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Executive Summary

The Belleville AmeriCorps program will have 18 members serving as tutors in 13 Belleville schools, 5 members serving as volunteer coordinators with 3 local neighborhood associations and within the community development department at the city, and 40 members serving as summer camp counselors in the 3 identified neighborhood associations. At the end of the first year, the AmeriCorps members will tutor 695 students and improve academic achievement in 565 students. While increasing the capacity of 3 neighborhood associations and maintaining a web based asset sharing software program, the members will also leverage an additional 2000 volunteers. The volunteers will serve as after school enrichment teachers, tutors, and in various capacities in support of neighborhood revitalization efforts.

The program target the CNCS focus area of Education. The CNCS investment of \$401,089 will be matched with \$377,921 local funding and \$ 55,480 private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

a. Problem/Need

According to research done by Sean Reardon in "The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor: New Evidence and Possible Explanations" (2011), as the income gap between families widens so does the achievement gap in education. Children from low-income families struggle to keep up with peers from more advantaged families. In fact, Reardon's research shows that the income achievement gap is twice as large as the black-white achievement gap which was once almost two times the income achievement gap 50 years ago. As is evident in national data, school report card data collected from the Illinois State Board of Education indicate that gap also exists in Belleville. Local data from the 2013 Belleville school district reports cards indicate that students who participate in the free and reduced lunch program are 3-4 times more likely to lag behind in reading and math scores on the Illinois State Achievement tests.

Adding to that alarming statistic, poverty rates for families in the community of Belleville, Illinois in St. Clair County steadily increase every year, according to the most recent U.S Census and school report card data collected by the state board of education. The poverty level for the county is 14.2%, but data from Belleville School Districts #118 and #175 indicate that rates for their students are 3-6 times greater. In fact, the majority of the schools have rates above 50% and up to 81%, with most rates higher than last year. An article from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch indicates that Belleville, with one-third of its housing consisting of affordable rental properties, is attracting families from nearby

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communities in desperate poverty, up to 100%. (US Census, 2010) The neighboring town of East St. Louis, Illinois is shrinking in part because of failing schools and a violent crime rate that is 4 times the national rate. (City-data.com, 2013) The US Census Bureau illustrates a decrease of 14% in the population of neighboring East St. Louis and an increase in that same demographic in Belleville at the same rate.

Belleville School District #118 and #175 superintendents remark that the schools manage increasing rates of homelessness (6.2% district average), parent unemployment (9.2% St. Clair County), and lack of basic skills for students entering kindergarten. In addition, the school districts are facing a mobility rate of 18.5-23%, much higher than the state average of 12.8%.

As evidenced by evaluation data from the Belleville AmeriCorps program, years of successful academic interventions by members progressively improve academic achievement. However, the increasing rates of poverty and need in the schools have spurred community, school, and neighborhood leaders to seek additional supports to combat the issues brought about by poverty. Leaders remark that additional community engagement is necessary to support the families to eliminate the achievement gap.

b. AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems Evidence Base and Measurable Community Impact

To ultimately achieve end outcomes (bridging the achievement gap) in the face of the great need in Belleville, community members, government and school leaders attempt to understand the issues and how best to address them. Through the structure of the AmeriCorps partnership, stakeholders adopted a multi-pronged, research-based approach to address the achievement gap. As seen in the attached logic model, the Belleville AmeriCorps program utilizes several interventions to address the gaps in academic achievement for low income children while also achieving other desirable long term goals like bridging gaps in service, encouraging civic engagement, and cultivating community leadership. Lisbeth Schorr, author of *Common Purpose: Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to Rebuild America*, Senior Fellow of the Center for the Study of Social Policy, and nationally recognized expert on what works to serve disadvantaged children writes that no single strand of intervention can work to produce significant results for populations in high risk. She asserts that successful community initiatives combine action in several realms, rely on community resources and strengths as the foundation, and draw extensively on outside resources to bring influence, experience, and necessary funding. Belleville leaders have adopted Schorr's approach by leveraging multiple community assets, developing systems to cultivate community leaders, embarking upon a comprehensive planning

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process, and working together to identify and address issues facing the community. Belleville AmeriCorps members play a large part in helping to build capacity while continuing to provide necessary, research based academic interventions with a proven record of success.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT/ AFTER SCHOOL/SUMMER PROGRAMS

Belleville is poised, with the support of AmeriCorps funding and a culture of collaboration, to foster a fundamental transformation of its poor neighborhoods, the circumstances, and opportunities of the families who live there. External factors that spurred on this approach are momentum from faith based organizations, neighborhood leaders, city government, and school administrators to support the growing needs of families in the community. Studied by the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in 2011, Belleville boasts an evidence-based best practice for supporting community development. Community leaders borrowed a structure from St. Petersburg, Florida (I CAN! - Involved Citizens Active in Neighborhoods) to help with community connectedness and empowerment/leadership development of community members. Broken into zones and neighborhood groups, each group has a leader who, in turn, has funding and a place at the table where decisions are made. Belleville AmeriCorps proposes to provide a member to help facilitate training, effective volunteer management practices, leadership development, and community connectedness for this structure. Another part-time member will maintain a web based SignUp Genius site to connect community needs and community assets. This intervention assumes that each neighborhood has different needs and assets; each neighborhood could benefit from service, leadership development, and asset based development; and most of the assets needed to improve the community exist within the community but need to be cultivated. The two Belleville AmeriCorps members will allow for a centralized place to mobilize assets and ensure effective volunteer management. These members will follow the Cities of Service model, utilizing those assets and resources to help guide service as a base for community development.

Research cites that failing to engage parents and the community dramatically lowers the prospect of increasing the number of students going to college or being prepared for a 21st century career. (Foster and Fege, expandinglearning.org, 2013) To effectively engage parents and community members, three Volunteer Coordinator members will be assigned to help serve three neighborhood associations chosen for their high levels of need and capacity for managing afterschool and summer programming: Franklin Neighborhood Community Association (FNCA), Harmony Neighborhood Association, and Henry Raab/Union /High Mount neighborhood. Charged with after school and summer based programming for students in at-risk neighborhoods, these members will function as

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capacity builders for the neighborhood associations. They will ensure the fidelity of after school programs with evidence based practices (cited below); ensure training, recruitment, and sustain volunteers to support the neighborhood missions while also overseeing the adoption of effective volunteer management strategies. To bolster chances of success, the neighborhood associations will follow features of high-performing after-school programs. FNCA, our oldest after school and summer program, serves as the model. For 20 years, FNCA has been carrying out effective practices as outlined by The After-School Corporation (TASC) cited by the National Service Knowledge Network. FNCA has been instrumental in the transformation and support of one of the poorest neighborhoods in Belleville. The features of FNCA and other high-performing after-school programs are: 1. A broad array of enrichment opportunities; 2. Literacy enrichment activities programmed to build participants' skills through reading, writing, and storytelling through project based-work centered on a culminating performance; 3. Intentional relationship-building with the school staff, teachers, students, families; 4. Site coordinators experienced in youth development, strong connections to the local community, and a commitment to effective programming; 5. A sponsoring organization that allows day-to-day autonomy and flexibility to sites with providing administrative, fiscal, and professional development support . Additionally, academic-based after school components will follow research based methods as supported by multiple studies in *Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success* edited by Terry Peterson (2013). All after school tutoring models will include: 1. Alignment with school curriculum and common core standards; 2. Constant feedback and communication with school staff about student progress; 3. Results driven interventions; and 4. Well-trained volunteers equipped with skills to deliver the interventions with fidelity. Interventions for tutoring will include homework help, math and reading interventions aligned with curriculum, and mentoring support. After school tutoring and enrichment programs will be for one hour after school at the neighborhood school offered at least 3 times per week with community and parent volunteers serving one-on-one as tutors or as facilitators for small group enrichment activities.

Belleville AmeriCorps members will also support several summer programs for at-risk students. The summer program is a continuation of support for after school programs through neighborhood associations. It builds upon the assertion by Helen Ladd, in *Education and Poverty: Confronting the Evidence* (2011) that it would be difficult, if not impossible for the US to replicate the success of higher scoring countries by focusing on school reform alone especially when paying little attention to meeting the social needs of disadvantaged children. Ladd supports addressing educational challenges

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faced by low income students in after school and summer programs because the discrepancy in investment of in enrichment activities and the chasm of experiential learning opportunities between middle and low SES students. 40 minimum time members, along with 11 carry-over full-time members will serve as summer camp counselors in 3 neighborhoods. The summer program is designed to follow the characteristics of a successful out of school time program. The goal of the summer program in each neighborhood is to provide experiential learning opportunities, character and leadership development, and summer reading loss prevention strategies. It is also designed to meet traditional challenges of low-income families by providing meals and safe places for children to go during the summer months.

ACADEMIC INTERVENTIONS

Building upon multiple years of successful academic interventions, the Belleville AmeriCorps program will continue to serve these needs. Utilizing comprehensive approaches to address reading skills in students, member interventions are grounded in educational methodology, with published results showing impact; and, as required by the Department of Education, are research-based and monitored by reading specialists and RTI interventionists. The interventions are aligned with the core curriculum with progress measured by regular assessments. Reading and Intervention teachers monitor trend lines and graphic data, identify appropriate interventions, monitor the fidelity of implementation, supervise AmeriCorps members, monitor progress, and interpret data for evaluation purposes. Teachers train the AmeriCorps members to understand the methodology and pedagogy required to effectively implement the tutoring interventions. Members receive on-going training at their site by these teachers to ensure consistent application of research based methods. Some interventions are described below as an illustration of member engagement.

The primary intervention for improving reading skills is BLAST, a whole-class program that provides intensive, reading-recovery inspired instruction to students in Kindergarten-second grade. It requires up to three members, actively engaging students in activities focused on improving reading fluency and comprehension during a 30-minute session. BLAST, based on the "Anna Plan" model of reading intervention and endorsed by the Illinois State Board of Education, addresses phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. Member participation in BLAST allows schools to reach more students within smaller group settings; allowing students improved reading confidence and overall increased interest in learning. Progress for BLAST is measured by weekly assessment meetings and Thinklink and Aimsweb probes, both research-based continuous improvement model tests that map diagnostic assessments to state tests. Response to Intervention

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(RtI), a collection of research-based interventions, addresses student deficiencies in all subjects. Tutors, using RtI, build upon the instruction of classroom teachers by providing intensive small group or one-on-one tutoring in math and other developmental areas. Meeting with students in prescribed increments, tutors address academic challenges and monitor progress in areas where students are struggling. The Center for Prevention Research and Development from University of Illinois laid out the framework for effective tutoring programs in Background Research: Tutoring Programs. (2009) They identified specific practices that increase quality of tutoring programs thus improving the positive impacts for students. The Belleville AmeriCorps program follows the best practices as outlined by this research. All tutors are trained on effective instructional strategies. A diagnostic and developmental template is designed by teachers and followed by each AmeriCorps member assigned to work with each student. All students are assessed formally and informally to guide the tutoring process. Tutors collaborate with the student's teacher and track progress of students to improve their sessions. In addition, the program is arranged around principles of learning, taking into account each student's needs and learning style while also following a sequentially arranged, systematic approach.

c. Member Training

To ensure the fidelity of the logic model and evidence based practices, Belleville AmeriCorps administers a comprehensive, on-going training program preparing members for successful service participation and completion, while laying a foundation for a lifetime commitment to service. An intensive three day orientation introduces all members to topics essential for successful term completion prior to placement in service sites. Staff introduce members to the history of National Service and how the program fits with other National Service programs. Staff review prohibited activities during orientation and highlight these again when members sign their agreements. During the orientation, staff facilitate team building activities to form a cohesive group. Members study and discuss the handbook to understand the policies on conduct, drug-free workplace, and disciplinary and grievance procedures. Members receive training on all position-related duties including data collection responsibilities and procedures, time keeping, and service requirements. Members are oriented to the communities they serve through participation in the following: 1) community partner sessions; 2) a session based on Ruby Payne's Framework for Understanding Poverty; and 3) team community service projects. All members are oriented to services sites and specific roles through workshop sessions facilitated by Southwestern Illinois College, community leaders, and school professionals. Other topics covered during orientation include: 1) diversity and school culture, 2) sexual harassment awareness; 3) behavior management, 4) reading and math strategies; 5) child development; 6)

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methods of tutoring; and 7) safety and first aid guidelines. During the service term, staff identifies and schedules skill building, leadership, and professional development based on the needs and accomplishments of past members, current needs of community partners, and member responses to monthly reflection questions posed by staff. During bi-monthly team meetings, members engage in continuous quality improvement by sharing successes and challenges with peers and staff, working on project committees, and receiving guidance and information necessary for successful term completion. Other trainings address skills such as: group development, stress management, assertive communication, conflict resolution, resume and interview strategies, disaster preparedness, and leadership development based on City Year's The Idealist's Journey curriculum. Program staff, the American Red Cross, school professionals, community leaders, and SWIC faculty and staff facilitate training sessions. Volunteer coordinator members complete the United Way Volunteer Management Training Series, a six-session module that covers planning, recruitment placement, management and evaluation of volunteer programs. These member coordinators also receive training at regional conferences and access to Internet-based tutorials and webinars developed by organizations such as Hands on Network and CNCS, as well as monthly meeting check-ins to share resources. Volunteer Coordinator members, in turn, train volunteers to avoid prohibited activities as disallowed by CNCS while also sharing specific information related to volunteer duties.

d. Member Supervision

The goal of member supervision is to support members in an effective, successful term of service while also affecting change as desired. Program staff train and support a designated service site supervisor at each site as required by a memorandum of understanding. Strategies implemented to supervise and support members include: 1) Monthly site visits by staff to ensure member compliance with program policies, while strengthening relationships between staff, members, and sites; 2) Twice monthly team meetings to build team morale, while giving members the opportunity for guidance from their peers and staff; 3) Monthly, members complete and submit reflections highlighting their current challenges and successes, allowing staff to assess the need for additional support or resources; and 4) Staff continually assess members' individual motivations and goals, both informally and formally, to provide assistance as necessary to make the most of members' personal service experience.

By pairing members with professionals for site-specific training and supervision, the program ensures that members are equipped to deliver high quality tutoring services consistent with local and state content standards including new common core standards or effective volunteer management

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principles as indicated.

e. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

Belleville AmeriCorps is proud to be a long-standing member of the National Service community. As such, it publicizes that brand and provides members opportunities to reflect and to speak about their service as national service participants. The program successfully incorporates the AmeriCorps logo, name, and mission into the culture of partnering schools and community organizations. Strategies for fostering a local and national brand identity include, publishing the AmeriCorps logo and program name on all materials including the website, partners' websites, Facebook page, job postings, flyers, brochures, business cards, and media alerts. Staff ensures proper signage at each host site. All members receive a complete uniform and are expected to wear their gear at service projects, community activities, and their primary service sites. Staff utilize evaluation data collected throughout the year to communicate to all stakeholders the value and impact that AmeriCorps members make in the community.

Organizational Capability

a. Organizational Background and Staffing

Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC) has extensive experience in and systems in place for grants management, having managed the AmeriCorps award, along with Title III, other Corporation for National Service funds, and other federal awards. Adopting a fiscally conservative approach has allowed the College to maintain an appropriate fund balance; receive clean audit opinions; and receive the Government Finance Officers Association Excellence in Financial Reporting Award since 2004. SWIC will continue to serve as the administrative agent providing fiscal and programmatic oversight with responsibility for payroll, disbursement of grant funds, collection of evaluation data, and reporting to the community, state, and Federal agencies. The Director of Community Education, under the Division of Community Services and Campus Operations, supervises the Program Director, with three percent time spent on grant oversight. (See organizational chart for hierarchical relationships.)

Serving since 1994, Belleville AmeriCorps maintains an outstanding reputation of providing quality interventions to school partners and neighborhood organizations and administering the grant with integrity and fidelity. The state commission recognizes the program as a state model. The current director promotes service and volunteerism by chairing the Southern Illinois Conference on Volunteerism, mentoring other Illinois AmeriCorps Program Directors, serving on local community boards, and by appointment as a non-voting member of the Illinois State Commission on

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Volunteerism and Service. Staff has systematized processes for managing enrollment, time sheets, evaluations, data collection, and other grant requirements by maintaining procedural binders and processes that can be replicated in other AmeriCorps programs.

The Program Director and a part-time Field Coordinator spend 100% of time on program related duties. The director has responsibility over the day-to-day administration of the program including staff and member supervision and recruitment, evaluation coordination, oversight and report of expenditures and progress, and coordination of partner activities. The current director has ten years of service with the program. The Field Coordinator assists with recruitment, training and supervision of host sites and members, and provides support to the director in collecting, analyzing, and completing performance measurement evaluations and track member paperwork completion and time reporting. The Field Coordinator has two years of experience in his current position, a background in cultural studies, and brings experience in tutoring and volunteer coordination to the program. Additionally, both staff members have served as Belleville AmeriCorps members.

b. Compliance and Accountability

Dedicated community partners continue to implement the program within programmatic and fiscal requirements. Partners adhere to consistent, clear expectations outlined in a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) developed by the program in congruence with federal regulations and as outlined in the grant application. The MOU delineates terms of the partnership and includes member roles, background check policies for staff and members including accompaniment regulations, site supervisor duties, record keeping requirements, prohibited activities, training responsibilities, member recruitment, and all policies. To ensure compliance, program staff train and support site supervisors, teacher mentors, partners, and camp directors on member rules, management and grant reporting requirements. Staff emphasize member roles, ensuring that site supervisors assign duties that do not include prohibited activities and align with intended outcomes. The partners provide site supervisors, data collection tools, and the contribution of both required match funds and in-kind resources. The program will continue to monitor the sites' implementation of member agreements, compliance with prohibited activities, and the overall support to members. Monthly site visits by program staff; attendance at principal meetings and community board meetings with ongoing dialogue ensures compliance and continuous quality improvement. Program staff also check timesheet descriptions twice monthly to ensure that members adhere to member agreements and avoid prohibited activities. Newer and smaller partners are audited more frequently as a training tool for compliance. Dashboard reports with snapshots of partner challenges and successes are

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discussed semi-annually with all partners. Staff compile the dashboard reports from data collected throughout the year, member timesheets, reviews, site visits, retention reports, tutor tracking and volunteer tracking logs, pre and post predictive test results, paperwork completion rate reports, and budget in-kind vs. actual in-kind reports. If a violation of MOU or member agreement occurs, the program staff meet with the partner or partner group immediately to rectify the situation. As many of the sites are tied together through a common AmeriCorps affiliation and goal for strengthening community and education, there exists a connection that allows implementation of the logic model.

c. Past Performance for Current Grantees and Former Grantees

SUCSESSES

Belleville AmeriCorps responds to a demonstrated need for continued services and has the long-standing reputation of effectively implementing service activities, meeting performance measures, adhering to the programmatic and fiscal grant requirements, and has no difficulties with state monitoring visits or audit requirements. In the 2012-2013 program year, Belleville AmeriCorps continued to meet the needs of the community as promised. Rigorous data collection in partnership with the teachers and administration of those buildings indicate that members spent their time tutoring, assisting with after school programs, developing mentor relationships with students, and serving as part of the team in all school buildings. Data show that members reached students and had a demonstrable impact in their education. In fact, all program targets were exceeded. The members tutored 1,195 students in the two Belleville school districts, double the benchmark. 94% of those students demonstrated increased academic achievement. In addition, members also served a key role in helping to identify other useful interventions, directly and indirectly. Members continually help students succeed academically. Bridging the achievement gap proves to be a more complex problem than members can address through academic interventions alone, however. The 2014-2015 grant application seeks to utilize current research, mobilize existing resources, and build upon successful interventions to address other compounding issues attributed to the achievement gap.

Enrollment: Belleville AmeriCorps had 100% enrollment for 2012-2013.

Retention: The program continues to increase retention rates with 93% for 2012-2013. In fact, retention rates have increased steadily over the past 5 years. Attrition for 2012-2013 was caused primarily by lack of member compliance with service site or program policies. To address these issues, program staff continues to strengthen selection standards and effective placement of members, recruiting for retention by focusing on candidates' motivation to serve, providing members with opportunities for greater personal investment, and flexibility by offering variety and customized

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training plans. Collection of timely feedback from service site supervisors and maintenance of relationships with supervisors also provides helpful tools for retention.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

As is the case for programs operating in multiple locations with multiple site supervisors, issues with compliance arise occasionally. During the last full year of operation, staff dealt with two such issues. 17th Street--During one-on-one meetings with a member, checking time sheet descriptions, and through volunteer coordinator meetings, staff identified a compliance issue with the 17th Street Neighborhood Association. The Volunteer Coordinator member was not utilized as described in her member agreement. The member did not have clear direction from her site supervisor or support in meeting pre-determined goals. Staff called a meeting with the site supervisor and members of the board. It was determined that the association, after realigning strategic goals, no longer needed a volunteer coordinator. The current volunteer coordinator was allowed to follow the current position description and complete the term, however, the slot was eliminated from future grant years.

Jefferson Elementary--Dashboard data for retention indicated that Jefferson School within District #118 had a 50% retention rate. In response to the data, AmeriCorps program staff, the teacher mentor, and principal, reevaluated selection criteria for that particular site. Staff guided the mentor and principal in more effective recruitment strategies resulting in 100% retention to date at the location for 2013-2014.

d. Continuous Improvement

Several methods imbedded into the program design of Belleville AmeriCorps help to inform continuous improvement. Feedback methods by internal stakeholders (members, staff, and partners) include: end of year surveys, training/orientation evaluations, site visits, team meetings, dashboard evaluations, monthly reflections, and performance reviews. All internal stakeholders are encouraged to provide constructive feedback throughout the year informally as well as formally. External stakeholders provide feedback with camp surveys, service project outcome forms, and data collected through efforts of the school administrators. Quantitative data help program staff and partners recognize trend lines and trajectory of impact. Quantitative data comes in several forms: retention rates, application rates, demographic information, volunteer rates, in-kind contribution tracking, and performance measure data.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

a. Cost Effectiveness

Corporation Cost per Members Service Year (MSY) for the proposed program is \$12,480. The

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program's MSY decreases yearly, by design for sustainability. In comparison, our program model is more cost effective than a start-up program or a program in a small non-profit without the extensive administrative support of a large community college.

ALTERNATE MODELS

Volunteer model: A program run entirely of volunteers might be an alternative solution to AmeriCorps intervention; however, that model has not proven sustainable or effective. In fact, the superintendents of each school remark that the overwhelming effectiveness of the AmeriCorps member follows because of the structure of the AmeriCorps program including: strong administrative support that includes high levels of accountability, significant monetary support to sustain efforts, a consistent and dependable volunteer force that adheres to a rigorous application and screening process, significant benefits and incentives for members, and a history of collaboration that has built not only an excellent collaborative model over time, but has offered participants opportunities to be part of a bigger picture vision that has extended over the years. Community development and engagement was designed, however, to create a more sustainable community-based asset model.

Staff model: Another model would be to hire staff to replace all of the AmeriCorps members who deliver necessary interventions to students, coordinate programming, and build capacity. At a time when school funding in Illinois is not guaranteed and schools are consistently underfunded, this option is not viable. The partners continue to collaborate with other community partners to ensure sustainability. They are designing a web of support for the students with additional funding, social supports, and efficient, mutually beneficial collaborations. Belleville AmeriCorps receives fiscal support from a diverse group of funders and partners. Presently, the program is funded 51% by partner organizations and 49% by CNCS dollars. Organizationally, however, CNCS contributions are only a fraction of the combined total partner budgets including two large school districts, a community college, 3 local neighborhood associations, and units of local government. The program relies on all community partners for support, financially and administratively, to be successful. Partners are funded through state and local sources, along with private and direct contributions. Partners continually discuss sustainable practices and seek to diversify funding. The city of Belleville has pledged to double its contribution for the first increase in 20 years. The city has also reached out to private and corporate funders to help support the program. All required resources have been secured to date, \$134,949 cash & \$289,003 in-kind.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

Evaluation materials were submitted through email.

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Amendment Justification

n/a

Clarification Summary

a. Clarification Summary/Budget Narrative Changes

1. Principal salaries are allocable to the AmeriCorps grant as match because principals play an integral part in helping to manage the program and the members at the school sites--different from the mentor and training role the teachers provide to the members. Principal duties include: being the direct contact in schools for program staff, interview, selection and recruitment of members, collaboration on service projects (monthly), member supervision, guidance for teachers and members, and authorization of member timesheets. Duties are August-June.

2. A Community Service Director, hired by the Chamber of Commerce, Belleville Main Street, and the BASIC Initiative will be the primary supervisor of two new AmeriCorps positions designed to help the Belleville community achieve the long term goals of cultivating community leaders who are to make community decisions with existing community resources effectively(zone leaders), bridging gaps and reducing duplication of services leading to a more efficient delivery of services to families in need (roundtables & community development network) and creating a more engaged community of service(a dedicated website for service opportunities in Belleville). The position with these three collaborative agencies is beginning in June of 2014 and will be solely responsible for engaging the 2 AmeriCorps members in attaining those long term goals. The line item for this person as in-kind personnel was revised in the budget. The Director of Community Education, as referenced in the narrative, serves as the supervisor at Southwestern Illinois College. This person also serves as partner of record for Southwestern Illinois College. Her salary is not listed in the line item, but is calculated in the indirect cost rate.

3. The metro and bus passes are given to each member as a way to offset costs of transportation to and from service sites, service projects, trainings, and team meetings. The metro and bus passes help the AmeriCorps members remain able to travel from site to site multiple times per week without incurring the expense of gasoline/car expenses or payment for their own bus/metro pass associated with local travel. As living allowances dictate that members make essential choices about monthly expenses, the program wants to ensure that necessary travel is not cut out of their budget and thus

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allowing them to fulfill their contract requirements.

4. The CCR registration will be renewed prior to 7/11/2014 in order to remain compliant with federal regulations.

5. Personnel fringe benefits were revised in the budget narrative. Unemployment and life insurance was modified.

6. Mileage rate was modified to .560, current federally approved rate.

7. Camp supplies budget was revised to reflect cost per camper, not per camp. Actual expenses will be reported in the periodic expense report.

8. Each year, Belleville District #118 purchases software to help evaluate student performance. This software is used several times monthly by teachers and AmeriCorps members to identify students falling in Tier 2 categories. The members deliver the interventions necessary to remediate the problem. The member and teachers then use the software to identify whether the student has progressed under the tutelage of the AmeriCorps member. This software helps to pinpoint the relationship between the specific intervention and the performance in the area of need. Other methods of assessment of student progress are much less expensive, but do not, however, provide accurate data to ensure that the progress being measured at the school level is attributable to the member intervention. Those other methods include student grades and state standardized test scores. The software is an accepted method as research-based, valid, and reliable for measuring student progress in specific areas of literacy and math.

9. Every year, the Belleville AmeriCorps program is assessed for evaluative purposes. That report is distributed to all of the stakeholders. The report for 2013-2014 has been emailed to AmeriCorpsGrants@cns.gov as of 4/11/2014.

10. Members who tutor must possess a high school diploma and pass a basic skills test or demonstrate proficiency by providing college transcripts (if 60 credit hours or more have been completed). In addition, members complete high-quality, research-based pre- and in-service trainings outlined in the

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training clarification below.

11. The Program utilizes District #118 & 175 teachers and administrators and SWIC faculty and staff to train members in high quality, research based training for its tutors. During orientation, all members receive an overview of the BLAST reading program, a research based literacy intervention. Members serving as reading tutors will complete intensive on-site training in this model and benefit from the constant guidance and support of district reading specialists, who implement the team-based model alongside members. Other training includes scaffolding and weaving literacy into other content areas, and math theory and computation. Literacy and math specialists assist members by meeting in small school groups up to 4 times monthly to ensure interventions are delivered in accordance with district expectations. Additionally, since training is led and facilitated by the local district teacher specialists, they are able to ensure that all members are trained in only research based interventions designed to support state and local approved curriculum.

12. Summer camp positions are designed for members to mentor and tutor at-risk students during the summer months. Each camp will deliver differentiated interventions as needed for their population, but each member is expected to do the following: 1. Each member will tutor at least one student for 30-50 minutes Monday-Friday--reading will be addressed along with other identified deficiencies identified by predictive test results at the end of the school year; 2. Each member is responsible for mentoring a small group of students with a 1:5 counselor to camper ratio; 3. Each member will be responsible for providing structured games and opportunities for experiential learning--educational field trips, character development & leadership training.

13. Members will be supervised, as indicated in the budget, by dedicated summer camp directors. Each camp will have a director hired specifically to supervise the AmeriCorps summer camp counselors. In fact, each organization is required to sign the memorandum of understanding indicating that at no time will AmeriCorps members be expected to manage other AmeriCorps members. The neighborhood volunteer coordinators will be serving the summer months helping to recruit volunteers and agencies to bring programming to the camp.

14. As per the request in the clarification, the program did decrease the CNCS cost to \$12,353 per MSY. In addition, the program runs on a very lean budget with the bulk of the expenditures coming

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in the form of living allowance for the members. The program continues to work with an extremely lean administrative budget, expending only what is necessary to run an effective program with well-supported members. The program understands that other comparable programs do not designate the resources to ensure members are fully trained and supported to be effective as evidenced by candidates from other programs unaware that they previously served a term. In fact, it is because of the resources that have been allocated to manage members at such a high level that they are aware that they are AmeriCorps members sent to the schools and the community to make a difference. The reputation of the program in the community as being an effective solution to persistent problems has allowed staff to collaborate with city officials, neighborhood leaders, and two new school districts in Belleville. The expansion of programming to replicate successful interventions throughout the city is one way the program is cost effective. In addition, with the help of reassigning positions to capacity building partners with the city's comprehensive plan, the program helps to address systemic issues which drive the need for AmeriCorps support in camps and schools. Also, the program has increased the cash match requirement for partners each year for the past 5 years an average of 2% per year. Finally, partners continue to find new and diverse funding streams to enable support of the neighborhood and school programs. The neighborhoods fund camps primarily through private and local dollars. The schools also utilize local and foundation funds to support at-risk student success.

b. Performance Measures

1, 2, 3. All corrections and clarifications were made directly into the performance measure section.

c. Strategic Engagement

1. The Belleville AmeriCorps program does not set a target percentage for recruiting members with disabilities. The Belleville AmeriCorps program strategy for recruitment is year round with particular emphasis on building new partnerships within the community for the following overall goals:

1. Building a solid, name-based reputation in the community
2. Constant evaluation of the needs and resources of the community
3. Building coalitions to bring strong candidates to the program
4. Maintaining attrition rates to 90% or higher and maintaining 100% recruitment rates
5. Ensuring the program's members are diverse in social, economic, ability status, culture, and educational backgrounds.

Qualified individuals with disabilities and those from diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply. Belleville AmeriCorps provides reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals and

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conducts all activities in fully accessible settings. In order to ensure a diverse team, program staff employ many different and diverse partners as part of the referral process. Specific targeted marketing for applicants with disabilities include.

1. Recruitment meetings with Veterans Leadership Program & Scott Air Force Base (veteran and military recruitment)
2. Recruitment Meetings with Linc, Inc, an area disability service provider (persons with disabilities recruitment)
3. Attending BEACON meetings (Local ecumenical agency who provides roundtable discussion for agencies serving populations in need--including those agencies targeting clients with disabilities.)
4. Partnering with the Disability and Access center at Southwestern Illinois College to target students with disabilities as candidates for the program.

The Belleville program continues to encourage members to disclose disabilities by making an open, welcoming environment and offering no-cost accommodations where necessary. The program recruits, on average, at least 20% of its Corps members with disabilities.

2. At this time the program does not request additional MSY's for the purpose of recruiting members with disabilities. The program design will accommodate the number of slots existing in the request. Assuredly, at least 20% of the original slots requested will be represented by members with disabilities.

d. MSY with no program funds clarification

Belleville AmeriCorps does not request any additional MSY.

e. Healthcare Clarification

1. & 2. The program is currently using The Corps Network Plan. The program has been using this insurance plan for members since SRC-Aetna discontinued coverage for AmeriCorps members because it did not meet the Minimum Essential Coverage requirement in the Affordable Care Act. The Corps Network does not offer MEC at this time either. All traditional AmeriCorps plans do not meet these requirements. Since acquiring the Corps Network plan as insurance provider, program staff have been involved in numerous conference calls and webinars to understand the ACA and how it impacts AmeriCorps full-time coverage. Current members have been coached on the ramifications of keeping current Corps Network coverage. A healthcare navigator from the Public Health Department was invited to train all of our members on what options are available to them, including the penalty for

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not being adequately covered. All members were told that if they were required to select a new health care plan from the marketplace and it wasn't covered under Medicaid expansion, the Belleville program would reimburse plan premiums up to the individual silver level.

3. The proposed budget was created before the ACA changes took effect. However, the plan is this: If the Corps Network cannot offer MEC, all full-time members will be coached on the ACA and the requirements of the individual to be covered by MEC. Additionally, all members will be given the current options of staying on a parent's plan, or shopping in the marketplace--including determining eligibility for Medicaid Expansion. If costs are incurred for individual health insurance coverage for the member, the Belleville AmeriCorps program partners will reimburse up to the silver plan on the market place on a cost reimbursement process. Invoices will be required to document the costs.

4. We await further guidance from CNCS to ensure that we are following federal regulations and grant guidelines. Most importantly, the program will educate the members as new information becomes available. The partners are committed to ensuring that all full-time members are covered with MEC as required by law. If the costs increase, partners will match the costs and the budget will be adjusted.

5. AmeriCorps members are not considered employees at this time. The Southwestern Illinois College insurer does not consider members employees making members ineligible for coverage under the employee plan. Program staff are working on providing the best solution possible for partners, members, and as required by regulations.

Continuation Changes

n/a

Grant Characteristics