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Executive Summary

The Missouri College Advising Corps AmeriCorps Program will have 40 AmeriCorps members who will provide college advisement services to students (and their families) in 40 high-need high schools in 28 school districts in 14 counties in Kansas City, St. Louis, and rural south central, central, and southeast Missouri. At the end of the 1st program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for increasing the college-going rates in partner schools over previous year's rates and as compared to a 3-year average baseline. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 200 volunteers (who will serve a minimum of 2000 hours) that will be engaged in assisting with activities that increase likelihood of college aspirations and enrollment.

The program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education. The CNCS investment of \$524,000 will be matched with a minimum of \$959,033, \$445,000 in public funding and \$514,033 in private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

Now in its 6th program year, the Missouri College Advising Corps (MCAC) -- headquartered at the University of Missouri (MU) and a member of the National College Advising Corps (NCAC) addresses the need that too few students in disadvantaged high schools across Missouri aspire to and enroll in a postsecondary education. MCAC addresses this need by partnering with disadvantaged high schools to place a near-peer college adviser/AmeriCorps Member in the school to provide students and their families with the assistance and support to get "to and through" college.

The current number of postsecondary-credentialed Americans is inadequate to sustain a robust economy and country: Missouri ranks 27th in percentage of adults with a college degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Low-income, first-generation-college, and underrepresented students are at the greatest risk of not enrolling in or completing college: Only 1 in 10 low-income students earns a postsecondary degree while 50% of those from high-income families do (ASPE, 2009). Compared to their college-educated counterparts, non-degree holders have fewer career options, earn less money, are more often unemployed and dependent on social services, and are less actively involved citizens (The College Board, 2013). Too few college educated citizens creates a slowed economy, a skills gap in the workforce, a less diverse workforce, a less active citizenry, and negatively impacts future generations' college-going behaviors.

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This project will make college advisement available to 38,762 students, grades 9-12 (7,939 seniors) in 40 high schools within 28 school districts in 14 counties, 6 of them priority counties for Missouri, (Butler, Clay, Dent, Dunklin, Franklin, Howell, Jackson, New Madrid, North Francois, Phelps, Ripley, Scott, St. Louis, Washington) and 2 cities (St. Louis, Kansas City) in 5 regions across Missouri (Kansas City, rural south central and central and southeast, St. Louis).

Partner schools have high proportions of first-generation-college, low-income, and/or underrepresented students who attend college at a rate far below the statewide average and lack college knowledge and awareness of postsecondary options. Across the 40 project schools, 42% are unaccredited or provisionally accredited (DESE, 2012), the average college-going rate is 55% -- with a low of 29%, and 68% of their students are low-income (an average increase of 11% since 2008). Juxtaposing the increase in poverty levels with the fact that college costs have increased 439% since 1984 (National Center for Public Policy, 2010), college appears financially out of reach for many students. Perhaps worse, many at-risk students believe they are not college material or most low-income students that do attend college under-match (MDRC, 2012) by attending a school under-aligned with their academic abilities, producing high drop-out rates.

Within the statewide context, 13% of Missourians live in poverty, the 18th highest rate among U.S. states (Boston, 2013). Among counties in this project, 3 (Dunklin, New Madrid, Ripley), and the city of St. Louis, have poverty rates at least 50% higher than the state average, all are "most critical" or "critical" on education need (ENI, 2005), and 7.95% is the average unemployment rate (with one as high as 9.9%), as compared to 6.5% statewide (MO Department of Labor, 2013). Of the 40 project schools, 6 are in the state's highest poverty region.

The project aligns with 2014-15 Missouri focus areas: partner schools are in rural and urban communities; of the 40 projects schools, 6 are in currently unserved or underserved counties; all have high proportions of students who will be the first in their family to attend college, are from low-income households, and/or are ethnic minorities; and 13 (33%) are unaccredited or provisionally accredited. Too, MCAC successfully recruits underrepresented and low-income populations to serve and honors the military as a postsecondary pathway.

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To address the need that too few low-income, first-generation-college, and underrepresented youth from disadvantaged high schools enter college, MCAC will place 40 full-time AmeriCorps Members as full-time, intensively-trained, near-peer college advisers (hereafter CAs) in its partner high schools. CAs focus 100% on assisting students (grades 9-12, with early college outreach to 7th and 8th graders), and their families, with navigating college planning, admissions, and financing processes with the ultimate goal of increasing the number/percentage of students who go directly from high school to "best-fit" postsecondary education.

Having attended similar high schools; being of low-income, underrepresented, and first-generation-college status; and having recently navigated college enrollment and completion, CAs mentor, role model, and uniquely relate to students being served -- making MCAC college advising an effective model to address the identified need. Diversity among CAs is representative across races/ethnicities, socioeconomic status, and academic programs. Of 25 current CAs, 68% are female and 32% male; 4% are Asian, 8% Latino, 4% mixed race, 48% Black, 32% White, 4% Other; and 72% are PELL-eligible collegians.

CAs will provide the following college advisement services and activities, with varying levels of student participation (with CAs available all day every day, some students seek frequent and ongoing advisement and participate in multiple opportunities where others participate less frequently):

- * Meet one-on-one with 100% of seniors and juniors and in groups with 9th-12th graders, intensively advising seniors to help them identify multiple best-fit postsecondary institutions (in 2012-13, CAs averaged 1,184 individual meetings with individual meeting defined as a minimum of 5 minutes duration, with most lasting longer);
- * Make classroom presentations on college planning, admissions, and financing processes (in 2012-13, CAs averaged 47 workshops with an average of 1,225 students participating);
- * Organize campus tours to a variety of colleges so that students, grades 9-12, can envision themselves as a college student and determine what type of institution is a "best-fit" (in 2012-13, CAs averaged 7.5 tours with 144 student participants);
- * Organize campus rep visits and college fairs and ensure that students participate (in 2012-13, CAs averaged 370 student participants);
- * Assist students with FAFSA completion so they receive financial aid and scholarships (in 2012-13, advisees averaged \$11,000 in renewable aid and 686 students submitted FAFSAs);

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- * Assist students with ACT registration, accessing registration fee waivers, and test prep;
- * Help students complete admissions and scholarship applications and admissions essays;
- * Advise and provide information to family members (in 2012-13, CAs helped 117 parents on average);

- * Organize afterschool college-planning workshops for students and families, focusing on financial literacy and budgeting-for-college (in 2012-13, CAs provided 8 workshops on average);
- * Conduct early college awareness activities in 7th and 8th grade classrooms;
- * Develop and use a college advising social media site;
- * Deliver college planning workshops in the service area community; and
- * Create a college-going culture and organize events to celebrate college-going.

A set of 17 quantifiable service deliverables serve as a CA position description and ensure that college advisement activities are consistent across partner schools. Deliverables provide for intensive college advisement for seniors while underclass and middle school students are motivated to prepare for college enrollment. Differently from school counselors who spend only 20 minutes a year per student, on average, on college planning advisement, CAs, working in tandem with school counselors, teachers, and administration, focus 100% of their time on assisting students/families on college planning -- making CAs critical in under-performing high schools where counselor's roles are stretched thinly.

To achieve this project's stated outcome of increasing numbers of students in MCAC partner schools enrolling in a "best-fit" postsecondary opportunity, CAs deliver 17 MCAC-created service deliverables. Intensive and purposeful delivery over the course of the school year, especially when delivered by a trusted near-peer college adviser, will increase college-going rates in MCAC partner schools.

Each deliverable is based on and aligned to activities empirically correlated to increases in college-going rates for low-income, first-generation-college, and underrepresented minority students -- those most at risk of not entering or completing college. Research supports that when students are provided college coaching and specific activities and supports (campus tours, campus rep visits, assistance on FAFSA, college testing prep, etc.), they are more likely to enroll in college. Without advisement and activities, students do not realize they can go to college and are unaware of how to navigate the college admissions processes.

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This project is based on a strong evidence model. MCAC bases its approach on college access literature as well as upon research generated by the program itself. Scholarly research, qualitative and quantitative and mixed-methods alike, validates that low-income, first-generation-college, and underrepresented minorities enroll in and complete college at a rate much lower than the U.S. average at a time when most jobs required a postsecondary credential (U.S. Department of Education, 2006; The Education Trust, 2012). In fact, First Lady Obama's 2014 national platform is to increase the number of low-income students among the college-going (Steinhaurer, 2013). There are empirically-proven methods for addressing this critical national need. While the evidence base for near-peer college advisement is broad, chief among methods is college coaching by advisers similar in experience, age, and circumstance to the students being advised. Coaching increases likelihood of disadvantaged students enrolling in college (Williams & Horowitz, 2013; Stephan & Rosenbaum, 2013; Carrell & Sacerdote, 2013; IES/U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Research also shows that students who are intensively advised more frequently enroll in a "best-fit" college and avoid under-matching -- a term that is gaining national traction and is used to describe high ability students enrolling in colleges under-aligned with their academic abilities (Sherwin, 2012). Coached students also persist in and complete college at a higher rate and also have lower student debt burdens (Kantrowitz, 2012). Tours of and applications to multiple campus types also increases college enrollment for disadvantaged populations (Hoxby & Turner, 2013; Lenz, 2013). Providing advisement to families (IES/U.S. Department of Education, 2009), FAFSA completion assistance, and financial counseling to students and families bolsters college enrollment among at-risk populations, particularly for those who are first-generation-college students (Bettinger, Long, Oreopoulos, & Sanbonmatsu, 2012).

MCAC also generates quantitative and qualitative evidence to demonstrate that the approach works! NCAC is among the largest and most extensively evaluated college access programs in the U.S. Its evaluation team at Stanford University runs school-level data through the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC; national database of student-level college enrollment) and analyzes them to measure changes in school- and program-level college-going rates as compared to a 3-year average baseline and each previous year since MCAC inception. Over MCAC's first 4 years, college-going rates increased by 10.35%, on average, across all partner schools -- with the highest increases of 27.55%, while the statewide average during this same period increased by only 0.3%. CAs assisted 4,376

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students with going directly from high school to college. CAs and advisees are surveyed annually and the results show that a majority of advisees would not have gone to college without the assistance and support of near-peer advisers.

MCAC also contributes to college access field research. MCAC is the only corps, selected from 20 nationwide, at which the NCAC evaluation team spent 1 week at each of 9 partner schools in 2012 (to augment qualitative research of MCAC conducted in 2010-11) to examine creation of college-going culture. The case study produced a theoretical model for creation of a college-going culture, presentations at national conferences, and scholarly publications (Foster, Santikian, & Antonio, 2013). The MCAC model was also recently shared with the White House as a model for increasing college-going among low-income students.

MCAC is heavily evaluated at the program level. MCAC underwent an organizational study by an external entity in 2011; CAs frequently read current research about college access and completion; and national-level researchers present at pre- and in-service training about increasing college-going rates among disadvantaged populations. CAs report on process outcomes weekly -- on the basis of MCAC-designed student interaction trackers, with outcomes totaled monthly and YTD (numbers of individual and group advisement sessions, campus tours, campus rep visits, college fairs, ACT registrations and test prep sessions, FAFSAs submitted, college and scholarship applications completed). Process outcomes/service deliverables align with metrics empirically correlated to increased college enrollment by disadvantaged students.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence that MCAC makes a difference is that 1) non-MCAC schools which are similar in size, academic performance, and student demographics are realizing decreases (up to 6% on average annually) in college-going as compared to increases across MCAC schools and 2) college-going rates dropped 16% in a school in the 4 years since MCAC discontinued its partnership when rates had increased under the MCAC partnership.

Training is a hallmark of MCAC. Members participate in 400+ hours of pre- and in-service training each year. Training includes a 1-day AmeriCorps Orientation before the 1st day of service, with the AmeriCorps State liaison co-presenting and covering mission, goals, and values of AmeriCorps; benefits of AmeriCorps service; Member contract, position description, and manual; and prohibited

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activities, how the living allowance and health insurance works, how to ensure proper training and oversight of volunteers, supervisory and support structures, required training, reporting of service hours, and criteria for successful service. Members will be trained on how to recruit and actively engage volunteers. MCAC has exceeded the number of volunteers and volunteer hours each grant year and in fact St. Louis (a region served by this project) was recently named 8th among 51 largest cities in the U.S. for its volunteer rate of 31.83 percent (Spencer, 2013). CAs also enroll in e-grants, complete AmeriCorps paperwork, and receive AmeriCorps gear.

Prior to start of the service term and alternatively funded, CAs complete pre-service training in-residence on the MU campus and in service regions to ensure preparation before entering service sites. CAs attend monthly 2-day in-service training, including presentations by state and national experts, on topics aligned with the college planning process, such as college-admissions and financial aid processes, ACT registration and preparation, working with families, and preparing for Life after AmeriCorps. Three trainings include partner school staff. Ongoing training is based on needs identified on a pre-service training evaluation and through ongoing discussion with Members. Members receive additional training by attending and presenting at state, regional, and national conferences. CAs complete Missouri-required training before January of the grant period -- First Aid, CPR, Emergency Response, and Citizenship training -- and attend AmeriCorps State meetings and service projects.

Members are supervised by a service region-based Program Coordinator, have access to ongoing assistance and support from all MCAC staff, with ultimate oversight by the Executive Director (See attached organizational chart). Partner schools identify a site supervisor (e.g., head counselor, assistant principal over guidance/counseling) to provide daily on-site supervision. Site supervisors (and CAs for ½ day) attend a 1-day AmeriCorps Orientation in August. Site supervisors receive a manual detailing program goals, policies, and roles. Communication and collaboration between the MCAC and school-level site supervisors is high. Both receive a copy of the CA's weekly service deliverables outcomes report and notice of challenges s/he may be having. MCAC staff visit site supervisors during monthly site visits and challenges are collaboratively addressed. MCAC staff and site supervisors jointly conduct mid-year and year-end CA performance evaluations. Program Coordinators meet with CAs at monthly in-service training to learn how things are going and to craft a plan to address any issues that have arisen.

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Members are placed in mentor/mentee teams and have access to a SharePoint site of historical resources and best practices to enhance the level of support provided and sharing of best practices. All these supervisory structures, support mechanisms, and resources coalesce to provide frequent and strong ongoing supervision and support to CAs.

CAs know that they are AmeriCorps members through pre-service training and AmeriCorps Orientation. To ensure AmeriCorps presence across the MCAC program and in its partner schools, the MOA between schools and the program details the AmeriCorps relationship, MCAC publications and presentations bear the AmeriCorps logo (website, Facebook, print materials, presentations, posters), CAs receive AmeriCorps gear and signage to be worn and displayed daily and also worn at all service projects, CAs are trained to explain their participation in AmeriCorps at the service site and the surrounding community.

Organizational Capability

Awarded 1 of only 10 highly-competitive \$1M start-up grants from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, MCAC placed its first college advisers in fall 2008. As 1 of 20 advising corps nationwide and considered the model corps among them, MCAC is headquartered at MU and reports to the Vice Provost for Enrollment Management. MCAC has the experience, staffing and management structure to successfully manage this project. MCAC has clearly defined and effective organizational structures and position descriptions, highly qualified staff, and ongoing training at all organizational levels. The Executive Director's shortened vitae, staff members' abbreviated bios, and management team position descriptions are included on the attached organizational chart.

The Executive Director (ED) has led MCAC's growth from 7 to 26 partner schools (growing to 40 with this grant funding), college-going rate increases of 10.35 percentage points, increase of external funders from 1 to 24, and development of a strategic and long-term expansion plan. The ED has secured and managed AmeriCorps State funding and 3 additional federal grants (College Access Challenge Grant, Social Innovation Funding, and The Corps Network), totaling \$2.3M over 4 years. The ED manages an annual budget of \$1.3M from 24 fund sources, and \$5.25M over the past 5 years. The ED and Business Coordinator have guidance from MU's Office of Sponsored Programs to ensure grant compliance and report expenditures. MCAC is also dedicating a Graduate Assistant -- a previous AmeriCorps Member in MCAC -- to handle AmeriCorps-related reports, paperwork, files, and portal entry.

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The ED holds ultimate accountability for project monitoring, staffing, supervision, reporting, and following of AmeriCorps rules and regulations. AmeriCorps rules and regulations will be verbally detailed and provided in writing during AmeriCorps Member and Partner School Site Supervisor Orientation, including explanation of prohibited activities and Members signing an agreement that details regulations and prohibited activities. MCAC proactively detects and resolves compliance issues by providing thorough training to everyone involved in this project, carefully reading and monitoring weekly reporting of service hours and activities, collecting data for required reporting and noticing any potential issues early, planning a comprehensive annual calendar that incorporates required training and reporting deadlines, and close daily oversight. MCAC is a very organized operation that plans a year in advance to include and prepare for all reporting and compliance deadlines. Non-compliance issues are handled by the ED who communicates to and works in tandem with AmeriCorps staff to promptly resolve them.

As an AmeriCorps State grantee for the past 4 years, MCAC has exceeded performance measure goals, increasing college enrollments by 32% and 58% while the goal was set at 5% and 7.5% (MCAC has set a higher % goal for this project); enrolled on time 100% of 35 slots; retained 90% of MSYs in year 1 and 100% in years 2, 3, and 4; submitted reports on time; achieved 100% Member participation in trainings and service activities; had successful site audits/visits with consistently low risk scores; and far exceeded the volunteer and volunteer hours requirements. MCAC has no history of compliance issues and can demonstrate a record of effectively orienting and monitoring project staff and overseeing the grant. As a result of past performance, the Missouri Community Service Commission and staff selected MCAC to apply for federal competitive funds. And, at the national level NCAC received a 2012 CNCS National Service Impact Award.

Evaluation and continuous improvement are core values of MCAC. As a learning organization, MCAC continually assesses operational effectiveness and makes needed improvements. Pre-service training and AmeriCorps Orientation is evaluated and future sessions modified to better meet needs. CAs and partner school site supervisors provide feedback during monthly site-visits, in-service training, and twice-annual evaluations, and year-end in-service training focuses on program evaluation/improvement, with selected modifications incorporated as appropriate. MCAC also receives annual reports for each partner school, documenting changes in college-going, based on NSC results

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and analyzed by our national evaluation team. Reports inform improvements needed to increase college-going rates. MCAC also invites internal and external stakeholder feedback as a way to improve. A Sustainability Council informs fund-development and long-term sustainability, an internal advisory group provides feedback about overarching goal attainment, and other external stakeholders are frequently asked for input (MO Department of Higher Education, funders, and college access and retention experts at the national, regional, and state levels).

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

MCAC requests \$13,100 per MSY (MCAC received \$13,300 per MSY on 4 previous AmeriCorps State grants) and living allowance requested is under-maximum at \$24,000/MSY.

MCAC is a cost-effective model for addressing the need that too few disadvantaged youth enroll in postsecondary education. Having recent college graduates serving as CAs helps keep personnel cost low and outcomes high. A non-AmeriCorps entity would pay ~\$46,000-\$50,000/year, plus benefits, to hire a full-time counselor to provide college advising services less intensive than those provided at a cost of \$24,000/year (\$13,100 from AmeriCorps) and FICA-rate benefits. Near-peer MSYs uniquely relate to students, producing a more effective service at ~50% less cost. Adding to effectiveness is the opportunity for external funders to match AmeriCorps funds. MCAC could not attract the same funders if they were asked to pay 100% of the cost. Finally, given that the college-educated have greater career opportunities, earn approximately \$1M more over a lifetime, pay more taxes into local communities, and are more actively involved citizens than the non-credentialed, the return on investment/benefit of MCAC is more expansive than described here.

AmeriCorps funds represent \$524,000 (33%) of this project totaling \$1,483,033, with the difference of \$959,033 as grantee share of which only \$157,200 is required in match. Non-AmeriCorps funds will come from MCAC's current external funders, MU funds, and additional funders being cultivated. The attached of funding sources lists secured, potential, and in-kind support for this project. Over its first 5 years, MCAC has grown its external funders from 1 to 24. MCAC continues to attract alternate funds through its collaborative efforts with the MU Development Office, utilizes its Sustainability Council -- a by-product of its Strategic Plan, to identify potential funders, and dedicates 60% of the ED's time to fund-development. MCAC is committed to ensuring its strategic expansion and long-term effectiveness and sustainability and building upon its demonstrated record of success.

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The budget includes the required costs of living allowance, healthcare, and background checks. The budget aligns with AmeriCorps regulations (\$13,100/MSY request, \$24,000 living allowance, 30% match, and 5% indirect costs). Each budget line-item is referenced in the narrative and includes a cost calculation. MCAC has multiple and diverse funding sources to meet required match and fully implement this project; in fact, MCAC has over-matched at 39.43%, 52.64%, and 47.84%, in grant years 1, 2, and 3 respectively and 54.66% this year.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

The problem/need addressed by this project is that too few low-income, first-generation-college, underrepresented ethnic minority students enroll in a postsecondary education, especially those from disadvantaged/under-resourced/low-performing schools. Of critical national concern, the White House is actively working to address the fact that too few low-income students complete college.

The Missouri College Advising Corps (MCAC) - a college-access program headquartered at the University of Missouri and 1 of 20 corps in a national program - is uniquely equipped to increase college-going rates for this population. MCAC places full-time, near-peer college advisers (AmeriCorps Members) in its partner schools where they deliver 17 quantifiable activities empirically demonstrated to increase college-going for the at-risk populations.

MCAC is unique from other college access programs because:

- * It places near-peer college advisers in its partner schools. Recent college graduates themselves and from backgrounds, communities, and schools similar to those being served, advisers can uniquely relate to students.
- * It provides full-time college advisement by advisers all day each school day whereas other programs are accessible only in evenings and on weekends.
- * Advisers focus 100% on college advisement.
- * Advisers work with all 9-12 graders rather than with only a small cohort or with specific grades.
- * Advisers receive 400+ hours of pre- and in-service training while only 14 school counseling programs nationally offer college planning curriculum.
- * Advisers work with families of students; with so many first-generation-college students in partner schools, research demonstrates that family engagement is critical to increasing college-going behavior.
- * It is anchored at a flagship, land-grant, research-intensive university where knowledge experts and

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resources support the program.

Members serve as full-time, near-peer college advisers, embedded in partner schools with low college-going rates and high numbers of low-income, first-generation-college, and ethnic minority students. They provide college advisement activities, empirically-linked to increases in college enrollment by disadvantaged populations, to students and their families to increase the number/% of advisees going directly from high school to a "best-fit" postsecondary education. The anticipated outcome is an average increase in college-going across project schools of 2 percent per year, as compared to the pre-program 3-year baseline average.

The theory of change is based on empirical findings about supports that increase college aspirations and enrollment, particularly for low-income, first-generation-college, and underrepresented students and their specific enrollment in a college that aligns with their academic abilities. Based on research findings, MCAC crafted 17 quantifiable and measurable service deliverables that serve as a the Members' position description (they are detailed in the Logic Model). MCAC knows from previous experience that providing these activities will bolster college-going rates in partner schools as compared to pre-program intervention rates and those of non-partner schools.

This project's research questions are:

1. Will a greater number/percentage of students, as compared to a 3-year pre-program baseline average, enroll in college as a result of receiving research-based college advisement activities from a near-peer college adviser?
2. Will disadvantaged students from under-resourced schools with traditionally low college-going rates enroll in college at higher rates than did previous classes of graduates from the same schools, pre-MCAC partnership?
3. Will college-going rates in current MCAC partner schools continue to rise year after year as the college-going culture becomes embedded?

Research design:

MCAC is rigorously evaluated and its outcomes measured quantitatively and qualitatively.

First, student-level data from project schools are used to establish a 3-year baseline average college-

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going rate pre-MCAC implementation. Post-program implementation student level data are run against the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) database each November to measure changes in college-going rates at partner schools, across each service regions, and across MCAC. NSC is the only third-party source for learning college enrollment status, with universities nationwide reporting each fall. Results are analyzed by the an evaluation team headquartered at Stanford University and reports generated for each project school. Analysis of reports shows the changes in college-going as compared to baseline. Estimated cost is \$1,905 per year for NSC records matching.

Second, program evaluation includes annual surveys of CAs and of student advisees, with results analyzed by the Stanford-based evaluation team. Previous findings support that most advisees would not have gone to college without the near-peer college advisement provided by MCAC and that many CAs themselves change their career trajectory as a result of service, most enrolling in graduate school post-service and remaining in fields of college access or education. Past Members are highly-sought by schools and colleges alike and known for their expertise, communication, problem-solving skills, and understanding of educational and societal needs.

Third, MCAC is the only of the 20 corps nationwide to have the Stanford team spend 1 week at each of 9 partner schools in 2012 (to augment qualitative research of MCAC conducted in 2010-11) to examine creation of college-going culture. This case study produced a college-going culture theoretical model being presented at national scholarly conferences and published in national journals. Thus, MCAC is the genesis of new evidence-based literature in the college access field.

Fourth, MCAC is evaluated via organizational studies by external researchers, weekly data collection to measure intensity and frequency of service deliverables outcomes, and internally-managed ongoing process improvement processes. Partially funded by AmeriCorps State, The Center for the Study of Organizational Change (based at MU and working internationally) qualitatively studied MCAC in 2010-11 to learn what it was doing well, what it could improve, and its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Study participants included internal and external stakeholders: funders, advisory members, partner school personnel, college advisers, MCAC staff, and student advisees and their parents. Findings drove crafting of the MCAC Strategic Plan and development of its Sustainability Council. Follow-up research was conducted one year later to examine how suggested changes had been implemented. CAs submit weekly reports detailing how many students at what

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grade levels have been advised and their participation in specific activities. Outcomes are totaled monthly and YTD to ensure consistent delivery across MCAC of its 17 service deliverables. MCAC uses feedback from its annual formal program evaluation to make changes that drive increased effectiveness and efficiency.

Last, MCAC will dive more deeply into previous process outcomes to create reports, briefs, tables, and charts to illustrate its work. While MCAC analyzes data and depicts results frequently and in various formats, it will set as a goal to better communicate its secondary results - return on investment, cost of program per student advisee going to college compared to future income, career paths and further educational attainment of previous Members. Too, through non-AmeriCorps funding MCAC recently added a College Transition and Retention pilot to support advisees' college persistence from freshman to sophomore year.

The Stanford-based NCAC evaluation team is directed by a PhD-level associate professor and internationally-known researcher and includes faculty and PhD students. The Center for the Study of Organizational Change at MU is directed by a PhD-level faculty member in MU's College of Public Affairs and internationally-known researcher. MCAC is directed by a PhD-level manager versed in qualitative research and program evaluation.

Results from the above-described evaluation processes will be used to: 1) measure if the program meets its intended outcomes by increasing college-going rates by an annual average of 2% among students served, 2) assess college-going culture in project partner schools and continually bolster activity delivery and advisement correlated to those empirically-demonstrated to increase college-going behavior, and 3) continuously improve program effectiveness and efficiency. Finally, results will inform project effectiveness by assessing if it met or exceeded its stated outcome to increase college-going rates in project partner schools by an average of 2% per project year.

As a grantee requesting \$500,000+ per year, MCAC will retain The Center for the Study of Organizational Change to conduct a follow-up qualitative evaluation of MCAC in spring 2015, four years past its initial assessment. Cost will be negotiated with and funding for it provided by alternate private sources. The study will examine MCAC's effectiveness at scaling and its capacity for long-term sustainability, offering insight regarding its goal to positively impact college-going among

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disadvantaged students all across Missouri. Evaluation results will be submitted with subsequent grant applications.

Amendment Justification

None

Clarification Summary

FY2014 CLARIFICATIONS

Budget Clarification:

Section I.C. Staff Travel: CNCS Sponsored Meetings. No money was budgeted for this line item.

Programmatic Clarification:

The grant start date and member enrollment period is correct as stated in the application. I confirm the start date of 08/01/2014 and the grant end date of 06/30/2015.

Strategic Engagement Slots Clarification:

None of the requested slots are targeted to recruiting members with disabilities, however we do market the positions across the University campus, including through the Office of Disabilities Services.

No-Cost MSY Clarification:

We will not be requesting no-cost MSYs.

Healthcare Clarification:

1. Summit America, through The Corps Network is our health insurance provider (Summit America has been our provider for the past two years).
2. We first learned of Summit America and The Corps Network three years ago and through another AmeriCorps program in another state.
3. The proposed budget provides healthcare that meets the AmeriCorps healthcare regulations; however, the plan does not meet Minimum Essential Coverage under the Affordable Health Care Act. The provider, who is covering many AmeriCorps Members nationwide, is working with the government to bring the plan to MEC requirements.

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4. To meet Minimum Essential Coverage, we would need to be able to provide health care benefits through the University, at an additional cost of \$6,622.80 per Member (35.02% federal benefits rate minus the cost of the current health insurance premium) for a total additional cost of \$264,912 for 40 members for this grant cycle. We are unable to do so as it would require a change in job classification for members and making this change would place them in a position of being considered employees which is prohibited by AmeriCorps. When we secured our first AmeriCorps grant, the University changed position classifications so that Members were not considered employees so that we would be compliant with AmeriCorps regulations. If we change the classification back, they would receive University benefits but would then be out of compliance with AmeriCorps as they would be considered employees.

Continuation Changes

None; this is a new application.

Grant Characteristics