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Executive Summary

The City of Albuquerque's Running Start for Careers program will have 20 AmeriCorps members who will provide wraparound support services as "Success Coaches" in high schools throughout Albuquerque and across the state. At the end of the 1st program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for improved 9-12 grade academic success and financial literacy among participants and increased economic opportunities within the targeted community. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 200 volunteers who will help with school and community projects and may serve in special events and other capacities as appropriate.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus areas of Economic Opportunity and Education. The CNCS annual investment of \$265,946 will be matched with \$177,751, of which \$36,996 is public funding and \$140,755 is private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

a. PROBLEM NEED. Running Start for Careers (RSFC) is designed to combat New Mexico's high school drop-out rate while creating an integrated workforce system critical to our state's sustainable economic success. The City of Albuquerque Mayor's office teamed up with the Governor of New Mexico, and additional partners are the Atrisco Heritage Foundation (AHF), Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce (AHCC), Albuquerque Public School District (APS), New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED), New Mexico Educators Federal Credit Union, and businesses, labor, and community members -- all stakeholders in improving workforce training in ways that keep our kids in school and on track to a career. CNCS support will provide an economy of scale not otherwise possible, improving RSFC's efficiency and effectiveness and increasing sites served. New Mexico students are at risk for poor educational outcomes for a number of reasons, not the least of which is pervasive poverty across our state. At 20%, New Mexico ranks second worst in the country for children living in high poverty pockets (Kids Count, 2012). Living in areas of concentrated poverty is shown to cause high (harmful) levels of stress and severe behavioral and emotional problems in students (The Urban Institute, 2006). Students in low-income schools not only have lower test scores but also are more likely to drop out than their peers -- no matter what their own family's income level (AECF, 2010). In addition, 66% of our students qualify for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (family income at or below 185% federal poverty level; NMPED, 2013). Youth in low-income communities and communities of color lack opportunities to gain real work experience or job-readiness training

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other youth gain from starter and part-time jobs during their high school years (Khatiwada & McHugh, June 2012; Center for Working Families, 2012).

With youth employment at its lowest point since 1948, it is critical that New Mexico high schools retain and graduate highly educated students prepared for careers. Among New Mexico youth aged 16-24, 12.6% are unemployed, double the rate of the state as a whole, and 9.8% of 20-24 year olds are unemployed, 55% higher than the general population (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012).

This unemployment epidemic is fueled by high dropout rates. Albuquerque's dropout rate of 65% is 13% higher than the national average and 5% below the state as a whole (NMPED, 2012). Among youth who drop out, unemployment is about 50%; they have significantly lower incomes (average just \$20,241 annually); and they experience a 63-times higher incarceration rate than college graduates (National Skills Coalition, 2010; DOWS, 2012; Northeastern University, 2009). In addition, high school dropouts stress public infrastructure. For instance, they are 50% more likely to use Medicaid and have a 60% higher probability of needing Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Alliance for Excellence in Education, 2013; NM State University, 2009).

As a response, the City of Albuquerque held community planning sessions, reviewing combined assessments, surveys, and community planning reports with stakeholders (including LEAs), who reached the consensus goal to implement RSFC. The program leverages state and local resources that augment school training programs in apprenticeship trades, of which more than 900 are offered in New Mexico schools. The program currently supports some 30 trades in seven industries, each identified as current and future employment growth areas. These middle-skill jobs, encompass 30 of New Mexico's fastest growing industries and make up 48% of the state's employment and, in key industries, demand is outpacing supply for skilled workers. Of these 30 industries, 21 require some training beyond a high school diploma, but not a four-year degree. These jobs support critical infrastructure -- construction, healthcare, energy, transportation, production, and public safety. New Mexico's demand is projected to increase from 2006-2016 in: Construction 6%; Health Care 18%; Installation, Maintenance, and Repair (including Energy, Oil, and Gas jobs) 11%, and Design 8% (National Skills Coalition, 2010; Bureau of Labor Statistics 2009). Many jobs for trained individuals within the trades have high pay scales and exciting career potential. Middle-skills job training was selected as RSFC's program focus because these jobs: 1) offer a path to develop verifiable skills at a lower than associate degree level cost/infrastructure; and 2) yield high return in both future employment and negating lost productivity through un/under employment (National Skills Coalition, April 2010).

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We are currently working on program scale-up to improve impact that will be accomplished by building additional capacity at high poverty, diverse schools and with industry and nonprofit partners. Fifty-eight percent of Albuquerque's high schools, which span four New Mexico counties, are ranked among the nation's lowest performing schools -- fewer than 60% of freshmen progress to their senior year on time (Alliance for Education, 2011). Of the estimated 2,100 (35%) of Albuquerque's high school students who dropout, we aim to redirect 500 of these students from that path. In 2013, the 10 Running Start sites served 260 students, demonstrating interest and potential to successfully scale up the program.

RSFC is well aligned with AmeriCorps and CNC S program structures, rewarding and incentivizing service in education while incorporating workforce development for low-income youth and youth of color. RSFC aligns with Albuquerque's adoption of innovative strategies shown to be successful in this 9-12 setting: 1) 'anchor' institutions acting in collaboration with a body of community stakeholders; and 2) course selections that foster on time graduation and yield trades/industry recognized certificates combined with job-readiness soft skills and financial and asset building training. RSFC uses active and hands-on learning proven to improve school performance, sharpen skills, and increase employment opportunities (Annie E. Casey Foundation [AECF], Youth & Work, 2012; PACE, 2010). Program students will complete apprenticeships taught by hand-selected industry instructors.

b. AMERICORPS MEMBERS IMPACT. The project will utilize 20 full-time AmeriCorps members, titled and trained as Success Coaches, who serve at assigned school sites supporting a small "caseload" of approximately 25 students each. To improve academic performance outcomes, Success Coaches will utilize a computer-based system and tutoring curriculum (Renaissance Learning STAR), providing case management, reading and math tutoring, and wraparound supports. This includes: 1) Evidence-based tutoring in basic Math/Reading proficiency; 2) Navigation of complex public systems (e.g. benefits/healthcare); 3) Work supports (e.g. employment placement assistance); and 4) Mentoring. Along with program partners, members will also facilitate the wraparound supports of: 2) Soft skills/career readiness training (partners are Atrisco Heritage Foundation and the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce); and 2) Comprehensive, integrated financial education training (partner is New Mexico Educators Federal Credit Union). Finally, members will foster program sustainability, building partnerships with family and community members and businesses. AmeriCorps members will recruit at least 10 volunteers at each school site from the local community, who may help with school and community projects and may serve in special events and other capacities as is deemed appropriate by the AmeriCorps Manager. Members will also recruit potential

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industry partners and may help develop additional support services complementary to programming. RSFC is well-aligned with AmeriCorps goals to: (1) Get things done; (2) Strengthen communities; (3) Encourage responsibility; and (4) Expand opportunity. Coupled with program design that is proven to improve youth outcomes, this makes our request to include AmeriCorps members in RSFC an effective choice for program expansion and closing the gap in middle-skill job training (PACE, 2010; AECF, 2012; National Skills Coalition, 2012).

b1. THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL. Please see the attached Logic Model Worksheet. It is critical that we support the students most likely to miss the mark for a middle- or high-skilled job because they drop out of school. Outreach is brought into schools as early as the 9th grade and is tailored by school and community context. Program operating sites are selected in high poverty, diverse neighborhoods/schools where barriers to achievement exist. High schools currently partnering operate at full and appropriate capacity, demonstrating their adequate programmatic and financial capabilities to continue the program. These sites are aligned with criteria and priorities set forth in AmeriCorps Regulations 45 CFR §2522.475. While reasons for high dropout rates are diverse and multiple, RSFC targets the following cited by students as critical reasons for dropping out: (1) Boredom, falling behind in class, peer disinterest in school (Bridgeland, Dililio, Wulsin, 2008); (2) Lack of teacher and peer support and respect (City of Albuquerque planning meetings, 2011); (3) Limited career pathways due to a lack of career training options for those who many not be college-bound (AECF, 2012); and (4) Disinterest and lack of training that lead to ancillary behaviors and risk factors, such as being more likely to become involved in gangs or counterproductive behaviors (AECF, 2012).

While active learning and service facilitate youth progress and success in education and employment, only recently have civic engagement and service been tied directly to raising youth out of poverty and gains in their academic, personal, and professional lives (PACE, 2010). Given this strong body of evidence, the addition of AmeriCorps members will move the program to higher outcomes and more effective results than would otherwise be possible. Toward this end, AmeriCorps members will provide tutoring and mentoring weekly to improve math/reading proficiency among participating students. They may be assisted by qualified volunteers. APS's Student, Family & Community Supports department works in deeper connection with families to ensure support for a diversity of needs within schools.

The potential of AmeriCorps members addresses the needs identified by the eligible schools and LEA leadership in the following ways: (1) limiting the budget burden on administrative costs for

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curriculum approval and program oversight; (2) fostering motivated learners; and (3) providing financial literacy, capacity, and career development curricula with specific learning objectives that help schools meet Common Core and financial literacy legislative mandates.

The project addresses multiple student needs, including: (1) Training by field experts; (2) Acquisition of basic curriculum content and real world application of that content (geometry, algebra, communication, etc.); (3) Reading, writing, and math tutoring (not limited to those enrolled in vocational training); (4) Training offered as an elective during the regular school day; (5) Recruitment by industry; (6) Program flexibility with a variety of training choices; (7) Skills transferable to other career paths, including financial literacy; and (8) job placement assistance. It is aligned with comprehensive turnaround efforts among multiple schools; in alignment with CNCS priorities, it will increase graduation rates through strategies such as early warning systems, credit-recovery programs, and re-engagement strategies. The extent to which it will do this is significant -- RSFC aims to serve 500 students per year and data shows that participating high schools are sustaining or improving their graduation rates.

As a program with multiple school sites, economies of scale will be realized with the assistance of AmeriCorps members. Turnaround efforts will impact the community by: lowering the local dropout rate; allowing industry to drive curriculum; fostering career/technical training without burdening schools; creating a visible, viable pipeline of trained workers; and reducing the burden on local, state, and federal budgets by reducing the impact of under/unemployment. The impact of effective intervention programming like Running Start for Careers can be transformative for our city and our state. If just half of New Mexico's 2010 dropouts had graduated, the state would have: increased annual revenues of \$4.5M, seen the creation of up to 600 jobs annually, and more than double higher education graduation rates; and in Albuquerque halving the number of dropouts would result in the creation of 350 new jobs and add \$3.5 million to the city's tax revenue base (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2011).

b2. EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM. An estimated 500 students each year will go through an intake process conducted by the AmeriCorps members to ensure services are tailored to student needs. Realistic goals for the project are based on experience, data, and lessons learned both internally and externally. A strong body of research demonstrates the critical importance of adding relevant education outside of the classroom to increase math, reading, and writing proficiency. An estimated additional 16 high school students per 100 in New Mexico will graduate as a result of creating and maintaining improved small learning communities, such as those used in RSFC, that include

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advocates and instructional enhancements (NMSU, Legislative Briefing Report - New Mexico Dropout Rate: Contributing Factors Implications for Public Policy, 2009). RSFC is approved by Albuquerque Public Schools as an alternative education pathway and curricula meet all NM Public Education Department standards and graduation requirements. PRE-PRELIMINARY EVIDENCE: The program has collected and reviewed local needs assessments that support program need and strategies including: Central New Mexico Education Needs Assessment, University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research, July 2011; Funding Public Schools in New Mexico in the Great Recession, New Mexico Voices for Children, 2011; and Kids Count in New Mexico, AECF, 2012. PRELIMINARY EVIDENCE: The initial evidence base that can support conclusions about the program's contribution to outcomes includes New Mexico's recent surge in its graduation rate (from 63% in 2011 to 70% in 2012), partially attributed to effective intervention programming, such as RSFC (Albuquerque Journal, 2013). Graduation rates have risen among Running Start participating high schools and charter schools. For example: West Mesa High School graduation rates rose from 58% in 2011 to 70% in 2012; Del Norte High School graduation rates rose from 55% in 2011 to 60% in 2012; Rio Grande High School graduation rates rose from 52% in 2011 to 56% in 2012; Highland High School graduation rates rose from 49% in 2011 to 54% in 2012; Volcano Vista High School's graduation rate remained stable at 80%; and Atrisco Heritage Academy Charter High School graduated 77% of its first senior class. STRONG AND CASUAL EVIDENCE: These assessments and additional strong, research-based evidence clearly demonstrate that innovative workforce development (career skills, academic, and social skills advancement) encourages vulnerable students to stay in school: MDRC, 2011; CLASP, 2012; National Youth Employment Coalition, 2012; New Mexico's Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs, National Skills Coalition, 2010; Civic Pathways Out of Poverty and Into Opportunity, PACE, 2010; and Youth and Work: Restoring Teen/Young Adult Connections to Opportunity, AECF, 2012. In practice, RSFC has two full school years of implementation data, during which graduation rates rose between 4-12% at four of the five initial participating schools (as described above); 100% of seniors in the first "class" of RSFC graduated; and program graduates are working in film and construction industry careers. Project evaluation is designed to measure education completion and youth employment success. Indicators of academic, personal, institutional, and workplace advancement and performance success are based on the PACE 2010 study recommendations and include: (1) Educational achievement and advancement; (2) Development of leadership skills and other skills of value in the workforce; (3) Personal and social capital development; (4) Technical skill development; and (5) Soft skills -- leadership, confidence, social skills.

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This entire body of research also consistently demonstrates no one system can accomplish this alone. Importantly, this program offers systems change using existing federal, state, and private resources, re-allocating them to programs demonstrating results.

c. MEMBER TRAINING. RSFC staff and partners are committed to providing AmeriCorps members and volunteers with the foundation, training, and skills to support students while also promoting a strong culture of service and citizenship. The process of member selection, orientation, and training aligns with AmeriCorps requirements. Members will be supported through a formal training program and development plan as follows:

Two weeks of Pre-Service Orientation are required, where topics such as AmeriCorps policies and requirements, National Service, documentation, CPR/First Aid, leadership, behavior guidance, prohibited activities, risk management, community specific guidelines, detecting and reporting child abuse and neglect, and wraparound support provision. These will all be covered in detail, along with program documentation training and data gathering privacy measures, policies, and regulations. At the start of the year, members will receive two intensive training sessions that cover RSFC curriculum, evaluations, assessment tools, and volunteer engagement specific to the program. They will be trained in Renaissance Learning STAR, a State- and LEA-compliant computer-based curriculum that incorporates individual management/feedback tools. Members who are tutors will receive extensive training derived from nationally-recognized best practice sources (including, critical components of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and reading comprehension) in combination with continuous development opportunities (National Reading Panel, 2013).

Weekly training session topics will include citizenship, service project development and volunteer recruitment strategies, communication skills including conflict resolution and team building and other member-requested topics. Math and reading and vocational training curriculum will be discussed. Monthly professional development trainings provided by community partners such as the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) will include leadership development, conflict resolution, cultural competency awareness, inclusion philosophy, and community ideals. Program partner NM Educators Federal Credit Union will also provide comprehensive financial literacy training to members at two of the monthly professional development sessions.

d. MEMBER SUPERVISION. All members will be supervised by the AmeriCorps Manager to ensure they participate in trainings and remain compliant with all CNCS and program requirements. The supervision plan will be designed to support member satisfaction, retention, and team building. The

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AmeriCorps Manager will monitor all sites for high quality provision of services and will coordinate and communicate with the Executive Director through weekly in person meetings and as-needed phone conferences. Members will also be evaluated by the AmeriCorps Manager twice during the term to assess their levels of satisfaction, performance, and areas requiring improvement. A written evaluation will be provided to each member. Members will also complete bi-annual self-assessments. Supervising for prohibited activities is discussed under compliance below. We will coordinate the supervision of AmeriCorps members with school leadership and staff through a formal chain of command and shared data reporting processes. The budget reflects an AmeriCorps Manager and a Coordinator who is responsible for reporting. The AmeriCorps Manager and Coordinator will be housed at Atrisco Heritage Foundation, which is experienced in processes and procedures. RSFC is housed at the City of Albuquerque where the RSFC Executive Director is Carol Biondi. The City and the Atrisco Heritage Foundation will enter a Memorandum of Agreement upon award.

e. COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION. Our goal is to engage a diverse AmeriCorps member body that has consensus on the importance of serving their communities, making a difference, and increasing participation in service of program participants and volunteers. During pre-service orientation, weekly sessions, parent interactions, outreach, community organizing events, or other activities, AmeriCorps members will wear AmeriCorps t-shirts, badges, or pins to indicate their affiliation in order to promote awareness of the AmeriCorps program in the community. Members will be supported in learning about each other's communities of service throughout the program service area. Members will have an opportunity to work and train with other AmeriCorps and VISTA members through a partnership with the Atrisco Heritage Foundation. The Mayor's office has made an organizational commitment to AmeriCorps identification. AmeriCorps will be acknowledged on program and participant websites, in recruitment materials, press releases, project materials and reports, and at community convenings.

Organizational Capability

a. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING. The City of Albuquerque and State of New Mexico are jointly applying for the Governor and Mayor's Initiative for the program Running Start for Careers (RSFC), which is housed within the City of Albuquerque Mayor's Office. The City of Albuquerque will serve as fiscal manager for CNC S funding. The Executive Director, RSFC's primary program contact, Carol Biondi, is responsible for fiscal issues. A letter of commitment signed by Governor Susana Martinez and Albuquerque Mayor Richard J. Berry supports this application and has been submitted to CNC S. Atrisco Heritage Foundation, an experienced CNCS grantee, will house

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the AmeriCorps Manager, who will provide support and training to AmeriCorps members, and an AmeriCorps Coordinator, who will assist with reporting, file management, and administration. The Executive Director and the AmeriCorps Manager will coordinate on the project very closely. Although housed separately, both will work virtually with shared reporting processes as they will be traveling from school to school. They will participate in Monday morning check-ins that calibrate the activities for the week and identify and propose solutions to any issues that may have come up. They will communicate via phone, text message, email, and instant message as needed throughout the day. They will participate in the weekly trainings sessions and monthly professional development sessions. The program was conceived in 2009, developed during 2010 in a community-led process, and launched by the Albuquerque Mayor's Office in 2011. Funding to date has supported initial partner industry curriculum; teacher salaries; and student materials and project supplies. Each participating employer commits to providing training and materials. Schools and LEA leadership have been involved in designing and implementing the program. Curriculum was developed with the Albuquerque Public School District (APS), the state's largest school district (and among the 30 largest nationwide), and New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) to ensure its alignment, compliance, and adherence to high school graduation credits. Each partner high school commits funds for site space and student transportation.

Atrisco Heritage Foundation (AHF) was established specifically to support outreach and education achievement, especially for marginalized Hispanic students. For the past five years, AHF has demonstrated expertise in facilitating robust AmeriCorps programs, making it an excellent partner to expand such an important project in our communities. In partnership with the Rio Grande Education Cooperative (RGEC), AHF has had remarkable success in operating an array of educational programs, including two 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grants. In addition, the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce (AHCC) is a uniquely perfect partner -- positioned to bring employer access and connections that will affect systems change in workforce composition, education, and training levels. AHCC's Barelás Economic Opportunity Center (BEOC) provides comprehensive educational programs for Hispanic and other community members and offers existing working partnerships with many resources and partners such as the Small Business Administration, New Mexico Department of Labor, Century Link, Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico, National Council of La Raza (NC LR), and Comcast. RSFC is currently in Albuquerque high schools in course pathways with construction, film, healthcare, hospitality, and financial industry partners that include the Albuquerque Association of Builders and Contractors, Film Industry Career

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Advancement Program, Comcast and UPublic, Heritage Hotels, New Mexico Educators Federal Credit Union, New Mexico Restaurant Association, and Presbyterian Healthcare Services. Industry partners being added include traditional and alternative energy, and urban and graphic design. Work is already well underway with energy partner PNM.

All partners contribute to the program either in-kind. Many also contribute financially (see attached Source of Match). Partner roles and responsibilities are: (1) CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE - promote, coordinate, and monitor programs for compliance requirements, disburse funds, provide partial industry training groups reimbursement, and provide \$25,000 in-kind match for RSFC Executive Director and \$11,996 cash for AmeriCorps members' pay; (2) STATE OF NEW MEXICO - collaborate with program administration to ensure courses meet graduation requirements, and help identify communities and school districts to benefit from RSFC expansion; (3) ATRISCO HERITAGE FOUNDATION - provide tutoring software, CPR training, and background checks to Members as in-kind contribution and \$28,750 in cash match for the AmeriCorps Manager salary; (4) ALBUQUERQUE HISPANO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - provide scholarships for student training (in kind valued at \$5,000) and provide leadership training to Members (in kind valued at \$4,000); help build the participating employer base, recruiting industry, and promoting the program. Other partners include: (5) ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT - provide program training for principals, teachers, and counselors, receive industry applications and curriculum, review curriculum, ensure participating students have appropriate elective-course insurance coverage, provide school sites, and arrange for student transportation; (6) NEW MEXICO EDUCATORS FEDERAL CREDIT UNION - provide comprehensive financial literacy training combined with career development training to all of the project's AmeriCorps members (in-kind valued at \$6,100) and a cash match for Member pay at \$25,000); and (7) INDUSTRY PARTNERS - develop curriculum/assist with curriculum development, provide school administration with all required instructor qualifications, commit to the program, submit periodic training reports to City (with measurements), train students, bear un-reimbursed costs of training, and provide alternative training sites and access to paid employment internships both before and after graduation. Match sources and amounts are shown in the budget.

b. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY. The Mayor's Office will be responsible for all funding compliance and program quality and evaluation. The RSFC Executive Director and AmeriCorps Manager will be responsible for ensuring compliance with all AmeriCorps regulations as detailed in the RFP and providing salient information to school staff. An AmeriCorps Coordinator will assist with

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reporting, file management, and administration. The program will use a variety of techniques to ensure members are not participating in prohibited activities (as determined by CNC S). If prohibited activities are discovered, program staff will work to ensure future compliance, and an action plan developed and acted upon if a second occurrence is noted. In cases where violations occur, disciplinary procedures will be followed according to AHF's Member Handbook, provided during recruitment and orientation.

c. PAST PERFORMANCE. N/A. (For Current/Former Grantees Only)

d. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. AmeriCorps members will maintain a service roster of all participating youth, documenting all academic and non-academic elements of program completion and student success measures. Case management will be provided for 100% of students, including system navigation assistance and work supports. An AmeriCorps member mentor and an industry mentor will be assigned to 100% of students. Soft skills and career readiness training will be provided to 100% of students in the program, who will complete at least three training sessions at nonprofit partner sites and 85% of those enrolled will successfully complete five or more. Outputs will include: 1) 85% of graduates will maintain employment in industry and/or enter post-secondary education; 2) Financial literacy training - 100% of students in the program will complete financial literacy coaching - 80% of those will take part in relevant financial products and services; 3) Tutoring in basic Math/Reading proficiency - 100% of students who require assistance in meeting grade level math/reading proficiency will receive tutoring; 4) The number of students successfully graduating or attaining a GED will be measured against the baseline for each site. Program evaluation will include analysis of: 1) Successes, failures, challenges, key lessons; 2) Full participation of program partners; 3) Number of employers engaged; 4) Specific industries added during project Years Two and Three; 5) Types of skills training and hard and soft skills certificates offered/achieved; 6) Number of students participating in sector training; 7) Number of students participating in sector training who graduate high school, plan to enroll in college, or obtained employment in the field of training; 8) Ways in which industry training partnership program elements were implemented, and cultural, ethnic, racial relevance to target population; and 9) Employer's resource commitment and engagement indicators (training level, time, frequency). Quarterly, stakeholders and other interested community agencies or individuals will be invited to discuss progress, challenges, and improvement. Program staff will conduct a continuous quality improvement process at school sites on a monthly basis. To increase program impact, sites in need of improvement will be identified (student/district data, formal/informal qualitative stakeholder feedback). An improvement plan will be developed to correct

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identified deficiencies. Program data/information will be shared with the community through our website, emails, and community meetings.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

The Albuquerque Office of the Mayor is seeking a three-year grant of \$265,946 per year, for a total of \$797,838, to add 20 AmeriCorps members to the Running Start for Careers (RSFC) program. The total cost for the project annually is \$371,903 per year, for a three-year total of \$1331,091. Initial foundation support has allowed the program to gain ground quickly. By the end of the three-year grant period, the program would be self-sustaining through partner commitments to engage, train, and manage volunteers and to administer the program. We recognize additional funding sources will be required and we have the capacity to develop ongoing appropriate, sufficient funding from foundations, corporations, and individual donors.

a. COST EFFECTIVENESS: Our proposed cost per MSY is \$13,297, which is based solely on reasonable costs required to ensure we can carry out program activities and within the CNC S allowable limit of \$13,300. CNC S funds will be used to pay part of AmeriCorps member costs with the remainder being made up of cash and in-kind match from program partners. In combination with the other significant match commitments made by program partners, this MSY will allow us to meet the project goals of the project. The attached program budget includes the multiple partnerships deemed to represent the appropriately qualified organizational budget. The RSFC program budget is less than 1% of the City of Albuquerque's total current budget of \$870,614,000. To date, there has been no CNCS program support. CNCS support will allow program expansion that would otherwise not be cost-effective or feasible. CNCS support will not supplant SIG funding or disrupt other existing school funding streams, rather it will supplement them and make them more effective by bolstering them via AmeriCorps Success Coaches.

It will also result in a net cost savings for the state. New Mexico is ranked 28th in the nation for public school cost per pupil (\$10,970 in 2010, KidsCount, 2013). By leveraging existing school and community resources, RSFC is able to build on New Mexico's investment in our students in ways that increase students' success on high school assessment measures to better identify students who need placement in remedial tutoring. This combined public/private effort by its nature maximizes available resources to lower the costs of remedial education by bringing all stakeholders, including volunteers and industry partners, into workforce development and training. This is especially important as more New Mexicans than ever are returning to school or otherwise withdrawing from the labor force, especially 20-24 year olds. Joblessness for teenagers (age 16-19) has jumped by 150% since 2007 to

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"an astounding 28.7% in 2012" outpacing the statewide 6.3% reported for the general population (NM Department of Workforce Solutions [DOWS], December 2, 2013). Remedial education costs our state at all levels, in poor education now and in the millions spent on public supports and justice/rehabilitation programs later. In New Mexico, remediation costs are topping \$25 million annually (Alliance for Education, 2011). Improving high schools has become one of the strongest recommendations to solve this problem. The use of remedial training in concert with job training is exemplified by Washington's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) program (Education Commission of the States, 2010). Other successful efforts include California's Early Assessment Program and Illinois' College and Career Readiness Act, all of which involve fostering alliances across community and educational sectors (Alliance for Education, 2011). RSFC incorporates best practices that include maximization of existing resources and fostering of long-term partners to sustain the program. Remedial training programs across the U.S. range between \$1,607 and \$2,531 in total program costs per student (Strong American Schools, 2010). Other CNCS programs that include remedial reading and math tutoring range as high as \$2,094 per student for total program costs but average closer to \$1,100 per student. While some CNCS programs in New Mexico come in at just over \$300 per student for MSY (not for total program costs), these programs do not offer the comprehensive case management and workforce training available in RSFC, where per-student MSY cost is \$532, and total program cost of \$744 per student, making it 69% lower than the lowest remedial training programs total cost, indicating the true nature of RSFC's cost effectiveness (Strong American Schools, 2010).

b. BUDGET ADEQUACY: The budget is adequate to support the project and achieve stated goals. Considerable planning has gone into development of the budget to make sure that RSFC staff can carry out the program as proposed. Any unanticipated expenses will be met with unrestricted partner funds. The extraordinary level of commitment that all RSFC partners have made to the program yields a match rate of 48% of the total budget, twice the required 24%. Matching funds annually total \$177,751, of which 86% are secured and the remainder is pending a board vote. We are committed to seeking additional resources for the program and sites through cash and in-kind donations, as needed. PROJECT PERSONNEL: The AmeriCorps Manager will be provided in-kind by AHF. The AmeriCorps Coordinator is requested from CNCS. FRINGE BENEFITS: Fringe benefits on the AmeriCorps Manager's salary at a rate of 15% is provided by AHF. TRAVEL: RSFC Executive Director and AmeriCorps Manager to required Commission-Sponsored State Training Meetings, requested from CNCS; Two staff travel as required to Annual Grantee Meeting and one other CNCS training, provided

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by cash match. SUPPLIES: Tutoring software, provided in-kind by AHF. Pins, Badges, T-shirts costs for AmeriCorps members, requested from CNCS. MEMBER TRAINING: Professional development and training, requested from CNCS and provided in-kind via partners. CPR training and Leadership and team-building provided in-kind by project partners. RSFC will host two days per year in which members are involved in social leadership and team-building events with staff. CONTRACTUAL /CONTRACTS: Executive Director, Carol Biondi currently serves as Executive Director through the Mayor's Office as an independent contractor, and will be provided in-kind. Student training scholarships to consultants will be provided in-kind. OTHER: Criminal Background Checks: RSFC will perform background checks as detailed in Member Training section, which will be provided in-kind. Curriculum development to add new industries and business partners to align with State and Common Core standards will be provided with cash match. LIVING ALLOWANCE: AmeriCorps members will be provided with a living allowance of \$12,800/year (17 00 hours of service) in accordance with CNCS minimum and maximum amounts. Allowance requested from CNCS and provided via cash match. MEMBER SUPPORT COSTS: FICA is calculated at 7.65% and New Mexico Workers' compensation tax is a one-time quarterly deduction of \$2.30, regardless of the number of paychecks made per quarter. Health care is budgeted at a rate of \$125/member per month. Both are provided via cash match. ADMINISTRATIVE: Corporation fixed amount at 5% per CNCS and Commission fixed amount at 1% per CNCS, requested from CNCS.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

b. Programmatic clarification items: Please respond in the eGrants narrative field labeled "Clarification Summary":

2. Please revise your executive summary to eliminate the last three sentences, since they do not correspond to the requested executive summary template.

The City of Albuquerque's Running Start for Careers program will have 20 AmeriCorps members who

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will provide wraparound support services as "Success Coaches" in high schools throughout Albuquerque and across the state. At the end of the 1st program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for improved 9-12 grade academic success and financial literacy among participants and increased economic opportunities within the targeted community. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 200 volunteers who will help with school and community projects and may serve in special events and other capacities as appropriate. This program will focus on the CNCS focus areas of Economic Opportunity and Education. The CNCS annual investment of \$265,946 will be matched with \$177,751, of which \$36,996 is public funding and \$140,755 is private funding.

3. Please describe how members that engage in tutoring will meet minimum qualification requirements to serve as tutors and will be supervised by individuals with expertise in tutoring, as required by 45 CFR 2522.910 - .940.

AmeriCorps members will act as the RSFC tutoring team to improve math and reading proficiency among participating students. **STANDARDS:** The RSFC Executive Director will establish job description-documented expectations/qualifications for all members, including those who serve as tutors. Members and volunteers who tutor will have successfully completed at least two years of college and demonstrate literacy skills and experience working with youth and/or knowledge of young adult development and education. **TUTOR TRAINING:** Program tutors will go through extensive training at the beginning of the school year and will be provided with continuous development opportunities throughout the program. Training is described in section A (f). In addition, training for tutors will include best practices, and be derived from nationally recognized sources. Member tutors will receive intensive instruction on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and reading comprehension, which are critical components recognized by the National Reading Panel. **SUPERVISION:** All members, including those acting as tutors, will be supervised by the AmeriCorps Manager to ensure they participate in trainings and remain compliant with all CNCS and program requirements. The supervision plan will include monitoring of tutoring activities to ensure members are meeting curricular standards and assist them with any additional training that may be required. The AmeriCorps Manager will monitor all sites for high quality provision of services and will coordinate and communicate with the Executive Director through weekly in person meetings and as-needed phone conferences. Members will also be evaluated by the AmeriCorps Manager twice during

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the term to assess their levels of satisfaction, performance, and areas requiring improvement. A written evaluation will be provided to each member. The process of member selection, orientation, and training aligns with the AmeriCorps requirements for tutoring qualifications, standards and training. Tutors will use Renaissance Learning STAR, a NMPED/APS-compliant, high quality computer-based curriculum that incorporates individual management/feedback tools. AmeriCorps members may tutor under New Mexico Senate Bill 170, 2008, passed specifically to allow uncertified/unlicensed instructors to conduct instructional support so that school vocational training programs can be augmented by community efforts.

4. The application narrative indicates that the RSFC program has been running for two years prior to the submission of this application. Please describe how the role of the requested AmeriCorps members will differ from that of other staff engaged in the project, and confirm that AmeriCorps members' activities will not duplicate, supplant, or displace the role of any employees or volunteers per 45 CFR § 2540.100.

The program has been running for two years with the outreach and supervision of the Program Director and the cooperation of outside staff within each participating school and community industry instructors. There are no dedicated resources at any of the participating or target schools. The requested AmeriCorps members would help the Program Director offer reliable services. Through this infrastructure, students would be provided with a hub for program activities and schools would be able to support program strategies. There is no duplication by members in any activity that would in any way duplicate, supplant, or displace the role of any existing employees or volunteers as per 45 CFR § 2540.100. The addition of AmeriCorps members will allow the schools to prevent students who would otherwise go unserved from dropping out.

d. Strategic Engagement Slots Clarification. Please respond in the eGrants narrative field labeled "Clarification Summary".

15. 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?

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Candidates with disabilities will be encouraged to apply and we would welcome support from the NM Commission for Community Volunteerism with recruitment of people with disabilities. Additionally, for example, the AmeriCorps Manager will meet with the New Mexico Business Leadership Network, one of 65 networks across the country that aims to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, to share the opportunity with them and have them advertise this to their outreach networks. We will set aside a minimum 10% of member slots for recruiting members who have self-identified disabilities. At this juncture, we wish to decline the offer of filling additional slots with members with disabilities. We may wish to reconsider this opportunity in future years if the opportunity remains open to us.

16. In order to increase the number of individuals with disabilities serving as AmeriCorps members, CNCS is offering applicants the opportunity to request additional MSYs to be filled by AmeriCorps members with disabilities. The additional MSYs would be funded at the clarification cost per MSY level. Applicants must describe their intent to recruit, engage and retain additional members with disabilities and provide a detailed outreach plan for how these members will be recruited and supported (e.g. established recruitment partners or strategies.) In addition, programs receiving these additional member positions will be required to report specific details on the success of the recruitment, supervision and retention of AmeriCorps members with disabilities in semi-annual progress reports. If you would like to request additional MSYs to be filled by AmeriCorps members with disabilities, please describe your intent as requested above. Also indicate how many MSYs your program would like to request, the number of slots by slot type, and where the additional members will serve. Add these additional MSYs to your budget.

Not requesting additional MSYs.

e. MSY With No Program Funds Attached Clarification. Please respond in the eGrants narrative field labeled "Clarification Summary".

17. Applicants may request No-Cost MSYs. These additional no-cost MSYs are national service positions in which no grant funds will be awarded. In other words, grantees could receive additional AmeriCorps positions but no additional grant funds. Programs will be responsible for using their own

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or other resources to pay program costs, member support costs and other operating expenses. Keep in mind that full-time AmeriCorps program costs include expenditures for the AmeriCorps living allowance, health care and criminal history checks. Programs are not required to pay living allowances or cover health care for less-than-full-time members.

Not requesting additional MSYs.

If you would like to request No-Cost MSYs, please edit your budget as appropriate (for example you may need to revise line items for member gear or criminal history checks). Please ensure your performance measures align with these additional MSYs. Lastly, you must include a response to each item below in the Clarification Summary field:

- i. The number and type of slots requested. Please confirm that for the MSYs requested, the additional members will only engage in activities aligned with the proposed member activities outlined in the application narrative.
 - ii. A description of resources that will be provided to adequately support the additional members and how they are sufficient to: support the member support costs, management, oversight, program operations, and the program activities.
 - iii. Source(s) of non-CNCS funds. Provide a brief description of the amount, classification (cash or in-kind), source(s) (State/Local, Federal, Private) for all resources secured to manage, monitor, and support these additional members.
 - iv. The organization's capability and capacity to successfully implement, manage, and monitor the additional members.
- f. Healthcare Clarification Items For All Applicants (unless the grant type is professional corps, EAP, or grants without full-time members):
18. Please provide the name of the health insurance provider you are proposing to use to insure your AmeriCorps members.

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The Corps Network is the proposed option for insurance coverage for AmeriCorps members.

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

Having reviewed plan options and costs of the City's insurance provider, New Mexico Health Exchange, and Corps Network, we have settled on the Corps Network both due to price and because the Corps Network provides insurance coverage that is designed specifically to serve AmeriCorps members.

20. 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?

The proposed budget is based on estimated plan costs. Since 2015 coverage period is not yet open for the state's health insurance exchange policies and CNCS has not finalized its requirements for member plans, policy costs for our proposed members are not yet available for the project period. This means that we do not yet know if the budget will cover Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC) plans offered in New Mexico through the state's health exchange. Therefore, we will expect Corps Network to be the most cost-effective and appropriate option.

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

Unknown.

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

Corps Network, which designs and services plans specifically for AmeriCorps members, is waiting for final provisions to be released from CNCS (expected by September 1, 2014) to guide their final MEC-compliant policy options and plan costs. They are estimating between \$200 and \$220 per month, per

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member. Therefore more time is required to answer question (4).

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics