

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School will have 30 quarter time AmeriCorps members who will be economically disadvantaged National Service participants, unemployed prior to their term of service in Philadelphia and 3 full-time members who are unemployed prior to their term of service. At the end of the first program year, the quarter-time AmeriCorps members -- all of whom are economically disadvantaged opportunity youth -- and 3 full-time members will be responsible for 500 individuals receiving emergency food from food banks and food pantries. Over the course of the three year program, 63 (70%) of our members who are enrolled as students will make a gain on the Test of Basic Education, 67 (75%) will earn a vocational certification and 63 (70%) will earn a high school diploma. In addition, our 33 AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 50 volunteers that will be engaged in securing healthy futures for economically disadvantaged individuals.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Economic Opportunity (O12), with the complementary program measure of Healthy Futures (H10). The CNCS investment of \$123,632 will be matched with \$124,058 in public funding from the School District of Philadelphia (non-federal).

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

### a. Problem/Need

With a four-year graduation rate of just 55%, nearly 20% fewer Philadelphians graduate from high school than other students in the Pennsylvania (EdWeek). The majority of those who do not graduate on time ultimately drop out of school altogether: about 40% of young people in Philadelphia schools. The School District of Philadelphia is facing an undeniable dropout epidemic. Nationally, almost twice as many minority students drop out of high school compared to white students (CNN.com), and economically disadvantaged students are six times more likely to dropout than their wealthier counterparts. In Philadelphia, these factors clearly compound the dropout crisis, as EdWeek reports that 77% of students in the School District of Philadelphia are income-eligible for free and reduced lunch, and 86% are minority.

The thousands of young people who drop out of Philadelphia high schools each year severely limit their future career options. While national unemployment rates have improved slightly (8%), high unemployment continues to have the largest impact on those without a high school diploma (13%) according to the Center for American Progress. Unemployment also disproportionately affects

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minorities. According to the PA Department of Labor, when the unemployment rate for dropouts hit a high of 15% in 2009, the unemployment rate for African American dropouts exceeded 21%.

The competition for entry level jobs is stiffer than ever, with college graduates and seniors applying for these jobs and employers assigning greater value to education level than ever before. A Drexel University Center for Labor Markets and Policy Study reported that a mere 55% of all 20-24 year olds in Philadelphia are employed and only 35% of 20-24 year old high school dropouts are employed. The percentage of Philadelphians over age 16 that are not in the labor force (42%) is one of the highest of any major city in the country. Because of this hyper-competitive job market for entry level jobs, huge percentages of young people are not just unemployed, but have given up the search for employment altogether. The economic future for high school dropouts is grim, even for those who are employed. Data from the US Census Bureau shows a high school dropout typically earns \$10,386 less than a high school graduate annually and \$36,424 less than a person with a bachelor's degree.

Unemployment and under-education are not the only issues plaguing Philadelphians. The Pew Charitable Trusts' Philadelphia 2012: State of the City report states that Philadelphia has the highest rates of poverty (26%), homicide (12%) and food insecurity (22%) of the 10 largest cities in the United States. Education plays a major factor in all of these issues. A 2009 research study from Northwestern University showed that incarceration rates for 18-24 year old high school dropouts were 63 times higher than college graduates. The Philadelphia District Attorney's Office reports that high school dropouts are 8 times more likely to be incarcerated and dropouts are 20 times more likely to be homicide victims in Philadelphia.

Education level also has a major impact on poverty. According to a national study by the Department of Education, high school dropouts ages 18-24 have a poverty rate of 30.8%, compared to a 13.5% poverty rate for college graduates. Poverty among children under 18 in Philadelphia is nearly double that in the rest of the state, with one-third of the City's children living below the poverty line according to a 2011 CLASP policy study. This soaring poverty has led to rampant food hardship in Philadelphia. Data from The Food Action and Research Center reports that Pennsylvania's First Congressional District (which includes a large portion of Philadelphia) ranks fourth-highest for food hardship in the entire country, with more than 31% of households in the District unable to afford to buy the food they need to feed their families. The 2011 Education Law Center study, PA's Best Investment: The Social

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and Economic Benefits of Public Education, states that "graduating from high school improves the quality of health, reduces dependence on public health programs by 60%" and that dropouts are three times more likely to receive welfare assistance than those with a diploma.

YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School helps high school dropouts reclaim their education and become an asset to their community. Each year we receive more than four times as many applications as there are slots in our 12 month program. Our targeted age range, 18-21, is a particularly underserved and vulnerable group -- too old to reenroll in public high school and too young for most adult education programs. YouthBuild students have high and unique needs. On average: 45% of our participants are parents; 48% have been arrested; 30% have an incarcerated parent; 18% have been in foster care; 90% are in low or very low-income households; 10% are homeless; and 40% live in unstable housing. These opportunity youth work to make improvements to their own lives, while also partnering with Share Foods to help make improvements to the lives of people in their community who are struggling with food insecurity. The self confidence they gain from improving their lives while also helping the community around puts them on the path to success as they transition into college and career.

### b. AmeriCorps members solve community problems

YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School (YBPhilly) uniquely addresses all of the City's most pressing issues through one comprehensive program. At YBPhilly, unemployed, undereducated, economically disadvantaged opportunity youth have a chance to earn their high school diploma, develop job skills and give back to their own communities as AmeriCorps members. All YBPhilly students -- unemployed high school dropouts -- are enrolled as part-time AmeriCorps members who complete 450 hours of service to their community as a central part of our program. YBPhilly AmeriCorps members address the issues in Philadelphia that directly impact their own lives and their community by: volunteering at local non-profit organizations that help alleviate food insecurity; participating in nationally recognized service days; developing partnerships with community organizations to address community issues together; designing and participating in weekly service projects; and evaluating the impact of projects on communities served.

At YBPhilly, opportunity youth spend half of their time in our one year program (three 5 week sessions) in the classroom building academic skills and the other half (alternating three 5 week

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sessions) learning hands-on vocational and soft skills. Service-learning is then tightly interwoven both the academic and vocational curriculum. Because our members are above traditional high school age (18-21), and undercredentialed, there is an urgency to prepare them for postsecondary and employment. YBPhilly follows a rigorous competency-based curriculum. Our learner-centered education model, specifically designed to meet the educational needs of opportunity youth who dropped out of high school, offers a year of academic coursework combined with hands-on occupational training in a high demand industry, intensive case management support services, transition planning, leadership development and service learning. All students receive basic skills training, as well as college prep and college exposure. Academic and enrichment courses are innovative, hands-on and incorporate project-based learning with vigilant evaluation to ensure both rigor and engagement. Instead of trying to skim over four years of high school content in one year, we focus on critical and core academic concepts important for a good transition to work and postsecondary success. In order to graduate from the program, students must demonstrate competency in each of these academic and nonacademic competencies.

The ethic of service is core to our mission and model, and service is the key way that young people in our program reconnect to their communities. In the process of changing their own lives, YBPhilly students knock down barriers to their development, remove negative stereotypes about dropouts, earn the credentials they need to secure meaningful employment and proudly serve in their own communities as AmeriCorps members. In a City with thousands of dropouts, YBPhilly typically receives about four times as many applications as there are slots in our program. Applicants are selected to be enrolled into our program based on their demonstration of motivation to recommit to their education and their community through a four step selection process: applicants must fill out a qualifying application (must be a Philadelphia resident, 18-20 years old and a high school dropout); attend a group information session; attend an individual interview to screen for motivation; and successfully complete an 8 day orientation. Applicants are recruited from all sections of Philadelphia but the vast majority comes from low-income, minority neighborhoods that directly face the kinds of problems we are striving to solve. Each year more than 90% of our enrolled students are documented as low-income according to federal poverty guidelines and 97% of our students are minority. All YBPhilly students are enrolled as quarter-time AmeriCorps members. YBPhilly provides opportunity youth with the skills and supports they need to successfully move on to college and career -- all the while they serve as AmeriCorps members addressing the urgent community need of food insecurity.

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The primary way that our quarter and full-time members give back to their community is through meeting the urgent food needs of individuals from their own neighborhoods. Through our partnership with the Share Food program, our members increase the number of individuals who have access to food, run campaign drives to collect food donations, support Share's food pantry through inventory and stocking, and increase the number of individuals participating in the Share Package Program, providing hundreds of low-income individuals with emergency food. This service work is integrated into both the academic sessions and vocational sessions of the program, so that members provide service throughout the program year. Our members are not only empowered through giving back to their community, but they also serve as important role models of service.

Evidence-Base: The YouthBuild model is proven to be an effective way to help high school dropouts earn credentials that are important to employers, transition to jobs and college, and improve the community around them. The Brandeis "Life After YouthBuild" study found that 75% of YouthBuild graduates "were either enrolled in postsecondary education or in jobs averaging \$10 an hour; 91% of graduates rated their YouthBuild experience highly; 85% were still involved in community activities; and a high percentage were successful and free of government supports using a variety of indicators." In this study, 65% of YouthBuild graduates said that their perceived life expectancy was 30 years longer because of their participation in a YouthBuild program. The 2007 research study "The Efficacy of Education Awards in YouthBuild AmeriCorps Programs" from Brandeis showed that those who completed YouthBuild AmeriCorps programs were more likely than YouthBuild students in programs without AmeriCorps to apply and be accepted into postsecondary programs. Those YouthBuild students who earned an AmeriCorps award were the most likely of all YouthBuild students to enroll in postsecondary education after graduation. YBPhilly has proven positive impact and success with former high school dropouts, with an average graduation rate of 76% (compared to the local JobCorps program whose graduation rate is 68%). YBPhilly is currently in year two of a five-year longitudinal impact study, funded by CNCS and the Department of Labor, and conducted by highly regarded researchers at MDRC and Mathematica. We believe that this study will establish concrete evidence of the powerful impact our program has on opportunity youth and the city of Philadelphia.

YBPhilly has been a demonstrated and celebrated leader in community service in Philadelphia for almost two decades. In 2008, YouthBuild was awarded the Harris Wofford Award for Active

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Citizenship for our long-standing dedication and commitment to service, and in 2011 won the YBUSA "Leader of the Pack" award for the best service project. YouthBuild has been selected to conduct the lead project in Philadelphia's MLK Day of Service five times in the last 10 years. In 2012, YouthBuild was nominated for the American Giving Awards: our experience and community impact was highlighted on this nationally televised awards show that aired last December on NBC.

Through a structured balance of academics, job training and service in our one year program, our members will: 1. Earn a high school diploma; 2. Earn an industry recognized vocational certification; 3. Complete 450 hours of community service in the economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in which they live; 4. Provide at least 500 individuals with emergency food through food pantries and shelters. 5. Engage 50 volunteers in addressing urgent food needs.

### c. Member Training

YBPhilly begins the orientation process into AmeriCorps before program enrollment (July-August) so that all applicants are fully aware of what it means to be a YouthBuild student, and how it relates to service in their community and their role as an AmeriCorps member in our community. Once students are officially enrolled as AmeriCorps members in September, they engage in a three-day orientation training that provides detail on the rules and expectations of AmeriCorps. After basic training in AmeriCorps Handbook & Paperwork, Leadership Development, Civic Engagement, Intro to Service Learning, Life Skills and Resiliency (taught by our full-time certified teachers) during orientation, these trainings are revisited throughout the yearlong program year and embedded in the YBPhilly curriculum taught by our certified instructors.

All YBPhilly AmeriCorps members are provided with first aid/CPR training, taught by an American Red Cross certified instructor. Through their weekly service learning class, students are reminded of their role as AmeriCorps members as they consistently reflect upon the service activities they provide both in and out of classes. These on-going reflection activities ensure that participants gain a full understanding of the way their individual service work impacts their community and how service makes them feel about themselves, and help to instill a sense of community responsibility. All prohibited activities are made clear to members from the beginning of the school year, and members are specifically reminded of particular regulations when it is timely and relevant (e.g. around election season, members are reminded that they cannot partake in political activities/rallies/voter registration

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while wearing the AmeriCorps logo or on behalf of AmeriCorps). All full-time AmeriCorps members participate in a week-long AmeriCorps orientation training led by the Director of Student Life in August where they learn the interworkings of YouthBuild as well as the rules, regulations and expectations of the AmeriCorps program, with orientation topics including AmeriCorps Handbook & Paperwork, Connection to Larger Service Movement, Intro to Service Learning Framework, and Service Partnership Building. Full-time members then join in YouthBuild's weeklong professional development workshops and meetings to prepare for the year. On-going professional development trainings and Communities of Practice (covering topics such as leadership development and project planning) throughout the year continue full-time member education and reinforce core programming concepts and strategies. All volunteers that members generate to support our AmeriCorps service participate in a detailed orientation and training, conducted by our VISTA Volunteer Coordinator and are provided with a Volunteer Handbook that reinforces all prohibited activities as well as volunteer roles and expectations. Volunteers are supervised at on-site service projects by full-time members.

### d. Member Supervision

YBPhilly has a successful 20 year history of providing service learning and education to underserved populations, and puts many supports in place to ensure our student members succeed in the program (e.g. close monitoring of service hours to ensure members are on track; case managers to help overcome personal obstacles; transition counselors to help apply for college and employment; and intensive support services in the year after graduation). Ameen Akbar, Director of Student Life, is responsible for the supervision and oversight of YouthBuild's AmeriCorps program. He meets with members weekly and works with them individually to provide guidance and support, and to help them meet personal and professional goals. Raised in the Mt. Airy section of Philadelphia, Mr. Akbar has dedicated his life to being a driving force for change in the community and improving the lives of young people in Philadelphia. Mr. Akbar earned his Bachelor's in Business Management from Penn State and has 13 years of experience supporting inner-city youth as they transform their lives and communities. The full-time AmeriCorps members meet weekly as a group to discuss their challenges and successes, share best practices and problem solve with each other and their supervisor. Mr. Akbar is supervised and supported by Program Director, Brian Leffler, who has more than 12 years of experience administering AmeriCorps programs and 3 years of directly supervising AmeriCorps members. During all community service projects, an on-site supervisor (Melissa Jackson, a PA certified teacher with 15 years of teaching experience) ensures that student members are completing

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tasks and following regulations. All supervisors participate in a monthly Disc Leadership Training series conducted by human resources professionals to provide supervisors with the tools they need to be strong, outcomes-driven supervisors who properly guide and support staff at all levels.

### **e. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification**

YBPhilly begins messaging around the centrality of service in our program during the application process, and by the time students are enrolled as AmeriCorps members, they are clear about the important role service and AmeriCorps plays at YBPhilly. Our members take the AmeriCorps pledge at a large public Launch Event along with AmeriCorps members from across the state. All members also participate in a City-wide AmeriCorps Rally to kick off AmeriCorps Week, an event that we have both hosted and coordinated. The AmeriCorps logo is prominently displayed on our school uniform shirts (worn daily), and the pledge and logo are displayed in several locations throughout our school building. Service reflection activities are built into the academic schedule and because service is a shared experience in the program, there is a lot of common language developed around service throughout the program. Student members feel comfortable talking about their service experiences and their role as AmeriCorps members. They know that they break stereotypes about high school dropouts and are often called upon to represent the opportunity youth perspective of service at events and panels.

## **Organizational Capability**

### **a. Organizational Background and staffing**

The mission of YBPhilly is to provide out-of-school youth with the broadest range of tools, supports and opportunities available to become self-sufficient, responsible and productive citizens in their community. The values of AmeriCorps are central to that mission, helping young people connect to their communities and develop a lifelong sense of community responsibility. YBPhilly was founded in 1992 to deal with the critical issue of out-of-school youth in Philadelphia. The organization was based on Dorothy Stoneman's model, created in East Harlem in 1978 to give high school dropouts the opportunity to earn their high school diploma while developing job skills through community service. Since its inception, YBPhilly has recruited and enrolled 3217 youth. Of these, 2235 (70%) completed the program, and 2110 earned high school diplomas (87% of those who completed). Together these young adults rehabilitated 84 houses for low-income families, refurbished 3,500 computers for local schools and charities, and worked closely with Share Food (and its executive director Steveanna Wynn) for more than a decade, with hundreds of students donating thousands of hours of service

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toward the alleviation of food insecurity in Philadelphia. More than 70% of graduates are placed in jobs or enrolled in continuing education within 6 months of graduation. Through its 21 years of experience providing education to opportunity youth and 18 years of experience as an AmeriCorps program, we have learned all aspects of operating a comprehensive service and education program for opportunity youth. YBPhilly has an established reputation city-wide and nationally as an innovative alternative educator and service leader, and a leading member of the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Network.

YBPhilly manages finances in a cost-effective manner, using funding from a broad base of sources to provide our students with vast resources. The organization has extensive experience managing grant funds, including 12 years of PennSERVE AmeriCorps grant funding; 18 years of funding as a national direct AmeriCorps sub-grantee, 21 annual grants from the Office of Housing and Urban Development, and 6 years as a direct Department of Labor YouthBuild grantee. For each of these years, YBPhilly leveraged significant additional resources (from state, local and private sources such as the School District of Philadelphia, The Gates Foundation, JP Morgan Chase and private donors) to maximize use of funds, and consistently met reporting and accountability deadlines. We have also demonstrated our experience in ensuring compliance with the administrative requirements of large and often complex grants. For 21 years YBPhilly has: recruited and retained large numbers of eligible opportunity youth; used multiple web-based MIS reporting systems; provided thousands of hours of community service; submitted timely reports to all funders; and facilitated staff and member training and professional development.

As a tax-exempt 501(c)3 corporation, YBPhilly currently operates under a \$4.9 million budget. A board of trustees meets quarterly, and its finance and executive committees meet bi-monthly, to ensure sound fiscal practices, responsible budgeting and contract compliance. YBPhilly contracts with Paychex, a professional payroll service, to administer payroll. YBPhilly has a well-developed fiscal management system that uses checks and balances recommended and overseen by an independent auditor. An annual audit is conducted under OMB Circular A-133 by an independent accounting firm and our audits have not had any findings in the last ten years.

YBPhilly benefits from a 19 member Board of Trustees, consisting of business leaders and respected educators in Philadelphia, and a strong, competent team of 42 qualified full time staff members. The service component of our program is one of 4 key elements highlighted in our most recent strategic

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plan, demonstrating the Board and Leadership's value and commitment to service. All program administrators have extensive experience working with opportunity youth. Simran Sidhu, Executive Director, is responsible for development of all facets of operation of YBPhilly. Ms. Sidhu has a master's degree in Journalism from Temple University, a BS in Psychology, and supervised the development and implementation of YBPhilly's AmeriCorps program for three years before taking over as Executive Director in 2003. Ms. Sidhu has served as president of the YouthBuild USA Affiliated Directors Network since 2010. She sat on the Professional Advisory Committee for United Way of Greater Philadelphia, and is currently a member of that group's Campaign Cabinet. Ms. Sidhu was named to the 40 Under 40 award by the Philadelphia Business Journal in 2009 and was asked to speak about the value of opportunity youth as service providers at the Aspen Institute in 2013.

### b. Compliance and Accountability

As a 19 year AmeriCorps program, YBPhilly has a long and stable history of compliance with all AmeriCorps rules and regulations. YBPhilly is well aware of prohibited activities and these activities are listed as prohibited activities in member and staff handbooks and punishment is enforced for infractions. We have demonstrated our experience in ensuring compliance with the administrative requirements of large and often complex grants, including 27 grants from AmeriCorps National Direct and State funding. Quarterly internal file and compliance audits conducted by administrative staff and the Director of Student Life help detect any potential issues, and a core team of staff with extensive AmeriCorps grant experience work together to create timely, detailed action plans to correct any detected issues. Member service is closely monitored by an on-site supervisor who meets with the Director of Student Life monthly to discuss the service partnership and member activities. Our Grants and Data Manager, who has 6 years of experience with AmeriCorps grant reporting, is responsible for timely and efficient data entry and reports, and tracks member hours closely, and records information accurately. Completion of service hours is a graduation requirement for all student members. YBPhilly staff have extensive experience meeting paperwork compliance for multiple funders for hundreds of students each year and our Fiscal Director has extensive experience managing complex grants and meeting fiscal deadlines. Multiple YBPhilly staff have participated in AmeriCorps trainings and conferences and are thus knowledgeable about AmeriCorps rules, regulations and administrative requirements. YBPhilly staff members regularly attend AmeriCorps webinars, workshops and trainings to ensure we are staying in compliance with all rules and regulations.

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### c. Past Performance

In our last three-year PennSERVE grant, YBPhilly successfully met and exceeded all its performance outcomes goals: 79% high school diploma attainment (goal = 70%); 79% industry recognized certification attainment (goal = 70%); 886 computers refurbished and donated into the community (goal=600); 300 hours of technical assistance (goal = 300); and 90% of organizations indicated that they more effectively use technology (goal = 90%). YBPhilly has had no compliance issues with this grant. While we experienced much success with our computer refurbishment program for the last eight years, in 2014-17, we have decided to expand our efforts in addressing food insecurity -- a substantial and growing issue that hits close to home for many of our members. We have had a strong relationship with Share for more than a decade, and will grow upon that established relationship to provide food for more than 500 individuals. This outcome is grounded in past performance, as YBPhilly students have been serving in food pantries and shelter kitchens since the establishment of our AmeriCorps program, providing thousands of combined hours of service and hundreds of meals for food insecure Philadelphians.

Since our 2004 PennSERVE grant, YBPhilly has achieved 100% enrollment, successfully filling all slots each program year. YBPhilly has had steady outcomes as a PennSERVE grantee, with an average retention rate of 76%, which is high among programs where 100% of members are economically disadvantaged opportunity youth. We realize that programs that do not enroll a high risk population are able to achieve much higher retention outcomes (for example, we have 100% retention and completion of terms of service for all ten of our full-time AmeriCorps members, who are college graduates) and our economically disadvantaged population struggles with personal barriers to program completion. However, because our student members come from backgrounds where service is oftentimes seen as a punishment, and ideas of civic responsibility are not typically instilled, we believe that through the AmeriCorps program we are able to make the strongest impact on our members, who begin to see service and civic duty in a new way and subsequently become life-long contributors to their communities. Service learning and a commitment to community is an important part of the journey for YBPhilly students, who transform over the course of the year from opportunity youth and dropout to successful graduate and conscientious citizen. YBPhilly proactively supports members to help them identify and overcome potential barriers, and connect them to community resources. Our multi-faceted support system of case managers, counselors and mentors helps prevent student members from falling through the cracks and keeps them retained in the

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program while they are facing personal issues. In addition, the education award means a great deal to our low-income population, who are increasingly attending postsecondary institutions and finding their education awards vital to college enrollment. The AmeriCorps program is well aligned with our Gates-funded Post Secondary Initiative, which is designed to aid and support students on their journey from high school dropout to college graduate.

### d. Continuous Improvement

Our stakeholder relationships allow us to partner in projects that meet real, timely and specific community needs on the ground level. We invite and encourage feedback from individuals and community organizations and are responsive to outside input and suggestion. We invite community stakeholders to serve as Board members, Committee members and Advisory Council members within our organization and to attend program events. We actively involve community partners and stakeholders in project planning and maintain open lines of communication with these organizations. We have very strong working partnerships with the key organizations integral to service in the city, including the Mayor's Office of Civic Engagement, United Way, and Global Citizen, and our students have spent thousands of hours working on, leading and planning collaborative projects with these service leaders. After all projects we ask for feedback from students, staff and partners to find ways to improve future projects.

As a forward-thinking organization that embraces change and learning, we constantly review several levels of data, and are always willing to adapt programming to respond to the data and ensure that our students are truly prepared to succeed. This drive to focus on the long-term success of our graduates has led to exciting program innovations, as well as a culture where staff and leadership at all levels are in the habit of examining both short terms indicator data (collected through daily attendance, formative assessments etc.), as well as longer term data (graduation, placement, retention in placement) regularly with a view to improve and innovate. We have been making continual progress on program outcomes (AmeriCorps retention for the 2012-13 program year was 90%, compared to the average of 76%) All of our student AmeriCorps members from the 2012-13 program year are a part of the 5 year MDRC longitudinal study, and we intend to take the information and data presented on this group to inform future programming - particularly in relation to service-learning.

Change at the program has been driven by both external and internal data, as well as by bringing

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together anecdotal as well as "hard numbers" data. For example, after receiving guidance from industry leaders in the healthcare field and hosting focus groups with students around career interest, YBPhilly became the first YouthBuild program in the country to pilot a Healthcare Training Program with industry-specific training for students interested in pursuing a career in the high-demand healthcare industry. In the first two years of the pilot program, YBPhilly graduates in the CNA pilot program had a 90% placement rate and made an average of \$11-\$14/hour in entry level positions. Seeing the data that showed our CNA graduates easily find living wage jobs immediately after graduation, we wanted to be able to provide that opportunity to all students. Therefore, we took the sectoral lessons learned in our CNA training and applied them to other training programs. This is just one example of how YBPhilly regularly uses data and stakeholder feedback to improve programming.

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

#### a. Cost Effectiveness

The Corporation cost for the YBPhilly program is \$11,301 per MSY (see budget) which is on par with our current MSY allotment of \$11,021 and significantly less than our previous per MSY cost from 2012-13 (\$13,300). The total match of \$124,760 under this grant will come from the PA Department of Education and the School District of Philadelphia which together coordinate to provide approximately \$8,000 per pupil in charter school monies each school year. YBPhilly's charter was renewed through 2016 and this funding is secure and committed. When we enroll 30 quarter time members, we will receive \$240,000 of these charter school funds, \$124,058 of which will be used to meet the match requirements for operating and member costs. A dropout costs taxpayers an average of \$292,000 over a lifetime through incarceration costs and lost tax revenue. Our comprehensive program, which provides academic and vocational training, leadership development, service learning, intensive case management and one year of follow up support all through in-house resources, is an extremely cost effective way to address the high school dropout epidemic. According to the Annie E. Casey Kids Count project, Pennsylvania spends \$13,356 per student for education services -- \$2000 per person more than our MSY cost, which includes more than education services.

#### b. Budget Adequacy

YBPhilly has developed stable relationships and secured diverse funding for general operating and project support from a wide variety of federal, state and local government agencies, private foundations, individuals and corporations. We have strengthened our Board and giving program, which has led to a substantial decrease in reliance on federal support in the last three years.

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YouthBuild's established Development Committee, consisting of eight influential community members, continues to develop financial partnerships with local corporations, law firms and organizations in Philadelphia. Through YouthBuild's Annual Giving campaign, we reach over 800 community members and stakeholders each year to spread the word about the organization and generate community financial support, and our media hits have more than tripled over the last five years. YBPhilly has more than doubled its private funding in the past four years. Individuals, private foundations and corporations, such as The Gates Foundation, Ernst and Young, and JP Morgan Chase, provide YBPhilly with cash and in-kind grants of more than \$1,000,000. We will be reapplying to these and other foundations for operating support in the 2014-2017 program years and anticipate a portion of which will be used towards the match requirement. Our Director of Development continues to focus on finding new sources of private support and building relationships with potential funders and corporate donors. YBPhilly has formed many collaborative relationships with governmental and community-based agencies and public and private funders have invested significant resources in the program. All of these factors, along with our consistent history of performance have contributed to our stability and long-term sustainability. YBPhilly has built into the budget the proper planning and supervision of all program personnel to provide vocational training, and teachers to provide academic instruction. Also included in the budget are the primary program support costs including required training events and building space.

### **Evaluation Summary or Plan**

The community service component of our program is a way to reconnect opportunity youth to their communities through action. To evaluate its effectiveness, members will be surveyed before and after their term of service to identify any changes that take place in their level of civic engagement and commitment to service. YBPhilly staff will collect this data to determine whether the values and behaviors of our students related to community service changes over the course of their tenure at YouthBuild. Members will be surveyed anonymously using Survey Monkey. In the pre-service survey, members will be asked questions about their service experiences and feelings about service and whether they plan to continue performing service after their term ends. In the post-service survey, members will again be asked these questions again and results will be analyzed. A pre and post survey will also be given to our service partner, Share Food, to determine impact, value and effectiveness of our service work, as well as to the recipients of the service to determine satisfaction and community impact. In addition to the surveys, we will also facilitate focus groups at the beginning of the year and end of the year to corroborate our survey data.

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## Amendment Justification

n/a

## Clarification Summary

### Further Budget Clarifications

Start up and implementation costs for the new program will primarily consist of an increase in staff time dedicated to program and curriculum development (including developing quality reflection and building transferable professional skills through the theme of the alleviation of food insecurity) partnership building with shelters and food pantries to ensure robust and meaningful service experiences for members through various avenues, certification training for quarter time members, and service learning geared toward food insecurity. The CNCS share of these costs are incorporated in the staff salary section of the budget.

### Budget Clarification

1. Cost per MSY: The small increase in MSY cost (\$276.00) for the 2014-15 program year is being requested partly due to the proposed shift in the program: from technology and bridging the digital divide to abating food insecurity. We anticipate that this shift will require more focus in the start up and implementation phase and so have added an additional full time member as well as associated start up costs. However, the total MSY cost is in line (and somewhat smaller than) past awards (such as in 2012-2013). In 2013-14 our total funds were reduced, thus reducing our MSY cost.
2. Budget Line Item Clarification: YouthBuild Philadelphia did not put line items into the budget for certain expenditures (such as training, uniforms, staff travel, evaluation and handbooks) that are being covered by additional leveraged funds (over and above matched funds). These funds cover specific expenses that are complementary to and aligned with the AmeriCorps grant. For example, the intake phase of the evaluation was covered by the Department of Labor and a private grant, and the nationally recognized research firm is being paid directly by these entities for the follow up portions of the research study. Also, private and charter school funds allow us to pay for staff travel and training expenses (in addition to the \$750 allocated in the budget under the heading Corporation Sponsored Meetings). There are also no further costs involved with the development of staff and volunteer manuals which have already been printed or are accessible online. All of this funding is additional leverage and not match, therefore not listed directly in the budget, but the associated activities will

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happen and be reported in narrative reports for the grant.

### Programmatic

1. Cost Effectiveness - YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School is a comprehensive one year program that provides the full array of support and training services to low income, high needs high school dropouts. Our student members face an array of personal barriers and challenges that require high expectations and high supports for success. YouthBuild is effective in transforming "at-risk" young people into successful and conscientious citizens because we serve the whole student, not just a part of the student and therefore services include academic training, vocational skills training, service learning, leadership development, intensive case management, and transition support services for a minimum of one year after graduation. The MSY cost of \$11,300 is cost effective, particularly when compared to other programs that serve similar populations. For example Job Corps operates at a cost of \$14,100 per pupil and the per pupil median local school district cost is \$13,205. In addition, while their programs serve similar populations, they do not provide the same comprehensive scope of services.
2. Roles and responsibilities of full time members: Full time members will be responsible for: facilitating service in the area of the alleviation food insecurity; making connections to the community's need of service; coordinating, planning and supervising secondary service events; coordinating, planning and implementing projects for National Service Days; developing service learning curriculum; and boosting the morale of the part time members. Our part time members have high and unique needs and their time is best spent focusing only on service delivery with opportunity for leadership development. The full time members work alongside the part time members as role models in service but are also instrumental in all of the planning and coordination that is necessary to implement meaningful service work for all of our members.
3. Performance measures: In the H10 Performance measure narrative it was stated that our members would complete 250 hours of service with Share Food. This was a clerical error. It should have stated that quarter time members would each spend 450 hours of service in the area of Alleviating Food Insecurity and that our full time members will be completing hours alongside the members in addition to planning service projects and events. This has been updated in the performance measure section to reflect the accurate information.

## Narratives

### Strategic Engagement

1. Targeting members with disabilities: YouthBuild Philadelphia typically receives nearly 1,000 applications to our program each year and a large percentage of our applicants (and then student members) have disabilities that include: learning disabilities; behavioral disabilities; emotional disabilities; and/or physical disabilities. Approximately 20% of our student members each year are documented as special education students because of one of these disabilities. YouthBuild strives to serve those most in need, and actively recruits student members with challenging personal barriers such as disabilities. As part of the strategy to recruit students with disabilities, during recruitment and program orientation staff emphasizes our in-house and external mentoring programs, our intensive case management supports, our in-house counseling services, our award winning special education program, our small class sizes and our individualized services. We anticipate that approximately 15-20% of our quarter time slots will be young people with disabilities.
2. We are not requesting any additional MSY slots beyond what was in our proposal at this time.

### MSY with no program funds attached

In our current application, we have asked for 30 no-cost quarter time members. We are not requesting any additional slots above and beyond these initial 30 quarter time members at this time.

### Healthcare

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

We originally proposed that full-time members use Aetna (which is the carried our full time employees use) but we found that the Blue Cross/Keystone Silver Proactive Plan was a better fit for our full-time members. We propose that full-time members use this plan for healthcare insurance coverage in the coming program year.

2. How did you select the provider?

Aetna is the insurance provider that covers YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School (YBPCS) full-time employees. The broker representing YBPCS gave full-time members some of his agencies resources as well as the Healthcare Insurance Marketplace website. The Blue Cross/Keystone Silver

## Narratives

Proactive Plan that we found that was the best fit for our members was found on the Healthcare Insurance Marketplace website.

3. 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?

Yes. At YouthBuild, we believe that high quality health insurance is a necessity for all of our staff and full-time members. We have done extensive research to ensure that all members can receive the best possible healthcare coverage.

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

N/A

5. 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.

N/A

### Continuation Changes

n/a

### Grant Characteristics