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Executive Summary

The Genesee County Youth Bureau will have 34 AmeriCorps members who will provide fitness, nutrition and environmental stewardship education activities for youth, recruit volunteers and help organizations to improve operating systems through the use of technology in the Genesee, Orleans and Wyoming County areas. At the end of the 1st program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for engaging 400 youth in fitness activities, 150 youth in nutrition activities and 100 youth in environmental stewardship activities. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 300 volunteers who will support host agency efforts to meet identified community needs.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus areas of Healthy Futures, Environmental Stewardship and Capacity Building. The CNCS investment of \$133,626 will be matched with \$141,019, \$81,808 in public funding and \$59,211 in private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

NEED: The Genesee County AmeriCorps program takes a regional approach by including neighboring Orleans and Wyoming counties. All 3 counties are rural, between the urban centers of Buffalo and Rochester in western NY. The area includes one city, Batavia. The population of the 3 counties (2010 Census) is 145,117 with an average of 100 persons/square mile. Neighboring Erie (Buffalo area) has 881/sq mile and Monroe (Rochester area) has 1,132/sq mile.

Each county features a rural lifestyle, with diverse small manufacturing and extensive agribusiness industry, largely dairy and vegetable farms with processing plants. In 2010, the median household income was \$50,281 and racial composition was 92% white with the balance comprised of minority groups. 3% was Hispanic. There are not large philanthropic/corporate entities to support services. The rural nature contributes to the isolation of families and to the limited availability of services.

Our AmeriCorps program will use the principles of positive youth development to address compelling needs for youth in the areas of healthy futures and environmental stewardship. Some of the consequences of limited choices and economic difficulty in rural areas are related to opportunities for healthy eating and physical fitness. According to the US Dept of Agriculture (USDA) and US Dept of Health and Human Services (HHS), "Children are a particularly important focus of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans because of the growing body of evidence documenting the vital role that optimal nutrition plays throughout the lifespan. Today, too many children are consuming diets with too many calories and not enough nutrients and are not getting enough physical activity.

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Approximately 32 percent of children and adolescents ages 2 to 19 years are overweight or obese, with 17 percent of children being obese. In addition, risk factors for adult chronic diseases are increasingly found in younger ages. Eating patterns established in childhood often track into later life, making early intervention on adopting healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors a priority."

This trend is present in our area. According to school survey data reported to the NYS Dept of Health, 22.5% of Genesee County students were reported as obese while 32% were reported as overweight or obese. Comparable numbers were 18% and 33.7% in Orleans County and 19.9% and 38.5% in Wyoming County. Statewide, 11% of high school students were obese (30th highest in the US) while 32.9% ages 10-17 were overweight or obese (17th highest in the US).

NY State Education Dept standards require students in grades K-12 to participate in 120 minutes of physical education per week. This only provides 40% of the activity recommended by the U.S. HHS Dept, which advises that young people aged 6-17 years participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily, or 300 minutes per school week. While organized sports leagues and YMCA branches in three locations across the counties can fill some of this gap, their activities are fee/membership based, which can deter participation.

New York State Education Commissioner's Regulations require students to receive instruction in nutrition. A curriculum framework is suggested but nothing specific is required. (National Association of State Boards of Education State School Healthy Policy Database). According to the Standards, nutrition education should be incorporated into lesson plans by regular classroom teachers at the elementary level. A separate health education course is required at the secondary level. Nutrition is one of several topics covered in these semester-long classes. While this provides valuable information to students, the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans from the USDA and HHS note that "all elements of society, including individuals and families, communities, business and industry, and various levels of government, have a positive and productive role to play in the movement to make America healthy." Youth need additional information and positive reinforcement during non-school hours to develop and maintain healthy lifestyles.

The need for additional environmental education for youth is evidenced by national and local data. Information from the No Child Left Inside Coalition and "Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder" by R. Louv (Chapel Hill:2006) note that youth are becoming increasingly disconnected from the environment. Several factors contribute to this trend including limited environmental education in schools pressured to meet stringent accountability standards and a drastic decrease in the percentage of free time that children spend engaged in unstructured, natural

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play. The NYS Dept of Education has established 12 standards for science curriculum. Only one deals with environmental education. Young people need additional information in order to be conscientious stewards of the environment.

In addition to those identified for youth, our program will also address capacity building needs for community organizations. Local organizations have requested help developing processes to meet emerging needs. Lack of financial or technical resources often prevents agencies from accessing or utilizing new tools. Further, New York has not kept pace with the rest of the U.S. in volunteering as evidenced by its rank of 50th out of the 50 states and Washington D.C. according to the Corporation's "Volunteering and Civic Life in America 2012: State Trends and Rankings". Only 20.7% volunteer, which is 6% less than the national rate reported.

In our rural area, there are limited technical and financial resources to assist organizations in the recruitment and management of volunteers. In April 2012, over 50 representatives from local agencies attended a training we sponsored with RSVP of Genesee County. This session, featuring a facilitator from Temple University, focused on recruiting baby boomer volunteers. Attendees found the information valuable and expressed interest in more training. Unfortunately, these opportunities are limited unless staff can travel to Buffalo or Rochester. Opportunities for youth to volunteer are also limited. In a 2010 survey of area youth, only 30% reported that they are given useful roles in the community.

AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS: Logic Model Chart/Theory of Change has been submitted as instructed.

EVIDENCE-BASED/EVIDENCE-INFORMED AND MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT: The primary interventions to be conducted by our program will be in the Healthy Futures focus area, specifically activities related to physical fitness and nutrition education for youth, based upon the latest US HHS' "Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans" (2008) and the USDA and HHS' "Dietary Guidelines for Americans" (2010).

According to the 2008 Guidelines "Youth can achieve substantial health benefits by doing moderate- and vigorous-intensity physical activity for periods of time that add up to 60 minutes (1 hour) or more each day." The guidelines recommend a mix of aerobic, muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening. It is noted, however, that "the total amount of physical activity is more important for achieving health benefits than is any one component (frequency, intensity, duration) or specific mix of activities (aerobic, muscle-strengthening, bone strengthening)." The Guidelines also stress

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activities that are age appropriate, fun for participants and that offer variety. The guidelines describe required levels of intensity for effective aerobic activity and give examples of all 3 activity types.

The nutrition education component will follow the 2010 Guidelines, developed by an advisory committee described by the Secretaries of Agriculture and HHS as "scientific experts who reviewed and analyzed the most current information on diet and health and incorporated it into a scientific, evidence-based report." The Secretaries also note that the Guidelines "serve as the basis for nutrition messages and consumer materials developed by nutrition educators and health professionals for the general public and specific audiences, such as children." Activities will be based on the four key recommendations: balancing calories to manage weight, foods and food components to reduce, foods and nutrients to increase and building healthy eating patterns.

The proposed activities will meet our identified community need by helping to fill the gap between recommended levels of physical activity and nutrition education and the amount provided during the school day. Members will provide valuable information to youth during out of school hours and in the summer, giving them strategies to achieve a healthier lifestyle and reinforcing positive behavior, which combats obesity.

Activities that promote physical fitness and nutrition education during out-of-school hours have been proven to be effective. Examples of efforts similar to the one being proposed follow.

APPLE (A Pilot Programme for Lifestyle and Exercise) Project targeted elementary school age children in New Zealand. Community activity coordinators were engaged to "encourage all children to be a little more physically active every day by increasing the variety and opportunities for physical activity beyond that which was currently provided in each school...with a particular focus on less traditional sports and more lifestyle-based activities." A nutrition component focused on reducing the intake of sugary drinks and increasing fruit and vegetable consumption. A quasi-experimental evaluation was conducted to collect information from four intervention and three control sites. Results showed a reduction in consumption of carbonated beverages and an increase in fruit consumption after the intervention. The prevalence of overweight was reduced in children who participated in two years of the intervention. Taylor RW, McAuley KA, Barbezat W et al. (2008) APPLE project. Two-year follow-up of an obesity prevention initiative in children: the APPLE project. *Am J Clin Nutr* 20008;88:1371-1377.

CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) Kids Club is a physical activity and nutrition education program for elementary school children in after-school settings. It includes three components: a five-module nutrition/fitness education program, physical activity and healthy snack.

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The evaluation study used a pre-test/post-test quasi-experimental design with a control group. Results showed strong and significant effects for the physical activity component but not for the five-module education component. Hands-on activities, including the healthy snack component, were observed to be enjoyed by students. Kelder, S, Hoelscher DM, Barroso C, Walker J, Cribb P and Hu S, University of Texas Health Science Center of Houston, School of Public Health, Center for Health Promotion and Prevention Research (2004) The CATCH Kids Club: a pilot after-school study for improving elementary students' nutrition and physical activity. *Public Health Nutrition*: 8(2), 133-140.

We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition) provides programs that encourage improved nutritional choices, increased physical activity, and reduced screen time in youth ages 8-13. It was developed by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (HLBI), in collaboration with the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), and the National Cancer Institute (NCI). We Can! stresses the role of parents and families in nutrition and fitness education for youth. A community outreach component encourages youth-serving organizations to provide local evidence-based programming to parents and youth. In 2005, 14 Intensive Community Sites were selected to implement We Can! programming for at least one year. Sites were asked to implement one of three different youth curricula provided by NHLBI with at least three different groups of youth. Data was collected using instruments designed by the originator of each curriculum and submitted to NHLBI for assessment purposes. Data assessment relies exclusively on self-report data from respondents. No data was collected based on direct observation. Overall, statistically significant increases were noted in 11 of 20 measures related to We Can! nutrition and fitness objectives. Academy for Educational Development, Center for Health Communication, Washington, DC (2007) We Can! Progress Report: Curriculum Implementation by the Intensive Sites. Report prepared for the NHLBI, National Institutes of Health.

Local data generated by the program supports continuation of our secondary interventions in Environmental Stewardship and Capacity Building. A pilot program component featuring education sessions designed with the assistance of an environmental educator was conducted during the 2011-12 and 2012-13 program years. Over the course of those two years, 549 youth completed pre and post tests to document increases in knowledge of environmentally-conscious practices. Of that total, 490 reported learning at least one thing at the end of the session. Past success in the Capacity Building area includes member recruitment of over 1,800 volunteers over the past two program years.

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Volunteers included 97 identified as disadvantaged youth, 170 college students and 481 baby boomers. Both episodic and ongoing volunteers were recruited. A survey of host site agencies conducted in 2012 asked respondents to identify ways in which AmeriCorps has benefited their organization. Twenty-five responses were received with the most frequent positive outcomes of increased programming/services, enhanced after school programs, increased marketing to community and improved organizational efficiency being reported.

MEMBER TRAINING: When a position is accepted, a comprehensive orientation is conducted by the program director prior to the start of service. This session covers AmeriCorps concepts, member responsibilities, expectations, reporting and training requirements. Members provide documentation of eligibility, complete tax forms and authorize background checks. The member contract, which outlines the term of service, member benefits, rules of conduct, AmeriCorps prohibited activities, provisions for release from the program, grievance procedures and a position description specific to each placement, is reviewed and signed. Members are given a handbook that includes program policies, procedures and education award information. Orientation covering agency-specific information is provided by the site supervisor. Both the content and estimated hours of agency training are outlined in the site proposal and included in the member's position description.

Members who will be responsible for conducting activities in the healthy futures focus area will attend training prior to the implementation of physical fitness and nutrition education components. This training will include an overview of the USDA and HHS Nutrition and Physical Activity Guidelines, give members activities that can be used at sessions with youth and instructions on the initiation of PALA+ membership. Members will also be given forms and instructions required for data collection.

Additional training opportunities are provided by both the program and the site. Program-sponsored topics include youth development, customer service, service project planning and stress management. These sessions are made available to members as on-line tutorials. All members are given the opportunity to become Red Cross certified in First Aid/CPR. The program covers the cost. A session on "Life After AmeriCorps", which helps members think about their next educational or career steps, is also offered. This includes discussion of both short and long term planning and reflection on the term of service. Outreach trainings occur at host sites during the program year. An environmental education session is held at the Genesee County Park and a team building session is held at 4-H Camp Wyomoco.

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Measures to protect members and generated volunteers from engaging in prohibited activities are ongoing during the program year. For members, prohibited activities are identified during the initial interview, detailed at the orientation session and included in the member handbook and contract. Biweekly time sheets include an attestation from the member and supervisor that all activities are within program regulations. Initiatives that utilize volunteers are reviewed by the site supervisor and program staff to insure that proposed volunteer tasks do not include any prohibited activities.

MEMBER SUPERVISION: Program staff and host sites provide ongoing support and supervision. Biweekly activity reports are reviewed by staff and used to monitor performance. Regular contact is maintained with each host site via e-mail, phone and correspondence to address concerns. A monthly newsletter with program highlights and hours updates is sent to all members and site supervisors.

Site supervisors are selected from existing staff at the host agency and identified by name and position title on the proposal form. The site supervisor oversees member activities and provides any required agency-specific training. Site supervisors review and sign biweekly time sheets, which include a certification that the hours are accurate and do not include any services that would violate AmeriCorps prohibited activities. The supervisor completes required member performance evaluations.

When a member is selected to serve at a site, program staff meets with new supervisors to review responsibilities and AmeriCorps policies. Supervisors receive a handbook, training schedule, performance evaluation form/instructions, a supply of time sheets and information on in-kind contribution and background check requirements. Veteran supervisors are provided with updated forms and a handbook for the new program year.

The program director schedules a site visit during the service term. This visit includes an hours update, review of member position description, reminder regarding prohibited activities, upcoming member training and evaluation requirements. The supervisor and member are given the opportunity to ask questions or discuss concerns.

A form documenting each monitoring visit is completed and kept in the host site agency file. Contact record forms may also be completed to document interactions in addition to the formal site visit. An Excel spreadsheet is used to record visits, note any compliance issues and record corrective action and date of resolution.

COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION: Basic information about AmeriCorps and

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our program is provided at applicant interviews and during member orientation. The member and supervisor handbook also includes this information. The host agency agreement stipulates that AmeriCorps be credited in all publicity related to the member's service. Members are provided with service gear at orientation, which is worn both at sites and group projects. All of the materials provided to members and sites feature the AmeriCorps logo. This includes applications, brochures and recruitment flyers as well as time sheets, handbooks and other forms used during the member's term. During the term, members are provided with regular information updates through newsletters and social media. AmeriCorps Week is used to highlight member activities and offers the opportunity for members to share their experiences with the community.

Organizational Capability

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING: Founded in 1971, the Genesee County Youth Bureau is a department of county government. The Executive Director is the department head and reports directly to the County Legislature for policy decisions, including permission to apply for and accept grants. The Legislature Chair executes contracts. The Executive Director reports to the County Manager for advice on daily operations. The AmeriCorps program is supported by several County departments, including the Treasurer's Office, Human Resources, Central Services and Self-Insurance.

The Youth Bureau has operated an AmeriCorps program since 2004. During the first 9 years of operation, over 270 members were enrolled in over 370 part-time positions at more than 60 local agencies. These members completed more than 205,000 hours of service and earned over \$560,000 in education awards. Approximately 91% of members enrolled since inception have successfully completed their terms. Fiscal and program reports are submitted to the NYS Commission by required deadlines. Requests for additional information are handled promptly. Staff attends all Commission-required program and fiscal training. In 2009, the Youth Bureau received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding to expand our AmeriCorps program. Twelve additional members were placed at local libraries, public and nonprofit organizations. All fiscal and program reports for the ARRA funding were completed within required time frames and in accord with funding regulations.

Lead staff for the AmeriCorps program is the Youth Program Specialist, a full time employee with 75% of her time devoted to AmeriCorps. The Youth Program Specialist reports to the Executive Director and is responsible for program management. AmeriCorps duties include recruiting, interviewing and placing members; orientating, training and supporting members; maintaining

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contact with site supervisors; reviewing/approving time sheets; monitoring; obtaining member evaluations; collecting data to measure program performance; preparing program and fiscal reports; and participating in disciplinary matters.

The current Youth Program Specialist has 17 years of experience with the Bureau and has directed our AmeriCorps program since it began 10 years ago. She has a background in political science/history and extensive experience in human services. Her other Bureau duties include contract management and community training. She has designed and facilitated training sessions for AmeriCorps members, youth and adults. The Executive Director is responsible for overall management/supervision of the program. The Director hires staff, handles public relations, assists the Youth Program Specialist to recruit sites and members, approves procedures and oversees finances. The 15% time allocation of the Director is local match. The current Director has a background in social work and 12 years of experience in the youth field. Both positions require a Bachelors degree and experience in human services. A financial clerk/typist (10 hrs/wk) handles office duties including preparing member materials, invoices, billing, and maintaining member and host site files.

In addition to AmeriCorps, the Bureau has successfully managed Federal and State grant programs, including an educational grant from the Environmental Protection Agency and Reality Check, the youth component of NY State's tobacco control program. The County undergoes a Scheduled Federal Assistance Audit annually. AmeriCorps was selected by the independent auditor to be included in the review in both 2010 and 2011. Records for both our traditional grant and our ARRA grant were examined. We met all the audit criteria with no findings.

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Fiscal and programmatic reports are submitted to the NYS Commission by required deadlines. Requests from the Commission for additional information are handled promptly. Staff attends all required program and fiscal training. This ensures that the program is designed to be in compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations. Information from staff training is shared with members and host site agencies and used to update policies and procedures.

Compliance efforts begin during the member and site recruitment process and continue throughout the term. Applicants are screened by program staff to insure that basic qualifications are met. Candidates who express interest in specific positions are then interviewed by sites before placement. If selected, a comprehensive orientation is conducted by program staff. Information regarding prohibited activities is relayed verbally as well as specified in the member contract and handbook. Criminal history requirements are explained. The National Sex Offender Public Registry check is

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completed prior to the commencement of service. State background as well as FBI checks for members with recurring access to vulnerable populations are initiated prior to service. Member compliance is monitored via staff review of biweekly time sheets/activity reports and site visits.

Host sites are given information regarding rules and regulations prior to submission of proposals as well as upon member placement. Supervisors receive a handbook and member management forms and instructions. The agency agreement outlines the responsibilities of the program and the site and includes the prohibited activities. Site supervisors review and sign biweekly member time sheets. This form includes a certification that the hours are accurate and do not include any services that would violate AmeriCorps prohibited activities.

Members are instructed to notify program staff immediately if they believe they have been asked to participate in a prohibited activity at their site. Staff will contact the host site supervisor to get more information and assess the situation. If program staff is concerned that that a member may have participated in a prohibited activity based upon information contained in member activity reports, both the member and site supervisor will be contacted to provide more details regarding the activity in question. If staff determines that that the member has engaged in prohibited activities after reviewing additional information provided by the member and site supervisor, the NYS Office of National and Community Service will be notified immediately. Staff will provide our designated program administrator with details about the incident and any action taken by the program. The program director schedules a site visit during the service term. Items covered at the site visit include an hours update, review of member position descriptions, prohibited activities reminder, upcoming member training and evaluation requirements. A form documenting each monitoring visit is completed.

PAST PERFORMANCE: During the last three years of program operation, the main focus of our program was youth development. We reported on a set of self-nominated measures. During the last two years, we also piloted a small component in the environmental stewardship focus area using a national performance measure. **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:** Members reported the establishment of relationships with 411 youth. They interacted with these young people regularly through a variety of activities. This exceeded our target of 300 youth. 265 of the 411 participants completed the Youth Attitude survey, providing information regarding their attitudes toward school, parents, peers and the community. 180 (68%) reported improved or greatly improved attitudes in at least 2 categories. This exceeded our 50 % intermediate outcome target. 191 youth completed the Youth Development Survey, which asked them to indicate whether they experienced 14 different developmental assets both now and six months ago. 131 (69%) reported a gain of at least 2 assets. This exceeded our 60%

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end outcome target. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP: During the first year of this activity, 276 youth attended an educational session on water conservation. This exceeded our target of 260 youth. Pre and post tests were completed. 187 of 276 (68%) of youth tested identified at least three environmentally-conscious practices learned. This did not meet our 75% target but the results showed that youth gained knowledge. 83% reported learning at least 2 things and 96% reported learning at least 1 thing. During the second year of this activity, 273 youth attended a session on recycling, exceeding our target of 260 youth. Of that total, 149 identified at least three environmentally-conscious practices learned, a 55% success rate, which did not meet our target of 75%. 74% reported learning at least two things and 83% reported learning at least one thing. Several factors created challenges that impacted our ability to meet the target. It was hard to design tests that captured enough increase in knowledge without being too lengthy or complicated. Updates to presentation materials were made based upon feedback. Logistical challenges such as outdoor locations and time constraints impacted some sessions. These challenges were overcome by modifying the presentation to meet specific circumstances. The environmental stewardship activities will continue as a small component of our program but will no longer be reported as we shift our main program design to the Healthy Futures focus area. If we were going to continue to report this measure, I would adjust downward both the number of youth expected to reach the target and the number of things learned by each youth. However, some of the lessons learned from this effort were used to develop the outcome measures that will be used for our Healthy Futures activities

ENROLLMENT: Our original 2012/13 program design included 45 part-time slots. To accommodate host site requests, we converted 2 unfilled HT slots to a combination of QT and MT slots per the conversion policy. This gave us a total of 47 members enrolled for the program year. For several years, our program has used conversions as an effective way to insure that all slots are filled while still meeting community needs.

RETENTION: As of this date, 32 members enrolled during the 2012/13 program year have been exited with full education awards. Ten members are still serving but all are on track to successfully complete their terms by the end of the calendar year. Five members were released for cause and exited without education awards. Three half-time members left the program without completing: two accepted other employment opportunities and one was accepted to seminary school in another state earlier than anticipated. One quarter-time member left due to personal issues and one minimum-time summer member resigned early to accept a paid internship at college. Our retention rate based upon members who have been exited so far is 87%. If all remaining members exit successfully as

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anticipated, the overall retention rate for the program year will be 90%. Retention is always a challenge. It is often difficult to anticipate changing circumstances that individual members may encounter during their terms of service. Finding the right fit for each position and dealing with problems quickly are strategies used to keep retention rates high. Staff and site supervisors work closely with members as issues arise to help them earn a full education award. All of the members who left early were encouraged by both their site supervisor and the program director to fulfill their AmeriCorps commitment. These efforts were not successful.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: Members are encouraged to contact staff during their term to express concerns or offer suggestions. Biweekly activity reports also provide regular feedback from members. An exit survey is forwarded to all members at the end of the term to gather information about their experience and obtain additional input that can be used for program improvement. Site supervisors provide feedback at site visits, on member evaluations and by contacting program staff directly. Program updates are provided on a recurring basis to the Bureau's advisory boards as well as to the Genesee County Legislature. Information is also shared at various human service coordinating groups in our service area.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

COST EFFECTIVENESS: The proposed budget requests Corporation support totaling \$133,626 for 10.40 MSY, a Corporation commitment of \$12,849/MSY. Our program is currently operating on a one-year supplemental grant with 8.07 MSY at a Corporation cost of \$12,592/MSY. Although this request would include an increase in cost/MSY, it would restore our program to a level closer to our efforts over the first nine years of the program. The request is still below the maximum allowed cost per MSY.

All other program operating costs were carefully reviewed and reduced when possible. However, staff time was restored to the level in place prior to the supplemental funding award to reflect the increase in the number of members. This is necessary to continue to effectively manage the program and insure compliance. This contributed to the increase in cost per MSY. The grantee share of our proposed budget is 51%.

Our program is a cost effective approach to addressing the identified community needs because AmeriCorps members provide service to local organizations for a modest cost. Our 34 members will provide 17,100 hours of service. Annually, our members will serve a total of 650 youth by providing nutrition education, fitness education and environmental education activities as well as recruit/manage 300 volunteers. This concentration of effort will help to fill the gaps identified in our

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need statement while sharing the burden of financial support. The Healthy Futures, Environmental Stewardship and Capacity Building activities that will be completed by the AmeriCorps members are a good fit for the core mission of our partner agencies yet cannot be undertaken with existing staff. The scattered site model used by our AmeriCorps program allows local agencies to respond to emerging needs, explore new programming and provide consistent interventions for a smaller investment. This encourages innovation and allows limited resources to be used in an effective manner.

Since 2004, over 70 agencies have benefited from the service of our members who have worked with youth, designed new programs, recruited volunteers and expanded community outreach. Our service area consists of three rural counties in upstate NY. Economic conditions have led to the consolidation of local human services agencies and the assumption of additional duties by already busy staff. Unlike these employees, AmeriCorps members can focus on one project or service, which can be critical to its success. Further, AmeriCorps members often bring a fresh perspective and new skills to an organization. This infusion of talent can revitalize a program or agency. Many of our host sites' traditional volunteers lack technical skills. AmeriCorps members, who make a commitment to the agency for a specific number of hours over a set time frame, provide a more predictable, stable presence than many volunteers.

BUDGET ADEQUACY: The majority of match funds for our program is provided by Genesee County and host site agencies. Genesee County will contribute \$53,182 in staff time and administration. Host sites provide a cash match for each member placed at their agency. This amount is determined by position type and based upon anticipated program costs for each member. Sites will be charged \$2,400 for a half-time member, \$1,200 for a quarter--time member and \$900 for a minimum-time member. Total cash match from host sites will be \$47,400. Agencies indicate their payment preference at the time of member placement and are billed accordingly. Staff monitors revenue received and follow up as necessary to insure that the match is collected. Sites also are asked to report a percentage of supervisors' salary/benefits, which is documented as an in-kind contribution to the program. Total in-kind match from host sites will be \$37,187. The remainder of match funding is an in-kind match of \$3,250 from the New York State Office of Court Administration. They provide New York state criminal background checks for our members at no cost. We were granted a waiver of their \$65 per report fee because the Youth Bureau is a municipal government agency.

Member living allowance amounts for all types of positions have been constant for the past several years. The amounts offered assist members to meet basic living expenses and in combination with the education award, offer participants a significant contribution toward their educational goals. Member

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training, including the cost of materials necessary for members to conduct healthy futures and environmental stewardship activities with youth as well as CPR/First Aid classes for members are a small part of the budget. Other expenditures are necessary for recruitment, member support and program requirements. Funds have been budgeted for FBI background checks, which will be conducted as necessary, based upon each member's position duties. Our 34 part-time members will be supported by a program director who will devote 75% of her time to AmeriCorps. Smaller amounts of time will be provided by a financial clerk/typist and the Executive Director. This configuration provides a solid foundation for the members plus support for the program director in the areas of member and site recruitment as well as record keeping. Operating expenses to carry out the activities of staff include advertising, supplies, copying costs, phone, internet, staff travel and training. Budgeted amounts are selected based upon our best cost estimates, using past experience as a guide. Discounts are obtained using the County's procurement system.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

An evaluation report has been submitted to the NYS Commission per instructions.

EVALUATION PLAN: The primary service proposed for Genesee County AmeriCorps members falls under the Healthy Futures focus area. Members will be placed at a variety of youth-serving organizations to engage youth in activities to increase knowledge of good nutrition and physical fitness strategies during out of school hours. Youth will complete a series of ten sessions each approximately 30 minutes in length with multiple activities designed to promote healthy eating and physical activity. Nutrition education activities will be based on US Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans: balancing calories to manage weight, foods and food components to reduce, foods and nutrients to increase, building healthy eating patterns and making healthy choices. Physical fitness activities will be based upon the US Department of Health and Human Services' 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans: a combination of aerobic, muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening activities. All youth participants will be given the opportunity to enroll in the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition's Presidential Active Lifestyle Award program (PALA+), which helps people track their fitness and healthy eating goals over a six week period and earn an award upon completion. To maximize participation, these activities will be conducted at both year round and summer programs. Youth ages 6-17 are expected to participate. The exact age distribution will vary by site. Activities will be designed to be developmentally appropriate for participants.

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The evaluation will examine the results of data collected from youth over the course of two program years. Youth participants will complete pre and post tests to document increased knowledge of nutrition and fitness strategies. Tests will be designed by program staff and then administered by members at their service sites. Instructions will be provided to members prior to their service term. Additionally, a survey will be designed and distributed by program staff to get feedback from both members and site supervisors at the conclusion of each program year. This input will also be included in the evaluation report.

Information from the first two years of the grant cycle will be used by program staff to prepare an evaluation report. Overall success in meeting performance targets will be examined. The results of member and site supervisor surveys will be used to assess the overall program design and make any necessary adjustments to future activities. Forms and instructions for members will be modified to reflect suggestions from members and supervisors who have implemented the intervention. The program budget includes \$500 of additional staff time for evaluation activities. The evaluation report will be submitted to CNCS with the program's next re-compete application and shared with local stakeholders.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

a. Programmatic clarification items

1. All members receive information on volunteer recruitment and management during their orientation session. An appendix to the member and site supervisor handbook is devoted to service project planning. It includes information for members regarding volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition. This provides guidance for dealing with volunteers before, during and after the project. Retention planning includes volunteer orientation, training and reflection strategies. An online training session on service project planning is also available for members to utilize at any point during their term of service.

Members will be used by some of our host site agencies to recruit and manage volunteers as part of capacity building efforts for those organizations. In those cases, members will complete the same training that the agency uses when its traditional volunteers join the organization. This will

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familiarize the members with requirements for volunteers and in turn give members the knowledge to participate in the training of new volunteers.

Some of our members may implement service projects utilizing youth at their sites as volunteers. These activities may occur in conjunction with national days of service or AmeriCorps Week. Members will be given project ideas and strategies for engaging youth volunteers in addition to the information described above that is given to all members at orientation.

2. The budget submitted with our grant proposal was reviewed to determine if the CNCS share could be adjusted to reduce the cost per MSY. The majority of the CNCS share is being requested to cover member costs. Shifting more of those costs to local share would require a corresponding increase in the fee that host site agencies pay to host each member. Given the economic climate in our rural area and the difficulty that reduced funding has created for small, local non-profit agencies, it would be hard to increase our fee without precluding many agencies from participating as host sites. However, program operating costs, including staff salary/fringes, supplies, training, travel and other costs have been adjusted to shift more of the cost to local share. A higher percentage of worker's compensation costs were also shifted to local share. These adjustments will be covered by an increased contribution from Genesee County.

As a result of these changes, the revised budget requests a total of \$129,311 from CNCS, a reduction of \$4,315 from our original proposal. This reduces the CNCS share to 47% of the total program budget vs. the 49% CNCS share originally requested. It also reduces the cost per MSY to \$12,434, a reduction of \$415 per MSY from the original proposal, which had a \$12,849 cost per MSY. The revised cost per MSY being requested is now below our 2013-14 program's cost per MSY of \$12,592.

3. The desired grant award start and member enrollment start dates for Genesee County AmeriCorps are 10/01/2014.

b. Descriptions of instruments to be used to measure outcomes H5 OUTCM5383 and H6 OUTCM5385 have been revised in the Performance Measures screens.

Narratives

c. Strategic Engagement Slots Clarification:

1. Our program will not target a specific percentage of our slots to the recruitment of members with disabilities. In the past, information about opportunities with our program as well as AmeriCorps in general has been provided to local organizations such as Independent Living of Genesee Region. We will continue to meet these requests as received. Opportunities to serve are also advertised in free publications available to all area residents. Applications are distributed upon request and interviews are conducted with all potential candidates who submit application forms.

2. Our program will not be requesting additional MSYs to be filled by members with disabilities.

d. MSY with No Program Funds Attached Clarification:

Our program will not be requesting No Cost MSYs.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics