Narratives

Executive Summary

The New York Immigration Coalition will have a total of 8 AmeriCorps Members (4 lawyers and 4 paralegals), who will provide legal services to Unaccompanied Children, build pro-bono capacity to support that population, and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of immigration courts in the locations in which members serve. By the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for providing legal services in Immigration Proceedings to the projected populations of Unaccompanied Children in New York State. In addition, AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 345 volunteers who will support the provision of legal services to Unaccompanied Children in Immigration Proceedings.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

RATIONALE

Since October 2013, 57,000 children - a significant majority of which come from Central America - have crossed into the United States by foot, the culmination of a long and dangerous trek. [1] These children - many of whom are abandoned, orphaned or fleeing crushing poverty and violence - are being detained by US immigration authorities and have been labeled priorities for deportation as they face removal proceedings in front of an immigration judge.

Many of these children have left their home countries because of gang warfare and threats to their lives, some witnessing horrible violence and/or the murder of family members by gangs. [2] Sexual violence is rampant, with many girls and boys victimized in their home countries and on the frightening route to the border. The journey itself can be perilous, with smugglers called "coyotes" hired by desperate families to extricate their children and bring them thousands of miles to the United States. The journey ends with children walking across a desert, floating in a raft across the Rio Grande, or climbing a ladder across a fence, and waiting for a border enforcement agent to pick them up and detain them. Reports are now emerging that the detention centers themselves include grim holding cells, where violence can emerge and some children are crammed for days in windowless rooms nicknamed "coolers." The crowding is so severe that people are sleeping standing up. [3]

Children from Central America have been making their way to the United States for many years, and will continue to arrive with a critical need for legal services, yet there is a significant gap in the availability of such services to immigrant children here. Most minors are unaccompanied by an adult

and arrive with no available resources. It is the policy of the federal government to release these children to relatives residing in the U.S. They are released to direct or extended family who are often struggling to earn an income at low-wage jobs. As of March of 2013, 6,000 children were on the immigration court docket in New York.

It is estimated that by the end of 2015, 10,000 children will be transferred to New York by the state (with an untold number of children, who have managed to find their way to New York, without being apprehended). We can safely assume that the majority of these children will end up in New York City, a long-standing destination for immigrants and the home to many of the children's immediate or extended families.

In some cases, children are transferred to foster-care institutions, which contact their relatives locally and conduct careful screenings to ensure their health and safety before releasing them to family members. In other cases, children are released by the federal government directly to relatives. Once they are released, these children are automatically placed into deportation (removal) proceedings, and are not assigned counsel. As people without citizenship, they have no constitutional right to a lawyer, and therefore will not be assigned to one by the court.

The road ahead for these children is long and difficult, but not completely without hope. Some children may be eligible for asylum if the facts of their case surpass generalized or criminal violence; others may qualify for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) if they were abandoned, neglected, or abused by at least one parent; for those that were the victims of particular crimes or trafficked, there are special visas that can lead to legal permanent residency. All are complex requests that require hours of legal research, extensive client and witness interviewing, court hearings, and trials. And yet there is a glaring lack of resources for legal representation - to offer individualized consultations and representation. For those with no relief under current immigration law, families will need to have this reality explained to them and seek prosecutorial discretion, if applicable.

Regardless of relief options, removal proceedings can take months or years to conclude, and these children will need a host of other services while their cases lag in the system - medical and mental health services, education and English services, and recreational services. Access to basic medical and mental health services is critical, as many have endured serious injuries and suffer from severe mental

trauma, and some have never seen a doctor in their entire life. Helping children and their families navigate the New York City school system, enroll in bilingual schools close to home, and access English as a Second Language programming is imperative. Lastly, these children need ways to connect with other children facing similar situations and need an outlet to participate in recreational and youth-focused community services.

[1] Todd Ruger and Mark Hamblett, Growing Crush Adds to Existing Strain in New York, July 14, 2014, available at: http://www.newyorklawjournal.com/id=1202663024342#

[2] Philip E. Wolgin and Angela Maria Kelley, 5 Things You Need to Know about Unaccompanied Children, June 18, 2014 , available at: http://americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2014/06/18/92056/5-things-you-need-to-know-about-the-unaccompanied-minors-crisis/

Roque Planas, These Are The Real Reasons Behind Our Humanitarian Crisis At The Border, June 22, 2014, available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/06/22/reasons-humanitarian-crisis-border_n_5515651.html?utm_hp_ref=politics&ir=Politics

David Roger, Flood of child migrants a neglected challenge, May 28, 2014 8: 56 PM EDT, available at: http://www.politico.com/story/2014/05/flood-of-child-migrants-a-neglected-challenge-107198_Page2.html

[3] See: http://www.npr.org/2014/06/23/324857970/child-detention-centers-a-headache-for-the-obama-administration

AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

The New York Immigration Coalition seeks to serve as an intermediary sponsor of a Justice AmeriCorps project. As the sponsor, the NYIC would place a total of four lawyers serving as Justice AmeriCorps Members, in four of its Member Agencies - Central American Refugee Center - New York (CARECEN-NY), New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG), the Pace Community Law Practice,

and Safe Passage Project. It would also place a place a full-time paralegal in NYLAG, and a full-time and 2 quarter-time paralegals in Safe Passage Project.

The NYIC would support CARECEN-NY, NYLAG, Pace Community Law Practice and Safe Passage Project, in recruiting and selecting AmeriCorps Members. It would also work with its Member Agencies to set up professional development sessions for the selected AmeriCorps Members, and would manage all reporting to CNCS.

The AmeriCorps Members would approach each new Unaccompanied Child client that they work with, by first screening immigration court documents and preparing an assessment memorandum for the child. They would also recruit pro bono counsel at this time. Following that, they would meet with the child and the pro bono counsel, and begin preparing an application for relief or motions for the Executive Office for Immigration Counsel.

Based on our Member Agencies' expertise, the NYIC expects many of the children to potentially qualify for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). SIJS involves two stages: a family court guardianship or custody proceeding and an immigration application. In some cases, the family law context is more complex and the Americorps volunteers will be trained to understand other areas of New York family law. Central to this strategy would be presenting sufficient evidence/testimony that it is not in the best interest of the child to return to the child's country of origin and that reunification with one or both parents is not viable due to abuse, neglect, abandonment or other similar basis under New York Law. All of the NYIC Member Agencies seeking AmeriCorps Members through the NYIC, have a depth of experience in this complex interaction between family and immigration law.

Another way the AmeriCorps Members could possibly obtain remedy for the Unaccompanied Children is through asylum. Applications made for Unaccompanied Children under the age of 18 are transferred to the jurisdiction of the USCIS Asylum Office for adjudication. Asylum and withholding applications require detailed interviewing and an assessment of the country of origin's conditions and the special circumstances of the child. The NYIC's Member Agencies have a great deal of asylum experience. Critical to the preparation of asylum applications for children, is that advocates do not re-traumatize the child through inappropriate interview procedures. In many cases, expert testimony or medical evidence is needed.

Narratives

A third remedy that AmeriCorps Members could pursue is U or T non-immigrant visa applications. These visa petitions require fact investigation, coordination with appropriate law enforcement or child welfare agencies, and securing government certifications. As in other applications exploring past traumatic situations for children, the AmeriCorps Members must be careful not to harm the child and to develop adequate information for the complete assessment of the child's application. In some situations, the child will need psychiatric or social work examinations as supporting evidence. AmeriCorps Members must also be able to secure relevant supporting documents and background information.

A fourth remedy AmeriCorps Members can explore would be administrative closure, which would entail a written request to the Executive Office for Immigration Review and to the Immigration and Enforcement counsel. Central to this strategy is identifying the facts that warrant an exercise of discretion, such as the lack of relatives in the country of origin, the long-term residence of family in the United States, and special considerations such as the character of the child and the country of origin's conditions, should the child face return. In some cases, administrative closure is a long-term outcome. In others, the closure is preliminary to a motion to terminate because the child has secured asylum or is eligible for adjustment of status via another remedy. In a few cases, the remedy may involve a family-based petition under immigration law or proving a child's claim to U.S. citizenship.

Critical to the AmeriCorps Member's work with the child, would be attention to cultural competency and trauma-informed care. The AmeriCorps Members would be trained to enter any sessions with Unaccompanied Children, with a strong self-awareness of their own cultural experiences and biases, and any trauma they may have experienced in their own life. It is important that they are self-aware and prepared for their own cultural biases or referred stress, when helping children who have been subjected to violence or trauma of their own. AmeriCorps Members will also be trained to make sure that they approach the client without judgment. They would be expected to ask open-ended questions and utilize social work exercises and techniques to conduct age-appropriate interviews. An example of a useful approach utilized by some of the NYIC's Member Agencies is incorporating artwork into the interviews, to facilitate storytelling and allowing the interviewer to develop a more contextualized, well-rounded understanding of the child's daily life in the country of origin.

Narratives

As part of their work with clients, the AmeriCorps Members will screen for trauma, trafficking and/or abuse, and when found, make referrals/reports to the appropriate authorities and/or social services. The NYIC's Member Agencies already provide such referrals in many cases and have long standing partnerships in the psycho-social community of service providers.

Building a trusting and reliable professional relationship will be a paramount goal throughout the AmeriCorps Members' work with the clients. Creating and maintaining a safe, respectful and healthy relationship with them, will allow the AmeriCorps Members to better serve them, and will support the clients in learning to trust legal services and other community resources. In addition to supporting the clients with legal service and abuse/trauma screenings, the AmeriCorps Members will be connecting the clients to social services around education (e.g., tutors and college peer counselors), to support their academic achievement.

EVIDENCE BASED

See Kennedy, E.G. (2013). Unnecessary suffering: Potential unmet mental health needs of unaccompanied alien children. Journal of American Medical Association, 167(4), 319-320.

In "Unnecessary Suffering: Potential Unmet Mental Health Needs of Unaccompanied Alien Children", Elizabeth Kennedy discusses the negative short and long-term effects of trauma on Unaccompanied Children. She notes that Unaccompanied Children have often experienced pre-flight, flight and resettlement trauma. The Unaccompanied Children program often fails to provide adequate mental health services. Mental health is not sufficiently assessed before the transfer to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). More must be done to diagnose and treat Unaccompanied Children's mental illness while in ORR care, because there are very limited treatment opportunities once a Unaccompanied Child is released from ORR. The author suggests that ORR facilities start using self-reporting instruments, such as the Child Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Scale, that could be administered before transfer to ORR care, to help ensure that Unaccompanied Children are sent to the ORR facility best suited for their needs. A mental health practitioner could assess in greater detail those children who report symptoms after transfer. Poor mental health caused by trauma could negatively impact how unaccompanied alien children proceed in their immigration cases. Long-term effects of trauma on unaccompanied alien children include higher substance-use disorders, lower

educational attainment, unemployment, homelessness and imprisonment.

As mentioned in the previous section, The New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) is committed to training its Justice AmeriCorps Members in cross-cultural communication and servicing Unaccompanied Children, with special attention to techniques developed for child victims of trauma.

MEMBER TRAINING

Prior to their training by CNCS, the AmeriCorps Members will be given reading assignments on supporting Unaccompanied Children with legal services and background information on Central America. These readings help to prepare them for immersion in the Justice AmeriCorps program. After they complete the CNCS training in December, they will participate in a 2-day intensive training, organized by Safe Passage Project, on providing legal services to Unaccompanied Children in New York State, state and federal ethical practice rules, screening Unaccompanied Children for abuse, trafficking and trauma, providing culturally competent and trauma-sensitive service, and learning to work with interpreters and pro bono partners.

During the course of the year, the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) would work with its Members Agencies in the program to provide ongoing professional development opportunities to the AmeriCorps Members. These opportunities might include exploring best practices in securing specific remedies related to supporting Unaccompanied Children, building pro bono capacity, and other topics. The professional development trainings will be scheduled for once a month and all AmeriCorps Members will be required to attend. These monthly trainings will also afford an opportunity for Americorps members to share and learn from one another and to learn of approaches and best practices used in other organizations.

MEMBER SUPERVISION

AmeriCorps Members will be report to one or more experienced lawyers in the organizations that they are placed in, and will have weekly one-on-one's with those individuals, in support of their work.

They will also have monthly check-ins with the New York Immigration Coalition's (NYIC) New

Americans Volunteer Coordinator, who will be managing the overall Justice AmeriCorps project. These check-ins will be used to keep the NYIC up-to-date on the AmeriCorps Members' work and to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps regulations, in addition to providing the NYIC with an opportunity to celebrate achievements, and identify areas where support is needed.

The NYIC's New Americans Volunteer Coordinator will also check-in with site supervisors once a quarter, to understand their experiences, celebrate their successes and identify areas where support is needed.

COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION

The New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) will set an expectation, that the AmeriCorps Members engaged in its cohort, proactively promote the AmeriCorps brand and their identity as AmeriCorps Members, by introducing themselves as Justice AmeriCorps Members to new contacts during working hours; incorporating "Justice AmeriCorps Member" into their official title; and always wearing at least one AmeriCorps-branded item during work days. This expectation will be established at the two-day training that will kick off the AmeriCorps Members' year of service. To support the AmeriCorps Members in promoting the AmeriCorps brand, the NYIC will provide all of the AmeriCorps Members with an AmeriCorps pin and an AmeriCorps soft shell jacket. At some sites, they may wear a branded I.D. lanyard as well.

Organizational Capability

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

*New York Immigration Coalition

The New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) aims to achieve a fairer and more just society that values the contributions of immigrants and extends opportunity to all. The NYIC promotes immigrants' full civic participation, fosters their leadership, and provides a unified voice and a vehicle for collective action for New York's diverse immigrant communities. As an umbrella organization with well over 100 diverse member agencies spread throughout the state on capacity, the NYIC is ideally suited to serve as an intermediary sponsor with maximum impact for Justice AmeriCorps Members. The NYIC currently supports its Member Agencies' capacity and ability to address immigration issues by providing the agencies with opportunities to become involved in working groups, issue campaigns, trainings and special events, and providing them with free or discounted

resources, translation equipment, media promotion, leadership opportunities, news updates, and technical assistance on issues and policies. A large part of the NYIC's work is providing technical assistance and training to lawyers, paralegals and law students.

The NYIC was approved to serve as intermediary sponsor for 8 AmeriCorps VISTAs in June and is currently in the process of recruiting and selecting VISTAs for placement. 3 VISTAs are expected to start service in September and 6 are expected to start in November. The VISTAs will ultimately work out of 8 separate organizations.

If there is a 20% fluctuation in the number of Unaccompanied Children in the New York Immigration Court, the Member Agencies that are participating in the NYIC's Justice AmeriCorps project, will deploy more members of their pro bono attorneys and law student cohorts for support. These cohorts currently contain over a 1,000 individuals.

Further, several of the agencies - regardless of whether or not there is a fluctuation - will proactively continue to recruit and train attorneys and students to provide volunteer service to Unaccompanied Children, in an effort to meet the already large community need.

For its second and third year, the NYIC's cohort of Member Agencies will proactively make plans to recruit, train and engage more of their pro bono attorneys and volunteers, in anticipation of a sharp increase of Unaccompanied Children in New York State.

The NYIC seeks to place Justice AmeriCorps Members in 4 of its Member Agencies in 2015:

* Central American Refugee Center - New York
The Central American Refugee Center (CARECEN-NY) is a non-profit immigration and human rights organization serving the refugee community on Long Island and throughout southern New York State. Since its founding in 1983 CARECEN has worked to protect the civil rights of immigrants, increase understanding between the native born and newcomer communities, and raise awareness of the interaction of human rights disasters and immigration. CARECEN-NY's legal services and resources include but are not limited to full legal representation, counsel and self-help materials for asylees and refugees.

Narratives

*New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)

The New York Legal Assistance Group provides high quality, free civil legal services to low-income New Yorkers who cannot afford attorneys. Its comprehensive range of services includes direct representation, case consultation, advocacy, community education, training, financial counseling, and impact litigation. NYLAG's Immigrant Protection Unit (IPU) provides New York's low-income immigrant communities with comprehensive legal services through consultation and direct representation. IPU assists individuals in securing or continuing lawful status in the United States through adjustment of status and other complex legal remedies that may be available to them. The IPU also aims to facilitate family reunification through family-based immigrant petitions, humanitarian parole and other forms of relief. Its immigration services include naturalization, adjustment of status, violence against Women Act (VAWA) Self Petitions, U-visas for crime victims, asylum, removal defense and public benefits and entitlements.

*Pace Community Law Practice

The Pace Community Law Practice (PCLP) is a legal services center at Pace Law School with a dual mission of providing legal education and advocacy to traditionally under-represented communities in Westchester and the Hudson Valley while also expanding the legal market's capacity to represent low income clients. Its client base consists primarily of immigrants, most of whom are undocumented. The PCLP is a unique "legal residency" and "incubator" program whose legal staff consists of recent law school graduates who serve as Fellows under the supervision of expert supervising attorneys. Fellows have the option to stay to be incubated in their own practices, which will in turn expand the legal market. The PCLP's Fellows, with the volunteer assistance of pro bono law students and attorneys, represent clients in a range of legal matters, most pertaining to their legal status. These include the full range of immigration law, as well as guardianship and custody proceedings, educational advocacy, and assistance with accessing financial benefits. As a law school-based legal center, the PCLP has ready access to an extensive network of law school interns and alumni who volunteer in our offices, as well as resources including the law library, free CLEs, and the expertise of our clinical faculty and the staff of multiple campus legal centers, such as the Pace Women's Justice Center. Since opening in 2012, the PCLP has assisted over 900 people and families, and has represented over 225 clients. The PCLP also engages in close collaborations with many community based organizations that serve Westchester's immigrants. In the past two years, the PCLP has

represented 67 immigrant youth in cases related to Unaccompanied Children -- 20 in SIJS cases, 40 in Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) cases, 6 asylum cases, and one motion for termination. 100% of all of the cases with dispositions have been granted: 30 DACA cases; 3 SIJS cases; and the motion for termination.

*Safe Passage Project

The Safe Passage Project, a division of the Justice Action Center at New York Law School, works with volunteer attorneys and New York Law School students to provide representation of unaccompanied minors in the immigration process. Safe Passage provides training, resources, and mentoring to volunteer attorneys regarding Special Immigrant Juvenile, ("SIJ") status as well as other possible immigration alternatives for children. In 2012, its work expanded to volunteer to cover one of the five juvenile dockets at the New York Immigration Court. Each month it mobilizes between 25 and 45 volunteers to conduct universal screening of all children assigned to the Master Calendar. It trains these volunteers (pro bono attorneys, law students, interpreters, art educators, and social workers) to conduct efficient screenings and counseling interviews at the immigration court. It follow ups with written evaluation and assessment of the potential avenues of relief and recruit, mentor and support pro bono attorneys, students and supporting volunteers to represent the child in relevant family court or immigration procedures such as asylum, adjustment of status application, work authorization applications, family petitions and special protection visas such as U or T visas.

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The NYIC will set clear expectations on the work that the Member Agencies can engage the Justice AmeriCorps Members in and how that work must correspond to the Justice AmeriCorps Members . It will also use that process to establish expectations to support compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations. These expectations will be officially established through MOUs and will be revisited through an orientation session for Member Agencies prior to the start of the program, in addition to site visits and other check-ins between the NYIC and Member Agencies during the course of the year. Should any Member Agency not adhere to the expectations, the NYIC will contact the agency, and work with it to bring it in compliance. If compliance cannot be reached, the NYIC will contact CNCS, and work with it to transfer the Member Agency's Justice AmeriCorps Member to another agency.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

Narratives

NYIC and its member and partner organizations recognize that it is a challenge to recruit lawyers to provide these types of services given the level of the maximum allowed living allowance.

Given the NYIC's strong commitment to address the legal representation needs of unaccompanied minors arriving in New York in large numbers, it has launched a campaign to seek additional resources (in-kind donations, grants and cash donations) to supplement the CNCS provided benefits of participating in the Justice AmeriCorps program. This includes seeking funding and resources from a mix of sources including: state and local government, private foundations, corporations, etc. to cover the costs of personnel expenses, fringe benefits, living allowances, health care coverage etc. At the time of this proposal, NYIC has not yet received confirmation of an award for support from any of the afore mentioned sources but has begun to make strategic solicitations to this end.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

CLARIFY WHETHER THE PROGRAM WILL PROVIDE DIRECT LEGAL REPRESENTATION TO THE ENTIRE ESTIMATED DOCKET SIZE OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN IN THE IMMIGRATION COURT LOCATION WHERE YOU PLAN TO OPERATE YOUR PROGRAM? If YOUR CURRENT PROPOSAL DOES NOT COVER THE ENTIRE ESTIMATED DOCKET SIZE OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN IN THE IMMIGRATION COURT LOCATION WHERE YOU PLAN TO OPERATE YOUR PROGRAM, WHAT WOULD YOUR PROGRAM NEED IN ORDER TO ACCEPT MORE MEMBERS (SUCH AS ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, FUNDING, OFFICE SPACE, ETC.)

The New York Immigration Coalition's Justice AmeriCorps program would not provide direct legal representation to the entire estimated docket size of unaccompanied children in New York State. The docket is currently being serviced by several organizations, who would not all be participating in NYIC's Justice AmeriCorps program.

Narratives

That said, the NYIC's AmeriCorps Justice program will provide valuable support to increasing the degree and quality of representation to Unaccompanied Children in New York State.

In order to accept more Justice AmeriCorps Members and by extension serve more of the New York State docket, the NYIC and its program partners, would need more funding.

CLARIFY WHETHER THE PROGRAM WILL REPRESENT UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN BASED UPON THEIR ELIGIBILITY FOR RELIEF OR WILL THE PROGRAM REPRESENT UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN REGARDLESS OF ELIGIBILITY FOR RELIEF?
The New York Immigration Coalition's (NYIC) Justice AmeriCorps program will represent Unaccompanied Children (UAC) regardless of eligibility for relief. The NYIC will not let the UACs that it is connected to, face proceedings without legal support, regardless of what the anticipated outcome will be for the court proceedings.

CLARIFY WHETHER THE PROGRAM WILL HAVE ALL PROPOSED MEMBERS ENROLLED BY DECEMBER 1, 2014.
The New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) is aiming to enroll all Justice AmeriCorps Members by December 1, 2014. Despite the short timeline, the NYIC is confident that it can accomplish this, due to the extensive networks it and its program partners have with regards to lawyers, paralegals and law students working on immigrations issues and Unaccompanied Children. In fact, some of the program partners have already identified individuals that they would like to offer the AmeriCorps positions to, should the NYIC's program be approved by CNCS.

CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS MUST BE CONDUCTED ON ALL MEMBERS, EMPLOYEES OR OTHER INDIVIDUALS WHO RECEIVE A SALARY, EDUCATION AWARD, LIVING ALLOWANCE, STIPEND OR SIMILAR PAYMENT FROM THE GRANT, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THESE COSTS ARE COMING FROM THE FEDERAL OR NON-FEDERAL SHARE. THE BUDGET DOES NOT INCLUDE COSTS FOR CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS ON STAFF OR THE AMERICORPS MEMBERS. PLEASE EXPLAIN HOW THESE COSTS WILL BE COVERED.
The New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) will conduct criminal history/background checks on all Justice AmeriCorps Members. The NYIC recognizes the importance of conducting background checks on individuals who work with youth, especially youth who are facing court proceedings and who - in

many cases - have experienced trauma. The NYIC will cover the costs involved for Member background checks through its own funds.

All staff members supporting the supervision of the AmeriCorps Members have already undergone a criminal background check, for their place of employment. If anyone new is added to the supervisor/staff team, their organization will be expected to finance their criminal background check.

PLEASE EXPLAIN HOW YOUR PROGRAM DESIGN WILL "IMPROVE THE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ADJUDICATION OF IMMIGRATION COURT PROCEEDINGS INVOLVING UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN".

Through the support of AmeriCorps Members, all of the organizations involved in the NYIC AmeriCorps Justice program, will be able to increase the amount of legal service that they provide to Unaccompanied Children (UAC), which will support the UACs in navigating the legal system and accessing legal remedies, in addition to health, social and educational services. These children can not be expected to handle the court system and pursue remedies to their legal cases, on their own.

The increased presence of legal representation will also support judges and courts in being able to move through each case in a more efficient manner, that will be sensitive to the needs of UAC. This efficiency will ultimately allow the court to move through its docket in a quicker manner, that will ultimately allow more UACs to get the relief they are eligible for, in a timely manner.

ADDITIONAL FUNDS

We will raise funds to cover the grantee share from a variety of sources including contributions from member site organizations to help cover the personnel and fringe, background checks, training and travel expenses associated with the project. In addition, we will seek support from UAC partner organizations whenever possible to cover any gap between what member sites are able to contribute and the actual expense. The NYIC will also work with member site, UAM partner organizations, etc., to raise funds to cover grantee share for the member fringe and living allowance share by seeking support from local and regional bar associations, law firms and lawyers associations as well as from corporate supporters.

ARE THERE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (E.G., COMMUNITY PARTNERS, PRO BONO

Narratives

SUPPORT OR OTHER FUNDS) THAT HAVE BECOME AVAILABLE SINCE YOU SUBMITTED YOUR APPLICATION? IF SO, WILL THESE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ENABLE YOU TO REPRESENT ADDITIONAL UACS OR IMMIGRATION COURTS?

This month the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) launched the Immigrant Child Defense Project, which will provide legal, educational, medical/mental health, and youth support services to Unaccompanied Children (UAC) and other immigrant youth, through community-based clinics in New York City, Long Island and Lower Hudson Valley. There are currently 10 clinics planned for the course of this fiscal year, the first of which occurred yesterday. (August 27)

The clinics are supported by multiple agencies, including the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG), which is one of the organizations that NYIC plans to place a AmeriCorps Justice Member at. NYLAG is managing the legal service provision at the clinics.

It is estimated that 2,000 unaccompanied children will receive legal services through the clinics, which will include a full legal intake and screening for all possible relief, explanation of the immigration court process and referrals to partner legal organizations for long term legal representation.

The NYIC plans to incorporate its AmeriCorps Justice Members into the work of the Immigrant Child Defense Project.

PLEASE PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT HOW YOU WILL BE ABLE TO RESPOND TO THE DEMAND FOR SERVICES IF THE NUMBER OF CASES INCREASES IN THE CURRENT OR FUTURE YEARS.

As just mentioned, the NYIC will be coordinating the Immigrant Child Defense Project this year, and plans to continue managing it in years to come.

The partner agencies will also continue to train and recruit pro bono legal service providers for work on Unaccompanied Children. For example, Safe Passage offers 4 trainings per month on serving unaccompanied children and then recruits the participants for pro bono service for unaccompanied children. The trainings are advertised to law firms and law schools.

Narratives

These types of recruitment/training efforts will continue throughout the year and beyond, and will support the development of a increasing large pool of pro bono attorneys, paralegals and law students, dedicated to serving unaccompanied children.

CLARIFY HOW THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN WILL BE ASSESSED AND MITIGATED. INFORMATION RELATED TO THE SCREENING TOOL TO UNCOVER ABUSE, TRAFFICKING AND OTHER NEEDS OF THE UNACCOMPANIED MINOR IS MISSING.

Mental health needs will be assessed through the intake process. The AmeriCorps Members will be trained prior to service around being sensitive to the clients' potential experiences with trauma, and how to effectively hold client sessions with them that will be sensitive to their mental health needs.

During intake, AmeriCorps Member will ask age-appropriate questions related to why the client immigrated, challenges they faced prior to/during/after immigration, their experiences at home, any experiences they may have in terms of abuse, whether or not they would be afraid to return to their home country, and more. A lot of these questions would be poised to the child without the presence of family/guardians, to support the child in providing honest answers.

The NYIC is also currently looking the possibility of adding a formal depression screening - developed by a mental health service provider - into the intake process. None of the partner agencies currently do this, but we are actively exploring whether or not it makes sense to formally add it to the program design.

FURTHER CLARIFY HOW RECRUITMENT EFFORTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED TO GARNER THE SUPPORT OF THE ADDIITIONAL RESOURCES NOTED IN THE LOGIC MODEL

The NYIC and its partner agencies for the program will promote trainings on providing legal services to Unaccompanied Children each month, and will recruit pro bono support through these trainings in support of the AmeriCorps Justice program and the agencies' general work around Unaccompanied Children.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Narratives

We are not budgeting living allowances and fringe benefits for the quarter-time Members, as it is our understanding that Members who work that schedule, do not need to be compensated with living allowances and fringe benefits. We plan to use law students in those positions, and believe that the experience gained, will be sufficient for the individuals filling those roles.

If we are in error in thinking this, we are very willing to rethink our budget plan regarding the quarter-time positions. We are also willing to add compensation to those positions, if sufficient funding becomes available.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics