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Executive Summary

The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP) of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) will have 28 half-time AmeriCorps members who will serve military service members, veterans and their families, assisting with access to healthcare, behavioral health care, social services, housing, employment or other individual and family services in the Greater Hampton Roads and Central/Southside Regions of Virginia. The investment from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) will expand the already successful Virginia Veterans Corps (VVC), which engages AmeriCorps service members in community support services for veterans, military service members and military families. The VVC "Navigator" is a trusted friend who is trained by VWWP and by participating organizations to have a working knowledge of community resources and the ability to help the service member, veteran or family access whatever services are needed to maintain a good quality of life, improve family strength and participate actively in their communities. Navigators ensure that the next level of service is provided by VWWP Resource and Housing Specialists. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for assisting over 1500 military service members, veterans and family members. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will focus on the CNCS focus area of Service to Veterans, Military Service Members and Their Families. The CNCS investment of \$186,200 will be matched with \$72,411 (match), \$72,411 in public (state) funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

Volunteer Recruitment And Utilization: The VVC Program Director will manage the recruitment and utilization of volunteers who will serve with the Navigators in service to veterans, service members and military families. Over its five years of operation, VWWP has amassed a list of individuals who have offered to volunteer with VWWP. This database will be utilized to identify volunteers and to match them with the services that they can offer to those served by the VVC Navigators. In addition, VVC will engage military service members, veterans and military family members as volunteers.

Among the VVC activities that may engage volunteers are: MLK Day activities (January 20); the Freedom Walk (Sept. 11th) sponsored by Operation Homefront; Tidewater Military Family Services Council Fall Festival; Operation Homefront's two major distribution events, Fall Back to School Backpack Distribution (August) and the Holiday Toy distribution (December); and the Annual Mud Run sponsored by the Armed Services YMCA. In all of these venues, volunteers will be utilized for

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event set up/breakdown, registrations, distribution of informational materials, event support items such as t-shirts and water bottles for sporting events, sorting and amassing of school supplies, toys, personal needs items and gifts for backpacks and holiday distributions. Navigators serving the VWWP Housing Resource Specialists and homeless services organizations may utilize volunteers to assist with the Point in Time Counts, registering volunteers or assisting with the actual count to identify and register homeless individuals.

Performance Measures Tier 1: Virginia has selected the National Performance Measure, Service to Veterans and Military Service Members as its priority. The primary objectives of the Virginia Veterans Corps will be to provide significant, high quality services to military service members, veterans and their families to support them in their communities, including the provision of permanent supportive housing options to prevent homelessness.

The Problem: According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Virginia is home to 840,398 veterans who have served in conflicts ranging from World War II to the current engagements in the gulf region, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF/Iraq), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF/Afghanistan) and Operation New Dawn. The Greater Hampton Roads region encompasses the largest amassing of military bases and military facilities in the world. The Richmond area is home to the 80th Army Reserve Training Command, the largest training command in the U.S. In addition, Dinwiddie County in VWWP Region 4 includes the Fort Lee Army Base that has seen enormous growth due to the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure mandates and its designation as an Army Sustainment Center of Excellence. Also of significant note is Nottoway County in VWWP Region 4, home to the training headquarters of the Virginia National Guard at Fort Pickett.

VWWP is statutorily required to coordinate and facilitate the behavioral health and rehabilitative services needed by Virginia's veterans and their families (Section 2.2-2001.1 Code of Virginia). Because of the large number of military bases in Virginia, many military service members and families transition to Virginia for their permanent residences. The VWWP commissioned a comprehensive needs assessment in 2010 conducted by the Institute for Policy and Governance at Virginia Tech University. The needs assessment provides the most recent data available on a statewide and regional basis to determine the needs of veterans in Virginia. The research study, Assessing the Experiences, Supportive Service Needs and Service Gaps of Veterans in the Commonwealth of

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Virginia, 2010, assesses and stratifies the service experiences, needs and gaps of veterans in Virginia. Information was gathered through an extensive statewide telephone survey, regional focus groups, inventorying and mapping existing veterans' services, and the review of relevant program and academic literature. The research focused on all veterans in Virginia, but particularly targeted veterans who have served since 2001. According to VA data, Virginia has over 260,000 veterans that have served since 2001, the highest OIF/OEF veteran ratio of all 50 states. Virginia ranks seventh among the states in total veteran population and fourth in younger veterans (age 20 -- 49). Virginia is one of the few states where the veteran population is expected to rise in the coming years. The VA predicts that Virginia will be fourth in veteran population by 2018.

According to the RAND Corporation's Invisible Wounds of War (Tanielian and Jaycox [Eds.], 2008), nearly one-third of the service members returning from OEF or OIF are affected by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), major depression, or traumatic brain injury (TBI). The research results indicate that OIF and OEF veterans residing in Virginia have higher rates of reported depression, TBI and PTSD than do veterans in general. However, Vietnam veterans have the highest rates of depression indicators and PTSD of all combat era cohort groups. The National Guard and Reserves have experienced higher rates of deployment, and many multiple deployments, during the OIF and OEF conflicts than during any previous conflict. The historically high rate of multiple deployments for members of the National Guard and Reserves causes greater health, financial, employment and personal strain than in their career military counterparts. National Guard and Reserve families have greater stress because of fragmented supports between deployments and from being isolated from other military families. The research found that veterans want more coordinated information on how to access services and meet eligibility requirements. Reducing barriers to services includes the need for more fluid access to providers across VA and other health systems, transportation supports, and reducing the risk and stigma of seeking behavioral health services. Service needs of veteran families include improved awareness and information regarding military culture, supports for struggling families, more mental health services for family members and more seamless information and support for National Guard and Reserve families isolated from other military families. The difficulty of obtaining and maintaining eligibility for services and health care coverage is reported as a primary barrier for veterans. Veterans also report that training, employment and educational opportunities need to be more widely available and better matched for transitioning from military to civilian life.

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Recent VA data indicates that only about 55% of veterans eligible for VA services actually seek care. In addition, a report issued by the VA provides the alarming statistic that every day in the United States nearly 22 veterans commit suicide (Kemp and Bossarte, 2012). Unfortunately, veterans with untreated PTSD and TBI often have great difficulty with post-deployment transition. The sequela of combat stress and brain injury too often manifest in suicide, substance abuse, family violence, divorce, homelessness, and criminal justice system involvement. Families and children are also affected by the impact of PTSD and TBI and are rarely provided services by the VA. Multiple deployments, single parent or dual parent deployments, and a lack of social and resource connections for families and children exacerbate the strain on communities to support these valuable citizens. According to the 2013 Virginia Point in Time (PIT) count which provides a snapshot of homelessness statewide, 719 Virginia veterans were homeless on a single night in January, 94 veterans were living in places not meant for human habitation, and 625 were living in emergency shelters or transitional housing programs. Annually, it is estimated that 3-5 times the number of veterans in the PIT count experience homelessness. An estimated 1 in 9 veterans are at risk of homelessness. These individuals have complex services needs and often need hands-on assistance to navigate housing and supportive services. DVS is addressing these issues with the Director and Associate Director of Housing Development for Veterans who focus on coordination of federal, state, and local resources for at risk and homeless veterans and advocate for policies and services to support the overall affordable housing needs of Virginia veterans.

AmeriCorps Members As Highly Effective Means To Solve Community Problems, Evidence Base, and Measurable Community Impact: The problems of returning military services members, veterans and their families cited above continue to justify the need for the highly successful Virginia Veterans Corps (VVC) funded by the National Corporation through state formula funding in 2011. The program design anticipates that the current program will continue in VWWP Region 5, Eastern Virginia with the addition of 2 half-time Navigators who will be serving veterans and families to prevent and end homelessness.

Theory Of Change And Logic Model: The theory of change embedded in the VVC model is that by ensuring that service members, veterans and their families utilize their federal, state and local benefits, including community support, they will benefit from improved access to healthcare, behavioral healthcare, financial assistance, employment and housing. Utilization of these services measured by

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numbers served, outreach events and units of direct service is expected to lead to increased quality of life for service members, veterans and families.

VVC has been successful in reaching all of its grant performance measures and goals. In 2012-13, 1227 individuals were served by VWWP Resource Specialists and community agencies because of the AmeriCorps service members' contributions. Nearly 16,800 hours of service were dedicated to service members, veterans and families. Seventeen veterans and military family members served as Navigators. Their ages ranged from 19-64. This experience supports the effectiveness of the current service model.

A recent study found that veterans are more likely to end up homeless because of poor financial skills. Elbogen, et. al, in a study entitled "Homelessness and Money Mismanagement in Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans" published in the October 22, 2013 edition of the American Journal of Public Health, found that money mismanagement reported by a substantial number of veterans was strongly associated with higher odds of homelessness at follow up. The study found that such education (available through the VA and other sources) might provide viable and low-cost options to reduce homelessness in veterans and their families.

VWWP has built strong alliances with Continua of Care (Dept of Housing and Urban Development mandated local planning bodies for homeless and housing services of which there are 16 statewide) to enhance services for at risk or homeless veterans and families. With the addition two Housing Development (HD) Directors, these alliances have continued to grow. For instance, the HD Directors work closely with the CoCs at the state level through the Homeless Outcomes Coordinating Council and with Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH). An example of statewide collaboration with VCEH includes the provision of technical assistance to CoC leads on strategies to enhance their efforts to end veteran homelessness and information on veteran specific data and resources to aid in the development of their HUD CoC funding application. The HD Directors also worked closely with select CoCs including Balance of State, Richmond, Peninsula, Norfolk, and Winchester/ Harrisonburg to collect detailed demographic data on veterans seeking shelter resources (from the Homeless Management Information System database) to better describe the needs of local veterans. In Region 5, the Regional Director has prior experience with the CoC and has effectively re-engaged since her hire in November, 2013. She has participated in the annual HUD Ranking and Review Process for

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Permanent, Supportive and Transitional Housing programs to bring a significant level of HUD funding to Greater Hampton Roads. This direct interface with Region 5 will continue with the Regional Director's participation in the Performance/Peer Review of programs selected to receive HUD funding to maintain the continuity of housing associated funding for Hampton Roads.

VWWP Regions 4 and 5 have expanded to include Housing Resource Specialist (HRS) positions dedicated to outreach and services to at risk or homeless veterans. The HRS positions will work closely with the local homeless and housing services providers within CoCs. Navigators will serve with the HRS staff, enhancing service provision and outreach. In Richmond VWWP is a part of a veteran subgroup of the CoC called Vet Help Link comprised of veteran specific providers including Virginia Supportive Housing (Supportive Services for Veteran Families grantee) and McGuire VA Medical Center's Healthcare for Homeless Veterans program to provide outreach at the Homeless Point of Entry for Richmond. Vet Help Link onsite outreach creates efficient access to support services for veterans seeking shelter and coordinates veteran specific and mainstream resources. The Navigator serving with the HRS at Richmond Behavioral Health Authority will serve at Vet Help Link, in addition to other service assignments. Navigators will serve with the VWWP HRS at Southside Community Services Board in the South Boston Area, with a Resource Specialist in collaboration with the Petersburg Freedom Support Center, with the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program at Virginia Supportive Housing in Richmond, and with the VWWP HRS and Homeless Services Team at Richmond Behavioral Health Authority. The service provided by the Navigators is a new service not being provided currently. The VWWP HRS will supervise the Housing Navigators located in Hampton Roads for Region 5. Two Navigators will serve at the Portsmouth Area Resource Coalition (PARC). The Navigators will cover areas in Central, Southside and Greater Hampton Roads where nearly 60% of homeless veterans statewide are counted during the annual point in time homelessness survey.

Research supports this integrated approach to reaching homeless veterans and preventing the downward spiral of those who might be at risk. In a recent study researchers confirm that among veterans risk factors for homelessness include unemployment, disability, poor physical health, psychiatric disorders, substance use disorders, and negative childhood experiences (Latent Homeless Risk Profiles of a National Sample of Homeless Veterans and their Relation to Program Referral and Admission Patterns, Tsai, et. al., American Journal of Public Health, October 22, 2013). The VA offers a number of programs designed to prevent and end veteran homelessness, including the Supportive

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Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), HUD Housing Choice vouchers, the Grant and Per Diem program, Healthcare for Reentry Veterans, the Veterans Justice Outreach Initiative and Domiciliary Care. VVC Navigators will provide an important liaison service reaching out to individuals in the programs with which they are associated, attending community meetings and events and providing information on how to access VWWP Resource and Housing Specialists, as well as how to access local services for addressing and preventing homelessness. The same study cited above found that for veterans in the study sample who connected with the VA homeless services teams, the most common initial point of contact was through self-referrals and street or community outreach. This supports the outreach and hands-on care coordination services of the Navigators to alert veterans and their families to available services and decrease access barriers they may encounter. Other referrals occurred through contact with the criminal justice system and hospital emergency rooms. VVC Housing Navigators will serve with VWWP Housing Resource Specialists to provide targeted outreach to jails, prisons, and hospitals to assist with housing and support services linkages during critical transitions from medical and/or psychiatric care, the jail or prison system.

How The VVC Engages Members For Service To Military Service Members, Veterans And Families:
The current VVC (AmeriCorps) program in VWWP Region 5 engages 22 part-time service members. Members serve various veterans and military service organizations helping military service members, veterans and families. Simultaneously, they inform the people that they contact about the VWWP and its services and coordinate the provision of service with the VWWP staff. In January 2012, Navigators and other AmeriCorps members provided 15,066 meals to individuals and families in need in the Greater Hampton Roads region. Navigators in the Greater Hampton Roads Region serve with the Armed Services YMCA, Community Services Boards (CSBs) in Hampton-Newport News, Eastern Shore and Middle Peninsula Northern Neck, Operation Homefront, the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, United Way of Greater Williamsburg, PARC, Goodwill Industries, and the Center for Military and Veterans Education at Tidewater Community College. Additionally Navigators dedicated to assisting homeless veterans and families and those at risk of homelessness will be serving with the VWWP Housing Resource Specialist at locations in Hampton and Norfolk.

Service opportunities for the Navigators comprise a wide array of outreach and direct service to veterans, military service members and military/veteran families. Service members, veterans and families (beneficiaries) are identified by word of mouth, requirements of their Commander to obtain

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services, referrals from military, Guard, Reserve and Family Readiness Groups, ombudsmen, family readiness support assistants, chaplains and other faith based organizations. At the Armed Services YMCA Navigators recruit and manage volunteers who assist with YMCA activities for the military community. Navigators coordinate and provide services at homecoming events for military service members and families. They provide support for Family Readiness groups that meet at the YMCA, assisting with set up and execution of the meetings. They assist with Operation Hero, an onsite tutorial and counseling program for at risk military students. They also assist with the Y's military spouse employment program. At the CSBs, Navigators serve with a CSB staff person who provides direct behavioral health support and counseling for community members, including veterans and families. Navigators plan and organize community outreach events that inform veterans and family members of the federal, state and local benefits available to them, including the resources of VWWP. Navigators engaged with Operation Homefront which provides emergency financial assistance and support to eligible military families assist in assessing eligibility prior to elevating the request to trained client services representatives at the national level. In addition, they provide supportive services to the families and children, such as school supplies, food, clothing and moral support for military service members and families. Families of deployed or wounded military often have increased expenses to support the home and basic financial needs. The Navigator may participate in the support of one-time special events such as Operations Back-to-School and Christmas, however, their weekly service enhances the quality of life for the military child and family while the service member concentrates on his or her mission and the spouse at home maintains the financial stability of the family. Navigators serve as speakers at special events educating the military population on community resources, including the benefits of AmeriCorps service and the resources available from VWWP and DVS. They also recruit volunteers to speak at special events. They arrange for pickup and delivery of donated items for service members and families, and follow up to address any unmet needs. The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society provides needs-based emergency financial assistance, financial education and counseling for Navy and Marine active duty service members, retirees and reservists. Navigators assess the service member's needs and assist with the provision of services, including financial education. At the United Way Community Resources Center, Navigators recruit and train volunteers from the veteran and military community and provide direct client assistance. Navigators serving at Goodwill Industries interview clients, including veterans, for employability, assess their skills, assist with overcoming barriers to employment, help the client establish short-term and long-term goals and contact potential employers. They link the client to the employer and track the achievement of

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employment goals. In addition, a VVC Navigator serves with VWWP for outreach to college campuses in the Greater Hampton Roads Region. Three Navigators serve at the Center for Military and Veterans Education at Tidewater Community College. They assist student service members and veterans with employment opportunities, researching and linking them to potential jobs. In addition, they produce and distribute outreach materials to inform military and veteran students about campus and off-campus support services, including VWWP. They participate in college-wide employment activities and job education, serve as liaisons with employers for employment, internships, education and training, and assess military and student veterans needs. As the Veterans Success on Campus Counselors (VSOC) become established on TCC's campuses, Navigators will serve as liaisons with the VSOC Counselors and provide information about the services available through this valuable VA resource. The 2014-2015 grant year will find VVC expanding outside of VWWP Region 5 to Region 4 and addressing the need to end homelessness among Virginia veterans and families. In VWWP Region 4 Navigators will be serving with the VWWP Resource Specialists and Housing Resource Specialist in South Boston, Petersburg and Richmond and with Virginia Supportive Housing in Richmond. Navigators serving directly with VWWP and in agencies that serve homeless service members, veterans and families such as PARC (Region 5) and Virginia Supportive Housing (Region 4) provide outreach through personal contact with veterans, service members and military families. They will help at risk or homeless veterans and families navigate housing crises and obtain services through prevention and rapid re-housing resources, emergency and/or transitional housing, and related support services. They will assist veterans in need of permanent housing to identify affordable and accessible housing options and provide linkages to HUD housing counselors for home ownership or foreclosure prevention guidance. Housing Navigators will also assist veterans and families with basic money management skills helping identify expenses and developing a budget. If needed services will be provided by credit and debt counseling agencies to help veterans and families maintain stable housing. Navigators will collaborate closely with VWWP staff to ensure that veterans receive behavioral health and support services as needed.

Member Training: To maximize the use of indirect costs, member training and service gear will be provided through indirect resources. Training is provided each month at a site and location arranged by the VVC Program Director. The VVC Program Director assures that member and volunteer training in the initial months, October and November, includes training in prohibited activities. VWWP Regional Directors and Coordinators provide training on a variety of topics including veterans'

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benefits and services available to active duty as well as veterans. Peer-to-peer training is provided by the agencies where Navigators serve, i.e., the Navigators train their fellow AmeriCorps members about the services provided by the respective services sites. The 2014-15 service year will include training on housing resources available for veterans and families, including the homebuyer training available from the Virginia Housing Development Authority, Housing First/Rapid Re-Housing, Accessible Community Resources and training available from the United Way. VWWP is exploring the opportunity for providing basic case management skills training for VVC Navigators as well. Training on disaster preparedness and emergency response is provided as well as training for future employability, such as resume building and team building. Trainings related to PTSD, TBI, Suicide Prevention and Substance Abuse Prevention will be provided through VWWP and online training venues or community partners such as the CSBs. The VVC Program Director will ensure compliance with all AmeriCorps regulations and assure that all members and volunteers are aware of prohibited activities.

Member Supervision: The Navigators will be supervised directly by site supervisors at the current and new placement organizations in Hampton Roads and the new sites in Central/Southside Virginia. Direct on-site supervision will ensure that members receive immediate and consistent support, encouragement and feedback while conducting their AmeriCorps service activities. The VVC Program Director will supervise all program sites and have direct access to members for programmatic guidance and oversight.

Commitment To AmeriCorps Identification: The VVC participates in the AmeriCorps launch event that instills the commitment to building stronger, healthier, safer communities through service. Particular emphasis is placed on service to military service members, veterans and families. The Executive Director of VWWP and Regional Directors, who are veterans or military spouses, congratulate AmeriCorps members on their commitment to community service and their dedication to military service members, veterans and families. AmeriCorps members are required to wear the AmeriCorps logo daily, in addition to the VWWP logo, during their service. They are trained to educate their service sites and community about the benefits of AmeriCorps service and the resources available from VWWP. Site supervisors receive training from the VVC Program Director about the members' commitment to service and about the overall tenets of AmeriCorps. Each service site also proudly displays the "AmeriCorps Serves Here" signage at the entrance to their location, informing the

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community of the Navigators' participation and support for the community.

Organizational Capability

Organizational Background And Staffing: VWWP will provide the required support for the Program Director to manage 6 additional Navigators, including those serving in VWWP Region 4. The budget includes for the Program Director and an Assistant who can manage the VVC as it expands statewide. The VWWP Regional Directors in Regions 4 and 5 will support Navigators placed across the two Regions. Additional resources have been budgeted for equipment, office space, criminal background checks, training and travel.

Compliance And Accountability: VWWP has a successful three-year record with the VVC (AmeriCorps). The VWWP budget is composed of a \$2 million on-going appropriation from the Virginia General Assembly. The program is supported by a number of federal grants as well as private donations collected by the Virginia Veterans Services Foundation. Approximately 40 staff comprise the contracted staff of the VWWP Regional Consortia across the Commonwealth. Matching funds will be from state appropriations or the Veterans Services Foundation. Compliance issues will be closely monitored and addressed by the VWWP Regional Director who supervises the VVC Program Director. Issues requiring the attention of the VWWP Executive Director will be forwarded expeditiously and dealt with through administrative procedures. Accountability is assured by state government controls, including audits by the Auditor of Public Accounts.

Past Performance: The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program has successfully launched, implemented and executed the VVC in Hampton Roads. The CNCS funds approximately \$133,000 for AmeriCorps members.

AmeriCorps Member Selection, Recruitment And Retention: Retention for the VVC has had some challenges over time but not necessarily because of any failure on the part of the program. Navigators who have left the program due to financial and personal reasons (i.e. medical or family issues) have affected the retention rate. Due to the high cost of living in Hampton Roads, the living allowance offered by the program may not be enough to support the needs of the Navigator and their families. Although Navigators are informed of the amount of the living allowance before the start of their service term, due to changes in their financial situation the Navigator may not be able to afford to continue to participate in the program. The program also has made attempts to engage with

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disabled veterans who may find the position places challenges on their ability to meet the requirements due to their emotional and/or physical needs. Although the program has experienced some challenges in retention, vacated positions have been backfilled successfully. VWWP will work to provide Navigators a greater understanding of the concept of service vs. employment to improve the rates of retention. The VVC Program Director will continue to post the position descriptions on the Virginia Department of Human Resources Employment website. The Director will request that each site supervisor post the Navigator position descriptions for their sites on either and/or both their websites and social media sites (i.e. Facebook) thereby sharing the positions with the existing network of the individual sites. The VVC will host information meetings where the positions will be presented to interested community members. The importance of the commitment to service will be emphasized.

Information regarding the date/time/location of each meeting will be disseminated by a variety of community partners including but not limited to the VVC sites, local military/veteran affiliates such as Fleet and Family Support or Army Community Service, the Military Newspapers and the local media. Innovative trainings will be provided with on-site speakers and webinars aimed at capacity building personal/professional development. Team building exercises will be offered at monthly trainings, and opportunities will be provided for members to engage with other service sites as volunteers for their ongoing site-specific activities. Members will be given organizational goodies (i.e. AmeriCorps pins, hats, and mugs) upon completing 100, 300 and 600 hours of service. A special token of appreciation will be given to returning service members marking their years of service. Each month a member will be selected to receive the Star of the Month. Social activities will be planned giving members the opportunity to socialize with one another. A Member Recognition Ceremony will be held at the end of the year.

Continuous Improvement: VWWP is developing a continuous quality improvement and performance management plan. As part of this plan, the VWWP Executive Team working with the VVC Program Director will work toward addressing any gaps in service or any challenges of the VVC Program. The new Regional Director for VWWP brings extensive managerial skill to VWWP and to the oversight of the VVC. Working with the VVC Program Director, she will address any quality issues that need to be addressed and any program improvements necessary. Discussions with previous site supervisors will provide valuable input for continuous quality improvement.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

The successful record of accomplishment of the VVC provides evidence of the adequacy of the

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program budget to sustain the activities and services of the Navigators and program staff. Significant supportive managerial assistance and resources are provided by VWWP. State general funds and grant-matching funding provided by the Veterans Services Foundation are used to augment the AmeriCorps program budget by supporting the Program Director and an Assistant. State general funds provide service members equipment and member service gear. Program sites provide resources by donating the time and attention of site supervisors and the office space required for the Navigators. The program model already established by the VVC evidences the cost effectiveness of the program.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

The focus of the VVC statewide is supportive community service to military service members, veterans and their families. The recipients are military service members, including members of the National Guard and Reserves, veterans and their families. The AmeriCorps members (Navigators), VWWP consortia staff and the partner agencies of VWWP, including the services of the VA, will be used to accomplish outputs and outcomes. VWWP working internally with the Executive Team will evaluate the VVC continually and with an end of year evaluation report. VWWP is exploring the availability of graduate students who may be able to assist with the design and analysis of VVC demographic data as well as output and outcome data.

The outputs tracked will include the numbers of military service members, veterans and family members provided with assistance, including assistance with housing and prevention of homelessness. VVC will track the numbers of veterans and families provided direct service and linkage for the next level of service to community providers, including service provided by VWWP. Utilizing the VWWP Data Management System, VWWP will evaluate the effectiveness of the VVC in serving with VWWP Resource and Housing Specialists and the outcomes of their collaborative service provision to veterans and families. VVC will collect data on veterans or military service members provided housing and financial resources. Data will be collected on the outcome of community support events, individual items distributed, units of direct service and numbers of services provided by a community resource for a specific need.

Evaluation Tools: Members will keep data sheets that record the contacts made, information on how many individuals and families are provided direct service or successfully linked to the next level of care, units of service provided, measured in time increments and product or service provided. The VVC Program Director will administer the tools. The VVC Program Director, VWWP Regional Directors

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and the VWWP Director of Housing Development will determine timing for administration of the data collection tools, the data to be collected, methodology for collection, and methodology for analysis. VWWP will utilize the web based DMS for service data collection and analysis. Data will be used for program and process improvement. VWWP will develop a 5-8 question survey for service recipients to gauge outcomes of service provision. For example, utilizing a 1-5 Likert Scale the survey would measure improvement in the veteran's/family member's knowledge about housing, financial or counseling resources, i.e., knowledge gained that led to an outcome of improvement in housing situation/stability, financial stability, family stability and improved quality of life.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

Additional Clarifications 4/14/14

Performance Measures have been revised to reflect National Priorities. VVC has a concern about having to divide the Performance Measures among Navigators because most are located at service sites that serve veterans, military service members and families simultaneously. We can achieve target numbers, however, it will be difficult if Navigators are required to adhere to only one performance measure rather than multiple. If we are required to measure overall program targets, then the concern is obviated.

Virginia Veterans Corps Monitoring Plan

The purpose of this monitoring plan is to ensure the Virginia Veterans Corps remains in compliance with all local, state and national guidelines in accordance with participation as a grantee under the CNCS and the AmeriCorps Grant Program.

The desired outcome of this monitoring plan is to:

- Ensure compliance with administrative requirements in accordance with the grant to include fiscal, material and all aspects related to data collection for the achievement of outcomes and performance measures
- Ensure accurate accounting of time served by the AmeriCorps Navigators
- Ensure accurate accounting of member stipends and/or monthly living allowance
- Ensure member and service site compliance with all requirements as directed by CNCS and the

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AmeriCorps program

- Ensure member compliance with all requirements for training and national service participation

Indicators used to measure progress towards achieving success include:

- Monthly financial reports as entered into the OnCorps program as they relate to the AFR and the PER
- Monthly member activity reports
- Quarterly activity reports
- Monthly member reimbursement forms and OnCorps data entry for member hours served
- Monthly training log and participation reports to ensure members are meeting their requirements at both their service site and as a member of the Virginia Veterans Corps

Participants in the project include:

- Virginia Veterans Corps (VVC) Program Director
- Virginia Veterans Corps members
- Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP) staff liaison
- Virginia Wounded Warrior Program financial analyst
- Department of Veterans Services (DVS) Director of Finance
- AmeriCorps Program Service Officer
- AmeriCorps Program Manager

The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services enters into Memoranda of Agreement with the Service Sites for the Supervision of VVC Navigators. Service Site Supervisors are trained in AmeriCorps requirements and policies for supervision, time-keeping and compliance.

Local Monitoring Efforts by the Virginia Veterans Corps Program Director:

- Managing and administering the day-to-day relationship with the AmeriCorps Program Service Officer
- Managing and administering the day-to-day relationship with the individual sites through communication with the identified site supervisor and through quarterly site supervisor meetings
- Managing and administering the ongoing relationship with the Virginia Veterans Corps service members through individual contact as necessary and through monthly training meetings and/or

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local/national service activities

- Coordinating, monitoring and evaluating service year activities and progress towards meeting performance measures monthly, quarterly and annually
- Monthly reporting on the service member/service year activities
- Semi-monthly review and approval of member service hours in the OnCorps system
- Monthly review of the AFR and PER to ensure program remains current within budget
- Weekly reporting to the VWWP on Virginia Veterans Corps activities and benchmarks
- Managing of individual member service records which include all requirements for maintaining the annual member service contract, background checks, and all other relevant data required for ongoing program monitoring requirements. Maintenance of member service records will be ongoing throughout the MSY.

State Monitoring by the Department of Veterans Service Financial Analyst and the AmeriCorps Program Service Officer:

- Monthly input and review of financial transactions as they relate to the budgetary requirements of the grant by the DVS financial Analyst
- Ongoing review of program requirements by the AmeriCorps Program Service Officer
- Program Monitoring visits by the AmeriCorps Program Service Officer as required by the grant and CNCS
- Fiscal Monitoring visits by the AmeriCorps Financial Officer as required by the grant and CNCS

Local Monitoring by the Site Supervisors:

- Responsible for day-to-day monitoring of service members as they perform their service as a member of the Virginia Veterans Corps within the confines of the local site
- Responsible to ensure members serving at their sites receive all relevant training required to serve in the capacity of an AmeriCorps Navigator at their individual service site
- Ensure the service members adhere to all requirements in accordance with fulfilling the required hours and accounting for same within the OnCorps System.
- Ensure the service members are available within their day-to-day responsibilities to attend all monthly training, local/national service projects and special events/activities as directed by the Virginia Veterans Corps Program Director

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- Responsible to attend quarterly site supervisors meetings and to maintain open communication with the Virginia Veterans Corps Program Director on all aspects of program operation at their individual site

- Responsible to ensure the AmeriCorps logo is displayed at their site and that Virginia Veterans Corps members adhere to requirements for the wearing of AmeriCorps gear or logos during their MSY.

Plan of Correction

- If a site notes a deficiency or non-compliance issue with a VVC Navigator, the site supervisor is required to notify the Program Director . The Program Director and site supervisor will discuss appropriate action to address the matter.

- The Program Director will review program policies and requirements, noting the identified deficiency and actions required to correct the deficiency.

- Within 48-72 hours, the Program Director will meet with the site supervisor and Navigator to address the non-compliance issue, provide back-up documentation and review program policies and guidelines to ensure that the Navigator understands the deficiency.

- Working together, the Program Director, site supervisor and Navigator will develop a plan of correction to ameliorate or eliminate the deficiency.

- The Navigator will be provided with clear guidance on how to ensure compliance moving forward.

- The Program Director will follow up with the site supervisor and Navigator within 30 days to ensure completion of the plan of correction and continued compliance.

- If a deficiency or non-compliance issue cannot be resolved with the Navigator and Site Supervisor, the Program Director will take necessary actions to terminate the Navigator, following all program guidance and requirements for termination.

- If the Program Director identifies or learns of a deficiency or non-compliance issue with a site, the Program Director will meet with the site supervisor to discuss appropriate action to address the matter.

- The Program Director will review program policies and requirements, noting the identified deficiency and actions required to correct the deficiency.

- Within 48-72 hours, the Program Director will contact the site supervisor to address the non-compliance issue, provide back-up documentation and review program policies and guidelines to ensure that the site understands the deficiency.

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- Working together, the Program Director and site supervisor will develop a plan of correction to ameliorate or eliminate the deficiency.
- The site supervisor will be provided with clear guidance on how to ensure compliance moving forward.
- The Program Director will follow up with the site supervisor within 30 days to ensure completion of the plan of correction and continued compliance.
- If the site has not completed the plan of action and corrected the deficiency, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Regional Director of the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program.
- The Regional Director will make every effort to resolve the deficiency with the site.
- If the deficiency cannot be resolved at the local level, the matter will be referred to the Director of the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program for resolution or termination.

Clarifications Submitted 4/10/14

The activities of the Navigators support the VVC & VWWP by meeting the emergent needs of military service members, veterans and their families. The VWWP provides community reintegration and support services, including: 1) access to health/behavioral health care for veterans and family members; 2) services and supports to address the needs of veterans and their families at risk of homelessness or homeless; 3) linkage to employment for veterans and families, and 4) re-entry services for veterans reentering their communities from incarceration. Navigators may be assisting veterans and families with enrollment in VA healthcare services, referral to behavioral healthcare services, requests for emergency financial assistance, access to affordable permanent supportive housing, or employment services. These activities allow the VWWP to utilize not only the direct service and support of the Navigators at the local service site but also provide a conduit for referral of veterans or family members in need to the Resource Specialists at the VWWP.

Members will participate in a variety of activities as determined by the individual service site. Organizations such as Navy Marine Corps Relief Society and Portsmouth Area Resources Coalition (PARC) will provide financial assistance and temporary housing support. Operation Homefront provides activities that directly assist active duty military families with quality of life opportunities or events such as offering back to school supplies, holiday support and other events such as baby showers

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for expectant Moms. The Navigators at Goodwill Industries assist veterans with employment and opportunities to build their resumes for professional growth and development. The Armed Forces YMCA assists active duty military families with childcare, tutoring and events aimed at strengthening the family while military members serve. Members at the United Way of Greater Williamsburg and members at Tidewater Community College assist with connecting veterans and families to both community resources and educational resources that will enhance their abilities to meet the needs of their families and enhance their educational experience. While each local service site engages in a different type of support for military service members, veterans and families, they all actively refer them to a cadre of trained Resource Specialists who provide direct service and care coordination through local community resources to meet their reintegration and community support needs. More specifics about member activities follow.

At the Armed Services YMCA Navigators recruit and manage volunteers who assist with YMCA activities for the military community. They coordinate and provide services at homecoming events for military service members and families. They provide support for Family Readiness groups that meet at the YMCA, assisting with set up and execution of the meetings. They assist with Operation Hero, an onsite tutorial and counseling program for at risk military students. They also assist with the Y's military spouse employment program. At the CSBs, Navigators serve with a CSB staff person who provides direct behavioral health support and counseling for community members, including veterans and families. Navigators plan and organize community outreach events. They refer veterans and families to VWWP Resource Specialists as needed. Navigators engaged with Operation Homefront assist with seasonal special programs. These events provide critical school supplies, food, clothing and support for military service members and families. They serve as speakers at special events educating the military population on community resources, including the benefits of AmeriCorps service and the resources available from VWWP and DVS. They also recruit volunteers to speak at special events. They arrange for pickup and delivery of donated items for service members and families, and follow up to address any unmet needs. The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society provides needs-based emergency financial assistance, financial education and counseling for Navy and Marine active duty service members, retired and reservists. Navigators assess the service member's needs and assist with the provision of services. They assist with "Budget for Baby" financial education and with outreach activities.

At the United Way Community Resources Center, Navigators will recruit and train volunteers from

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the veteran and military community and will provide direct client assistance. Navigators serving at Goodwill Industries will interview clients, including veterans, for employability, assess their skills, assist with overcoming barriers to employment, help the client establish short-term and long-term goals and contact potential employers. They will link the client to them and track the achievement of employment goals. Navigators will be serving at the Center for Military and Veterans Education at Tidewater Community College

to assist student military service members and veterans with employment opportunities, researching and linking them to potential jobs. In addition, they will produce and distribute outreach materials to inform military and veteran student about campus and off-campus support services, including VWWP. They will participate in college-wide employment activities and job education, serve as liaisons with employers for employment, internships, education and training, and assess military and student veterans needs.

Navigators will work with VWWP in rural Southside Virginia to address the need to end homelessness among veterans and families. Navigators will be serving with the VWWP Resource Specialists and Housing Resource Specialist in South Boston, Petersburg and Richmond and with Virginia Supportive Housing in Richmond. Navigators serving directly with VWWP and in agencies that serve homeless service members, veterans and families provide outreach through personal contact with veterans, service members, wounded warriors and military families. They will help at risk or homeless veterans and families navigate housing crises and connect to prevention and rapid re-housing resources, emergency and/or transitional housing, and related support services. They will assist veterans in need of permanent housing to identify affordable and accessible housing options and provide linkages to HUD housing counselors for home ownership or foreclosure prevention guidance. Housing Navigators will also assist veterans and families with basic money management skills by community referral for budget, credit and debt counseling services to help ensure that veterans and families can maintain stable housing.

Training is provided at a number of levels both prior to and during an individual's tenure as an AmeriCorps member. At the time of initial interviews, there is an overview of the program requirements, particularly as it relates to attendance, specific requirements as a member at the individual site, and as a member of the local AmeriCorps team. A brief overview of the requirements for recordkeeping for the purpose of their monthly service hours and the recordkeeping for member activities in support of performance measures is explained so each applicant understands expectations

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before they accept member status at a site. Once the members have been selected by their individual site, both group as well as individual communication begins to reinforce the requirements of their positions as an AmeriCorps Navigator under the Virginia Veterans Corps.

Members are required to participate in a group onboarding orientation. This orientation provides the historical context for AmeriCorps service and the incorporation of AmeriCorps service into the VWWP. The honor and dignity of serving Virginia's military service members, veterans and families is emphasized, as well as the unprecedented significance of Virginia's military history. At this time, the members are asked to sign their member contracts. They are provided detailed information as noted in their member contracts, their attendance at their individual sites, attendance at monthly trainings, opportunities for outside trainings (i.e. webinars, conferences, etc.), the logo requirements for wearing both site and AmeriCorps gear (i.e. AmeriCorps logo wear, pins, etc.), and the display of signage at their site locations identifying "An AmeriCorps Member Serves Here". The Program Director and Regional Director educate the members on requirements for communication with both the site supervisor and the Program Director. The Program Director provides a detailed overview of prohibited activities and the requirements of their Member Contracts (i.e. term of service, illness or other reasons for leave of absence as well as the ramifications of and reasons for termination of their contracts). Members will receive a copy of their Member Contracts, which specifically outlines the Prohibited Activities. They will be asked to sign an acknowledgement of receipt of both the contract and the Prohibited Activities. The member file supports the receipt and understanding of both.

The Program Director engages in monthly meetings with the AmeriCorps Navigators. During this activity, the members are provided with a training module (first aid/CPR, emergency preparedness, domestic violence, etc.) to assist them in building their skills for service in the community. This meeting also provides an opportunity for the Program Director to discuss monthly activities, performance objectives and measures to date, as well as engaging in administrative activities that relate directly to their service (i.e. travel reimbursement, OnCorps entries of hours, etc.).

Training is also provided for the site supervisor during quarterly meetings. During these activities, the site supervisors are informed of the details of service and performance by the Navigators.

Members are required to engage in ongoing monthly training as presented by the Program Director. This training not only outlines the requirements of their service as a member of the VVC, it also provides training opportunities which directly relate to how best to serve military service members, veterans and their families within the confines of the individual service site and the rules as they apply

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to their position within the AmeriCorps Program. Each member training promotes the Navigator's position of service, not employment. Members routinely receive updates on requirements, which include specialized trainings, webinars, opportunities for participation in national service projects and their ongoing obligation to meet their hourly requirements. Ongoing training is also provided as required for the OnCorps program to ensure that members understand their requirements to provide program submissions in a timely manner.

Members are supervised at two levels, one at the site level and then one at the program level. Site supervision is provided by the identified Site Supervisor. The Supervisors must ensure the members complete their onsite responsibilities in accordance with the site/member agreements and must ensure that the members meet their training requirements and monthly meeting requirements. The site supervisors ensure the timely and accurate submission of the member's time sheets in accordance with their established schedule of submission and make certain the time sheets reflect the appropriate activities and verbiage as required to reflect their duties and accomplishments during each pay period. The Site Supervisors will also ensure the members meet their time requirements within the service year. Members receive a written mid-year and final evaluation from their Site Supervisor. During the evaluation, members meet with their Site Supervisor to discuss their progress in the program and areas in their service that may need improvement. Should issues evolve regarding member hours and the completion of their contract, the Site Supervisors will communicate these concerns to the VVC Program Director. The supervision at the program level is done by the VVC Program Director. This supervision not only includes the oversight required of the site and their contract agreement with the program but also the ongoing supervision of the member to ensure they meet their monthly requirements for time, training and service.

Monitoring to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations is an ongoing process that incorporates both review at the site and the program level. Monthly training and ongoing communication with each member throughout the month ensures that the member and the Program Director are communicating directly for compliance with the requirements of the program. Ongoing monitoring of the OnCorps program also ensures that members are meeting their hours and that there will be minimal issues regarding their contract and the ability to perform in accordance with their requirements for both receipt of living allowance stipend and their end of term educational stipend. A monthly review of the timesheet submissions and monthly training ensures any issues can be corrected in the short term as opposed to the long term. If questions of compliance arise, they will

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be addressed and resolved in a timely manner.

The successful record of accomplishment of the VVC provides evidence of the adequacy of the program budget to sustain the activities and services of the Navigators and program staff. Significant supportive managerial assistance and resources are provided by VWWP. VWWP will provide additional part-time support for the Program Director to manage 6 additional Navigators, including those serving in VWWP Region 4. The VWWP Regional Directors in Regions 4 and 5 will support Navigators placed across the two Regions. State general funds and state special funds (grant-matching funding) provided by the Veterans Services Foundation are used to augment the AmeriCorps program budget by supporting program management. The budget includes resources for a Program Director and part-time assistant who can manage the VVC as it expands statewide. Indirect resources will be provided for equipment, office space, criminal background checks, training and travel for the Program Director and Assistant.

State general funds provide service members equipment and member service gear. To maximize the use of indirect costs, training, travel, supplies, service gear, background checks and workers compensation will be provided through indirect resources for the 28 half-time AmeriCorps members.

The following Cost/Benefit Analysis provides evidence that the VVC Program Design is cost effective as compared to other models. Since the VVC program design is unique, the only model for comparison is hiring part-time state employees to provide the service provided by AmeriCorps members. The following analysis shows that the VVC model, utilizing AmeriCorps members, results in a savings of over \$100,000 for Virginia as well as providing service opportunities.

Cost Analysis:

VVC Members:

Scenario: VWWP would hire the members as VWWP Employees

28 members X 900 hours each X minimum of \$10.00 per hour X 7.65% FICA = \$271,278.

The average grantee cash match for non-payroll line items the first two years are as follows:

\$3,686 for Travel

\$4,695 for Supplies

\$1,494 for Training

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\$970 for Background Criminal Checks

Totaling \$10,845

Total Cost for 28 Members as VWWP Employees based on the information above = \$282,123

This is well above the CNCS share for 28 members @ \$5,177 each for 900 hours of service X 7.65% FICA totaling \$156,045.

VVC Program Director:

Scenario: VWWP would pay 100% of the Program Director's Salary and Fringe Benefits as well as the Assistant's Salary, Fringe and other non-payroll costs. The average grantee cash match for non-payroll line items the first two years are as follows:

\$950 for Travel

\$50 for Training

\$2,320 for Other Program Costs (phone, computer, etc)

Totaling \$3,320 X 2 = \$6,640.00.

Total Cost for Program Director and Assistant if VWWP paid 100% based on the information above = \$72,926.

This is well above the CNCS share for the Program Director's Salary, which is \$20,850. VWWP includes the additional salary amount of \$40,725 and fringe benefit amount of \$4,711 for the Program Director as grantee cash match. The non-payroll line items are included in the indirect costs.

Program sites provide resources by donating the time and attention of site supervisors and the office space required for the Navigators.

The actual dollar cost of an employment model is over \$350,000, while the total proposed AmeriCorps project cost is \$258,610. The VVC model of community service for members of the military and veteran community and their families a model that can be replicated by other states seeking ways to assist service members, veterans and their families and has been highlighted by VWWP in a variety of national settings, including the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Policy Academies. In addition, the proposed program model extends services into rural Central and Southside Virginia,

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including sites in the Petersburg area where one of the world's largest military installations, Fort Lee, is situated. Services will be extended into areas of Southside Virginia, including rural Lunenburg, Nottoway and Mecklenburg counties, bordering North Carolina.

The VWWP is proposing a robust budget that will adequately support an active Virginia Veterans Corps in the Hampton Roads area as well as South Boston, Petersburg and Richmond areas. The resources of the VWWP and DVS will be dedicated to ensuring long term stability of the program and replication in other regions of the Commonwealth.

I. Grant Start Date and Member Enrollment Period: The desired Grant Award Start Date is September 1, 2014. Member enrollment will occur during the month of September, 2014.

Recruitment for the allocated slots is a comprehensive process that targets all members of the community, including veterans and military family members who may have disabilities. Due to the transient nature of the military and veteran community, targeting one specific population with an allocation/percentage of slots may be difficult if not impossible to accomplish. The VVC will communicate the availability of slots to community partners who will have the opportunity to share with individuals and organizations in direct communication with the community of people with disabilities (i.e. the local Community Services Board, the Veterans Administration Medical Center, the Warrior Transition Units, and the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehab Services, etc.). Our goal is to fill our slots with members who have the time, interest and capabilities to support the needs of the program. Recruitment within avenues that will have access to people with disabilities will assist in offering this opportunity to a wider range of individuals during the upcoming service year.

The VWWP is not requesting MSY with no program funds attached. We have reviewed the program design thoroughly and feel that the current request is appropriate for the program design and performance measures.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics