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Executive Summary

Duluth Area Family YMCA and 25 AmeriCorps members work with the Duluth Public Schools and community-based partners to narrow the achievement gap. Nineteen members provide school-site reading and math interventions during the school day and school-site out-of-school-time (OST) programs (afterschool and summer). Six members provide academic support and engagement activities after school and during the summer off-site in collaboration with community-based organizations. At the end of the 1st program year, 675 children demonstrate improvement in academic progress and 720 /children demonstrate improvement in academic engagement. Members leverage an additional 120 volunteers to support the OST programs and facilitate mentoring, homework help, Service Learning, and enrichment activities. Focus Area: Education. The CNCS investment of \$296,840 is matched with \$422,299 overall, \$255,500 in local, state, and federal funds and \$166,799 in-kind.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

a. Problem/need

The Duluth Public Schools (DPS) has one of the largest achievement gaps in Minnesota. The reading proficiency index is 84.02 for White students, whereas the proficiency index for American Indians and African Americans is 65 and 59; an 19- to 25-point gap. In math, the index for White students was 70.1 while the index for American Indians and African Americans was 52 and 44; an 18- to 26-point gap. This discrepancy is evident across class lines as well: of those DPS students eligible for free and reduced lunch, 62% of are not proficient in math and 32% are not proficient in reading. Proficiency in reading and math declines as students move through the system: in Math: from 69% proficiency in 3rd grade to 49% in 8th grade (1). In Reading: from 78% proficiency in 3rd grade to 68% in 8th grade (2). For free and reduced lunch, American Indians, and African Americans students, these discrepancies result in dropout rates that are 18%, 25%, and 28% respectively and graduation rates that are 49%, 34% and 49% respectively!

DPS staff training and instruction have not adapted to address the changing needs of diverse students in math and reading. The DPS 4-year Continuous Improvement Plan includes a focus on student, family, and community engagement as well as standards-based reading and math instruction and continuous improvement using data. Strategies to reduce the achievement gap include:

* Ongoing review of individual grades and benchmarks

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- * In-school/OST academic supports for students and family engagement
- * Student Success Teams regularly assess student progress and adjust interventions
- * Address the impacts of poverty and racism through enrichment, and family support
- * Leverage community based resources to provide OST, family support, and access AmeriCorps

b. AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means

True North facilitates DPS strategies to reduce the achievement gap through evidence-based interventions in classrooms as well as evidence-informed OST programs. For over 11 years True North brought considerable people power and outside resources that improved student outcomes and built capacity of schools and non-profits to engage volunteers. Schools trust the YMCA and True North to provide quality, evidence-based interventions and highly trained staff and volunteers.

Nineteen members placed in eight elementary schools provide school day math and reading interventions as well as facilitate OST programs at the school site in partnership with community based organizations. Six members facilitate OST activities off school-site with other community-based organizations. School based members maintain a caseload of 20 school day students and 20 after school/summer students. Off-site members maintain a caseload of 40 after school/summer students.

= School Day Programming =

> Target audience: Children in the yellow zone of the Tiered Intervention model who are partially-proficient in K-3 math or 4-5 reading based on benchmarks. Yellow zone = students who "partially met standards" as measured by state and local assessments. Program completers attend 40 or more days, in any combination of school-day, afterschool and summer.

> School day duration and dosage: Classroom teachers train and oversee Members as they provide 40 minutes of direct intervention during core instruction within the classroom 5 days/week for 40 weeks in one-on-one and/or small group format. Members rotate through 5 different classrooms each day. DPS will employ the pull-in (sometimes called push-in) method of intervention so students receive peer and teacher support. An analysis of nine pullout programs by George Mason University (n.d.) indicated no academic improvement by students in pullout programs versus those in the control groups. However, the Council on Disability (2002) & Gleason (2008) note that pulling students from class can inhibit friendships and promote bullying, isolation and withdrawal from school as well as

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increase school costs and teacher/classroom disruptions (3). Pull-in is shown to positively affect outcomes and reduce disruptions (Allington & Cunningham, 2002) (4).

> Core activities

* Reading: DPS interventions incorporate evidence-based strategies and best practice recommended by the National Reading Panel (5) and International Reading Assoc. (6). The Nat'l Reading Panel was established by Congress to review the scientific literature and determine, based on evidence, the most effective ways to teach children to read. Internat'l Reading Assoc. supplies evidence-based best practices that provide an effective template for understanding best literacy practices.

Strategies include Repeated Reading; Guided Repeated Oral Reading; and additional reading time during "All hands on deck", an extended learning period. Other Nat'l Reading Panel, Scientifically Research-based Strategies are: Echo Reading; Tape Reading; Partner Reading; Choral Reading; Plays, Reader's Theater, Famous Speeches, Oral Recitation, Paired Reading, and Buddy Reading (Nat'l Reading Panel) (7).

* Math: DPS interventions incorporate evidence-based strategies and best practices including explicit instruction, peer tutoring, and cooperative learning (Slavin & Lake)(8). Strategies include: writing prompts, Differentiation Cards; Intervention level, MN Test Prep -- Standards Practice, Problem Solving on Location, and Vocabulary Practice as well as Think Aloud, Fact/computational fluency, I do/We do/You do. Interventions are verified as evidence-based from US Dept of Ed Center on Instruction, Promising Practices Network (Rand Corp), or Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education (Johns Hopkins University).

> Site selection: DPS senior personnel participated in the design of this program. MSY's reflect the expectation that each elementary school receives at least one Member for reading and one Member for math. Individual schools sign a Site Agreement agreeing to implement both school day and OST activities as well as school site responsibilities for Member training, oversight, and participation in School Success Teams. True North and district personnel will prepare schools for this model and ensure compliance.

= OST Programming =

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Target audience: Students from school day caseloads are targeted. However, additional yellow-zone children are recruited as well as students that qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch. Program completers attend 40 or more days in any combination of school-day, afterschool and summer.

> Duration and dosage:

* Afterschool: Students receive at least 120 minutes of intervention/week. Programs run 5 days/week for 40 weeks.

* Summer: Students receive at least 180 minutes of intervention and participate at least 3 days/week. Programs run 5 days/week for 8 weeks.

> Core activities

* Enrichment: The Harvard Family Research Institute and the US Department of Education, What Works Clearinghouse, inform the high-quality OST model. This research tells us that children need multiple opportunities to learn and grow: at home, in school, and in the community. High-quality OST programs must provide access to sustained participation, well-organized programming, activities that are engaging and foster positive relationships and strong community connections.

Key Zone, the OST collaboration between the DPS and the YMCA, utilizes complementary learning, a systemic approach integrating both school and nonschool supports. School-based Members work in Key Zone during the afterschool and summer hours, bridging in-school and OST learning. YMCA leverages funds from the Minnesota Department of Education to deliver this comprehensive model at little or no cost to income-eligible students or those who are partially proficient.

The summer program is theme-based and includes weekly field trips to corresponding locations such as a state park, the Environmental Protection Agency, planetariums, theater productions, and so on. All sites participate in the same theme to provide greater integration and sharing of expertise among teachers and resources. Each site develops and presents a unique project based upon the theme to the community.

* Volunteer Coordination: Members recruit, train, oversee, and support volunteers for the community partners who provide OST programming. They a) provide resources to volunteers and document their impacts and hours; b) conduct interviews and criminal background, sexual predator and reference

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checks; and c) connect participants with caring adults, facilitate high-quality activities and meaningful service, encourage appropriate behavior, and ensure school/OST connectedness. True North builds community capacity to recruit and support volunteers, and attracts diverse stakeholders to contribute in-kind and match support.

* Service Learning: Members plan and lead service learning projects that allows students to link classroom learning with life. Students participate in 15 hours of service throughout the calendar year. True North convenes service learning professionals, including DPS Service Learning Coordinator and the YMCA Youth Development Director, and utilizes the Nat'l Youth Leadership Council model to guide training and implementation and ensure exemplary oversight to Standards of Quality Practice.

> OST site selection: OST partners apply via an RFP process that outlines expectations for Member training, oversight, program activities and duration. Adherence to these components is required for site selection and is codified in Site Agreements. Smaller sites willing to share a Member are considered.

c. Member Training

Paramount to the success of Members is extensive initial and ongoing training in the interventions both for the school-day and OST. Training thoroughly prepares members to deliver evidence-based academic interventions as well as high quality programming based on the principles outlined by the Center for Youth Program Quality and the Nat'l Institute for OST.

= Orientation =

Candidates receive enrollment documents, an event calendar, training schedule and orientation agenda. True North conducts the initial interviews to ensure applicants meet CNCS eligibility and qualifications. Schools and OST programs interview and approve candidates to ensure a suitable match. Each step stresses a full year commitment, the distinction between AC service and a job and participation in all training and meetings.

Supervisors spend 4 hours orienting Members their first day and oversee a discovery activity about people, procedures, policies, and history through staff interviews. The first week covers site policies & procedures, expectations, facility tours, school & neighborhood background, available resources,

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current & potential uses of volunteers, and schedules of activities and meetings with supervisors.

Members attend staff meetings & workshops and receive an updated site manual that details activities, resources, and tips.

= On-going training =

Members receive extensive pre- and in-service training. True North tracks completion of required workshops and provides monitoring and support. Mandatory workshops include:

* Aug: 1 day: Preservice orientation: AC requirements, allowable/prohibited activities, procedures, guidelines.

* Late Aug: 3 day preservice retreat: research-based academic interventions in math and reading, indicators of Youth Program Quality, tracking requirements, and using the SAYO Tools to measure outcomes. Presented by experienced education and OST professionals and True North staff.

* Late Sept: 1 day: SUCCESS Series: six 60-minute workshops on working with volunteers as well as understanding developmental assets, reading comprehension/ fluency, current trends in math/ math academic mentoring tips, cultural competency, relationships with youth and positive role models.

Members receive certification and may become co-trainers.

* Early Nov: 1 day: Engage families & volunteers, work with challenging behaviors, and develop leaders.

* Jan: 1 day: the Seven Steps of Service-Learning.

* Feb: 1 day: Intercultural competency training and working with students with special needs.

* April: 2 day mid-year retreat: reflect on the first 6 months of service, review evaluation requirements including tracking, understanding benchmarks and survey instruments and summer programming components.

* May: 1 day: networking, utilizing the AC experience in a job search, and prepare for life after AC.

* May: Requirements for tracking mentor and volunteer hours, attendance and participation in school-day interventions and OST programming.

* July year-end retreat: Reflection and recognition of accomplishments, service learning presentation, cultural competency reflection session.

= OST Training =

* Jan: Youth Program Quality Assessment, Youth Work Methods, connecting OST with school day.

* Oct: Complementary Learning model: two workshops each fall, a mid-winter training and a two-

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day workshop each spring. Topics include: volunteer mobilization and engagement, building community, cooperative learning, youth advisory councils, service learning, active learning, student engagement through planning and reflection, relationships with schools and parents, project-based learning and academic enrichment clubs.

* Oct: Service learning in academics for each grade and tying OST to core standards).

= DPS workshops include =

* Sept: School and student specific literacy and math interventions.

* Sept: Understanding proficiency benchmarks using the Measurement of Academic Progress

= Optional workshops =

*On-going: CPR/First Aid training and four workshops (3 hours) covering diversity, literacy, education crisis in America, and the impacts of Service.

*On-going: Returning members take advanced leadership training, mentor new members, and serve as "Corps Group" leaders. Monthly meetings allow new members to problem-solve or just connect.

= Prohibited Activities =

School and Member Service agreements include policies and procedures to ensure compliance on prohibited activities. Members, site supervisors and volunteers receive training on appropriate activities during orientation and training. Ongoing communication and site monitoring ensures compliance:

* Audit time sheets submitted by School Supervisors quarterly.

* Conduct at least three site visits/year ensuring model fidelity, supervision & support, and that AC goals and site goals are met.

* Collect performance evaluations twice/year. Members evaluate themselves and their supervisors and provide feedback that they discuss with their Supervisor and True North staff.

* Provide reasonable accommodation training and follow-up throughout the service term.

d. AmeriCorps Member Supervision

= Supervision =

> School supervisors allocate at least 10hrs/month to coordinate program components. True North supports site supervisors through bi-annual site visits and on-going communication. Schools with a

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member requiring accommodations receive two visits from the Inclusion Specialist.

>Supervisor qualifications: School supervision is shared by DPS Data Coaches and licensed teachers.

= Supervisor Training and Support =

> Schools sign a Partner Site Agreement outlining program expectations, requirements for AC branding on all communications, prohibited activities, & cash match/in kind commitments.

Supervisors:

*Attend orientation on AC mission, regulations, prohibited activities, and recruitment.

*Attend a pre-service and bi-annual training on best practices in implementation, expectations of supervision, welcoming & coaching members, and allowable & prohibited activities.

*Attend a hands-on web training on the OnCorps Reporting system for timesheet approval and in-kind report submission and includes allowable and prohibited activities.

* Learn to coach and promote member leadership.

* Prepare a mid-year report card documenting completion of member and site requirements.

e. Commitment to AmeriCorps identity

> AC Awareness: Members and Site Supervisors are provided and expected to wear and use provided AC gear and accessories that help foster a sense of connection to the AC identity. Orientation and fall retreats stress members as national service representatives. Returning members provide peer support and build the AC identity through Corps Groups.

> Member reflection: fall and spring retreats incorporate reflection through dialogue and writing. Returning members lead monthly reflection for new members. Training, site visits, and reports provide opportunities for reflection as does the Final Celebration.

> AC Connections: AC programs in the region connect to expand their skills through Corps-wide initiatives (Nat'l AC Week, Nat'l Service Day, etc), networking opportunities such as Global Youth Service Day and Martin Luther King Day, and training.

Organizational Capability

a. Organizational Background and Staffing

> Experience: The YMCA has provided educational, youth, community and health programs for 128 years. The YMCA oversees True North and is fiscal lead. The YMCA works diligently to develop new partnerships with schools, human service agencies, government and community. The YMCA employs

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a professional staff, offers quality services and programs, and practices financial integrity. It employs 41 FT and 312 PT employees, 15 AC members at 2 True North sites, and serves nearly 5,000 youth annually. The YMCA provides programmatic and fiscal support for 7 Mentor Duluth agencies and a 14 member youth-serving coalition. The YMCA partners with DPS to operate OST programs at 10 sites that include six 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

> Staff Experience and Training

Program quality is dependent upon superior staff development and YMCA implements a comprehensive training plan that includes the importance of science-based interventions, model fidelity and the relational skills that meet the developmental needs of children. All staff participates in the National YMCA Professional Development process that includes supervision and leadership skills, team building, cultural competency, fiscal management, and volunteerism, as well as child cognitive development; behavior management; professional relationships with schools/parent; diversity; evidence-based interventions; team/youth leadership development; and best practices in Project Based Learning, Service Learning, Mentoring, OST, Family and Volunteer Engagement.

The YMCA Community Services Branch Executive Director has 30 years of experience in the field of Youth Development, holds a Master's degree in Educational Psychology and has extensive experience in federal and state grant implementation including AmeriCorps, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, HRSA Rural Health Outreach and National Endowment for the Arts. She oversees program success and grant guideline adherence; coordinates with YMCA accountants to provide fiscal oversight, directs quality control, adherence to best practices, coordinates evaluation with the DPS Assessment Director, and provides member training/support.

The True North Director holds a BA in Elementary Ed, has been with the YMCA for 13 years. She has extensive training in leadership and program development through the YMCA of the USA and CNCS. She served as True North Coordinator since 2006 and as Director since 2010. She oversees the operations of the program and outside evaluator and supports the program coordinators.

True North Coordinator holds a BA in Recreation Management, has been with the YMCA for 16 years. She has held positions in YMCA Camping, Youth Development & OST Programs and has extensive supervisory and training experience.

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>Management structure: The YMCA Association operates under 2 active boards, Governing and Trustee, with well-defined roles and five committees that provide support and oversight. The YMCA has 4 branches, Downtown, Camping Services, Cook County, and Community Services. Community Services oversees all early childhood, mentoring and OST programs including True North, which is advised by a community board that provides staff & program oversight and coordinates the site selection process. United Way reviews the YMCA organizational and board processes every 3 years and uses it as a model for other non-profits.

> Fiscal and Fundraising Experience: The YMCA raised and administered millions of Federal and State dollars including \$4,784,000 from CNCS since 2003-04. Other funds include \$2.25 million from Federal Compassion Capital Funds; \$576,000 from the US DoEd for mentoring; \$197,000 from OJJDP for Juvenile Mentoring; \$347,000 MN State Incentive Grant; \$1,100,000 in 2004 and \$2,375,000 for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers in 2012. In 2013, the YMCA secured three pilot project grants from Y of the USA totaling \$110,000 as part of a national effort to lower the achievement gap. The YMCA's annual operating budget is \$5.254 million. Programs receive \$400,000 annually from local foundations, an endowment through funds and trusts totals more than \$6 million, and assets are over \$13 million. Annual campaigns earn \$120,000. Memberships account for \$1.95 million annually, Community Services programs (including True North) account for \$1.987 million, camping programs \$470,000, and Administration \$744,000. A staff accountant and a bookkeeper administer grants and an independent firm audits finances yearly.

b. Compliance and accountability

> Monitoring Plan: True North monitors all aspects of its program, including noncompliance and risk. True North supports site supervisors through bi-annual site visits and on-going communication. School Sites sign a Partner Site Agreement outlining program expectations, requirements for AC branding on all communications, prohibited activities, & cash match/in kind commitments. Compliance is audited during each site visit and members and supervisors are trained in allowable activities. An outside evaluator audits practices, policies and procedures annually. ServeMN bi-annual site visits have scored True North at the highest level of performance and accountability.

> Noncompliance accountability: The YMCA works with sites that are underperforming or struggle

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with retention to develop compliance plans and set a probationary period. Preventative practices and proactive support developed via years of experience have curbed risk or noncompliance issues. Just three organizations out of 86 needed probationary periods for improvement since 2004.

c. Past performance

= Performance towards goals =

True North has consistently exceeded performance targets. True North impact since 2003/04: 510 MSY were filled by over 760 individuals, served 12,600 non-duplicated youth in 85 organizations in 26 rural communities with over 30,000 on-going and one time volunteers mobilized. Over 1000 service-learning projects. Capacity building initiatives facilitated by True North increased funding streams and volunteerism throughout a 10-county area.

> 2012-13 Performance Measures:

* 2100 children will be targeted and enrolled in a TNAC education program

Result: 3883 were enrolled in a TNAC education program

* 1800 children will complete a minimum of 40 sessions within a TNAC Education Program

Result: 1807 completed a minimum of 40 sessions in a TNAC Education Program

* 1350 of 2100 children who successfully complete a TNAC education program will show improvement, based on school records, teacher report and a pre/post academic engagement inventory in at least one of the three performance areas; attendance (25% increase), behavior (25% decrease), academic engagement (10% increase) while not decreasing in any area.

Result: 1356 grades were collected but only 945 of them were complete and usable. Tools employed to assess engagement displayed poor reliability and had to be discarded, leaving only school records of Language Arts performance as a measure. 76% of the 945 students maintained or improved their Language Arts grade. The tool has been replaced with Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes (SAYO) a nationally verified instrument.

> Other successes

* Eight of nine schools that hosted AmeriCorps members made gains in the MMR (Multiple Measurement Rating) or Focus Rating used by Minnesota to assess achievement gaps, student

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growth, and proficiency. Laura MacArthur Elementary, a Priority School in 2012, saw the most significant gain. In the past 18 months, the school's MMR increased from 3.49 to 64.91 and was recognized by the MN Dept of Ed as a Celebration School. DPS believes AmeriCorps made a significant contribution to this success.

> Demonstration of compliance: True North has no compliance issues. Monthly reporting and year-end closeout are accomplished on time. Annual A-133 audits are performed annually with no findings. ServeMN annual report has referenced True North as a program that excels in member experience and work with rural communities.

>Enrollment: True North consistently enrolled 100% of slots.

>Retention: Past year rates: 96.8% with 20-25% of Members returning for a 2nd or 3rd year. Given the rural setting and commitment to diversity, these figures reflect a substantial commitment to energetic recruitment and rigorous support. Employment is the most prevalent factor for Members leaving: high unemployment and poverty rates compel Members to take employment when offered. Members and their skills are highly valued.

d. Continuous Improvement

= Internal and external feedback =

YMCA and DPS are true partners in the planning and operation of all in- and out of school programs. The Superintendent, the Principal of each school and community partners collaborate on development and implementation. Community input is facilitated by the Delegation for Educational Outcomes, a working group that investigates, reviews, and makes recommendations for strategies to positively impact the achievement gap. The Delegation includes schools, youth and human service agencies, funders, businesses and families.

= Using student data =

> Weekly: School student success teams that include Members review performance data through benchmarks, grades, and teacher reports as well as reflect on the "why" of student challenges. Team action planning informs next-steps for student learning as well as teacher professional development.

> Weekly: True North and other school and community personnel review OST student data on

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achievement and engagement and monitor youth involvement and improvement over time.

> Monthly: Partners meet to assess the process and communication.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

a. Cost Effectiveness

= Cost per MSY - \$11,874 =

The budget exhibits cost effective programming of \$553 per child supported by extensive partnerships and cash/in-kind support. Comprehensive OST program costs nationally range from \$213 to \$850 per child (9). If DPS or parents were to employ 19 professional school-day tutors (average \$21/hour) or Teacher's Aids (\$48K/year/each), the cost per child would range from \$2,250 to \$3375! These sums are far beyond either the parent's or the community's ability to pay. AmeriCorps members do not supplant: without AmeriCorps, these services will not be provided. True North costs a fraction of this because of its extensive ability to leverage resources while maintaining high standards. Coordinated services and partnerships enable True North to make the best use of its resources; a key variable in its ability to meet critical community needs during a time of continued economic constraints.

= Higher cost per MSY than previous years =

The cost/MSY for True North (2009/10 - 2012/13) was \$11,300 for 60 Members. YMCA estimated support costs for AC Turnaround (2012/13-2015-16) at \$9,970/member for 15 members based on the efficiencies that are possible with greater numbers. However, cutting back from 60 to 15 members cost the YMCA these economies of scale. The current staffing is not adequate to support the intensive interventions and training costs were considerably higher with so few members. The \$11,874/MSY remains less than past True North programs but more accurately reflects the real costs that result from loss of scale.

b. Budget Adequacy

> Non-CNCS resources needed and secured: Local cash support is \$243,000, including the annual cash match of \$6,000 per MSY member for 25 sites (\$150,000): the City of Duluth contributes \$2,280 for each site match. Duluth also provides \$93,000 per year for operations. ServeMN Innovation fund provides \$12,500 for a total cash match of 225,500. In-kind support contributes an additional \$166,799 that includes \$3,971 support from host sites per MSY (\$99,279); UMD staff oversees service & program evaluation providing training & consultation (\$3,625). The YMCA provides an additional \$63,895 of In-kind support. Cash and in-kind match = 58.72%. A five-year

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475,000/year 21st Century Community Learning Center grant provides the resources to implement the complimentary learning model and high-quality evidence-informed activities in Key Zone and other community based partners.

> Adequacy: True North draws on a decade of experience to keep per/child costs low while consistently exceeding performance targets. Program, management, and fiscal staff are experienced in program implementation and management and require none of the start-up costs associated with new programs. Evaluation, reporting, training, and OST program materials/procedures to implement interventions are in place. Community relationships that leverage resources are in place, secure, and require less time to maintain.

>New resources: YMCA and its partners are continuously investigating and procuring local, state, and national resources to build capacity and support programs (See Fiscal/Fundraising Experience above).

1. Dr. Tawyea Brome-Lake. Director of Assessment and Evaluation. DPS.
2. Dr. Tawyea Brome-Lake. Director of Assessment and Evaluation. DPS.
3. MN Comprehensive Assessments. MN. Dept of Ed
4. Council for Learning Disabilities; Learning Disability Quarterly, Vol. 25, No. 1; Stages of Acceptance of a Learning Disability: The Impact of Labeling; 2002. Also:
Gleason, M. After School Clubs and English Language Learners' Self-Esteem (2008)
5. Schools That Work: Where All Children Read and Write (2 ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
6. The report and more information about the National Reading Panel, is available at <http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org>.
7. http://www.reading.org/Libraries/position-statements-and-resolutions/ps1055_evidence_based.pdf
8. Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction. <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications>.
9. Effective programs in elementary mathematics: A best-evidence synthesis. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education. February. http://www.bestevidence.org/math/elem/elem_math.htm)
10. Wallace Foundation

Evaluation Summary or Plan

1. Project and plan description

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a) Theory of Change: Does comprehensive evidence-based interventions in the classroom, coupled with out of school time support and evidence-based or informed interventions for student and families reduce the achievement gap?

b) Interventions and dosage:

School day:

Members provide 40 minutes of direct intervention during core instruction within the classroom 5days/week for 40 weeks in one-on-one and small group format.

Reading evidence-based interventions: Repeated Reading; Guided Repeated Oral Reading; and additional reading time during "All hands on deck", an extended learning period. Other National Reading Panel, Scientifically Research-based Strategies (SRBI) include: Echo Reading; Tape Reading; Partner Reading; Choral Reading; Plays, Reader's Theater, Famous Speeches, Oral Recitation, Paired Reading, and Buddy Reading.

Math evidence-based interventions: Best practices include explicit instruction, peer tutoring, and cooperative learning. Strategies include: Differentiation Cards; Intervention level, writing prompts, MN Test Prep & Standards Practice, Problem Solving on Location, and Vocabulary Practice as well as Think Aloud, Fact/computational fluency, I do/We do/You do.

Out of School Time:

Afterschool: Members provide at least 120 minutes of intervention/week. Programs run 5 days/week for 40 weeks. Program completers attend the program 40 or more days or any combination of school-day, afterschool and summer programming.

Summer: Members provide at least 180 minutes of intervention and participate at least 3 days/week. Programs run 5 days/week for 6 weeks.

Interventions include :

- * Academic mentoring
- * Academic enrichment
- * Service learning

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* Parental/family support/community engagement

2. Research questions, methodology and the outcomes

a) Research questions:

- 1) Is the pre-post change related to number of contact hours during the day, after school or summer?
- 2) Is the pre-post change related to youth demographics?

b) Research methodology:

This is pre-post analysis which compares pre-test measure given at program entry to post-test measures given at each benchmark and at program completion. A repeated measure design will be used to test for significant differences and post hoc analysis will consider demographic data and hours of participation.

c) Performance Measures

Outputs

ED 1: 1000 children are enrolled in True North AmeriCorps. Participants are partially proficient in Math and Reading based on DPS benchmarks and/or eligible for free and reduced lunch if in an OST program.

ED 2: Ninety Percent (900) of enrolled children will successfully complete a minimum of 40 True North sessions. Performance measure: Completion = 40 days in school-day or OST or a combination of both.

Outcomes:

ED 5: 75 percent (675) children who successfully complete demonstrate improvement in academic achievement.

ED 27: Eighty percent of the 900 children (720) who successfully complete demonstrate improvement in academic engagement.

3. Data

a) Population or sample: Student selection: Students fall in the yellow zone of the Tiered Intervention model in reading and/or math as determined by DPS benchmarks. Yellow zone = students that are

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partially proficient. OST students are recruited from school day caseloads with additional yellow zone students.

b Data collected:

1) demographic data: age, gender, year in school, race, and socio-economic status as measured by free and reduced lunch.

2) Performance measures:

ED-1: Performance measure: number of students enrolled.

Instrument: Enrollment forms, case files and a data base utilized at all sites. Case files track: 1) student academic data, 2) attendance and duration at school day interventions and OST programs, 3) parent contacts and participation, 4) educational enrichment activities, and 5) service learning activities.

ED-2: Performance measure: number of students who complete.

Instrument: Enrollment forms, case files and a data base utilized at all sites. Case files track: 1) student academic data, 2) attendance and duration at school day interventions and OST programs, 3) parent contacts and participation, 4) educational enrichment activities, and 5) service learning activities.

ED5: Performance measure: Students who move from "partially meets proficiency" to "meets proficiency".

Instruments:

Grades 3-5: NWEA MAP reading and math

Grades K-1: Letter-Sound Fluency (reading), Quantity Discrimination (math)

Grade 2: Oral Reading Fluency (reading), Computation (math)

And: Federal Teacher Survey (21st Century Community Learning Centers). Students enrolled in True North are receiving 21st Century services as part of the comprehensive model: teachers currently complete the survey for these students.

ED-27: Performance measure: students show positive statistically significant improvement on instruments.

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Instruments: Youth and/or Staff Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes* (SAYO) (Summer and OST) Federal Teacher Survey (21st Century Learning Communities)

School records: NWEA Map

3) participation: number of sessions for in-school and out-of-school, number of service learning and academic enrichment activities.

4) number and type of goals selected for each participant, and percentage of goals attained.

5) measures of academic/school engagement: SAYO Youth Survey indicators

c) Data management system:

True North will implement EZReports, a nationally recognized web-based software for management and reporting. The EZReports software is used by the Michigan State Department of Education (340 sites), the Indiana State Department of Education (250 sites) and the Colorado State Department of Education. Each EZReports system is designed specifically for each programs with input from Program Directors and Site Coordinators.

System highlights include:

- * Internet based software can be accessed by users via the Internet from anywhere
- * Programs, activities and performance analyzed in real time to make informed decisions
- * Reduced operational costs
- * Enhanced communications between sites and administration

Sample fields include, but are not limited to:

- * Activities/interventions by session, teacher, and content area
- * Ongoing and special activities
- * Student attendance by multiple criteria
- * Student grades and test scores
- * Student characteristics
- * Teacher and service provider time utilization

Narratives

d) Analysis: EZ Reports is compatible with SPSS, a leading research analysis software. SPSS calculates outcomes and the inter-relationships among variables. Of particular interest will be the comparison between students who receive three (school, after school, summer) services in contrast to students who receive two or one services.

4. Evaluation results

Evaluation feedback monitors program quality and continuous improvement. YMCA Director coordinates emerging assessment needs with DPS Director of Assessment. Student Success Teams, comprised of principals, data coaches, integration specialists, teachers, social workers, AmeriCorps members, and an OST representative, meet weekly to review data, assess student progress and adjust interventions as needed. Site specific results and overall results is presented to site supervisors and other stakeholders.

*Dr. Beth M. Miller and Wendy B. Surr of the National Institute on Out-of-School Time worked with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education over a three-year period to develop the SAYO Evaluation System. Results from two rounds of field-testing with over 5,000 students indicate that the SAYO is a valid and reliable instrument for measuring change in youth. The system exceeded scientifically accepted levels for both boys and girls at early elementary, later elementary, and middle school ages. In addition, programs results indicated statistically significant, positive changes in most outcome areas.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

AmeriCorps 2014 Clarification for Application ID #14AC156655

Duluth Area Family YMCA / AmeriCorps True North

Response date: April 9, 2014

Your application is under consideration for a grant in the amount of \$296,840.00, 25 Member Service Years (MSYs), 25 slots, and \$ 11,873.60 Cost per MSY.

Narratives

1) Budget clarification items:

If your changes result in you adding any new line items to your budget, please begin those line items with the word 'NEW' as the first word of the description line, so that our staff can quickly identify any new line items.

Response: No new line items added.

a) Section III - Administrative Costs: Corporation Fixed Amount - the totals for these line items are correct however, the calculation included in the Corporation Fixed should be Sum of Section I & II x .0526 x .60.

Response: Changed in egrants budget.

b) Please clarify why the budget includes criminal history checks for 15 supervisors, when there are 28 supervisors covered by the grant. Please verify that criminal history checks will be conducted on all members, employees and other individuals as described above.

Response: All members, employees and other individuals who receive a salary, education award, living allowance, stipend or similar payment from the grant has a criminal background check conducted. Many existing staff and supervisors have undergone background checks.

c) Section I, Program Operating Costs, Item E. Supplies-Please include that member gear contains the AmeriCorps logo.

Response: Changed in egrants budget.

d) Section I, Program Operating Costs, Item G. Member Training:

- Bi-Monthly service trainings- Please include that the meetings are of a length that it is necessary to include lunch.

Response: Changed in egrants budget.

- Duluth Cross Corps Leadership- Please include that the meetings are of a length that it is necessary to include lunch.

Response: Changed in egrants budget.

Narratives

- Member personal development YMCA individual memberships- Please provide justification for including individual memberships in the budget as part of the AmeriCorps program.

Response: Member access to full health and wellness activities promotes physical and mental health and reduces health care costs. Also changed in egrants budget.

e) The CCR registration is scheduled to expire on 1/21/2015. Please remember the registration must be current and active to receive an award from CNCS.

Response: In process.

2) Programmatic clarification items: Please respond in the eGrants narrative field labeled ¿Clarification Summary¿ as appropriate.

a) Executive Summary: Please revise the Executive Summary to reflect a CNCS share of \$296,840.

Response: Changed in narrative.

b) Tutoring: Please confirm that the proposed tutoring intervention meets the CNCS requirements outlined in 45 CFR 2522.900-.950, including:

- Tutors have high school diploma or equivalent, or a higher degree.

Response: Unemployment in Duluth is high and chronic resulting in a highly qualified applicant pool. Many members are licensed teachers and hold Bachelors or advance degrees. Tutors will have a HS diploma or equivalent as a minimum, but a Bachelor's degree is a preferred and given competitive advantage. Members often return for a second year (20 -25% on average) providing mentoring to new members as well as building their own expertise.

- Tutoring curriculum is high quality and research-based, consistent with the instructional program of the local education agency and with State academic content standards.

Response: All academic interventions are consistent with the instructional program of Duluth Public Schools. Pre-service and on-going training includes professional development workshops in school-based interventions. Members participate alongside their classroom teachers.

-Pre-service and in-service training content is high quality and research-based, consistent with the instructional program of the local education agency and with State academic content standards.

Response:The 3-day training retreat includes the research-based academic interventions in math and

Narratives

reading employed by the Duluth Public Schools. Members participate in all school-based professional development workshops including School and student specific literacy and math interventions and understanding proficiency benchmarks using the Measurement of Academic Progress.

- Members will be supervised with individuals with expertise in tutoring.

Response: School based Members are supervised by principals, instructional data coaches or classroom teachers: all hold teaching licenses. Afterschool site supervisors are YMCA or other youth agency staff. YMCA and other youth agencies implement a comprehensive training plan that includes the science-based interventions, model fidelity and the relational skills that meet the developmental needs of children. All YMCA staff participates in the National YMCA Professional Development process that includes supervision and leadership skills, team building, cultural competency, fiscal management, and volunteerism, as well as child cognitive development; behavior management; professional relationships with schools/parent; diversity; evidence-based interventions; team/youth leadership development; and best practices in Project Based Learning, Service Learning, Mentoring, OST, Family and Volunteer Engagement.

c) In the Clarification narrative field, please enter a statement confirming the desired grant award start and member enrollment period start.

Response: Start Date: August 16th, 2014 End Date: August 15th, 2015

d) The program funding history indicates that the program was required to submit an evaluation report. Please provide a copy of the evaluation report via email. If the program did not conduct an evaluation, please provide an explanation in the clarification summary field in eGrants.

Response: YMCA submitted its third, three-year evaluation report, dated August 2012 to ServeMN. Since that time, the scope of True North has changed considerably. The scope was reduced from a 10 county area to two local turnaround schools and the budget reduced to less than \$500,000. The Turnaround project is just completing its first year and not yet required to submit an evaluation report. YWCA will follow all 45 CFR § 2522.710 requirements for evaluation reporting for both the True North Turnaround project and any future True North programs.

3) Please make the following changes in the Performance Measures screens in eGrants:

Response: changes made in egrants. Also included here question by question for clarity.

Narratives

a) Please confirm that the students captured in the proposed measures are enrolled in grades K-12 in schools with a majority of economically disadvantaged students and/or a majority of children with special or exceptional needs.

Duluth Public Schools have one of the highest achievement gaps in Minnesota. The reading proficiency index reflects a 19- to 25-point gap between white, more affluent students and low-income/children of color. The math proficiency index reflects an 18- to 26-point gap between white, more affluent students and low-income/children of color. True North will provide reading and math interventions and enrichment activities to 1000 unduplicated K-5 students: the majority are low-income, low-income persons of color, and at risk of academic failure.

b) Please indicate how targets were set, as outcome targets in performance measures appear to differ from targets in the submitted logic model.

Each member maintains a caseload of 40 unduplicated students ($25 \times 40 = 1000$) across the integrated in-school, afterschool and summer programs. Students who drop out are replaced.

c) ED2: Please clearly indicate the level of participation required for completion for each of the proposed interventions, including the summer learning activity.

Please confirm that the target for this measure counts each child only once, even if they participate in multiple program interventions.

Students must participate 40 days in any combination of in-school, after school, or summer to complete. 900 un-duplicated students will complete the 40 days. Members maintain a caseload of 40 students across in-school, afterschool, and summer and students who drop out are replaced.

d) ED5: Please indicate whether the target for this measure includes those students participating only in interventions at community based organizations rather than schools or in summer activities rather than school-year tutoring.

Targets include all enrolled program participants regardless of their school-year tutoring status.

If so, please indicate how the program proposes to measure gains for those students.

School-based Benchmarks

SAYO Teacher Survey

Narratives

Please indicate whether the level of improvement expected varies according to the specific intervention and indicate the level of improvement required in each intervention in order to be counted for this measure.

Specific intervention successes will demonstrate increase in proficiency in math or reading performance as measured by NWEA benchmarks. Proficiency scale: does not meet, partially meets, meets, or exceeds. Students will improve by at least one level.

SAYO is a 4-point scale. Students demonstrate improved academic progress of at least one point.

Please confirm that the proposed instruments meet the definitions required by ED5, including those for standardized tests. Please provide more detail related to the instrument, including when it will be administered and whether it is a pre-post-test method.

School-based measures of academic achievement are validated, research-based instruments used by the Duluth Public Schools.

Grades 3-5: NWEA MAP

On-going 3 times per year. School-based student support teams update student progress weekly or monthly throughout their school career.

Grades K-1: Letter-Sound Fluency (reading), Aimsweb Quantity Discrimination (QD) (math)

Grade 2: Oral Reading Fluency (reading), MSB (Monitoring Basic Skills Progress) Computation + QD (previous spring (math)

K-2 measures on-going 3 times per year.

NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) standardized tests are employed by the Minnesota Department of Education and are nationally recognized and validated. NWEA tests do not exist for students in grades K-2. Quantity Discrimination is math benchmark tool of Aimsweb. NWEA and Aimsweb are nationally-recognized, normed, standardized tests directly aligned to the Minnesota State standards, District Adequate Yearly Progress and Minnesota's Multiple Measurements Rating. MSB Computation and Quantity Discrimination are research-based, validated standardized set of measurement and evaluation procedures. Letter-Sound and Oral Reading Fluency measures are recommended by the national Reading Panel.

Narratives

Grades K-5 Federal Teacher Survey (Schools only)

Post-test only.

Federal Teacher Survey is a validated, federally developed instrument for the 21st Century Learning Communities Centers Program. Measures teacher perception of student academic progress.

SAYO Teacher Survey (community based organizations only)

Pre/post test

SAYO has been extensively piloted, and scientifically tested. Developed by Beth M. Miller, Wendy B. Surr, and Allison Tracy, National Institute on Out-of-School Time at the Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA, for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. SAYO is being used by over 300 afterschool and youth programs in 33 states and Canada.

Please indicate whether the same instruments will be used for all students at all schools and community based organizations.

School-based benchmarks are used across schools and community based organizations. No Federal Teacher Survey for community based organizations and no SAYO Teacher survey for schools.

e) ED27: Please indicate whether the target for this measure counts students only participating in community based or summer interventions rather than school-year tutoring.

Targets include all enrolled program participants regardless of their school-year tutoring status.

a. Please indicate what measures of academic engagement the program will measure.

b. Please indicate what level of change in academic engagement is sufficient to be counted as improved for each intervention.

Youth and/or Staff Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes (SAYO) (Summer and OST) (pre/post)

Measures of engagement: Classroom/program behavior, learning engagement, relations with adults and or peers, problem solving, communication skills, and homework completion.

SAYO is a 4 point scale: Students will improve at least one point level.

Federal Teacher Survey. Post only. School-year only.

Narratives

Measures of engagement: Measures of student behaviors include: increased attendance, increased completion of assignments including homework, increased teacher-reported participation, and academic progress. Measures of student attitudes include: increased interest in school, increased attendance, and improved volunteering in class.

Levels are: slightly improved, moderately improved, or significantly improved.

Students demonstrate improved academic engagement of at least one level.

Please confirm that proposed instruments meet the definitions of those required by this measure. SAYO has been extensively piloted, and scientifically tested. Developed by Beth M. Miller, Wendy B. Surr, and Allison Tracy, National Institute on Out-of-School Time at the Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA, for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. SAYO is being used by over 300 afterschool and youth programs in 33 states and Canada.

Federal Teacher Survey is a validated, federally developed instrument for the 21st Century Learning Communities Center Program.

4) Strategic Engagement Slots Clarification:

a) 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?

Response: On average 8% of slots are filled by members with disabilities. YMCA partners with Courage Duluth and Choice Unlimited to recruit members. Staff presents to participants and advertises in organizational newsletters. Staff meet individually with persons who voice an interest and provide accommodation.

b) Not applicable.

5) MSY With No Program Funds Attached Clarification (No Cost MSYs):

a) Not Applicable

6) Healthcare Clarification Items:

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

Narratives

Response: Summit America Insurance Services with Willis of Seattle as the broker.

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

Response: National Conference on Volunteerism in Washington D.C.: Personal communication with and recommendation from other AmeriCorps Programs and price comparisons with local provider.

c) 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?

Response: Rates went up for this current service year by 5% but the current budget covers the per member monthly premium for minimum coverage. However, for service year 2014-15 the budget does not cover the anticipated rate increase.

After speaking with both Summitt America, claims agent, and Willis of Seattle, broker, YMCA anticipates a 20-30% increase starting in August 2014. Currently per month/per member for health insurance is \$160. and another \$15. per month/per member for dental. Dental coverage will not be increased.

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

The new cost per month/per member based on the 30% increase will be \$208. per member/per month or \$2,496 for the year. Response: This will be a total budget of \$62,400 if all members take the health insurance, while the budget item is \$48,750. However, the Affordable Care Act allows YMCA to encourage members under the age of 26 to stay on their parents insurance when possible and many True North members fit this profile. Typically only 25-30% of members take the health insurance, so the total budget is expected to be adequate.

AmeriCorps 2014 Clarification for Application ID #14AC156655

Duluth Area Family YMCA / AmeriCorps True North

Clarification April 15, 2014

1) Budget clarification items:

Narratives

Please provide additional information to clarify how the YMCA membership is reasonable and necessary as expensed under member training. What requirements of use if any are associated with the yearly memberships?

Response: YMCA believes youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility are interconnected. St. Louis County and the Minnesota Dept of Health recently documented the impact that poverty has on physical and mental health. "People with the lowest median household income (under \$25,000) in Duluth can expect to live 11 years less than those with the highest median income." (St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services. Health is more than healthcare. St. Louis County Health Status Report, 2013 and Advancing Health Equity in Minnesota. Minnesota Department of Health, 2013.) The majority of True North members are low-income and all work with low-income populations. Members act as mentors to the youth they serve and, as such, provide role-models for healthy living to these very at-risk populations when they model exercise and wellness in their personal lives. As mentors they promote fitness to youth and families: YMCA does not turn anyone away due to inability to pay. Further, as staff at the YMCA, AC members are entitled to benefit from the same personal and professional development as regular staff: all YMCA staff receive free membership as health and wellness is shown by the research to improve productivity and learning (Ray Merrill, Health Sciences, Brigham Young University, in-process).

Requirements of use: none. However, YMCA will track Member use and report on and adjust the in-kind match. An analysis of past use can be made available to CNCS provided time is allowed to generate the data.

2) Programmatic clarification items:

Provide an explanation for why the current True North program proposed in 14AC156655 qualifies as a different project.

Response: §2522.340 guidance criteria:

- Objectives and priorities of the project;

*True North 2004-2012 objectives: connect participants with community based mentors, increase academic engagement and achievement overall based on pre/post tests, build the capacity of rural

Narratives

organizations through volunteer mobilization.

*True North Turnaround (current): funding and requirements are distinct from the requirements of the current request. Turnaround is in its first year of implementation.

*True North (proposed) objectives: participants demonstrate academic improvement on school-based benchmarks in K-2 math and 3-5 reading. Student engagement demonstrates increased engagement on pre/post tests.

- Nature of services provided;

*True North 2004-2012: Primarily mentoring, academic support, and OST enrichment in partnership with urban and rural community-based organizations. No school-based interventions.

*True North Turnaround: school-based academic mentoring, family engagement, community engagement

*True North (proposed): Urban school-based and OST tutoring in K-2 math and 3-5 reading. Case management for each student.

- Staff, participants, and volunteers involved;

*True North 2004-2012: Partner staff/volunteers were community-based. Participants were all K-5 children served by community-based organizations.

*True North Turnaround: two SIG schools designated as "lowest performing schools" in MN.

*True North (proposed): Supervisors are school-based: teachers, data coaches, and principals. Participants are focused (K-2 math and 3-5 reading).

- Geographic location in which the services are provided;

*True North 2004-2012: 10-county area in Northeast Minnesota.

*True North Turnaround: one school in Duluth and one in Proctor.

*True North (proposed): Duluth public schools only, excluding the SIG schools served by Turnaround.

- Populations served;

*True North 2004-2012: urban and rural elementary students in the 10-county area.

*True North Turnaround: SIG school elementary students at 2 Duluth area schools.

*True North (proposed): K-2 math and 3-5 reading at Duluth public schools excluding the SIG schools served by Turnaround.

Narratives

-Proposed community partnerships

*True North 2004-2012: urban and rural community-based organizations.

*True North Turnaround: School-based: Two SIG schools

*True North (proposed): School based and community based. Considerably expanded school-based partnership. This is the first time supervisors will be school-based staff or faculty.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics