

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): 10/18/12 | 3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE: | STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2b. APPLICATION ID: 13SR143182 | 4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY: 10/18/12 | FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. APPLICATION INFORMATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LEGAL NAME: Newton Community Service Centers DUNS NUMBER: 070611587 | NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Jan M. Latorre-Stiller TELEPHONE NUMBER: 617 969-5906 x120 FAX NUMBER: 617 964-3975 INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: jlatorre-stiller@ncscweb.org | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 492 Waltham St West Newton MA 02465 - 1920 County: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 042232418 | 7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit 7b. Community-Based Organization | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 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: 94.002 10b. TITLE: Retired and Senior Volunteer Program | 11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: SOAR 55 11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY): | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Ashland, Framingham, Newton, Natick, Wayland, Wellesley and Weston, Massachusetts | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 04/01/13 END DATE: 03/31/16 | 14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="MA 004"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="MA 004"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 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;">\$ 106,384.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. APPLICANT</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 53,493.00</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;">\$ 51,493.00</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;">\$ 2,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g. TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 159,877.00</td> </tr> </table> | a. FEDERAL | \$ 106,384.00 | b. APPLICANT | \$ 53,493.00 | c. STATE | \$ 0.00 | d. LOCAL | \$ 51,493.00 | e. OTHER | \$ 0.00 | f. PROGRAM INCOME | \$ 2,000.00 | g. TOTAL | \$ 159,877.00 | 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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| g. TOTAL | \$ 159,877.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 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: Jon Firger | b. TITLE: Executive Director | c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (617) 969-5906 116 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: | | e. DATE SIGNED: 10/18/12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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Executive Summary

SOAR 55 (Service Opportunities after Reaching 55), an incumbent RSVP project sponsored by Newton Community Service Center, Inc., requests federal funding in the amount of \$106,384 with a match of \$53,493 in cash and in-kind sources for a total budget of \$159,877. Since 1973, the SOAR 55 project has been recognized as a strong and innovative organization that creatively and effectively responds to both community needs and the interests and proclivities of generations of older adult volunteers. Since 1993, when the current Project Director was named, the project has received national recognition from the Met Life Foundation and the National Council on Aging, the Social Innovation Forum, and the Corporation for National & Community Service that awarded SOAR 55 several grants for Programs of National Significance, including Learning Partners, our school-based tutoring program and primary focus area for this grant.

With SOAR 55 currently supporting approximately 300 volunteers, many of whom are currently serving in the national priority areas assisting children, the elderly, veterans, immigrants, and low-income and disenfranchised populations and with 78 partner organizations, SOAR 55 is poised to deliver on the goals set forth in this proposal. SOAR 55 has the solid experience, robust infrastructure, available resources, strong community bonds, and sponsor support to continue providing effective volunteer programming.

As this grant proposal will outline, beginning in April 2013, SOAR 55 will focus its energies and resources to meet national priorities in education, economic opportunity, healthy futures, veterans and military families, and capacity building in the communities of Ashland, Framingham, Natick, Newton, Wayland, Wellesley and Weston, Massachusetts. With an established and successful Learning Partners program that helps on average 225 at-risk students annually with reading and math skills, a thriving pro bono consulting program that has assisted over 40 nonprofits to better serve their clients by building stronger and more efficient organizations, a solid partnership with the

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local aging-in-place communities, and a developing relationship with a Military & Families Support Center where volunteers provide tax, finance and legal assistance to individuals and families, SOAR 55 is already well on its way to meeting the goals of this grant.

Strengthening Communities

This year's focus for SOAR 55 will be to strengthen and expand those volunteer programs and assignments that align with the focus areas of the Corporation for National & Community Service and those which have an impact on select community organizations in the territories served by this project. With our history of accomplishment and evidence of continuing community need, Education will be our priority program focus area for this grant application.

HISTORY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS Established in 1997, our school-based reading and math tutoring program, "Learning Partners," provides professional training and resources to enable program participants to provide the most effective support to the students and schools they serve. With consistent annual requests from local schools for additional help for students struggling with reading and math and the increasing availability and continued interest on the part of community members, age 55 and over to help, the program continues to thrive. Volunteers consider making a difference in a child's academic success of paramount importance and a remarkable retention rate proves their commitment, with volunteers staying an average of at least 2 years and many for 5 years or more. Since the program's inception, we have primarily been providing Learning Partner volunteers to the school districts of Ashland, Framingham and Newton.

According to past end-of-year surveys from our partner schools, Learning Partner volunteers play a significant role in meeting the needs of students. This past year's outcome reports are consistent, showing that 80% of the students helped by SOAR 55 Learning Partners increased their interest in and enthusiasm for reading, and 75% showed the same for math. 56% of students achieved grade-level

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proficiency in reading attributed in large part to their SOAR 55 Learning Partners. 49% achieved grade-level proficiency in math, again attributed to their SOAR 55 Learning Partners. Forty-eight Learning Partners served approximately 162 children.

COMMUNITY NEED

Ashland MA Public Schools

Ashland is a town in Middlesex County, Massachusetts. It is part of the MetroWest region. The population was 16,593 at the 2010 census, 10% of whom are non-white, with a median household income of \$87K. Twenty-five percent of the population is between 6 and 18 years of age (4,200 students).

We currently serve two elementary schools in Ashland: Warren and the David Mindess.

The 2012 MCAS test results show the following:

In 3rd through 5th grade, an average of 30% of students showed they need improvement in English language arts and an average of 25% of the students need improvement in math; in 6th grade through 8th grade, an average of 12% of students showed they need improvement in English language arts and an average of 20% of students need improvement in math. Statistics improve as students enter high school.

Framingham, MA Public Schools

Framingham is a town in Middlesex County, Massachusetts. It is part of the MetroWest region. At nearly 67,000 inhabitants, Framingham is the largest Town in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the hub of the Metro-West region. The racial makeup of the town were 65.3% White, 5.8% Black, 0.8% Native American, 6.3% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 6.27% from other races, and 3.38% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 13.4% of the population. Brazilian immigrants have a major presence in Framingham.. (Source: 2010 Census Quickfacts)

The median income for a household in the town was \$54,288, and the median income for a family

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was \$67,420. About 8.0% of families and 16.0% of the population were below the poverty line, including 11.4% of those under age 18.

We currently serve the following elementary schools in Framingham: Brophy, Heminway, McCarthy, Potter, and Woodrow Wilson. The 2012 MCAS test results show the following:

In 3rd through 5th grade, an average of 33% of students showed they need improvement in English language arts and an average of 33% of the students need improvement in math; in 6th grade through 8th grade, an average of 25% of students showed they need improvement in English language arts and an average of 31% of students need improvement in math. Statistics improve as students enter high school.

Framingham's school system released a statement recently that said the town's schools continue to be "challenged" at reaching the desired levels of progress and achievement for students but remain committed to highlighting areas of excellence and areas needing continued improvement. Five schools were designated as Level Three schools indicating challenges with various subgroups and other issues. The district is committed to meeting its goal to improve student performance. "During the 2012-2013 school year, each school will develop a School Improvement Plan in which they use MCAS and other data to set five improvement goals," said Dr. Sonia Diaz, Director of Educational Operations.

"Principals have formed leadership teams that will set goals, develop strategies to reach those goals, and collect data to monitor progress towards those goals."

Newton MA Public Schools

Newton is a suburban city in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, approximately seven miles west of downtown Boston. Rather than having a single city center, Newton is a patchwork of thirteen "villages." According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the population of Newton was 85,146, making it the eleventh largest city in the state.

As of the census of 2010, there were 32,648 households and 20,499 families residing in the city. The

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racial makeup of the city was 79.6% White, 11.5% Asian, 2.5% African American, 0.07% Native American, 0.03% Pacific Islander, 0.71% from other races, and 1.46% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 4.1% of the population. (2010 Census Report: Census report Quickfacts.com)

Newton, along with neighboring Brookline, is known for its considerable Jewish and Asian populations. The Jewish population is estimated at roughly 28,000, about one-third of the total population. Newton also has a sizable Arab-American community.

According to 2010 income statistics the city of Newton had a median household income of \$112,230. We currently serve the following elementary schools in Newton: Angier, Burr, Bowen, and Lincoln-Eliot. In 3rd through 5th grade, an average of 18% of students showed they need improvement in English language arts and an average of 16% of the students need improvement in math; in 6th grade through 8th grade, an average of 8% of students showed they need improvement in English language arts and an average of 13% of students need improvement in math. Statistics improve as students enter high school. The following is an excerpt from a 2011 report from the Newton Schools entitled, Areas of Concern and Challenge: "Despite substantive improvements at nearly every grade, we have not yet been successful at narrowing the gap between students not included in an No Child Left Behind subgroup and those who are included. We have been unable to support African American, low income, and special education students enough to meet AYP performance targets or improvement targets. As we get closer to 2014, the year in which authors of the No Child Left Behind Act expected 100% of all students in the country to be proficient, AYP targets are less and less achievable. Even so, in Newton, we can and should do a better job of educating our most vulnerable students. "At every grade level 3 -- 8, the disparity between each measure of student performance between students with disabilities and students without is substantial. In 2011, about 90% of all students without disabilities scores proficient or above, while only about 44% of their disabled peers were able to score in that

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range. Similarly, the Composite Performance Index (CPI), a measure of the achievement of proficiency, shows discrepancy of between 14 and 25 points between these groups... Additionally, nearly 100 Newton School Volunteers continue to work with elementary students before and after school to provide support and encouragement to our fragile learners. We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated and competent group of citizens working with our students."

From the aforementioned reports, clearly the most need in order of degree is in the elementary and middle school grades in Framingham, then Ashland, and lastly, Newton. SOAR 55 Learning Partners will expand its volunteer base by 28% in order to more effectively meet the amount of need evidenced by these reports.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPPORT

With 50 Learning Partners and 11 Partner Schools, SOAR 55 has an established and successful school-based volunteer tutor program in place. Over the 15 years we have operated the program, we have formed strong partnerships with participating schools that rely on our services to their students since they recognize the quality, caliber, and commitment of SOAR 55 Learning Partners. Cathy Stickney, Coordinator of Curriculum at Ashland Public Schools states, "The SOAR 55 Volunteer Program addresses a major need within our school community. We are always in need of additional adults who can work with us to support the learning of our students. Whether the students need assistance in comprehending or completing their work, or if the students need an opportunity to work on enrichment activities to support their interests and talents, the volunteers work collaboratively with school staff members to provide academic assistance in a variety of ways. We benefit tremendously from the background experience and training each volunteer has to offer. This program has become a vital part of our educational program."

With the support of this grant, we will build on the success of the SOAR 55 Learning Partners program by: expanding the number of volunteers, currently at 50, to 70 in order to more completely

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meet the need, especially in elementary and middle school math in the Framingham School District; continuing to provide a required initial orientation and training for Learning Partners who tutor reading; and offering opportunities to receive additional training through our partnerships with the Jewish Literacy Program based in Boston, Ma. Those SOAR 55 volunteers who tutor math in Newton Schools receive training and support through that school system. We will also continue to offer ongoing support to volunteers through regularly-scheduled facilitated Round Table Discussions where Learning Partners have an opportunity to share ideas, reflect, and consider challenges. We will strengthen our partnership with the Framingham Elementary and Middle Schools to provide additional math tutors who receive training that reflects the district's elementary and middle school math curriculum.

There is always room for improvement. A survey to the schools in 2011 showed that some schools would like volunteers to come better prepared with some basic knowledge of reading techniques. From that survey result, we recruited a SOAR 55 volunteer who is a retired reading specialist to design and deliver a curriculum that will, as of this fall, be mandatory for each volunteer who tutors reading. We will replace an outgoing SOAR 55 volunteer who served as our Learning Partners School Liaison, assigned to take leadership responsibilities for coordinating many aspects of the program, we will retain the SOAR 55 Learning Partner Trainer, and recruit several SOAR 55 Volunteer Leaders assigned to each school district served who will help in local school coordination and volunteer recruitment and support efforts.

All SOAR 55 volunteers, including Learning Partners, are tracked through Volunteer Reporter, a volunteer database application, customized for RSVP projects. The database tracks volunteer information, assignments, hours served, and other important information for reporting purposes.

SERVICE ACTIVITIES

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Seventy SOAR 55 Learning Partners will be placed at partner schools to meet one-on-one or in small groups with students who have been identified as needing assistance with reading or math skills in order to succeed academically. Learning Partners, after being further screened with a criminal background check by the schools, meet with their student(s) twice a week for approximately one hour each session, for the duration of the school year. Volunteers will know that the purpose of their service role is to both increase academic engagement and improve reading and/or math skills and will be prepared and supported in their efforts to do so. SOAR 55 anticipates that, as a direct result of the Learning Partners interventions, 80% of those students served by Learning Partners will experience increased academic engagement and 60% of students will have improved academic performance in math and/or reading.

VETERAN SERVICE ACTIVITIES

SOAR 55 has been working with its partner, the Military Support and Family Center in Wellesley, Ma for two years, providing tax prep, legal, and financial assistance to military members, veterans and their families. The Military and Family Support Center is an agency of the Massachusetts National Guard. A wide range of services are available free of charge that include, but are not limited to: Legal services, Military identification card services, Family program staff and services, Counselors and other representatives from federal and state agencies to assist with financial assistance, housing and healthcare, and Veterans' Laws and Benefits.

We plan to increase the number of volunteers helping in tax prep, legal, and financial assistance from six to ten. We anticipate expanding our assistance by providing an additional five volunteers to directly help with family services..

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Recruitment and Development

A critical step in creating a successful volunteer recruitment and retention plan is to provide the types of assignments that offer a high level of satisfaction to those who would volunteer. As the baby-boomer population begins to transition from full-time careers and looks to give back, they seek opportunities to apply their substantial skills and experience to significant service roles within nonprofit organizations that make a difference. What we have learned is that this group generally prefers direct service assignments that have substantial impact, project-oriented tasks, the affiliation of working in teams, and challenging assignments. At the same time, nonprofit organizations, struggling to fulfill their missions in a difficult economic environment, are poised to benefit from this rich resource of individuals. Ultimately, the combination of these synergetic forces promises to markedly benefit the community at large. For volunteers who serve in volunteer assignments that match their interests, values, skills, and schedules, the experience can be life-changing. Volunteer Surveys conducted by SOAR 55 consistently show that volunteers feel an increase in well-being as a result of engagement in an endeavor that leads to a sense of accomplishment and purpose, increased social connections, and the satisfaction of knowing they are making a difference in their communities.

In order to ensure high quality assignments with the opportunity for volunteers to share their skills and experience to improve their communities and themselves, our project will continue to take a proactive role in seeking out volunteer opportunities that align with our mission and goals informed by national focus areas and local community needs. Building relationships with local nonprofit organizations that utilize our services ("stations") is paramount to a successful volunteer program. In

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order to continue to build quality relationships, we will regularly survey stations regarding their level of satisfaction with our services and SOAR 55 volunteers, offer technical assistance to station supervisors, and offer training to station staff and volunteers who are interested in serving as volunteer coordinators for nonprofit organizations.

Through the SOAR 55 Scan Task Force, SOAR 55 staff and volunteers meet one-on-one with nonprofit leaders to help them imagine and craft volunteer roles and/or design projects that help strengthen infrastructure and build capacity so that they are better able to serve their clients. In addition to a one-on-one approach, nonprofits are also able to learn about best practices and trends through group presentations and trainings. A SOAR 55 volunteer with professional volunteer management experience provides this type of educational experience for local nonprofits with a workshop entitled "Effectively Engaging Skilled Volunteers to Achieve Organizational Impact." With dozens of volunteer opportunities and over 80 nonprofit "partners," our program will continue to offer high-impact, innovative service assignments as Direct Service Volunteers serving vulnerable populations as outlined in Performance Measurements, Nonprofit Management Consultants helping nonprofit leaders better serve their constituents, and Volunteer Specialists who can offer special expertise as direct-service or leadership volunteers. In addition, by providing volunteers with a variety of opportunities, thoughtful placement, and specialized training and support, SOAR 55 increases retention rates by helping them to optimize their service experience.

Under the direction of a 20-hour-a-week SOAR 55 Volunteer Recruitment Coordinator, volunteer recruitment activities include: group presentations through a series of workshops entitled: "Connecting through the Volunteer Experience" where panels of SOAR 55 volunteers share their stories of service; media coverage (articles); community listings; flyer distribution; visibility on

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volunteer and partner organizations' websites such as Volunteer Match and Connect & Serve; robust partnerships with organizations who serve the same cohort such as Discovering What's Next, Jewish Vocational Services, and the Life Planning Network; visibility at local Employment and Training Centers; and social networking sites. Volunteers, as "SOAR 55 Ambassadors," play a major role in recruitment through participation in workshops and group presentations as "panelists" where they describe their volunteer experience in an effort to inspire others.

SOAR 55 will continue with a commitment to training and support as a way to improve volunteer satisfaction and performance. Volunteers will enhance their skills and awareness through a range of trainings including: a New Member Orientation where volunteers learn about nonprofits and the responsibilities of volunteering; a six-hour training for Learning Partners who tutor reading; a training for elementary-level math tutors who serve in Framingham Schools, where the need for math assistance is most urgent; a series of Round Table discussions that support Learning Partners need for affiliation and continued assistance in their efforts to help young students; a 60-hour Nonprofit Consultant Training for those volunteers in capacity-building consulting assignments followed up with advanced trainings such as "Mind Mapping," "The Art of Powerful Questions," and "Development for Nonprofits." This past year, SOAR 55 introduced a new program where trained volunteers serve as Volunteer Coordinators within small to mid-size nonprofits. Through reports from our Scan Task Force, we have learned that organizations are more receptive and better equipped to utilize volunteer assistance if this kind of help were available. Plans are to continue to expand this program. The training, conducted by a SOAR 55 volunteer and former Volunteer Management professional, provides volunteers with information about the full range of topics relevant to this type of position. Once trained, they are placed at a local nonprofit organization for 8-10 hours a week and receive additional support as they "learn on the job." One SOAR 55 Volunteer Coordinator says of her experience, "With SOAR 55's training and support, I felt prepared for my assignment as a Volunteer

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Coordinator for Springwell. I am delighted to be part of a team and my experience recruiting and interviewing volunteer candidates has been not only very rewarding--I have also learned a lot of valuable skills." This type of professional training is exactly what baby boomers seek out as part of their volunteer experience and therefore enhances recruitment efforts.

We will continue with other volunteer retention practices which include a thoughtful approach to volunteer placement where we examine an individual's skills, talents, and interests as they relate to a volunteer position. A 10-hour a week Volunteer Support Coordinator will periodically follow up with each volunteer to ascertain satisfaction with his/her assignment(s), submit an annual volunteer survey to solicit ideas and comments from members, and help plan a volunteer annual recognition event and other activities that are current, meaningful, and festive.

Building relationships with local nonprofit organizations that utilize our services is paramount to a successful volunteer program. In order to continue to build quality relationships, we will regularly survey stations regarding their level of satisfaction with our services and SOAR 55 volunteers, offer technical assistance to station supervisors, and offer training to station staff and volunteers who are interested in serving as volunteer coordinators for nonprofit organizations.

Our volunteer base is reflective of the demographics of the communities we serve, particularly in terms of socio-economic status. We plan to recruit several SOAR 55 Volunteer Leaders who will help us increase the diversity of our volunteer members, including individuals of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientation, and degrees of English language proficiency, veterans and military families and those with disabilities, including those with age-related disabilities.

Program Management

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SOAR 55 will develop and manage its volunteer stations by continuing to build strong relationships with organizations whose missions and goals fall within the parameters of this grant application. The SOAR 55 Program Director will continue to take primary responsibility in ensuring efficient and effective management of volunteer stations by continuing the following efforts: ensuring that stations comply with current federal grant regulations and applicable laws, which includes having an up-to-date Memorandum of Understanding that clearly outlines the mutual responsibilities of stations and SOAR 55; communication with station supervisors through a variety of vehicles including workshops, trainings, newsletters, surveys, and notices; managing and tracking station data and required documentation through Volunteer Reporter, a data management program specifically designed for RSVP projects. The Program Director along with a SOAR 55 Leadership Volunteer will conduct periodic station audits that present an opportunity to assess and update volunteer practices and roles, address concerns and challenges, and encourage key staff to imagine new roles that would both help build organizational capacity and provide meaningful placements that match the interests and skills of volunteers and the goals of this grant. SOAR 55 will continue to provide additional meaningful placements to volunteers by partnering with stations that demonstrate compelling missions and offer significant volunteer service roles that align with this grant's goals outside of the primary focus area of education. At the same time, SOAR 55 will review those stations that are no longer relevant to the strategic direction of our program, notify each of them personally, and offer to help them with projects that would align with our capacity building focus area. In addition, every effort will be made to minimize disruption to the volunteers associated with those stations. The plan is to notify volunteers of the change in direction for our project, the reasons why, with the assurance that their volunteer placements, although no longer under the auspices of SOAR 55, are valued and still viable. Since all inactive SOAR 55 volunteers receive quarterly newsletters and monthly updates of new volunteer opportunities, they will have the opportunity to select other SOAR 55 placements. Our

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program went through a similar exercise two years ago when our federal funding was reduced, making it necessary to trim and focus our energies. The transition went smoothly with no disruption of the volunteers or their placements.

To further ensure that all parts of our program are running effectively and that our goals are being met, SOAR 55 will continue to undergo self-assessment, which currently include an annual volunteer satisfaction survey, station reports, periodic visits to stations, evaluation of identified volunteer service activity, semi-annual progress reports against the goals of the federal grant and, when indicated, regular progress reports to other funders. Accurate and thorough record-keeping is an important part of program management and operations. SOAR 55 manages information and data via the Volunteer Reporter Software program, which stores comprehensive information on each volunteer and station. To help meet reporting requirements and to effectively manage our project, we require that all stations complete a Volunteer Request Application that includes the following: community need data, description of service activity, inputs, projected accomplishments, and projected outcomes (if applicable), as well as Job Descriptions, and documents that help define the goals of our service activities and deliver the required information for those program(s) under performance measures. The SOAR 55 Project Director is responsible for ensuring the success of National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs for programming and assignments. The Director, who has 20 years of experience as an RSVP project director and over 10 years of experience with performance measurement protocol, will work closely with station leadership to ensure that outputs and outcomes are measured and collected. A SOAR 55 volunteer, with 20 years of program evaluation experience with United Way, will assist the Project Director in developing best practices for our project in this critical area.

The project director, the Sponsor Executive Director, and Vice-President of Finance will continue to

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create an annual budget that aligns with existing federal requirements, reflects available resources, and meets project needs. Our sponsor agency, Newton Community Service Center (NCSC), has a strong track record in the management of federal funds and provides a rich and effective resource of peripheral services such as accounting, development, marketing, and finance that are integral to the successful operation of the SOAR 55 project. NCSC is an established (over 100 years old) and reputable 501(c)(3) with all the requisite checks and balances that ensure financial accountability and efficiency in the use of all resources. NCSC and other community resources will continue to provide valuable in-kind support mostly in training services. Over the years, SOAR 55, with the help of NCSC, has been very successful in securing funds to expand programming through several Program of National Significance grants from the Corporation for National & Community Service and through other grant sources, most recently, the Tufts Health Plan Foundation. Fundraising efforts will continue to be led by a SOAR 55 Development Action Committee whose purpose is to identify sources of funding including grants, business partnerships, and major gifts, and to conduct other fundraising activities. This past year, we received our first "Corporate Partner in Service" donation of \$10,000. We also received \$30,000 in major and individual gifts and our fourth year of funding from Tufts Health Plan Foundation in the amount of \$48,942.

Organizational Capability

Newton Community Service Center, the sponsor agency for SOAR 55, has a proven track record in federal grants management. SOAR 55 has access to a variety of support services from its sponsor agency including IT, administrative, fundraising, human resources, record-keeping, and fiscal oversight and management. Newton Community Service Center staff, including the Associate Executive Director for Business and the Executive Director, work closely with the SOAR 55 director to meet the project's fiscal responsibilities by designing and managing the annual budget, creating monthly financial reports against budget goals, and submitting all federal financial reports and

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meeting federal financial requirements. NCSC is an established organization with the capacity to provide satisfactory facilities which include a well-maintained office space and adequate standard office equipment including phones, computers, and printers. With personnel policies and procedures in place, carried out by a full-fledged Human Resources Department, staff is able to fulfill the mission and responsibilities of the program within a well-structured and professional environment.

In addition, SOAR 55 staff and volunteers are valuable resources for effectively overseeing SOAR 55 operations and delivering excellent community programming. Staffing consists of a project director with nearly 20 years of experience with RSVP project management, and the following part-time positions: a Volunteer Outreach Coordinator, with a strong sales and marketing background, who is responsible for meeting our volunteer recruitment goals and has been part of our organization for the past 5 years; a Volunteer Support Coordinator, with an executive background in volunteer management, who provides volunteers with critical support as they begin the process of placement, periodically checks in with volunteers over the course of their volunteer assignment, and manages the project's database; a Program Manager with a background in volunteer management and fundraising, who, for the past 5 years, has overseen the SOAR 55 Nonprofit Management Consulting Group program; and a professional nonprofit management consultant who is the trainer and lead coach for those volunteers who serve as pro bono management consultants. Staff is proficient in using the Volunteer Reporter program, which tracks volunteer and station information and other important data to ensure an organized and well-managed operation. The SOAR 55 Development Committee, formed in 2011, has done a remarkable job in increasing financial resources to make up for a substantial reduction in federal funding and has provided the needed funds to support staff positions. Since 2010, we have operated a satellite office in Framingham, Massachusetts, with no additional overhead expense. The office, donated by the Framingham Public Library, is currently staffed by a SOAR 55 volunteer who provides intake for new volunteers. Over that time, it has increased the

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number of Framingham and Metro West volunteers by 25%. The SOAR 55 Leadership Council (Advisory Council) takes a very active role in overseeing operations and programming and by offering valuable guidance, expertise, and hands-on assistance.

The SOAR 55 Development Committee, coordinating with Newton Community Service Center, has been instrumental in not only making up for the severe reduction in federal funding but in raising additional money to support our program. Their development plan includes additional resources from grants, individual donors, and corporations. This past year, the Committee raised a total of \$89,000 in non-federal funds from a combination of a Tufts Health Plan Foundation grant, now in its fourth year, individual donors, and our first "Corporate Partners in Service" sponsorship. We also have in-kind resources provided by a contractual consultant who considerably under-prices her services to contribute to our program.

Other

n/a

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

n/a