building their instructional skills, analyzing student achievement data, and differentiating lessons for diverse learners.

4) Support the expansion of BFPF into Massachusetts. Blueprint has established an agreement with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to support the implementation of our whole school turnaround model (including BFPF) in underperforming schools around the state in 2013. Though the exact sites of operation have yet to be determined, DESE is committed to working with Blueprint to identify schools that would most benefit from BFPF's implementation. Support from AmeriCorps will provide Blueprint with the additional organizational capacity we need to successfully recruit and train highly qualified individuals to implement BFPF in these new sites. The expansion of BFPF to Massachusetts will significantly increase the number of students that will benefit from its impact.

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM DESIGN: The interventions AmeriCorps members and volunteers will be engaged in are entirely evidenced-based and will have a measurable academic impact on students and a broader impact on the community. Research has shown that our model of daily, small-group, high frequency tutoring has a particularly significant impact on student achievement (Cohen et al, 2007; Dobbie and Fryer, 2011; Fuchs et al., 2009; Fuchs et al., 2008; Gordon et al., 2007; Madden and Slavin, 1989; U.S. Department of Education, 2011). In fact, tutoring is found to have a statistically stronger impact on school effectiveness and student learning than traditional resource inputs such as reduced class size, increased per pupil expenditures, and a greater number of teachers with higher degrees (Dobbie and Fryer, 2011).

Blueprint designed BFPF's tutorial structure to deliver targeted, intensive academic support to every student using proven-effective methods and strategies. As research and experience have shown, students have diverse learning styles (Bloom, 1968; Gardner, 1983). Therefore, Fellows and Fellow Coordinators work closely with school staff to align tutorial lessons to each student's individual needs. The BFPF lesson structure has two main objectives: 1) Build students' foundational skills; and 2) Ensure student mastery of grade-level content. The foundational skills component helps to strengthen

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the computation and problem-solving skills that students need to master before they can accomplish greater and deeper learning (Willingham, 2004). The grade-level content component serves to reteach and reinforce concepts covered in the regular classroom, a strategy found to improve comprehension and retention (Willingham, 2004).

MEASURING IMPACT: BFPF is designed to produce a measurable impact on students' academic achievement in mathematics and AmeriCorps members will play a key role in producing this impact. Throughout the school year, Blueprint ensures that student achievement data is collected and analyzed frequently to inform Fellows' instruction and track student progress. At the beginning of the year, students are paired according to data from a diagnostic assessment. Subsequently, throughout the year, each curriculum unit includes a pre-test, a post-test, and a period for Fellows to re-teach and remediate when students have not mastered a concept or extend lessons upward for students who are excelling and have already achieved mastery. Fellows collect data by checking for student understanding informally throughout the lesson and administering formal end-of-lesson assessments. This information is used to gauge student mastery at the conclusion of the period and inform planning for subsequent lessons. Fellows also help students track their own progress by updating their personal tracking logs to highlight skills that they have mastered and skills they need to continue practicing. In this way, Fellows are able to adapt their instruction to meet student needs, invest students in their own learning, and ensure a measurable impact.

At the end of each year of the 3-year grant cycle, Blueprint expects that students in BFPF will demonstrate more than one year of growth in mathematics for each academic year, as measured by achievement gains on an end-of-year post-test relative to performance on a pre-test prior to the delivery of services. Additionally, we will track student assignment to and completion of BFPF to ensure that we are serving our target number of students. These targets align with AmeriCorps Tier 1 National Performance Measures and will be reported annually.

RESULTS: In the summer of 2012, ten persistently underperforming schools in DPS completed their inaugural year working with Blueprint to facilitate whole-school turnaround. A key component of this work was the implementation of BFPF for all students in grades 4, 6, and 9 to improve mathematics performance. This is the same program for which AmeriCorps members will be recruited for service. First-year results from the implementation of Blueprint's turnaround strategies suggest that the initiative has been extremely effective thus far, particularly in raising mathematics achievement. For example, all grades in schools that implemented BFPF outgained DPS grade-level performance by 8 to 20 percentage points for students scoring either proficient or advanced in math on the Transitional

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Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP). Blueprint also administered the Scholastic Math Inventory (SMI), a widely used norm-referenced diagnostic assessment used to track student progress in math throughout the year, to all tutored students in our Denver schools. Final end-of-year results from this assessment showed that 49.7% of all students scored either proficient or advanced in mathematics, a significant increase from the 9.1% of students who achieved these scores at the beginning of the year. Additionally, according to Colorado's Median Growth Percentile metric, which measures student growth from one year to the next, all of Blueprint's new and turnaround schools ranked in the top 13 percent of the 1,829 schools in the State of Colorado for student growth in math, with four schools showing growth in the top 5% in the state. In particular, Green Valley Ranch Elementary School achieved student growth that was greater than 99% of all other elementary schools in Colorado, and High Tech Early College achieved student growth that was greater than 98% of all other high schools in the state. These results ranked them as the 3rd best elementary school and the 5th best high school statewide for student growth in mathematics.

The Denver Public Schools Office of Accountability, Research, and Evaluation has conducted its own independent internal audit of BFPF and its impact on student achievement. In their evaluation, DPS found that BFPF produced strong incremental growth [in mathematics] across the year for all grades and schools. In addition, the DPS report interviewed seven principals from Blueprint's Denver network and found that all of them were "strongly in favor" of the program. Some of the specific feedback received from principals includes: "This is the most effective intervention I've ever seen..this is what is needed..every day, all students, one subject"; "It is a program well worth the investment in time, people, and students"; "The program works so well I am looking to expand it into other content areas."

Originally, BFPF was implemented as a high dosage tutoring program for a cohort of underperforming schools in Houston. In 2010, nine secondary schools began a comprehensive turnaround initiative, led by the Education Innovation Laboratory at Harvard University (EdLabs). Blueprint served as a lead partner in this effort by supporting the implementation of BFPF that was eventually expanded to 20 elementary, middle and high schools in Houston. Blueprint has since successfully scaled and replicated the program for use in Denver.

In the summer of 2011, at the conclusion of the first year of the turnaround initiative in Houston, EdLabs conducted a formal evaluation of the overall impact of the strategies implemented in the nine secondary schools and found evidence of a particularly striking impact on student math performance in the grade levels that received tutoring from BFPF (6 and 9 in 2010-2011). The results indicated

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student growth that was equivalent to at least 1.5 years' worth of learning in one school year. In the five targeted Houston middle schools, the percentage of sixth graders achieving proficiency on the 2010 Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) exam grew from 63% to 85%, exceeding the district average. Similarly, the percentage of 9th graders passing the TAKS Math exam grew by an average of 14 percentage points, compared to 2 percentage points in the district overall.

Blueprint will conduct similar reviews and assessments of results from AmeriCorps funded positions. Reporting will be conducted by an outside evaluator and results will be submitted to CNCS.

THE AMERICORPS INVESTMENT: BFPF has been a remarkable success thus far in Denver and Houston, but its sustainability and scalability is at risk without the infusion of talented, service oriented

individuals, and comprehensive professional development training that an AmeriCorps investment can provide. By investing in BFPF, AmeriCorps will be joining forces with a well established,

proven effective program that will enable AmeriCorps members to make real change in the students' lives. Members will also receive comprehensive training in effective instructional practice and become introduced to the important work of school reform. For additional details on how the AmeriCorps investment will be used to build upon the positive results BFPF has achieved to-date, please see the "Value-Add of AmeriCorps" section above.

MEMBER RECRUITMENT: Blueprint has a successful, proven plan for recruiting members. A fulltime

Blueprint Recruitment Coordinator (RC) and a team of support staff recruit candidates for BFPF throughout the year. The RC contacts more than 200 college career centers, posts on more than 300 college career boards, leverages social media (including Facebook, LinkedIn, Facebook Causes etc.), and works closely with local organizations including partner school districts in Denver, Houston, and Massachusetts to advertise, increase public awareness of the program, and identify prospective local candidates. In 2012-2013, BFPF received over 1,080 applications and selected 333 as Fellows. The current cohort of Fellows has impressive credentials; in Denver, Fellows' average math SAT score is 680, ACT score is 28, and college GPA is 3.4. The rigorous selection process requires candidates to apply through our website by submitting a letter of intent and resume. Candidates must hold a Bachelor's degree or higher and must achieve a score of 80% or higher on an aptitude test assessing their mastery of math content. Qualified candidates are invited to participate in a series of interviews, and, in most cases, participate in a mock tutorial during which they tutor actual students.

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MEMBER TRAINING: Blueprint's plan for training and orientation includes familiarizing members with AmeriCorps, the service community, the placement site, the skills they will acquire, and the service they will perform. When accepted, members will receive an orientation packet with resources for moving to the community and assigned readings on the achievement gap and education reform. Prior to the school year, members will attend a mandatory two-week orientation training in their service district.

Blueprint's training prepares members to perform all the activities they will engage in during their term of service. Members' orientation training will focus on increasing student engagement, setting and upholding high academic and behavioral expectations, and communicating with a diverse set of stakeholders. Members will be introduced to the tutoring curriculum, which consists of interactive lessons aligned to state and district expectations for student learning. Specific training topics include: 1) cultural competency and context; 2) AmeriCorps expectations and procedures (including information on all prohibited activities); 3) instructional techniques; 4) strategies for delivering student-centered lessons; and 5) creating a positive, productive learning environment. Sessions are grounded in high-impact teaching strategies and modified for use in a tutoring setting. Training modules feature readings, video clips, role-play activities, and discussions. Many of the sessions use Doug Lemov's "Teach Like a Champion" as a core text for professional learning. Blueprint will further supplement sessions with models of effective tutorial practices on film for members to observe, analyze, and emulate.

MEMBER SUPERVISION: BFPF will provide ongoing training, supervision, evaluation and support to members during their term of service. The Fellow Coordinator (FC) will support members at the school level through weekly collaboration meetings and monthly professional development sessions in their school teams. Each month FCs will have a different focus for sessions, such as implementing the tutoring curriculum using proven-effective instructional strategies, creating a positive and productive learning environment, using data, and monitoring student understanding. Whenever possible, members' daily planning period will coincide with the school math department's to facilitate collaboration with the school staff. FCs will also work with a Service and Operations Coordinator, who will be employed by Blueprint to oversee the coordination and training required for meeting AmeriCorps members' volunteer recruitment obligations, as further described in the "Volunteer Generation" section below.

FCs are district employees, selected based on demonstrated instructional and leadership skills. FCs attend summer training on the roles and responsibilities of their position, goal setting, curriculum

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training, and leadership and management. A Blueprint-employed Regional Director supervises and provides professional development to the FCs and ensures that members and recruited volunteers are aware of and adhere to rules regarding prohibited or unallowable activities. FCs meet monthly with the Regional Director to further develop their leadership skills, receive updates, and problem-solve. Every six weeks, FCs will observe and evaluate members. In a post-observation debriefing session with their FCs, each member will create an individual action plan using a rubric of Fellow effective practices. Progress will be monitored during weekly check-ins. Members will be supported in the implementation of these action plans through access to individualized professional development, observations of other tutorials, and opportunities for the instructional staff to share planning ideas and instructional best practices.

TUTORING PROGRAM COMPLIANCE: BFPF meets the AmeriCorps requirements for tutoring qualifications and is consistent with the districts' instructional program and with state academic content standards. As stated earlier, BFPF has appropriate member supervision by individuals with expertise in tutoring and provides specialized pre-service and in-service training consistent with the activities the member will perform. Members will provide academic support in the core content area of mathematics. Partner districts have extended the length of the school day so that tutorials do not interfere with other classroom instruction. Fellows will work to improve student achievement through daily small group tutorials using regular assessment data to identify student strengths and areas for growth. Our program requires biweekly parent communication, which is recorded in a communication log regularly and monitored by the FC. Parent volunteers will be leveraged to provide support in tutorial classrooms. BFPF complies and surpasses AmeriCorps requirements for member tutoring qualifications. For complete details on our selection process and qualifications for tutors and their supervisors please see the "AmeriCorps Member Selection, Training, and Supervision" section above.

MEMBER EXPERIENCE - POWERFUL SERVICE EXPERIENCES: As essential contributors to their schools' turnaround efforts, members will witness both the effects of educational inequity and the potential for growth in their students. Through their service, members will establish strong bonds with their students and directly contribute to the growth and development of these students throughout the year. As a result, members will come to recognize the tremendous difference that one person can make in a child's life, and will take pride in, and become empowered by, their unique contribution as agents of change in a high-needs school. This experience is intended to instill a lifelong commitment to service in members, and to spark members' interest in education reform or other

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community revitalization initiatives that lead to positive change.

AmeriCorps members will broaden their impact by engaging the community in the work of improving school culture and student achievement. In addition to the service of providing daily tutoring, members will organize and execute service projects and volunteer engagement initiatives. These community service activities will include school campus beautification initiatives, book drives, and outreach to families to increase participation in school events. Members will strengthen communication between the school and students' families through bi-monthly correspondences and quarterly curriculum nights.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION: Members will have opportunities to reflect on and learn from their service during whole-group summer training sessions, weekly planning meetings with school teams, weekly online surveys and professional development led by their FC. During small group

training sessions, members will explore root causes of and potential solutions to the achievement gap, as well as engage in conversations about working with children and families living in poverty. Members will be encouraged to reflect on and address their personal biases in order to set and maintain high academic and behavioral expectations for all of their students.

AMERICORPS IDENTITY: BFPF is designed to foster a deep sense of connection with the AmeriCorps identity, and to ensure members will promote this affiliation within the communities they serve, and to the general public. Members will feel connected to other members serving across the city through their orientation, pre-service summer training, and collaboration on volunteer service projects. Trainings root members' service experience in the context of the critical need that they are addressing and connect their work to AmeriCorps' values of civic engagement and community development. Through school-based, whole-staff professional development meetings, members will develop relationships, problem-solve, and share best practices within their school community, including other members serving in their school. Additionally, service projects organized by members will offer connections with other AmeriCorps members across the city and national service participants. Blueprint is developing ways to connect all of our members nationally in order to build a robust professional and social network. These opportunities will include monthly newsletters and social networking pages.

VOLUNTEER GENERATION: BFPF's reach and impact will grow in the school community with the support of AmeriCorps members' strategic engagement in volunteer generation. With AmeriCorps funding, Blueprint will hire a Service and Operations Coordinator to ensure that AmeriCorps members

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meet their responsibility to expand their impact in the community beyond their role as tutors, and that volunteers will not be engaged in prohibited or unallowable activities. In addition, the Service and Operations Coordinator will train members and FCs at each operating site on how to effectively manage volunteers by using attendance logs, collecting volunteer contact information, maintaining frequent communication with volunteers through email and/or phone calls, and carefully planning and structuring all volunteer opportunities. Members will be expected to work with FCs to recruit and engage volunteers from the community to expand the impact of BFPF, either through direct support in the classroom or school-improvement-focused service projects such as campus beautification events, book drives, and family outreach events. Volunteers will be recruited using school newsletters, flyers, monthly meetings, and other outreach efforts organized by members with support from the Service and Operations Coordinator and FCs. Blueprint expects that the members will engage at least 70 volunteers overall in the inaugural year as an AmeriCorps program.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION: Blueprint is committed to branding its pledge to national service and currently brands the BFPF with Blueprint's logo throughout all communications materials and collateral. If awarded AmeriCorps support, Blueprint will include the AmeriCorps name throughout BFPF's operations. For example, Blueprint will use the AmeriCorps name and brand on websites, service gear and public materials such as stationary, application forms, recruitment brochures, on-line position postings, and other public materials identified in this application. BFPF will require that members wear AmeriCorps-branded clothing and they will be instructed on use of the name on all printed materials, within the classroom and on work related to the AmeriCorps program. In addition, throughout group meetings and service, BFPF will consistently reinforce and emphasize the AmeriCorps values of service, community development, and civic engagement.

Organizational Capability

MISSION AND HISTORY: Founded in 2010, Blueprint is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to helping school districts close the achievement gap in their lowest-performing schools. Using a blueprint of reform strategies distilled from ongoing research, we partner with districts, state governments, and other nonprofit organizations to plan, implement, and monitor the progress of whole school turnaround with the goal of improving educational and life opportunities for economically disadvantaged students in order to ensure that they are on track for college and career readiness. The organization's staffing is described in detail in the following section.

AMERICORPS PROGRAM MANAGEMENT: Blueprint's team has a proven track record of

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successfully operating and managing district-wide school turnaround efforts. With their experience and expertise, the team will ensure that the organization meets the programmatic, financial, operational, and strategic goals of BFPF.

The roles, responsibilities, relevant experience, and individuals assigned to staff the implementation of BFPF are as follows:

Executive Director, Matthew Spengler brings experience as a founding principal and Chief Academic Officer for a national charter school network. He oversees the Blueprint leadership team, manages board relations, and oversees relationships with partner district cabinet members. He will provide leadership and strategic direction to the BFPF.

Director of Operations, Jonathan Scherr has overseen the implementation of operational initiatives in the private sector and of national education projects with EdLabs. He oversees Blueprint's operations and finances in districts as well as the operations, marketing, development, and finances of the national office. He will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the BFPF's operational systems and structures.

National Program Director, Jeremy Beard is a former principal and School Improvement Officer of HISD. He oversees national implementation of our programs and provides on-the-ground support to our schools in Houston. He will monitor the implementation of BFPF in our Houston-based operating sites.

Regional Program Director, Deborah Backus brings experience as a Chief Academic Officer of Jefferson County Public Schools. She coordinates Blueprint activities in Denver and manages schoolbased

Fellow Coordinators. She will monitor the implementation of the BFPF in our Denver-based operating sites.

Tutoring Coordinator, Patricia Tao has implemented the Program in Houston and Denver and has coordinated tutoring programs at the MATCH charter schools. She will manage the professional development offerings of the BFPF.

Recruitment Coordinator, Suad Al-Kawas is a former MATCH tutor with experience developing charter school applications. She will oversee all aspects of BFPF'S member recruitment and selection.

Finance and Grants Manager, Theodore Trevens has served as the lead financial administrator on over 17 state and federal grants. He will oversee and manage Blueprint's prospective AmeriCorps funding.

Regional Director, Massachusetts, TBD. The individual who fills this role will have at least ten years

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of leadership experience and will be familiar with Massachusetts' districts and schools. In addition, he or she must have a Masters degree or higher in educational leadership, or a comparable field. This position will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the BFPF in our Massachusetts-based sites.

Service and Operations Coordinator, TBD. The individual who fills this role will have at least 5 years of experience managing and coordinating volunteer efforts and service projects. Experience working within a school environment will be preferable. He or she must hold a Bachelor's degree or higher. This position will ensure that AmeriCorps members meet their responsibility to expand their impact in the community beyond their role as tutors and that volunteers will not be recruited or engaged in prohibited or unallowable activities.

GOVERNANCE: Blueprint is governed by a four member Board of Directors. Meeting quarterly, the Board oversees the Executive Director, helps the organization meet our fundraising goals, ensures accurate budgeting, and regularly reviews financial records. The Blueprint Board of Directors is committed to supporting BFPF through fundraising as well as by providing direction on programmatic decisions.

CAPACITY TO PROVIDE TRAINING FOR MEMBERS: Blueprint is well-equipped to provide comprehensive training and skills development for members from their orientation throughout their service. The National Program Director and Tutoring Coordinator will create and implement a twoweek summer professional development program, similar to programs they have already created and implemented for our current Fellows, which will prepare members for success with instructional skills and classroom management training, set expectations for BFPF management and member conduct, and discuss how members should handle difficult situations they may experience as staff members in high-needs schools. In addition, if awarded funding through AmeriCorps, all staff will receive comprehensive training on the programmatic and financial guidelines of the AmeriCorps program. For a complete overview of the orientation, training, skill development, and supervision our organization will provide members and staff, please refer to the "AmeriCorps Member Training and Ongoing Supervision, Evaluation, and Support" sections above.

CAPACITY TO SUPPORT EXTERNAL EVALUATION: Blueprint coordinates with external organizations that are among the leaders in education research and program evaluation on a regular and ongoing basis. These organizations are tasked with measuring the overall impact of our turnaround initiatives on student achievement. The evaluations provide valuable independent and

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objective feedback on our work. Blueprint is prepared and has funding to collaborate with external partners to conduct evaluations of BFPF at all operating sites.

CAPACITY TO ADMINISTER FEDERAL FUNDING: Blueprint's senior staff and consultants have extensive experience running and financially administering federally funded programs although Blueprint itself does not currently have federal grants under management. Executive Director Matthew Spengler and Director of Operations Jonathan Scherr were intimately involved in the implementation and management of National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants while working at EdLabs. Jeremy Beard, National Program Director, has managed an AmeriCorps grant for Teach for America, a 21st Century Learning grant, and a Texas Title I Priority Schools (TTIPS) grant. Blueprint's Recruitment Coordinator Suad Al-Kawas has experience ensuring program compliance with MATCH Charter School's AmeriCorps grant requirements. Theodore Trevens, Blueprint's Finance and Grants Manager, has served as the lead financial administrator on over 17 state and federal grants including those from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the NIH.

SUSTAINABILITY: Blueprint ensures the long-term sustainability of BFPF by 1) Securing necessary funding to support long-term program implementation; 2) Building district-level capacity to implement and manage the BFPF; and 3) Building community engagement and support for the program. Blueprint coordinates with a variety of community stakeholders to accomplish these goals, including superintendents of schools and their teams, district foundations, community representatives, parents/families, community volunteers, and other influential leaders. This collaboration directly leads to long-term, sustained community engagement in BFPF's continued operation.

1) Securing sources of funding. Blueprint has a successful track record of planning for and securing financial and in-kind resources necessary to support our program implementation. Financial support for the BFPF comes from a diverse set of federal, state, and local funding sources. For example, funds to support Blueprint's partnership and the tutoring programs in Denver and Houston include a combination of Title I, School Improvement Grants, and other district-based resources. Additionally, in partnership with the districts we serve, we have assisted in raising more than \$4 million in major foundation awards to support the turnaround efforts. In November 2012, voters in Denver approved an annual 50 million dollar local tax increase that will provide ongoing funding to expand the BFPF to 40 additional schools beginning in the 2013-14 school year. Blueprint also employs a full-time development coordinator to help secure additional external funding sources to support the long-term financial stability of BFPF.

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2) District-level capacity building. Blueprint is committed to building school districts' capacity to implement the BFPF to ensure the sustainability of the program. For example, district staff members worked in partnership with Blueprint staff members during the recruiting, selection, and hiring of Fellows for the 2011-12 school year. Additionally, Blueprint's extensive training program is designed to ensure that the district-employed, school-based Fellow Coordinators internalize systems and structures and can adapt materials for successful program implementation. In this way, Blueprint leverages each district's systems and employees to make BFPF more integrated with ongoing operations. Blueprint believes that partnering with districts and engaging local staff members in the training, operations, and monitoring of the program will ultimately make it more sustainable.

3) Community engagement and support. BFPF is most effective when it operates with the full support of the community it serves, particularly from the students and families directly involved in the program. In order to maintain and actively leverage support and engagement from our service site communities, Blueprint will work to build systems for effective and ongoing school-to-home communication and outreach. For example, Fellows are expected to maintain bi-weekly communication with student's families and to help coordinate outreach activities such as hosting parents for quarterly curriculum nights and leading students and their families in instructional games and activities. Our school principals have many before, during, and after school opportunities for volunteers to contribute to the academic and socio-emotional development of students. Thus, we expect that Fellows will work to recruit and support community volunteers to work on these additional school-centered initiatives in each Blueprint partner school. These efforts will foster strong community relationships and yield an ongoing awareness, engagement, and investment within the community to sustain BFPF after the AmeriCorps grant ends.

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Blueprint considers compliance and accountability integral to the success of the BFPF and has established plans and protocols to ensure all operating sites are adhering to AmeriCorps rules and regulations. On-site staff will be trained to ensure that each site is operating in compliance with AmeriCorps requirements and aware of prohibited activities. All participants in the BFPF including Blueprint staff, district staff, and Fellows will sign agreements to adhere to all Blueprint and AmeriCorps rules and regulations. Contracts with subgrantees will include language requiring compliance to these rules, regulations, and accountability measures as well. Blueprint's Regional and National Directors will visit operating locations and school sites for extensive observations of the BFPF in action. They will observe staff, Fellows, subgrantees, and service sites once every quarter, and, based on their observations, they will work with our Finance and Grants

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Manager to develop and implement internal systems to prevent and track all potential compliance issues. If instances of risk of noncompliance are identified, depending on the severity of the incident, our response will include a written warning and development of an action plan to ensure compliance in the future.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Blueprint purposefully operates in low-income communities with the goal of accelerating achievement in chronically underperforming schools. We currently operate in two resource-poor communities, as detailed in the community need section. As a newly formed organization, Blueprint has already made an impact having operated our programs in 30 schools for the 2011-12 school year, and we are currently operating in 32 schools for the 2012-13 school year. As we continue to grow as an organization that brings essential supports and resources to its partner districts and schools, Blueprint leadership acknowledges that an AmeriCorps sponsorship would allow Blueprint to greatly increase that impact by providing additional instructional supports, service, and outreach to the schools and communities that we serve.

CONSULTATION WITH STATE COMMISSIONS: Blueprint has been in contact with state commissions in Texas, Colorado, and Massachusetts. We have submitted all requested paperwork and online forms to comply with all state requirements and ensure non-duplication and coordination of CNCS resources.

OPERATING SITES AND SERVICE SITES: Blueprint will coordinate fiscal and general oversight of BFPF from our national headquarters in Newton, Massachusetts. Additionally, on-site staff operates out of local offices in Denver and Houston. The Massachusetts program will operate out of our Massachusetts office. Member service sites include 32 elementary, middle, and high schools in DPS and HISD, as well as a network of turnaround schools in Massachusetts (see below for timeline and process for identifying these schools). These sites are all part of Blueprint's national network of schools and were identified in collaboration with district leadership as schools in need of intensive turnaround interventions based upon a common history of chronically poor academic performance. Blueprint executes agreements with school districts or with their affiliated district foundations to support the work at each local operating site. Blueprint provides partner schools and districts with extensive technical assistance and support in order to ensure consistent and high-quality program implementation across service sites and that the sites have adequate programmatic and financial capabilities to succeed.

Our site selection process incorporates the criteria required by the AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR 2522.475 and the special considerations found in 45 CFR 2522.450 by conducting extensive due

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diligence to determine whether sites have the capacity to implement BFPF as it has been described in this narrative. Operating sites sign agreements with Blueprint prior to implementation, promising to adhere to the program's guidelines and expectations. These agreements guarantee that the quality of BFPF will be preserved. In addition, Blueprint conducts comprehensive screening interviews with onsite

staff and leadership to confirm their commitment to faithful program implementation, and once agreements have been signed, Blueprint provides on-going training and monitoring at each site to ensure BFPF is both effective and sustainable.

TIMELINE FOR IDENTIFYING SERVICE SITES IN MASSACHUSETTS: To identify service sites for BFPF in Massachusetts, Blueprint's national team will conduct the following activities in the winter of 2013: 1) Site visits to low-performing schools in Massachusetts identified as potential candidates for a partnership with Blueprint. These visits will include classroom observations, student performance data analysis, and conversations with students, teachers, and school leaders; 2) Analysis of Massachusetts' underperforming districts, including their capacity regarding data management, human resources, and instruction departments; 3) Introductory meetings with district board members, superintendents, cabinet members and department directors; and 4) Introductory conversations with prospective community stakeholder groups and supporters. Blueprint plans to identify operating sites in Massachusetts by May 2013.

Blueprint is investing considerable time in understanding the landscape of prospective districts in Massachusetts and in building relationships with district and community leadership before any turnaround interventions are initiated. Throughout this process, our leadership team will provide regular updates to the AmeriCorps program on our findings, potential roadblocks, and ultimately our assessment of which districts in Massachusetts have the necessary conditions in place to effectively partner on this work.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

COST EFFECTIVENESS: Blueprint runs all of our programs including BFPF in an efficient and cost-effective manner. We leverage existing district resources and systems whenever possible to ensure that program participants have all the resources they need in order to avoid creating financial redundancies that could come from a stand-alone program. In addition, by focusing our efforts on students in critical transition years (4th, 6th and 9th grades) and by optimizing our student:tutor ratios (3:1 at the elementary level compared to 2:1 at the secondary level), we are able to maximize

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impact while controlling costs.

Blueprint is requesting 70 full-time members at \$7,000 per MSY for a total request of \$490,000, which is below the annual cost of existing programs. Our program is currently supported by our partners in Denver, Houston and Massachusetts through contracts with the Denver Public School District (DPS) (62% of FY13 budget), Houston Independent School District Foundation (HISD) (10%) and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA ESE) (28%). The proposed AmeriCorps support will represent approximately 24% of Blueprint's 2013-2014 operating budget although this percentage is subject to decrease as we continue to expand our operations. The total operating cost to support 70 members in all three Blueprint locations is approximately \$2.9 million per year, or \$42,000 per MSY for the stipend, benefits, recruiting and selection, training, supervision, and professional development for each member. In turn, the \$7,000 per MSY requested, while extremely important to expanding the program and continuing its effectiveness, represents approximately 16.7% of the overall budget for this group of 70 members.

To support BFPF, Blueprint works with our partner districts to ensure we can obtain diverse resources for program implementation. Currently, BFPF is funded primarily through Blueprint's partner districts that have witnessed the effectiveness of our program and are committed to working with us to ensure BFPF is funded year-to-year and expanded as appropriate. For complete details on how Blueprint works to obtain diverse sources of funding to support BFPF please see the "Sustainability" section above.

BFPF has been shown to be among the most cost-effective interventions for accelerating student achievement and closing achievement gaps. The full per-student cost (not per-Fellow cost) for Blueprint's work, the majority of which falls under the BFPF, translates to approximately \$1,700 per pupil across Blueprint's schools. When compared with other interventions that have been researched, it is a substantially more cost-effective intervention. For example, our model has a more positive impact than reducing class size from 22 to 15 and is about 30% less expensive. (Fryer, 2011).

Therefore, BFPF maximizes the return on investment because our program design achieves superior results at a lower cost.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Blueprint works in schools located in low-income and underrepresented

communities. Blueprint is continuing to work to expand to similar districts across the country. As an organization just over two years old with a rapid rate of growth in such a short time, CNCS support will help further solidify our organization and its trajectory in impacting student

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achievement. Although this program is exclusively for Blueprint's work in our current locations, in the coming years, Blueprint anticipates partnering with other communities to help close achievement gaps nationwide. For complete demographic statistics on the communities we serve, please see the "Need" section above.

BUDGET ADEQUACY: As detailed in the program narrative, AmeriCorps funds will be used to recruit, train and support skilled, capable, service-oriented AmeriCorps members to serve as Fellows in BFPF. In this role, members will work to accelerate mathematics achievement in failing schools where racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps are prevalent and persistent. In order to make the program an attractive and practical employment opportunity, Blueprint has allocated AmeriCorps funding to be used as a living stipend for members. This will help us recruit the most highly qualified candidates possible. In addition, Blueprint has allocated a portion of our AmeriCorps budget to invest in BFPF's capacity to provide comprehensive professional development and improved curriculum supports to members which will help improve the quality of instruction students receive and enhance the overall impact of BFPF on student achievement. Finally, Blueprint will use AmeriCorps funding to invest in the expansion of BFPF into high needs operating sites within Massachusetts, thus allowing a new population of at-risk students to benefit from the positive results BFPF has produced.

Of the \$7,000 per MSY requested, \$2,500 per member will be sub-awarded to DPS and HISD to supplement Fellow living stipends. Blueprint will ensure that the AmeriCorps stipend is paid appropriately as a stipend for AmeriCorps members, not for any other purpose. Our partnerships with DPS and HISD allow us to take advantage of their internal systems and scale to conduct criminal history checks, provide health care coverage, as well as coordinate the payment of living stipends. Other expenses that AmeriCorps funding will support include: 1) Tutor curriculum development and refinement in mathematics; 2.) Expansion of our tutoring program into other regions; 3.) Tutor professional development and support; 4) Consumables; 5) Uniforms and other branding materials; and 6.) The implementation of the service program at each site. Budget management and oversight is conducted at the national level and is subject to an annual audit and review by the national Board of Directors.

Blueprint is in the process of developing a five-year fundraising strategy that will allow us to further diversify BFPF's funding sources. Our strategy will focus on: 1) increasing our visibility in the local communities where our programming exists; 2) conducting outreach to individual donors; 3) submitting applications to private foundations; and 4) pursuing additional government funding. Blueprint has hired a Development Coordinator to support this work.

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Evaluation Summary or Plan

Not Requested

Amendment Justification

Not Applicable

Clarification Summary

1. Please describe your plan to reduce your cost per MSY in years 2 and 3 of the grant:

Blueprint will work to reduce the cost per MSY in subsequent years of the grant by using the first year of funding to invest in the creation of training and tools that can be used in subsequent years of the Program as well as through pursuit of additional private funding.

Blueprint has pursued a variety of development and fundraising activities to support BFPF in its partner schools and districts. Through these ongoing efforts, we are confident that we will secure the additional funding needed to reduce our cost per MSY in years 2 and 3 of our AmeriCorps partnership. Specifically, Blueprint aims to achieve the reduction in cost per MSY requested by: 1) Pursuing national and local private foundation grants, major donors and other groups interested in our work; and 2) Coordinating with District Partners to underscore the power of the public-private partnership that exists between Blueprint and its partners. Below, we have provided an overview of Blueprint's fundraising efforts and activities conducted to-date for moving forward in achieving a reduction in MSY.

Blueprint's Development Goals

To sustain Blueprint's AmeriCorps program model, Blueprint employs a Development Coordinator who, in collaboration with Blueprint's Leadership team, has been building relationships with local and national foundations whose strategic priorities are aligned with Blueprint's mission and the mission of BFPF. Through these efforts, Blueprint will work to ensure there is a private philanthropic funding pipeline that is informed, invested, and engaged with the success of BFPF and prepared to support its continued implementation.

Coordinating with District Partners

Blueprint is committed to working with our district partners to build relationships with the local and

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national philanthropic community to support BFPF at each of our operating sites. To do this, we spend time with district leadership co-constructing a thesis for our collaborative work, identifying potential funders and leads, and preparing development communications materials including: letters of inquiry, project proposals, and informational memos and briefs about our work. In addition, Blueprint helps manage the development and fundraising process by setting fundraising targets, timelines, and benchmarks for progress monitoring. Below, we provide an overview of the fundraising activities we have pursued to-date in coordination with our district partners.

Activities to-date

- o Blueprint has collaborated with Denver Public Schools to co-author successful proposals to local and national foundations.
- o Blueprint has worked with each partner district's finance office to construct a long term budget projection, identify potential funding sources, and develop a plan to align sources and uses to support the sustainability of BFPF tutoring interventions over time.
- o Blueprint is in the process of working with its new district partners to create a fundraising plan that will provide necessary funding to supplement the implementation of BFPF in each school.
- o Blueprint and district leaders are currently collaborating to create a potential funders list that includes both Blueprint and district contacts and develop written materials such as letters of inquiry, project proposals, and communications documents to distribute in support of our outreach efforts to these potential funders.

Moving forward, Blueprint will continue to work independently and in collaboration with our district partners to pursue potential funding leads and secure the supplemental resources needed for the 2013/14 school year and beyond. This next phase of work will involve pursuing major donors by cultivating relationships in the philanthropic community, setting up introductory meetings, and networking through our board and other organizational contacts. In addition, Blueprint will prepare and distribute letters of inquiry, project proposals, and outreach materials to potential funders as needed. With these efforts, we are confident in our ability to reduce our costs per MSY in years 2 and 3.

2. Clarify how AmeriCorps members roles and responsibilities will be different from those of the previous Blueprint Fellows. Were Fellows paid a stipend for their tutoring or were they considered

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volunteers? As AmeriCorps members are not permitted to displace existing staff or volunteers in their role, please discuss how this program will comply with this when placing members.

AmeriCorps member roles and responsibilities will only differ in ways that are not at odds with Blueprint's evidenced-based tutoring program given that the AmeriCorps program model is designed to replicate this highly successful tutoring intervention. AmeriCorps members can expect, however, to receive additional training tailored to meet the specialized expectations and requirements of the AmeriCorps program. This includes being required to focus explicitly on integrating AmeriCorps values of community service into their roles and responsibilities through the coordination of community service initiatives and volunteer events at each schools site.

BFPF is a one-year service program that is designed to serve as a supplemental intervention to support each partner school's existing staff and resources. Fellows are not considered volunteers, they are paid a stipend for their tutoring services. A new corps of Fellows is brought in each year to replace corps members from the previous year. No existing staff members or volunteers are displaced by the implementation of BFPF at a school site because of the nature of the Program being an intervention and supplement to core classroom instruction. In addition, Blueprint anticipates using the AmeriCorps program to expand BFPF into new school sites in Massachusetts and Denver, meaning that existing Fellow positions will not be replaced by new corps members from the AmeriCorps program. Rather, AmeriCorps Members will be placed where the Fellows Program has yet to be implemented. This plan guarantees compliance with AmeriCorps regulations when placing members in service sites.

3. Since training for members is done in different service districts, please discuss how you ensure consistency of training. Please also clarify who delivers the member training in each service district.

Blueprint's National Program Director and Tutoring Coordinator are responsible for the training of all Fellows in all of Blueprint's partner schools. Together, with support from Blueprint's program staff, they coordinate and deliver a standardized summer professional development program in each region where the program operates. The core sequence and content of training modules is consistent across all service sites. Through this training, AmeriCorps members will be prepared to succeed as tutors with instructional skills and classroom management training, clear guidance for tutorial session

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procedures and protocols, expectations for member conduct, and training on how to handle difficult situations that may arise in a high needs school. In addition, summer training will outline the various support systems that members can seek out if they need help, instill the importance of using ongoing evaluations to guide instruction, and train members in student performance data collection and analysis. Though training sessions may be modified to fit within the context of each district, the topics, goals, and objectives of core training will remain consistent.

4. Please clarify whether and how members receive daily support and supervision as needed, since only weekly, monthly and quarterly interactions are described.

To ensure members receive daily support and supervision, each school has an on-site Fellow Coordinator employed by the district who is responsible for implementing BFPF at the school-level with support from Blueprint's Regional Director and program team. Fellow Coordinators are experienced educators and/or former tutors and are selected for their roles based on demonstrated instructional effectiveness, management skills, and leadership capabilities.

Coordinators facilitate daily check-ins, are available and on-site every day to supervise tutorial sessions, and provide ongoing daily support to Fellows on implementing the tutoring curriculum, effective instructional practices, and strategies to improve student engagement and classroom management. In this way, Blueprint ensures members will receive access to daily support and supervision in addition to the weekly, monthly, and quarterly interactions described previously. Informal observations and feedback take place daily and fellows are constantly being developed to improve their skills as effective instructors.

5. Please describe in more detail how program staff will be trained in AmeriCorps regulations and requirements as part of the program.

As a part of Blueprint's orientation into the AmeriCorps program, Blueprint's National Program Director will conduct a series of mandatory training seminars for all program staff, including Blueprint's internal staff, school-site based Fellow Coordinators, and essential school district personnel. These comprehensive sessions will provide all necessary training in AmeriCorps regulations and requirements. Specific dates and the length of these sessions have yet to be determined. Topics will

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include: 1) Prohibited Service Activities; 2) Program Structure and Training Requirements; 3) Expectations for Member Conduct; 4) Member Supervision and Training; and 5) Integration of AmeriCorps Commitment to Community Service. Other topics will be added in accordance to the requirements of Blueprint's partnership agreement with AmeriCorps.

Training will take place over the summer, prior to the implementation of BFPF at school sites and will be reinforced throughout the year by site visits and ongoing professional development sessions. These training sessions will be created by Blueprint's operations team and designated AmeriCorps program staff and delivered by field-based Blueprint leadership with support of Coordinators. Any additional staff hired for AmeriCorps program-related work will be required to complete the training as a prerequisite for employment. In addition, Blueprint will provide follow-up training sessions for all program staff to reinforce the requirements and regulations each summer prior to the start of each school year. Finally, as needed, Blueprint is committed to facilitating targeted training on an ad-hoc basis to address explicit compliance and AmeriCorps-specific program implementation issues as they arise.

6. The application indicated that you would place AmeriCorps members in SIG or Priority Schools. In order to be considered in Tier 1, at least 50% of the schools in which members are placed must be either SIG or Priority schools. Please confirm or deny that you meet this 50% threshold. If you do not meet the 50% threshold and have checked the SIG box in the Grant Characteristics section of the application, please uncheck the box.

At least 50% of the schools AmeriCorps members will be placed in for Blueprint are SIG or Priority Schools.

7. You selected low-income individuals and communities of color as applying to your program in the grants characteristics section, but did not provide sufficient information on how you plan to recruit members from these populations in the application narrative, other than stating that 30% of your corps will represent these demographic groups. Please provide a detailed discussion about how you plan to reach out and recruit members from low-income and communities of color populations.

Blueprint has developed strategic partnerships with school districts and community organizations in

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Denver to assist in recruiting and hiring Fellows from the communities served by BFPF, and will work to cultivate similar relationships at the sites we establish in Massachusetts. By recruiting locally as well as nationally, we will ensure that a portion of our Fellows will reflect local demographics, which in large part are made up of low-income and minority populations. We have experience working with and engaging traditionally underrepresented populations. For example, in Denver, efforts to recruit a diverse corps of tutors for our program have included outreach to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), faith-based organizations, and coordination with bilingual television and radio stations. These include multicultural organizations such as the Hispanic and Black Chambers of Commerce in Metro Denver, and Mi Casa- a Denver-based nonprofit that works to advance the economic success of Latino and working families. In addition, Blueprint places advertisements for BFPF in a wide range of publications, including the Denver Urban Spectrum, African-American Voice, and Denver Black Pages.

Blueprint's goal is that at least 30% of BFPF corps be from socioeconomically or ethnically diverse backgrounds. We anticipate that as an AmeriCorps program, we will be better able to attract a diverse pool of highly qualified candidates from across the country because it will enable the BFPF to reach a broader pool of applicants in our recruitment efforts.

8. Given that majority of the operating budget for FY13 appears to come from the Denver Public Schools District, please discuss in detail the funding you have secured to date to operate the program in Colorado and Massachusetts for the 2013-14 program year. Please discuss how the funding you receive from each school district will correspond with the number of members placed in that district. In addition, please discuss the level of confidence you have in your ability to secure the necessary funding for each operating state for 2013-14 and discuss your plans to raise the total necessary program operating funds in subsequent years of the three-year cycle.

Blueprint negotiates agreements with its district partners for its oversight of BFPF in schools. The fee Blueprint receives covers a part of Fellows training, recruitment and selection, program management, oversight, and implementation support.

Blueprint has secured funding to support the BFPF in schools in Denver through our ongoing contract with the District. Through this agreement, forty (40) additional schools in Denver will be receiving

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Blueprint's model of high-dosage tutoring in grades 4, 6, and 8 (no tutoring in high schools). An additional 242 tutors will be needed for the program and Blueprint intends to allocate a portion of our MSY's to support schools included in this expansion. In addition, Blueprint is engaged to implement BFPF in two school districts in Massachusetts: Boston Public Schools and Fall River Public Schools. These partnerships will provide the funding necessary to support the AmeriCorps program in these schools.

Blueprint is moving forward with a targeted fundraising strategy, independently and in coordination with our district partners, to secure additional funding to support the long term implementation of the program and reduce the cost per MSY in subsequent years of the grant cycle. Blueprint has already pursued a number of promising funding opportunities as a result of this effort and we are exceedingly confident in our ability to secure the necessary funding to support the program's operating funds

9. Please clarify how many members you plan to place in each operating state.

Massachusetts-based sites - 20 Members

Colorado-based sites - 30 Members

10. Please provide additional information on your progress in identifying placement sites in Massachusetts.

Blueprint is currently engaged with two Massachusetts districts, Boston Public Schools (BPS) and Fall River Public Schools (FRPS) to implement our turnaround model, which includes the BFPF. These schools have been classified by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as Level 4 or "most in need of intervention."

State of Negotiations

Boston Public Schools

* Blueprint has met regularly with BPS senior leadership, including Superintendent Carol Johnson and Chief of Staff Tim Nicolette, to discuss school turnaround plans for two designated schools: The English High School and Elihu Greenwood Leadership Academy (K-5).

* Blueprint has conducted site visits, classroom observations, and meetings with each school's

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leadership team.

* Blueprint co-authored a School Redesign Grant (SRG) with BPS to secure additional funding to support turnaround efforts at The English High School.

Fall River Public Schools

* Blueprint has visited schools and met regularly with FRPS leadership, including Superintendent Meg Mayo Brown, to discuss details and plans for a Blueprint partnership.

* Blueprint is partnering with FRPS and the Fall River-based Resiliency Foundation to open an "early college" innovation school called Fall River Innovation Academy.

* Innovation schools, authorized by 2010 MA legislation, are in-district schools that operate with increased autonomy in areas such as staffing, curriculum, scheduling, and budget.

* Blueprint will provide technical assistance and monitoring regarding implementation of BFPF as well as other elements of the Blueprint turnaround framework such as scheduling, human capital pipelines, school culture, and use of data.

12. Please clarify whether the organization has a fee-for-service relationship with the school districts where members will be placed, with schools providing a fee to your organization in exchange for the services provided by members. If so, please clarify what is the average amount for a fee-for-service contract per school.

Blueprint's fees are paid for by its partner districts for Blueprint's oversight and management of the implementation of BFPF in schools. Blueprint's fees support the Fellows training, recruitment and selection, monitoring and feedback, and implementation technical assistance. Each Fellow's salary and benefits, Fellows Coordinator's salary and benefits, furnishings, and consumables related to the BFPF are covered directly by the district, and are not included as part of Blueprint's service agreement.

Contract amounts for these agreements vary by the number of schools, fellows, and other elements included in the scope of Blueprint's services. For example, some schools partner with Blueprint exclusively to operate BFPF, and others work with us to implement our full turnaround program model which includes BFPF, frequent site visits, data collection, and recruitment support. The cost of Program implementation ranges from \$40,000 -- \$100,000 at each school and is dependent on a number of varying contexts including school location, size, and the scope of services provided. In

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addition, the up-front costs related BFPF implementation in Year One are not reflective the funding required to support the program in subsequent years because over time districts build their internal capacity, as a result of their partnership with Blueprint, to assume greater responsibility for Program management and implementation.

12. Please provide additional information to discuss your organization's financial capacity to effectively manage a fixed-price grant, given the significant total cost of the program, the necessary compliance with AmeriCorps and federal funding regulations, and the low cost/MSY requested from CNCS.

Blueprint currently manages an operating budget of nearly \$2 million and thus is well prepared with the financial management systems and expertise needed to steward a fixed-price grant of \$350,000. In addition, Blueprint's senior staff and financial consultants have extensive experience managing federally administered funding programs.

Due to the significant total cost of the program intervention Blueprint has composed, the necessary compliance with AmeriCorps and federal funding regulations, and the low cost/MSY requested from CNCS, the Blueprint board will ensure the proper bookkeeping and financial management structures exist for adequate fiscal reporting and compliance with all federal regulations.

Due to the fact that AmeriCorps funding will require an A-133 audit, we have begun discussions with our CPA to ensure our financial management systems and staff are prepared for those requirements.

Grant Start Date and Member Enrollment Period:

Blueprint Schools Networks confirms that the AmeriCorps grant and member enrollment period start date will be August 1st, 2013.

Budget Clarification Items:

1. In the budget adequacy section, you listed the following program costs: "Expansion of our tutoring program into other regions" and "consumables." Please clarify what specifically is included in these cost categories.

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Please see our line-item budget for complete details of how AmeriCorps funding would support Blueprint's work, consumables, and expansion.

Clarification Summary #2

Programmatic Clarifications:

1. Please confirm that proposed members will only be placed in the expansion schools.

AmeriCorps members will only be placed in schools where the Blueprint Fellows Program is expanding for the 2013/14 school year. They will not be placed in school sites where the Program is currently operating.

2. Please clarify the stipend amount that is provided to individuals who currently serve as Blueprint Fellows.

Blueprint Fellows are not employed by Blueprint Schools Network; they are the employees of their respective school districts. Thus, stipends vary slightly by region. Salary ranges for the Program are \$20,000-\$21,000 with up to a \$2,000-\$5,000 attendance and performance bonus.

3. The clarification response describes program operations only in Colorado and Massachusetts. Please discuss why Houston, Texas is no longer included as a proposed program operating site and revise the application cover page to reflect this change if necessary.

Blueprint has been working with the Houston Independent School District (HISD) for the past two and a half years to help operate and oversee the implementation of the Blueprint Fellows Program while also building the District's capacity to independently sustain the Program in the long term. In June of 2013, our current agreement is scheduled to end. At the time of Blueprint's original

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AmeriCorps application submission in February it was unclear whether HISD would have the capacity to assume full-control of the Blueprint Fellows Program and to manage and oversee its implementation independently at the conclusion of the contract term. Thus, there was a possibility the contract would be extended. After careful consideration, however, Blueprint and HISD have mutually determined that Blueprint's services are no longer required to maintain the operation of the Program and the District will assume full responsibility for its implementation moving forward. Therefore, HISD will no longer be used as an operating site for AmeriCorps members serving in the Blueprint Fellows Program.

4. As the agreements with the Massachusetts schools appear to still be pending, what is your confidence level that your organization will be able to secure appropriate agreements and funding from these schools in time for the program start?

Blueprint's agreements with Boston Public Schools (BPS) and Fall River Public Schools (FRPS) are in the final stages of review and processing and will be finalized before the Program's start. Superintendents in both districts have given approval for Blueprint to begin recruiting Fellows and to specifically identify both BPS and FRPS and the partner schools on our website. Each of these agreements guarantee the necessary funding will be available to support the Program's implementation. Blueprint can provide letters of commitment and assurance from each of its district partners in Massachusetts to confirm these statements if requested.

5. Please clarify the role of Financial and Reporting Consultant that is included in the budget.

The role of the Financial and Reporting Consultant will be to oversee development and implementation of financial processes that will enable Blueprint to competently manage Federal Funds. This consultant will have experience with A-133 audits and the process regarding establishing policies and procedures that meet all requirements of accepting federal funding.

Budget Clarifications:

1. Your organization is very new and the IRS Form 990 does not indicate you have had Federal funding. Please describe any experience you have had managing Federal funds.

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As an organization, Blueprint has not directly been a recipient of Federal Funding. However, as noted in our initial narrative, Blueprint senior staff has extensive experience running and financially administering federally funded programs. Executive Director Matthew Spengler and Director of Operations Jonathan Scherr were intimately involved in the implementation and management of National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants while working at EdLabs. Jeremy Beard, National Program Director, has managed an AmeriCorps grant for Teach for America, a 21st Century Learning grant, and a Texas Title I Priority Schools (TTIPS) grant. Theodore Trevens, Blueprint's Finance and Grants Manager, has served as the lead financial administrator on over 17 state and federal grants including those from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the NIH. Each of these individuals will bring their knowledge and experience to support the effective management of any funding awarded for Blueprint's AmeriCorps program.

In addition, as Blueprint has grown, we have applied for several Federal grants and developed an infrastructure and staffing plan to address the challenges of managing Federal Funds. We are currently working with our auditor to assess our financial staffing needs going forward and will be hiring additional personnel to insure Blueprint meets all regulations and requirements of an A-133 audit. As mentioned above, we will hire a financial consultant with extensive experience overseeing Federal Funds to coordinate and supervise Blueprint processing of Federal grant dollars.

Continuation Changes

Not Applicable

Grant Characteristics

- AmeriCorps Member Population - Communities of Color
- AmeriCorps Member Population - Low -income Individuals
- AmeriCorps Member Population - Native Americans
- AmeriCorps Member Population - New Americans
- AmeriCorps Member Population - Older Americans
- AmeriCorps Member Population - People with Disabilities
- AmeriCorps Member Population - Rural Residents
- AmeriCorps Member Population - Veterans, Active Military, or their Families
- AmeriCorps Member Population - economically disadvantaged young adults/opportunity youth
- AmeriCorps Member Population - None of the above
- Geographic Focus - Rural