

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The American Red Cross will have 27 AmeriCorps members who will increase communities' resilience by improving the capacity of communities across Illinois to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters by acting as educators and community conveners. Members will be serving multiple communities in Illinois with host-sites in Chicago, Moline, Springfield, Champaign, Quincy, Rockford, Fairview Heights, Macomb, DeKalb and Kankakee. At the end of the 1st program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for the education of 96,000 individuals, supporting 11 community-based disaster exercises and creating the foundation for four community resiliency networks. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 270 volunteers that will be engaged in peer to peer youth safety presentations, intergenerational community projects, bilingual education, fire prevention activities, parent programs and emergency planning for individuals with intellectual and development disabilities. This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Disaster Services. The CNCS investment of \$ 332,085 will be matched with \$332,086 in private funding.

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

### PROBLEM/NEED

A Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) study shows that for each dollar spent on mitigation an average of four dollars is saved. In fulfilling the Red Cross mission, the priority of our Safe Families Illinois AmeriCorps program is to increase community preparedness, building competence around responding to disaster and create social capital to help rebound from individual and community disasters.

The need for individual and community disaster preparedness continues to grow. From 2009 to 2011, the number of FEMA declared emergencies grew by 59%. The human scale of these disasters is no less serious: between 2001 and 21012 nearly 21 million people in the U.S were affected by disasters. That is nearly five times more than in the previous decade. The Red cross, is faced with the dual challenge of not only responding to disasters as they arise, but also in positioning ourselves as a primary resources to prepare communities for the disasters they may face in the future. The American Red Cross led 1,537 disaster response operations, of various scales, and 2,860 families were served in Illinois from July 1st, 2012 -- June 30th, 2013.

According to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, since 1981, 99 of Illinois' 102 counties have been declared Presidential disaster areas. Illinois communities prone to a series of community and individual disasters including but not limited to: floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, residential fires

## Narratives

and extreme weather. In Illinois, more than 60,000 Illinois people and households received financial assistance to replace or repair home and personal items damaged by floods in April 2012. In 2010, tornadoes in Illinois resulted in 45 fatalities, 699 injuries, and \$1.107 million in property damage. Also, Illinois sits on the New Madrid Fault System and the Wabash Valley Fault System, making Illinois communities vulnerable to many earthquakes. Recently, On Nov. 17, a severe storm system spawned scores of tornadoes that carved destructive paths across the Midwest.

AmeriCorps members will address the gap in trained lay responders, in the community responding to health and safety emergencies. In Illinois, more than 1 out of 4 deaths are due to heart disease, according to the National Vital Statistics Report, 2010. The American Heart Association reports that about 75 percent to 80 percent of all sudden cardiac arrests happen at home, and approximately 94 percent of sudden cardiac arrest victims die before reaching the hospital. They also state that effective bystander cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), provided immediately after sudden cardiac arrest, can triple a victim's chance of survival. This means that being trained to perform CPR can mean the difference between life and death for a loved one. The National Center for Disaster Preparedness also reports that Americans with annual household incomes below \$25,000 are less likely to have had CPR/First Aid training.

Youth in our community's possess a set of unique characteristics that requires special attention and makes them more susceptible to disasters. FEMA commissioned a review, "Bringing Youth Preparedness Education to the Forefront: A Literature Review and Recommendations," citing Lori Peek who outlines additional three types of vulnerability that children face in a disaster: "psychological vulnerability, physical vulnerability and educational vulnerability."

Residential fires and drowning are among the most serious risks for our nation's children. According to Centers for Disease Control and Safe Kids USA, drowning is the second leading cause of injury-related death among children ages one to fourteen and the leading cause of injury related death among children ages one to four

The U.S. Fire Administration reports that children are responsible for starting over 35,000 fires annually and make up 15 -- 20 percent of all fire deaths.

The Safe Families IL AmeriCorps program will target four Illinois regions comprised of communities identified with a high incidence of individual disasters, previous large-scale emergencies or those communities, urban and rural, at-risk for natural and manmade disasters. The regions include: The Red Cross Midwest River Region serves 1,447,153 people with 11.2% of the population under the poverty line, with members based in the following cities: Moline, Rockford, Freeport and

## Narratives

Galesburg. The Greater Chicago Region serves 8,605,559 people with members based in the following cities: Chicago, Kankakee, Romeoville and DeKalb. The Central Illinois Region serves 1,440,964 people with AmeriCorps members based in the following cities: Springfield, Quincy, Decatur, Champaign and Peoria. The St. Louis region serves 6,013,066 people with members based in Fairview Heights, IL.

### EVIDENCE BASE AND MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT

Resilience is defined by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction as, "The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions". The Safe Families AmeriCorps program is designed to engage communities throughout Illinois around evidence based practices that build the knowledge, skills, actions and networks that contribute to an increase in community resiliency.

There are a variety of models used to engage youth, adults and organizations in emergency preparedness, the Safe Families Program uses a Community Engagement Strategy, is built within a community of practice through the American Red Cross. A similar model, The Los Angeles County Community Disaster Resilience Project (LACCCR), created a baseline through survey findings that identified social preparedness and partnership development as high priority areas in building resilience. The study published in the American Journal of Public Health (July 2013, Vol 103, No 7) notes, "This baseline assessment represents an important first step toward understanding community resilience challenges in a large county..." Throughout pre-identified communities in Illinois AmeriCorps members will contribute and lead similar activities to those identified by the LACCCR in social preparedness and partnership development.

American Red Cross Chapters outside Illinois have piloted the same Community Engagement Strategy as proposed in Biloxi, MS; Denver, CO and other statewide locations; Bassfield and Prentiss, MS; Homestead, FL; and San Francisco Bay, CA. Informed by the lessons of each pilot project, the Safe Families program was refined to address the needs and hazards relevant to Illinois residents leading to a program focused around fire, flooding and health/ accident related emergencies. Our program takes these most likely hazards and through education, awareness, relationship and capacity building provides comprehensive courses, certifications, and collaborative networking to specific vulnerable populations. During the first year of using the Community Engagement Strategy, the San Francisco Bay Area Red Cross achieved significant disaster preparedness in target communities and created sustainable networks of resilience among community stakeholders. The chapter developed

## Narratives

processes for engaging community residents and organizations, began building a corps of culturally competent volunteers, and developed partnerships with key community organizations and stakeholders.

The Safe Families IL AmeriCorps program is supported by two divisions within the American Red Cross network: Preparedness Health and Safety Services and Community Preparedness and Resiliency Services. Both develop and update participant and instructor curricula to reflect current research findings in health, safety, and disaster education on an ongoing basis. The Scientific Advisory Council also guides the Red Cross on emergency treatments and practices that align with the latest evidence-based scientific and medical knowledge.

### MEMBER TRAINING

Safe Families IL AmeriCorps members participate in a training program designed to engage communities in a variety of activities aimed at building community resiliency. In addition the training protocol aims to prepare members of all ages to continue their development as citizens and champions of preparedness.

Throughout their term of service AmeriCorps members will attend a variety of mandatory in-person team training, site-specific training, partner-offered training and web-facilitated training. SEPTEMBER: Red Cross Instructor Classes; Overview of AmeriCorps and Red Cross; Volunteer Recruitment Training; Course and Program Marketing; Prohibited Activities; Sexual Harassment Awareness; Customer Service Training; Service Project Planning; OCTOBER: Advanced fire prevention training; Diversity training; NOVEMBER: Volunteer management and recruitment training DECEMBER: Community Convening Training; JANUARY: Citizenship training; Elements of effective programs; FEBRUARY: Flood prevention training; MARCH: Leadership vs. Management Training

APRIL: Life after AmeriCorps; Citizenship Training; MAY: Lifelong Service and Leadership; JUNE: Evaluating Community Networks JULY: Reflection Activities; Citizenship Follow-up;

Beginning with member orientation at the start of each term of service, the prohibited activities will be reviewed verbally with each member by the program director. Every member contract will also include an section where members will initial that the review and understand each prohibited activity.

Member supervisors will also be trained to review the prohibited activities and scenarios that may arise around the subject. Members also organize service projects that utilize community volunteers, when organizing service projects (those with or without volunteers) members are required to submit a form to the Program Director outlining the activities of the member and any volunteers with specific

## **Narratives**

reference to the prohibited activities. In the case of revisions to the prohibited activities, communication will be distributed in a special call to supervisors and members, updates to member contract and in an email to all program staff, AmeriCorps members and volunteers.

### **MEMBER SUPERVISION**

Day to day supervision for the members will be provided by host-site supervisors at local American Red Cross offices. The majority of site supervisors serve in the Disaster Program Manager role, overseeing preparedness, response and recovery functions within the Disaster Cycle Services division at the Red Cross.

Site supervisors meet with the Program Director prior to the beginning of the program year to be trained and updated on program policies and restrictions. They will also meet once during the year for program updates and strategy sessions and participate in monthly conference calls. All supervisors go through a day and a half of AmeriCorps program and management training that includes the following topics: Prohibited Activities training, National Service Overview, Financial Well-being of AmeriCorps members, using the OnCorps reporting system, AmeriCorps recruitment and National Performance Measures in Disaster Services.

Supervisors are expected to meet regularly with their members and communicate any concerns or challenges to the Program Director. If issues cannot be resolved at that level, site supervisors take their concerns to the Program Director's immediate supervisor then to at the Chief Operating Officer of the Greater Chicago Chapter. Ongoing support by the Program Director will be provided through quarterly trainings, monthly phone calls, topic specific conference calls, webinars, and individual in-person assistance as necessary. Formal reviews of member performance are included in the member personnel files and occur mid-year and end of-year review. An informal evaluation occurs after the third month of service to check-in with members and introduce them to the evaluation process. The Program Director also visits each chapter site once a year.

### **COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION**

Members begin their term service with an orientation that defines their critical role within the American Red Cross as AmeriCorps members. The value that the organization places on their service is emphasized in the on-boarding process and throughout each day of service.

Member apparel is important to the identification of AmeriCorps inside and outside of the American Red Cross. Members are provided, all with the AmeriCorps logo: name badges, business cards, short and long-sleeve shirts, hooded sweatshirts, collared shirts and program materials/handouts. While members are serving in the community they are required to at a

## **Narratives**

minimum be wearing an AmeriCorps pin visible and are provided enough apparel to wear in a variety of situations in the community. AmeriCorps program staff are also required to wear AmeriCorps logoed apparel when in the community evaluating members. On the mid-year and end-of-year evaluation documents, there is a field to evaluate members on wearing the logo daily.

The American Red Cross across Illinois is committed to identifying AmeriCorps and national service by applying AmeriCorps logo window clings to Red Cross vehicles, promoting AmeriCorps through social media, especially during AmeriCorps Week and to installing AmeriCorps signage in Red Cross facilities.

To prepare members to speak in the community about their AmeriCorps experience the American Red Cross utilizes three basic strategies. First, during member orientation a history of national service is presented to each member with members required to pass a verbal assessment on its content. Second, each member develops a 30 and 90 second elevator speech describing AmeriCorps and specifically the service provided by the Safe Families AmeriCorps program. Third, each member works with trained Red Cross communicators based across Illinois on engaging members of community in dialogue around community disaster preparedness. Safe Families IL AmeriCorps members also offer a stand-alone presentation on National Service throughout the term of service.

### **Organizational Capability**

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY**

For more than 130 years, the mission of the American Red Cross has remained constant: to help people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. The Red Cross has a unique role as the only non-governmental partner directed by Congress to respond to disasters. The American Red Cross is among the premiere health and safety education organizations in the world.

The American Red Cross of Greater Chicago, which is the primary site for the Safe Families AmeriCorps Program, was chartered in 1915. The Chapter, in cooperation with all chapters across the state of Illinois throughout its history, has provided the staff and resources to recruit, train, place, and supervise over 415 State AmeriCorps members since the inception of the program in 1994. Approximately 175 staff and 6,383 core volunteers work together year round to raise awareness of core programs and deliver services.

The Chief Executive Officers of each Red Cross chapter in Illinois support the Safe Families program by authorizing the cash match from each Red Cross host site that complements Corporation for National Service grant funds. The Safe Families program is housed in the Disaster Cycle Service department within each regional Red Cross organization led by the Program Director, based in the

## **Narratives**

Greater Chicago region. The Program Director is supervised by the Manager, Individual and Community Preparedness and Resilience and has the support of each Regional Disaster Program Officer, who serves in a role similar to Chief Operating Officer.

Guillermo Becerra serves as Field Finance Director, in this position he heads one of the finance Centers of Expertise and is responsible for all business, planning and financial operations for Red Cross Chapters across the Midwest region. The American Red Cross of Greater Chicago is required by the national organization to conduct annual assessments of its services and programs. Staff members are reviewed annually on performance measures and behavioral accountabilities.

The American Red Cross has established financial management guidelines that are followed by the Safe Families program. In the most recent Illinois Department of Human Service financial audit of the AmeriCorps program, the Program successful presented all requested information and were presented with no findings. The Program Director has the support of the Center of Expertise to assist with budgeting, accounting and grant stewardship. The Program Director facilitates any technical assistance on financial management or program oversight that is requested by sites.

For the past eighteen years, the Safe Families AmeriCorps program has trained underserved Illinois communities in health, safety, and disaster preparedness education. Throughout this time, the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago has demonstrated its sound planning and management ability of the AmeriCorps program. The Greater Chicago Region has an operating budget of approximately \$7.3 million. The chapter has served as the fiduciary organization for the Red Cross AmeriCorps program for the past eighteen years. In the coming grant cycle the Chicago Red Cross will continue the responsibility for recruitment, payroll, personnel files, grant reporting and evaluation, and communication with the Corporation for National and Community Service.

### **COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Safe Families AmeriCorps program administered by the American Red Cross in Illinois has a long history of compliance with rules and regulations established by AmeriCorps and the Serve Illinois Commission. The American Red Cross in Illinois has demonstrated an understanding of prohibited activities within the AmeriCorps program and has effectively enforced these rules and regulations at service site locations throughout the history of our participation in the program. The American Red Cross in Illinois will continue to prevent and detect compliance issues through a structured reporting system, scheduled consistent meetings and thorough training of Corps Members and supervisory staff. The Red Cross will also provide accountability for any instances of risk and/or provide consequences

## **Narratives**

for members deemed in noncompliance of the highest standards established by AmeriCorps and the Serve Illinois Commission.

All service sites will have open and regular communication with the Program Director via e-mail, telephone, supervisory meetings and bi-annual site visits to their chapter. The Program Director will actively review and approve timesheets, set outreach objectives for the members and review the Great Stories submitted by the members. While reviewing the service report, the Program Director can determine if personal or professional issues arise for a given member. The Program Director will then initiate discussion with the site supervisor and member as appropriate. If necessary, the Program Director will use American Red Cross HR tools, such as the Work Improvement Plan, to provide guidance and repercussion to the AmeriCorps member in non-compliance.

The Program Director will coordinate and oversee FBI fingerprint based background checks required under AmeriCorps grant guidelines. The American Red Cross has previous successful experience with this process. Member candidates are screened against the National Sex Offender registry before an interview in addition to checking references. American Red Cross will initiate a State Criminal History check for multiple states, if necessary, a FBI fingerprint-based background check, and Illinois Department of Child and Family Services check.

The American Red Cross in Illinois is committed to abide by the limitations on activities that AmeriCorps Members can support and participate in. The American Red Cross in Illinois has a long history of compliance in this regard and will educate its Members regarding prohibited activities that Members may not engage in while earning service hours, or when otherwise representing AmeriCorps. In addition, the American Red Cross in Illinois understands that AmeriCorps members are individuals who may exercise their rights as private citizens and participate in or pursue religious or political activities on their own initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-AmeriCorps funds provided the AmeriCorps logo is not worn while doing so.

Site Supervisors will meet with the Program Directors at the beginning of the program year to be trained and updated on AmeriCorps and Serve Illinois Commission program policies and restrictions. In addition, at least once during the program year, the Site Supervisors will meet with the Program Director for program updates and strategy sessions while also participating in regular monthly conference calls.

### **PAST PERFORMANCE**

During the past three years of program operations the Safe Families IL AmeriCorps program has

## Narratives

worked to build volunteer capacity, increase community disaster preparedness, mitigate residential fire damage and educate youth in safety programs.

For the 2010-2011 program year the Safe Families program was successful in reaching many objectives to address community readiness, member development and volunteer capacity. Two of three community readiness objectives were met: 90 percent of surveyed participants reported that they felt confident in their ability to identify and respond to emergencies, and 80 percent of participants in Babysitter Training and First Aid/CPR obtained certification. The final outcome to measure an increase in overall preparedness was not able to be calculated for the specific identified communities. Across IL, 69 percent of participants reported that the following statement describes them or describes them completely, "Respondent feels prepared to face unexpected disasters at home, work and neighborhood." All member development objectives were accomplished: 90% of AmeriCorps members reported confidence in leadership, a commitment to volunteerism and knowledge of new skills; and 70% of the members reported that they will return to school, accept employment in an economically distressed community and/or remain an active Red Cross volunteer.

For the 2011-2012 Program year the Safe Families program was successful in addressing metrics in the disaster service focus area, volunteer capacity building, creating community partnerships and member development. Our disaster preparedness, mitigation and youth programs served over 80,000 individuals across Illinois. 269 volunteers were recruited and completed 36 service projects; exceeding goals for both measures (200 volunteers and 12 service projects). 210 partnerships, primarily schools were developed achieving a goal of 200 new partnerships.

For the 2012-2013 program year the Safe Families program shifted to utilizing Corporation for National and Community Service, national performance measures specifically addressing disaster services areas. Members focused on community disaster preparedness for specific communities across Illinois, targeted programs for parents and other at-risk community groups and fire mitigation programming. With a goal set at 60,000 individuals, members reached over 65,827 individuals with disaster preparedness information; 100 percent of those surveyed reported an increase in knowledge around at least two emergency preparedness skills (planning, building a kit, making a plan, etc). 12,068 individuals and households received information and fire prevention tools as part of fire prevention and mitigation training, the target being at least 10,000 individuals and families.

## ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

The Safe Families program has averaged a 100 percent enrollment rate for the past three grant

## Narratives

years, 2011-2013. For the 2011 program year, all 17 member slots were filled including two half time slots when a member left the program early in their term. In the 2012 program year, all 15 member slots were filled and in the 2013 program year, all 12 slots initially awarded were filled. In the 2013 program year the American Red Cross was also awarded four additional members slots which will be filled before the end of the 2013 calendar year.

The Safe Families program has averaged an 84 percent retention rate for AmeriCorps members in the past three years, grant years 2010, 2011, 2012 with 43 of 51 members exiting with an award. For the last full program year in 2012, 12 of 15 members completed their term of service and received education award resulting in an 80 percent retention rate. Two members were not able to complete 1700 hours due to personal circumstances not under our control and the other member left late in the term to pursue a permanent position at another organization. The American Red Cross continues to improve our recruitment process and add more training and recognition for our members. We believe that our retention rate will continue to be high as all of the Safe Families program activities aim to ensure the highest quality of training, strong supervision and administrative support so that each member is guaranteed a rewarding experience.

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Across each host site and each community, AmeriCorps Member's feedback is gathered both formally and informally. Internally there are two methods where feedback is generated for the members; peer and volunteer feedback and formal evaluation. Members and volunteers are trained to provide feedback whenever they lead programming together in the community that feedback is documented quarterly for each member. Formal evaluations occur three times during the course of the term of service, at the three-month mark or about 425 hours an review of member goals and community assessment(s) is completed; at six months or 850 hours a mid-year evaluation occurs reviewing member performance; between 1600 -- 1700 hours completed members are evaluated on their entire term of service and asked to also complete a comprehensive program evaluation. For the overall program, quarterly reports are submitted to statewide leadership including Chapter executives and Chief Operating Officers. Changes are implemented based on the recommendation of leadership.

On a ongoing basis, through the Community and Partnership Survey System, the American Red Cross in Illinois surveys external partners and community members on service quality and effectiveness indicators. These surveys are the core method for analyzing the Safe Families Program's impact in the community. This data is then used to make modifications to communities served,

## Narratives

programs offered and member performance.

### **Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy**

The funding for the Safe Families program was significantly less in 2013 than in previous years and the American Red Cross committed to supporting a much higher percentage of the program to make sure that communities were not without AmeriCorps-led programming. We are requesting funds to support more members in a more complex model aimed at serving not just youth but the whole community. The proposed cost per MSY is \$12,298.

In the proposed model there are two primary activities members lead: to provide disaster preparedness information to vulnerable communities and to support individuals and organizations in short-term recovery activities. With a requested amount of funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service at \$329,809 and an equivalent match, a total program budget of \$660,000 supports a program reach of over 95,000 individuals in Illinois. The cost per each individual reached is just under seven dollars. Traditional Red Cross programming in fire prevention, CPR and First Aid averages over \$80 per individual or household. With such a low cost per individual reached we are able to serve more people, in more communities, than in previous program years.

The American Red Cross has contracted with Asurint, a leader in background check screening processes, to help with background checks and keep the costs low. Member living allowance is budgeted at \$12,500 per term of service which is \$400 above the minimum required and health care is also budgeted for each member.

### **BUDGET ADEQUACY**

Each fiscal year, the Red Cross Resource Development department actively cultivates relationships that sponsor our AmeriCorps programming. We work with corporate partners, such as ITW and Motorola to secure \$50,000 donations. We annually receive over a million dollars from the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago; 40% of that allocation is targeted for our prevention and mitigation programs. Additionally, The Red Cross submits grant applications to approximately ten to fifteen 10-15 foundations seeking support for these specific programs. Applications and deadlines vary per foundation as well as the amounts requested and received.

Beyond direct monetary donations, we also receive in-kind support of materials. Annually, First Alert and Ace Hardware supply the fire extinguishers and smoke detectors for our fire prevention programs. Donations of materials are budget relieving for our organizations in that we can provide the services and materials to the community without incurring additional costs. We actively seek in-kind as well as pro-bono support to minimize program expenditures.

## Narratives

Current requests include: Fred J. Brunner Foundation: ask for \$15,000; Blum Fund, Nathan and Emily S., ask for \$10,000; Berner Charitable and Scholarship Foundation: Asked for \$5000, received \$2000; Blum-Kovler Foundation: Asked for \$5000, received \$2000  
Children's Care Foundation: Asked for \$25,000; Aileen S. Andrew Foundation: Received \$5000;  
Scholl Foundation, Dr.: Asked for \$30,000; received \$15,000; Speh Foundation, Albert J. & Claire R.: Asked for \$10,000;

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

AmeriCorps members will implement the following program offerings: FIRST AID FOR LITTLE PEOPLE, teaches children basic First Aid and safety skills; The PILLOWCASE PROJECT targets third graders teaching them to use their knowledge to act as advocates for emergency preparedness; KID FIRESTOPPER provides fire safety education for students; SCRUBBY BEAR teaches ways to prevent the spread of germs and diseases; WHALE Tales focuses on basic water safety; HOME ALONE starts the discussion about emergency actions; MASTERS OF DISASTER cover a variety of hazards through eighth grade; HANDS ONLY CPR, CPR and FIRST AID teach participants to recognize and respond to emergencies; COMMUNITY SAFETY DAYS programming reach vulnerable populations with advanced disaster preparedness and response skills; PREPAREDNESS SKILL BUILDING courses teaching basic emergency preparedness skills; HAZARD SPECIFIC training focuses on individual disasters and specific skills to lessen the impact of each; FIRE PREVENTION WORKSHOPS provide residential fire prevention steps and materials.

Based on a community engagement strategy AmeriCorps will perform activities in disaster preparedness and response, primarily short-term recovery. Through the training of youth, at-risk community members, the creation of emergency plan and hazard specific presentations communities will have better access to community preparedness information and an increased amount of knowledge. Individuals will gain the ability to problem solve, form partnerships and take action to address emergencies. In partnership with organizations, especially schools, short and medium-term outcomes will expand to create cooperation among community segments, citizen participation and a sense of community that build social capital. In turn, increased social capital helps communities become more resilient to everyday and once in a lifetime disasters.

AmeriCorps members will provide disaster preparedness training to 85,000 individuals, divided among: 51,000 youth, 6,000 at-risk community members, 1,000 emergency plans created, 27,000 participants attending hazard specific training. Members will also support 11,770 individuals and 39 organizations by: training 11,500 people in CPR and First Aid, training 270 community volunteers

## Narratives

partnering with 25 organizations on preparedness initiatives, creating four community networks around disaster preparedness; distributing short-term recovery tools with individuals post disaster.

The Safe Families Program is a state program that receives less than \$500,000 in federal funds. An evaluation will be overseen by the Manager, Individual & Community Preparedness & Resilience and conducted by Regional Planning, Readiness and Situational Awareness Program Manager at the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago. During year one, we will review our data collection tools and reporting procedures. We will determine if we need to utilize alternate collection tools that will be used by our members and community partners.

At the beginning of the year two we will collect data utilizing the reporting tools and procedures suggested by the evaluation team from year one. During year three, data analysis will be conducted and findings and recommendations for the final report will be completed by the evaluation team, authored by Regional Planning Program Manager. These findings and recommendations will then be implemented in the next grant program cycle. We will use the evaluation plan to determine whether targets are realistic to assess our program outputs and outcomes, to confirm we are working in the correct communities, and to ensure we are offering the correct programs. The evaluation findings will allow program staff to confirm necessity and applicability of programming and allow for any retooling needed to ensure maximum return on the investment made to the community. The ultimate goal of the program is for members to be in the communities that need them the most, providing the most up to date and location specific preparedness and resiliency programming necessary to reduce the impact and recovery time for these vulnerable populations.

Data is collected in a variety of formats which vary based on the program and type of data being collected. Programs targeting youth K- 5th grade utilize a five question pre and post test administered verbally in younger grades and via a paper survey for 3rd, 4th and 5th grades. The American Red Cross also utilizes a Customer and Partnership Survey System (CAPSS) that allows for the collection of survey data for participants in any course. Each survey is performed independently by the participant based on the course taken and accessed by online portal or paper copy. Data can be viewed on a state, region, Red Cross office or community level.

Corps Members also utilize a CAPSS survey specifically designed for the classroom teachers and partner organizations to provide input. It asks the partner agency/ educator to rate the preparedness educational programming as well as the ability of the organization to provide dynamic programming to meet the emerging needs of the community. It also allows for them to make suggestions about the content and the facilitators work. The partner survey will also be utilized to ask partners if

## Narratives

'Collaboration with chapter gives partner's agency access to specialized resources and/or expertise' and 'Chapter helps partner develop an understanding of how to work together'. If partners feel that Corps Members have provided access to specialized resources surrounding preparedness, it demonstrates the need for preparedness education and the unique capability our Corps Members have to provide such resources.

In the Community Safety Day program, participants are surveyed before and after the class, allowing us to measure whether or not the program was effective in getting participants to learn the material. In the fire specific programming, we go a step further to measure a change in behavior of the participants. Approximately 30 days after the educational program and fire safety equipment is provided to participants, we follow up and contact them to see if they acted on any of the several action items they were given during the educational programming. The action items include making and practicing an escape plan, installing and checking smoke alarms, assessing their own homes to identify potential fire hazards and making a disaster kit.

For capacity building initiatives we use a different set of tools to collect data. When working with community non-profit organizations and schools we use our Ready Rating assessment tool, which evaluates on a 123 point scale and is self-directed by the partner. This tool can be accessed 24/7 and can be retaken any number of times; Red Cross guidance is to take the assessment every year.

Participant data is also entered into a national learning management system (SABA) by each AmeriCorps member. This system tracks the success of community members in any Red Cross course with individual participant data entered for any class offering a certificate. Through this data we can view what percentage of students are successfully completing CPR and First Aid course and are prepared to respond in an emergency.

Results from both participant and partner surveys will inform changes that need to be made in content delivery as well as methods of communication, outreach and support for our partners. CAPSS surveys are now live, so results can be tallied at any time to evaluate the effectiveness of AmeriCorps Members. The Red Cross is a nimble organization and there are many preparedness program models utilized around the country we have access to should we discover the participants are not learning the content of our programs satisfactorily.

### **Amendment Justification**

N/A.

### **Clarification Summary**

## Narratives

\*CNCS | As of 3/18/14, the EPL data for American Red Cross - Chicago (DUNS #068477868) was not available. No award will be made unless the applicant can provide documentation of eligibility.

RESPONSE | DUNS has been updated and we are working to align the EIN currently in the EGrants system with the correct DUNS number. Correct EIN number: 53-0196605 and DUNS: 003255213.

\*CNCS | Please describe why the budget lists costs for 12 host site supervisors when members will be placed at 10 sites.

RESPONSE | Members will serve in two different reporting structures with the American Red Cross Disaster Cycles Services department supporting the activities listed in the performance measures. In three sites (Chicago, Moline and Central Illinois) there will be members serving alongside each other but reporting to different supervisors.

\*Please make the following changes in the Performance Measures screens in eGrants:\*

RESPONSE | A summary of changes made to performance measures is listed below:

Performance Measure D1: Updated to reflect the way individuals are counted. New outcome created to reflect a larger percentage of individuals experiencing change.

OUTCM6061: Removed

OUTCM6059: Outcome and measure revised. Outcome updated to reflect both a pre-post-test model and the completion of emergency plans by participants. Added language about level of knowledge gain.

OUTCM6060: Outcome and measure revised. Outcome clarified to define implementation of survey and hazard-specific information given during intervention and the inclusion of that information in the survey model.

OUTCM6059 and OUTCM6060: Targets are not duplicative and targets do not overlap. OUTCM6059

## Narratives

uses local Red Cross Community Safety Days evaluations composed of 10 questions in pre and post survey. OUTCM6060 uses national CAPSS survey composed of 16 questions. Attendance sheets and the American Red Cross Learning Management also distinguish individual learners for each class, presentation or service provided.

OUTCM8644: Created. Additional information added about youth survey for 3rd-5th grades and clarification around questions asked.

Performance Measure D2: Updated intervention to reflect the short-term recovery actions listed in the definition of response D2 measure.

OUTCM6062: Removed.

OUTCM6063: Removed.

OUTCM6064: Removed.

Create a new outcome for Performance Measure D2: New outcomes and measures created.

OUTCM8635: Created. Measure and instrument updated to reflect appropriate performance measure classification as D2. Emphasis the critical aspect of supporting disaster-impacted individuals in making the right decisions and using the correct tools to support quicker recovery.

OUTCM8645: Created and then removed.

For all measures: Please confirm that the target for each measure is an unduplicated count of individuals:

RESPONSE | Targets are not duplicative and targets do not overlap. Outcome is measured through phone survey only used in site and home-based training. Attendance sheets and the American Red Cross Learning Management also distinguish individual learners and households. Disaster operations situation reports also prevent the duplication of targets in reporting.

## Narratives

\*Strategic Engagement slots Clarification\*

CNCS | What percentage of your slots will be targeted to recruiting members with disabilities? What is your programs plan, if any, for outreach and recruitment of members of the disability community?

RESPONSE | We are aiming to have one MSY filled through targeted recruitment to members with disabilities, this is included in the request for 27 MSYs. The Safe Families IL Program currently recruits members through a variety of methods aimed at reaching all members of the community who may or may not be aware of AmeriCorps State/National or other national service offerings. Our specific outreach plan to recruit members with disabilities focuses on existing partnerships with Centers for Independent Living, municipal offices for people with disabilities, public health departments and organizations working with individuals transitioning to independent living. Partners are currently aware of our program and AmeriCorps and we will provide AmeriCorps presentations, job descriptions, timeline and other recruitment materials in a variety of formats and translate materials into any requested format not currently offered. In person meetings occur with partner-organization staff and interview session are hosted at partner agencies when requested.

CNCS | 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.

RESPONSE | We are not requesting additional MSYs and will continue to recruit individuals with

## Narratives

disabilities to serve as AmeriCorps members in our program through our outreach and recruitment plan.

\*MSY with no program funds attached clarification\*

RESPONSE | N/A

\*Healthcare clarification items for all applicants\*

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

RESPONSE | We are planning to use a three-option system for members. This involves using the BCS Insurance Company and their AmeriCorps Benefits plan, Medicaid (IL expanded Medicaid with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act) and also plans through the Health Insurance Marketplace.

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

RESPONSE | We selected our providers based on the best options for our members with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

CNCS | 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 | Yes.

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

RESPONSE | None.

## Narratives

CNCS | 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.

RESPONSE | N/A.

### Continuation Changes

N/A.

### Grant Characteristics