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Executive Summary

Providence Children's Museum will have 12 AmeriCorps members who will deliver relevant and robust project-based learning activities for 200 children in out-of-school time in Providence, Rhode Island. At the end of the 1st program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for improving children's attitudes towards mathematics and increasing children's understanding of math content. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 100 volunteers that will be engaged in facilitating play and learning in the Museum's hands-on exhibits.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education. The CNCS investment of \$159,600 will be matched with \$177,913 in private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

1) A solid understanding of mathematics is a necessary 21st century skill. Numerous research studies and school assessment data show that socio-economically disadvantaged children are significantly behind their more affluent peers in mathematics beginning in the earliest grades and do not catch up. 2) Studies and the Museum's own experience show that children who are motivated to learn and practice math, and are provided with engaging opportunities to do that, can improve their understanding of math concepts; the Children's Museum's AmeriCorps Members will provide those opportunities for 200 low-income children. 3) At least 70 of those children will show increased motivation to learn math assessed with the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire and improved scores on the Monitoring Basic Skills Progress test, and, based on research referred to in the narrative that follows, it is expected that those children will have sustained positive attitudes toward math beyond the program.

PROBLEM/NEED:

In their 2009 report, "Mathematics Learning in Early Childhood," the National Research Council of the National Academies identified this problem: "Mathematics has risen to the top of the national policy agenda... the new demands of international competition in the 21st century require a workforce that is competent in and comfortable with mathematics. There is particular concern about the chronically low mathematics and science performance of economically disadvantaged students ...

Particularly alarming is that such disparities exist in the earliest years of schooling." (NRC, 2009, pg.

1) In response the NRC conducted a comprehensive examination of the evidence for math learning

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and teaching. They noted that study after study showed that children of low socio-economic status significantly under-perform their more affluent peers in math and that children in poverty demonstrate lower levels of math skills before entering school and the gaps continue and even widen throughout their time in school (NRC, 2009), limiting career opportunities later in life.

These unfortunate findings are born out in Providence, RI. Only 33% of 3rd graders in Providence public schools, where 83% of students are eligible for subsidized lunch, tested as proficient in math on the 2012 New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), the state's standard assessment. Statewide, where less than half of public school students are eligible for subsidized lunch, 60% tested as proficient (RI Dept. of Education [RIDE]).

MuseumCorps, the AmeriCorps program at Providence Children's Museum (PCM), will address this disparity working closely with Boys & Girls Club of Providence (BGCP) and Highlander Charter School (Highlander), two anchor institutions serving children in the impoverished Southside neighborhood of Providence, both within two miles of the Museum. One-third of Southside residents live below the federal poverty line and 91% belong to racial/ethnic minority groups (The Providence Plan, 2010 US Census). The majority of children served by BGCP-Southside attend nearby Fogarty School, which is identified as a "priority" (most in need of intervention) school; 87% of students are eligible for subsidized lunch; chronic absenteeism was 27%; and only 19% of 3rd graders scored proficient on the math NECAP (RIDE). PCM has partnered with BGCP for more than a decade and MuseumCorps has served at the Southside club for the past three years, delivering STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) enrichment. PCM administers the Monitoring Basic Skills Progress (MBSP) Basic Math Concepts and Applications tests (a standardized, research-based evaluation tool) to participating children in grades 2 to 4. Their baseline scores are abysmal, averaging 18.5 to 27%. At the conclusion of the children's participation in the MuseumCorps program, the majority of the children's scores had risen 5 to 10%.

At Highlander, a K-8 public charter school serving Providence children, 78% of students are eligible for subsidized lunch; 30% of third graders scored proficient on the math NECAP (RIDE). More troubling, at the beginning of the school year, 41% were assessed as performing at grade level for math on the school's assessment tool, Aimsweb; at the end of the year that had dropped to 30% performing at grade level.

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The children at Highlander and BGCP are clearly in need of academic support and enrichment. As the Assistant Head of Highlander wrote, "I believe the work that would be done with the Museum would give the students a chance to work with concepts in new environments and in creative ways, hopefully making those new connections to concepts that haven't been successfully connected with here at school."

EVIDENCE & IMPACT:

PCM has found AmeriCorps to be a highly effective means of delivering academic enrichment for disadvantaged children. Since 1997, MuseumCorps teams have run STEM-based after-school and summer "Learning Clubs" in partnership with community organizations. The program has evolved to accommodate changing community needs and build on lessons learned, however Learning Clubs have always aimed to increase positive attitudes (i.e. motivation) toward learning. Motivation affects amount of time devoted to learning and "21st century skill" development (such as persistence), integral to academic and career success (National Research Council report "How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School," 2000). In recent years, the program has measured the increase in participants' STEM (particularly math) content knowledge, as well as their interest and motivation, experimenting with various models of program design. We have found that children who participate in at least 12 (60 to 90 minute) Learning Club sessions are much more likely to improve their scores on the MBSP assessment (75% with an increase of 10% or higher). We therefore sought community partners serving high-need children that can accommodate the 12-session Learning Clubs and provide opportunities to collaborate with classroom learning. Both BGCP and Highlander fit these criteria. MuseumCorps has a dedicated space for Learning Clubs at BGCP and a collaborative relationship with the math coach at Fogarty Elementary, the neighborhood school. Highlander is able and willing to transport Learning Club participants to the Museum and the classroom teachers and administrators are eager to collaborate with PCM. Both organizations are located in the Museum's Southside neighborhood.

In 2014-17, MuseumCorps Members will work with 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade students from Highlander and BGCP during out-of-school time to a) foster positive attitudes toward mathematics and b) build understanding of math content by engaging students in relevant and robust project-based learning activities. Trained in PCM's extensive repertoire and drawing on well-evaluated curricula such as

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"Mixing in Math" (TERC, Inc.) and "Practical Uses of Math & Science" (NASA), Members will plan and facilitate hands-on activities that encourage participants to actively discover and examine math concepts. Members will work in teams of four to ensure a low adult/child ratio (1:4) needed for lively interactive learning. They will engage children in challenging tasks that involve problem solving and reasoning -- such as cracking a code or building a tower out of sticks -- with supportive guidance and feedback. Members will ask open-ended questions encouraging elaboration, questioning and self-explanation -- "What did you notice?" "How did you figure that out?" -- and provide opportunities for children to reflect on their work through talking, writing and drawing. Children will use multiple and varied representations of concepts, such as charting results from mystery powder investigations or acting out the flight path of a paper airplane.

Learning Clubs will support and extend school-day learning, by giving children time to practice and integrate their developing knowledge and skills, a critical element of math learning. Learning Clubs will provide opportunities for students to engage in and apply mathematics, deepening their understanding of the content standards (e.g., charts, number & operations in base ten, measurement, geometry, time & money) and practice standards (e.g., problem solving, reasoning, constructing arguments, modeling and using tools), described in the Common Core State Standards.

The educational enrichment that PCM Learning Clubs provide aligns closely with the recommendations from the National Research Council's comprehensive report, "Education for Life and Work: Developing Transferable Knowledge and Skills in the 21st Century" (NRC, 2012). NRC recommends, based on prevailing research, that instructional programs incorporate six key elements: using multiple and varied representations of concepts and tasks; encouraging elaboration, questioning, and self-explanation; engaging learners in challenging tasks with supportive guidance and feedback; teaching with examples and cases; priming student motivation; and using formative assessment.

A goal of this initiative is for children to see themselves as capable learners, particularly in a foundational skill area such as math. NRC's research shows that motivation, self-efficacy and interest are directly linked to academic performance. Learning Club students' self-efficacy and motivation will be assessed using questionnaire items adapted from the motivation subscale of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, a validated instrument which has been used in hundreds of research studies, including studies with elementary-aged children (Duncan & McKeachie, "The

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Making of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire", 2005). We will look for improvements in children's self-efficacy (belief in their abilities to be successful in math); interest in math (opinions about the relevance of math to their lives); and intrinsic motivation to learn math (desire to master math skills). Math content knowledge will be assessed through the MBSP. Both the attitude survey and the MBSP will be administered at the beginning of the children's participation in Learning Clubs. The attitude survey will be re-administered after children have attended six times, the MBSP after 12.

Formative assessment is critical to Learning Club development and delivery. The pre- and post-motivation survey captures information about children's perceptions of themselves as math learners and the pre- and post-MBSP identifies strengths and deficiencies in specific skills. In addition, Members will observe and reflect upon children's engagement and adjust activities to respond to their needs and interests. PCM will consult with math instructional staff at Highlander and Fogarty schools about school curriculum and specific intervention strategies recommended for struggling children. These data will help PCM's school-age learning specialist set learning goals, which will inform Members' curriculum development to provide "instructional practices that extend children's out-of-school experiences," which are recommended as "more likely to produce meaningful mathematics learning." (NRC, 2009)

Informal science learning environments (like PCM) that are interactive, provide multiple entry points for engagement, and prompt participants to connect their experiences with prior knowledge are effective for priming student motivation and increasing self-efficacy (NRC, 2012); Learning Clubs capitalize on PCM's expertise in designing environments for learning. Highlander children will travel to PCM to meet in the art & science studio and explore hands-on exhibits each day. At BGCP, where transport is not readily available, Learning Club has a dedicated space, designed by PCM to stimulate engagement and learning; BGCP children will visit PCM quarterly.

Example of success -- Learning Club, winter 2013: AmeriCorps Members challenged Club participants to create an "egg drop protector," providing opportunities for the children to plan, problem solve, collect data and share learning (and success). To playfully add another math component, Members set up a "store" for supplies. After explaining the challenge to the group, each child received \$6 of play money to purchase design materials. "A few children decided to work together and pool their money,"

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Members reported. "Some kids were very skilled in addition and subtraction while others needed help counting their money. It was amazing to help a girl discover that four quarters is equivalent to a dollar, and to see her face light up as she ran back to her friends saying, 'Guys, we have one more dollar! Let's count them all again.'"

Clubs will take place after school during the school year and four days a week during the summer to reduce "summer learning loss." A key finding in the 2011 report Making Summer Count by The RAND Corp is "research indicates that, on average, students lose skills over the summer, particularly in mathematics.... and summer learning loss disproportionately affects low-income students. " The report concludes, "since mathematics is learned primarily in schools from teachers, lack of exposure to mathematics instruction over the summer would account for the loss identified for most students."

Members will lead four sessions of Learning Club at BGCP each week, inviting children to sign up and attend two days a week for 6 to 8 weeks; as BGCP does not require children to register in advance for after-school programs, daily attendance varies. During summer and school breaks Learning Clubs are offered to children in kindergarten through 5th grade. In total 130 children at BGCP will attend at least 4 times and 52 of these in grades 2, 3, and 4 will attend 12 or more times. At Highlander, Members will lead Club three days a week during the school year and four days a week in the summer. Highlander students will pre-register for programs, signing up to participate in Learning Club one day a week for seven week sets -- 70 children will attend at least 4 times and 42 of these, in grades 2, 3, and 4, will attend 12 or more times. Children will self-select for participation, which means that Members must make the activities engaging and emergent -- connecting with the children's interests -- to attract participants and keep them involved. PCM predicts that Member-led Learning Clubs will influence math performance immediately and over time. Children will be assessed for attitudes (short-term) after 6 one-and-a-half hour Club sessions and academic improvement after 12 sessions.

Recognizing that children's families are their first and most influential teachers, Members will connect with the families of the children they serve to encourage families to share in their children's learning and ensure they feel familiar with and welcomed at the Children's Museum, an important community resource. Children and their families will attend "Museum Family Nights" for dinner and activities, a time when children can share their enthusiasm for learning with their parents and alongside their

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peers. Each family can receive a free yearlong pass enabling them to return to the Museum on their own as often as they like. Members will bring activities to family events at Highlander and BGCP and participate in "Math Cafe" family events at Highlander and Fogarty. During warmer months, Members will bring open-ended, fun activities to neighborhood parks to engage participants, their families and their friends in high-quality play experiences. At these family events, Members will introduce parents to math resources as well as math-embedded games and activities that they can do at home to bolster children's skill development and appreciation of the relevance of math.

During the school year, Members will also present activities at Head Start centers, as they have since 1997. Children's Friend (CF), Head Start's oversight agency, values MuseumCorps as a partner, critical to the success of its early childhood program. CF has identified "creating a culture of problem solving in the Head Start classrooms" as a key strategic goal and asked MuseumCorps to align activities with this initiative. To that end, Members will develop and implement classroom activities and enriched Museum visits for children enrolled in all 50 of CF-Head Start classrooms, serving 900 children. Members will visit each classroom three times to deliver engaging problem-solving activities that align with the US Dept. of Health & Human Services' Head Start Child Outcomes, specifically "logic and reasoning." The National Association for the Education of Young Children and National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2010) identified problem solving as critical to early math learning; problem solving promotes proficiency in reasoning processes as well as mathematical ideas. Members will use games, stories and manipulatives to provide children with opportunities to exercise problem-solving skills and higher order thinking such as classifying and comparing, sequencing, recognizing cause and effect, and applying knowledge to new situations. Each class will also visit PCM to explore its interactive learning environments. The children and their families and teachers will also attend Family Nights at the Museum.

MEMBER TRAINING, SUPERVISION & ID:

PCM has developed and sustained an AmeriCorps program that successfully recruits Members ready to be trained to serve an urgent community need, and they complete service as competent workers dedicated to service. The majority of MuseumCorps alumni go into careers in the education or community service sectors; 96% say their AmeriCorps service experience at PCM fostered their continued engagement in active civic participation including volunteering. "I attribute my time at PCM and my work with the AmeriCorps team as the reason I am becoming a teacher," reported a

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2007 alumna. Another from 2002, who is now the director of youth programs at Institute for Nonviolence in Providence, said, "Everything I've done professionally has built off what I learned leading Learning Clubs."

The ideal MuseumCorps Member is mature, socially responsible, respects children and their caregivers, and is fluent in English and Spanish. To ensure that Members understand and carry out PCM's and AmeriCorps' missions, there is a comprehensive plan for development, training and supervision. A 3-week intensive pre-service training includes AmeriCorps rules, regulations and prohibited activities. From their first weeks and throughout their service year, Members are equipped to speak confidently and appropriately about their AmeriCorps experience to the community.

Throughout the year Members are mentored closely through weekly meetings and day-to-day coaching with staff supervisors. Weekly seminars are presented by outside experts and PCM staff on such topics as learning theory, classroom management, conflict resolution, inclusion/disability awareness, first aid, and life after AmeriCorps. On-the-job training covers professionalism, teamwork, technology and communications. Supervisors conduct goal setting and evaluations for each Member mid-year and year-end. Members receive 70 hours of training in informal education techniques and math learning theory and methods and 70 hours of workplace readiness. In addition to formal professional development, Members have daily opportunities to lead activities and facilitate children's learning as part of the teaching and learning culture of PCM, helping them hone their teaching skills and ability to respond to children's learning needs in a variety of situations. They are well prepared to provide 1,100 children with quality learning experiences, to represent the Museum and AmeriCorps in the community, and to enter the workforce after their service year.

Members will wear a required, visible ID badge with the AmeriCorps logo and have AmeriCorps grays. PCM, BGCP, and Highlander will display the AmeriCorps logo. The logo will be included on print materials sent to parents and teachers.

Organizational Capability

The Children's Museum opened in 1977 as a learning center for children and caregivers. Reaching capacity at 50,000 visitors a year, in 1997 it relocated to a former Providence factory near highways, family services, cultural attractions and inner-city neighborhoods. The Museum now welcomes over 160,000 visitors each year (30% at no charge) from throughout southeastern New England and

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beyond.

The Museum's mission is to inspire and celebrate learning through active play and exploration. The Museum creates and presents hands-on exhibits and programs that: explore the STEM disciplines, arts and culture; are based on developmental needs of children ages 1 to 11; increase awareness of ways children learn; embrace a wide range of abilities and learning styles; and are accessible and responsive to all families--culturally, physically and economically. It encourages children and adults to play and learn together, and develop a love of learning.

PCM is a professionally staffed non-profit organization with a balanced \$2 million operating budget. Sixty percent of its revenues are earned through admission, membership and program fees; private giving accounts for 23%; and government grants for 17%.

The mission of PCM's AmeriCorps program is to instill a lifetime love of learning in children, especially those whose exposure to high-quality educational experiences is limited. The Museum provides stimulating educational experiences not available to most low-income children at home or school. Working closely with its community partners, PCM has developed solid programs that meet expressed needs of the communities they serve, further the Museum's mission, and provide challenging service-learning opportunities for AmeriCorps Members.

As has been the program model for the past 16 years, MuseumCorps will be staffed by PCM's experienced educators and leaders. Cathy Saunders, program director and primary contact since 2005, holds an MS in education leadership and has two decades of experience managing education programs including nine AmeriCorps teams. The Learning Club supervisor has an MA in environmental education and five years experience in after-school and science learning; the Head Start supervisor has a BS in early childhood education; and the Member coordinator (a MuseumCorps alum '11) holds a BA in leadership & organizational studies.

Executive Director Janice O'Donnell, with more than three decades in nonprofit management, oversees the education team and community partnerships, setting overall direction for the program, as well as assisting in securing funding and ensuring compliance with all relevant regulations. She reports to and seeks advice from the Board of Directors in these efforts. The director of finance, with

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the assistance of the Board finance committee, manages accounting and fiscal compliance, with guidance provided by the state commission. The director of development, assisted by the Board, raises private matching funds to support the program.

While the Members directly serve community sites, they are supervised by PCM staff. Each Member is part of a team led by an experienced educator (see above). Members report to the director of education/MuseumCorps program director, who reports to the executive director. Team supervisors communicate regularly with community sites and mentor Members on a daily basis. The Member coordinator manages schedules. The program director works closely with her staff to provide effective training, work program and performance monitoring.

In addition to 16 years of AmeriCorps funding and an ARRA AmeriCorps grant, PCM has received federal grants from National Science Foundation, Institute for Museum & Library Services, the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities, and Children's Bureau (of Health and Human Services) as well as federal Community Development funds through the City of Providence, a federal appropriation through HUD, and funding from the RI Dept. of Transportation. Audits conducted by these agencies have found PCM to be in compliance and fiscal oversight to be sound. The RI state commission has categorized MuseumCorps as "a low risk grantee" for the last three years.

The MuseumCorps program has an excellent record of enrollment and retention and frequently hires its AmeriCorps alumni. Recruitment and retention rates for the last four years was 100%. Current year is fully enrolled.

MuseumCorps has consistently met performance measures, outputs and outcomes, e.g. in 2012 and 2013, the targets of 75% of children demonstrating an increased use of science process skills and, in 2013, 20 children increasing MBSP scores by 5% were met. Performance measure selection is the result of ongoing assessment to ensure continued improvement of program design. In addition to the skills and attitudes standardized assessments described previously, PCM tracks Learning Club and Head Start attendance; records observations of children's learning behavior; surveys and interviews staff at partnering agencies; and tracks volunteer recruitment, length of service and number hours served. AmeriCorps Members' service is closely monitored including hours, satisfaction surveys and performance reviews. PCM works closely with its partners to develop, assess and improve its programs

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and to measure and understand their impact, e.g. convening focus groups and advisory groups of community leaders and staff.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

MuseumCorps programs are cost effective and continually improving. PCM will assume 53% as its share of the costs (\$177,913); Corporation cost per MSY (12 MSYs) is \$13,300. The AmeriCorps program has proven to be a cost-effective way to expand PCM's reach. It provides opportunities to pursue promising initiatives that could not be carried out by Museum staff alone. Because it is a multi-year grant, efforts can be carefully assessed and improved each year, resulting in strong and valued programs that are also increasingly cost effective.

Past experience has established that the proposed budget is adequate to support the MuseumCorps programs. We are well aware of the considerable commitment of staff time needed to ensure each incoming team is well trained and able to carry out their service projects. We have determined and are requesting the number of Members for which PCM staff can provide sufficient ongoing guidance and mentoring to ensure excellence.

\$80,416 in funds raised through PCM's annual appeal are directed to support MuseumCorps programs. PCM seeks to establish enduring relationships with children and their families served through MuseumCorps. The Museum's admission fee is \$9; a \$32-plus outing is not plausible for a family living in poverty. Purchasing a membership enables a family to visit as often as they like at no additional charge, but the \$100-plus membership fee is no more affordable for a low-income family. Providing free yearlong passes to the families enables and encourages them to return to the Museum as often as they want. The value of the free passes represents a portion of PCM's match. In these difficult economic times, PCM is committed to ensuring that its most under-resourced neighbors still receive access to high-quality educational experiences and, in fact, made that commitment explicit in its strategic plan. That more than one half of the costs of these programs is borne by the Museum -- and more than one half of the costs for the past three years -- demonstrates this commitment.

The Museum has a strong track record of garnering private support for AmeriCorps activities; the meaningful direct service MuseumCorps provides leverages contributions from private and corporate donors. In the most recent service year, MuseumCorps was supported by grants from Bristol County Savings, Clarke Trust, CVS/Caremark, Hazard Fund, Horton Fund, Providence Shelter, Talbots,

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Textron and United Healthcare (totaling \$43,000) as well as donors to the Museum's Annual Campaign. Local businesses contribute food and supplies for Family Nights (\$4,000). BGCP and Highlander have committed to contribute \$16,500 (total) as annual partner share, in addition to providing space and transportation. Children's Friend provides transportation as well as food and staffing for Family Nights.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

Providence Children's Museum is committed to evaluation and continuous improvement of the MuseumCorps program and will assess progress and outcomes as described in the narrative and as done in past years.

The theory of change on which the proposed program is based is: 1) A solid understanding of mathematics is a necessary 21st century skill. Numerous research studies and school assessment data show that socio-economically disadvantaged children are significantly behind their more affluent peers in mathematics beginning in the earliest grades and do not catch up. 2) Studies and the Museum's own experience show that children who are motivated to learn and practice math, and are provided with engaging opportunities to do that, can improve their understanding of math concepts; the Children's Museum's AmeriCorps Members will provide those opportunities for 200 low-income children. 3) At least 70 of those children will show increased motivation to learn math on the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire and improved scores on the Monitoring Basic Skills Progress test, and, based on research referred to in the narrative, it is expected that those children will have sustained positive attitudes toward math beyond the program.

Members will deliver series of challenging and engaging STEM (science, technology, engineering & math) learning activities that encourage children to apply real-world math skills for 2nd, 3rd and 4th graders in the out-of-school time (OST) programs at Boys & Girls Club of Providence (BGCP) and Highlander Charter School (Highlander).

Evaluation has been designed to track progress toward and determine success in achieving the outputs and outcomes stated in the logic model and performance measures:

* Outputs: The number of children who "start" (attend at least 4 Learning Club sessions) and number of children who "complete" (attend at least 12 sessions) will be measured by attendance logs

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administered by Members.

* Short-term Outcomes: The number of students with improved attitudes (self-efficacy, interest and motivation) towards math will be measured by survey questions adapted from the motivation subscale of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (Pintrich et al., 1991; 1993). Surveys will be administered by AmeriCorps Members and PCM staff to the children at the beginning of their Learning Club participation to establish a baseline (pre-participation survey) and again after 6 Club sessions (mid-participation survey). It is anticipated that if their motivation to learn and practice math improves, there will be a corresponding rise in math performance scores at the end of 12 sessions.

* Medium-term Outcomes: The number of students with improved academic performance in math will be measured by the Monitoring Basic Skills Progress (MBSP) assessment tool from PRO-ED, Inc. The assessment will be administered by AmeriCorps Members and PCM staff to the children at the beginning of their Learning Club participation to establish a baseline (pre-assessment) and again after 12 Club sessions (post-assessment). Members will use the results of the pre-assessment to inform Learning Club activities. For example, if many children score low on understanding charts and graphs, Members will have children record results of their STEM-based explorations in graph and chart form.

In addition, formative assessment will ensure the program is proceeding smoothly, logistically and on track to meet its performance goals:

* Observations of children's learning behaviors: Members will systematically observe a sample of children in Learning Clubs and record their observations using a PCM-developed "learning behaviors checklist" with supporting comments to track children's demonstrated learning behaviors such as asking questions, making observations and collecting data, making new discoveries, experimenting, setting new challenges and taking risks, talking about their learning and sharing knowledge, persisting and trying new ways to solve problems. Systematic observation helps the Members build their skills as educators as they become adept at recognizing and responding to children's learning behaviors as well as presenting engaging lessons that prompt the children's learning.

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* Reflective practice: Following each Learning Club session members will meet as a team, often with their supervisor, to reflect on what went well, what they might improve, the children's responses, any unexpected problems, etc. to ensure continuous improvement in teaching practice as well as to enhance teamwork.

* Meetings with partner site staff: Members and their supervisor will meet monthly with staff at BGCP and Highlander's after-school program to address any logistical issues that could become problematic and to ensure good communications.

* Interviews with math teachers: PCM's school-age learning specialist (supervisor of the AmeriCorps Learning Club team) will interview the math teachers at Highlander and at Fogarty Elementary School (the school many of the BGCP children attend) at mid-year and year-end to (a) determine whether the teachers have noticed children demonstrating changes in attitude toward math or understanding and application of content in class and (b) to garner the teachers' recommendations for concepts and skills to incorporate into Learning Club activities to better support school-day learning.

* Interviews with partner site coordinators and administrators: PCM's school-age learning specialist and AmeriCorps program director will interview Highlander and BGCP site coordinators and administrators at mid-year and year-end to ensure the program is running smoothly from their viewpoint as well as to determine whether the administrators think Learning Clubs add value to their OST offerings.

* Family engagement tracking: Members will track family attendance at Family Nights at the Museum and Math Cafes at the schools.

Formative assessment and interim evaluation results will be used to inform curriculum focus (mathematical concepts and practices to emphasize); new activity development (design of math-infused lesson plans that connect with children's interests); and any needed modifications to recruitment and retention strategies as well as overall program design. It will also help PCM staff determine and meet the Members' training needs (math learning theory, behavior management, etc.).

Both on-going assessments and the final evaluation results will help determine the potential of

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expanding this model to other sites and to identify ways to sustain these activities with or without AmeriCorps funding.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

April 2014

a. Budget clarification items. Please respond to the following items in the clarification summary field of the narrative and/or in the budget narrative as is appropriate.

1. Section C. Member Travel- Parking passes-Please provide the number of members and the on average # of passes per year.

>>300 passes: 75 days x 4 ACs x \$2

2. Section E. Supplies

Building Maintenance supplies-Please provide more detail of what is included in this line item in order to determine if it is allowable.

>>The Building Maintenance Supplies line item covers consumable janitorial and cleaning supplies (cleaning solutions, cloths, sponges, trash bags, laundry detergent, paper towels, hand soap, toilet paper, light bulbs, etc.). There are no building repair, equipment, personnel or capital expenses in this line item. Maintenance supplies are regularly used in order to maintain the facilities.

3. Other-recognition-Please breakout the separate costs in this line item.

>>See revised budget

4. Section I. Other Program Operating Costs

Yearlong Passes-Please provide justification for this expense as related to the AmeriCorps program as a reasonable and necessary expense or remove from the budget.

>> The yearlong passes are part of the Museum's strategic community outreach and engagement.

The passes are distributed at Family Nights, which are run by the AmeriCorps team, to families of

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children that AmeriCorps members are working with in their programs. The passes enable these children participating in MuseumCorps programs to return to the Museum with their parents on their own, as often as they like. This allows families to build on the activities that Members conducted with children in Learning Club and Head Start. Informal science learning environments (like the Museum) that are interactive, provide multiple entry points for engagement, and prompt participants to connect their experiences with prior knowledge are effective for priming student motivation and supporting deeper learning (National Research Council, 2009a, p. 307). Visiting the Children's Museum gives families a chance to get away from daily stresses to spend quality time together in engaging in hands-on application of STEM concepts. Parents and caregivers may participate in and observe their children's play by creating a fountain together that directs the flow of water in Water Ways, for example, or navigating the maze-like outdoor Climber. They make take roles, such as shopkeeper and customer in the recreated 60s-era Latino bodega, and have a conversation about the cost of mangos and avocados as they weigh the fruits in the shop scale.

Furthermore, a majority of the families served by MuseumCorps are not using community resources (like the Museum) because they do not know about them or do not feel welcome in them. Providing yearlong passes helps build relationships with families and the community, empowering parents to access all that the community has to offer their families.

5. The CCR Registration is scheduled to expire 10/23/2014. Please remember the registration must be current and active to receive an award form CNCS.

>>Thank you for the notification. We will renew in a timely fashion.

b. Programmatic clarification items:

1. The applicant proposes a cost per MSY that is greater than its current grant but does not provide a compelling reason for the increased cost. Please provide justification for the increased cost per MSY.

>>Cost per MSY for the last three years has been \$13,300. We have requested the same in this application.

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2. Based on a review of the cost effectiveness section in your application we feel your program did not make a compelling case for the requested cost per member service year (MSY). Please consider decreasing your cost per MSY by revising your CNCS share of the program budget or explain why your program is cost effective in terms other than what exists in the application.

>>The Museum has carefully examined the expenses in this program and the budget submitted reflects true costs to operate an AmeriCorps outreach program of this quality.

The Museum aims to be economical in all that it does. Supervisory staff are paid modest salaries. The mileage reimbursement rate is 11¢ below the federal. Staff and AmeriCorps Members minimize expenses for programs by using many recycled and donated materials. Training costs are kept low by having the majority of training for the AmeriCorps members conducted by the supervisory staff or pro-bono by other Museum staff.

3. Grant Start Date and Member Enrollment Period:

>>The desired grant award and member enrollment period start date is 9/1/2014 (after the 6/1/14 date CNCS lists).

c. Please make the following changes in the Performance Measures screens in eGrants:

1. The national performance measures do not align with selection rules. If selecting ED2 and ED5, ED6 and/or ED27 must also be selected (ED1 is optional). Or, an applicant may select ED1 and/or ED2, as long as it additionally includes at least one of the following: ED7, ED8, ED9, ED10, ED11, or ED 26. Please review the CNCS Performance Measure Instructions and revise as needed.

>> Not applicable. Our Performance Measures align, as verified by State Commission and CNCS Program Officer.

d. Strategic Engagement slots Clarification:

1. What percentage of your slots will be targeted to recruiting members with disabilities? What is your program's plan, if any, for outreach and recruitment of members of the disability community?

Narratives

>>The Museum is not targeting any slots to recruit members with disabilities. However, the Museum is an Equal Opportunity Employer and welcomes members with disabilities to apply and to serve. Serve Rhode Island (the state commission) surveyed PCM Members (2011 and 2013) and found that nearly half self-identified as having a disability.

2. If you would like to request additional MSYs to be filled by AmeriCorps members with disabilities, please describe your intent as requested above.

>>The Museum is not requesting any additional MSYs.

e. MSY with no program funds attached Clarification: Applicants may request No-Cost MSYs.

>>The Museum is not requesting any no cost MSYs.

f. Health care clarification items are to be addressed by programs with full-time members (excluding EAP and Professional Corps)::

1. Please provide the name of the health insurance provider you are proposing to use to insure your AmeriCorps members.

>>Starting with the 2013-2014 year, Rhode Island AmeriCorps State programs used The Corps Network AmeriCorps health insurance to ensure those members electing to enroll in AmeriCorps coverage. Members who did not enroll through the Corps Network were required to sign a waiver and provide documentation of their alternate health insurance upon the start of pre-service training. Non-AmeriCorps insurance options have included spouse/parent coverage, private insurance, public insurance, or insurance purchased through the RI exchange/marketplace, operated by HealthSource Rhode Island (after January 1, 2014). As The Corps Network has indicated its intentions to be ACA or MEC compliant by September 1, 2014, we will continue to offer this option while encouraging members to explore the other options listed above. All members will be required to document whether they want to enroll in AmeriCorps sponsored insurance or waive and provide documentation that they are insured through another insurance option at the start of service.

2. How did you select the provider? (for example, direct marketing ,through the Health Insurance Marketplace or other means)

Narratives

>>The Corps Network was selected because of its tailored plan for AmeriCorps programs and because of the affiliate membership held by Serve Rhode Island that allows our RI AmeriCorps program to opt into Corps Network. HealthSource RI is the official health care portal for the state of RI, and as such is used as the statewide exchange/ marketplace.

3. Does your proposed budget for member healthcare provide for Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC) coverage, as defined by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), for your full-time members?

>>Yes, our proposed budget for member healthcare provides for Minimum Essential Coverage/Affordable Care Act coverage for full-time members. The Corps Network and Willis (the broker for Corps Network) have provided their best estimates for its 2014-2015 plan, which was used as the basis for our projection along with research into plans offered through the Health Insurance Marketplace, HealthSource RI.

4. If not, what adjustment to your budget is necessary in order for you to provide Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC)?

>>Not applicable. Our program intends to provide Minimum Essential Coverage to full-time members.

5. If you do not have enough information to answer question (4), please explain why not and/or what prevented you from being able to obtain the necessary information.

>>Not applicable. Our program intends to provide Minimum Essential Coverage to full-time members.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics