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Executive Summary

Reading Partners will have 67 AmeriCorps members who will manage the volunteer recruitment for and day-to-day operations of our one-on-one literacy tutoring program for low-income students at 47 Title I elementary schools across the Silicon Valley in California, Tulsa, Charleston, Washington D.C., Seattle, and Baltimore. At the end of the 1st program year, the ACMs will be responsible for measurably increasing the literacy skills and learning rate of at least 764 students. In addition, the ACMs will leverage an additional 2,000 volunteers that will be engaged in individualized reading tutoring for low-income students struggling to maintain proficient, grade-level skills. This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of education. The CNCS investment of \$846,545 will be supported by various leveraged resources, including fee-for-service contributions from our school partners and philanthropic gifts from individuals, corporations, and foundations. A sampling of our philanthropic funding prospects include the Lobeck Taylor Foundation, the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, the Tulsa Community Foundation. We are stewarding active funding partnerships with the George Kaiser Family Foundation (\$700k), Trident United Way (\$90k), the Deerbrook Charitable Trust (\$350k shared between DC and Baltimore), the Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation, Inc. (\$250k over two years), and the J. Willard and Alice. S. Marriott Foundation (\$50k).

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

2.A. Problem/Need: Third grade marks one of the most critical transitions of students' entire academic career. Until third grade, much of students' focus in school revolves around learning the mechanics of and basic comprehension strategies involved in reading. Starting in third grade, though, reading is no longer the objective of learning but rather its primary vehicle; students are expected to read to learn. Across America, however, millions of children from low-income homes are not successfully making this transition due to the many and complicated consequences of poverty. In its 2013 Kids Count Data Book, The Annie E. Casey Foundation named poverty as "one of the greatest threats to healthy child development" because children need reliable shelter, nutrition, and safety to facilitate regular cognitive, behavioral, and social development. Indeed, the harmful effects of growing up in poverty are well evident in current fourth grade elementary literacy proficiency rates. According to the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, 82% of all fourth graders from low-income homes fail to meet the standards for proficiency in reading. In Maryland, typically one of the top performing states on NAEP, only 28% of fourth graders eligible for Free or Reduced-Priced Meals (FRPM), performed at or above proficient grade-

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level standards on the 2013 test. In Oklahoma, the percentage was just 24%, and in South Carolina, it was just 19%. In California, only 17% of fourth graders from low-income homes could read at grade-level. In our nation's most populous state, then, nearly eight in 10 students from low-income homes experience reading not as a springboard into opportunity, but as a wall still blocking their way. The District of Columbia, home to our nation's capital, under-performed all other states. In DC, just 15% of FRPM-eligible fourth graders passed proficiency benchmarks on the 2013 NAEP.

The broader crisis lurking beneath these statistics is that students' current challenges in literacy can bear long-term life consequences. As reported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in a 2010 report called "Early Warning! Why Learning to Read by the End of Third Grade Matters," roughly 16% of all children who struggle with reading in third grade fail to graduate high school on time. For children from low-income families, the proportion jumps to 35% - more than one in three. Consider then that the US Department of Education notes that employees without a high school diploma earned a median income of just \$23,000 in 2011 -- nearly \$16,000 less than those workers with a bachelor's degree. In our society where an increasing number of careers require at least an Associates Degree, needless to say a high school diploma, the path out of poverty for thousands of elementary students is already obstructed by the time they enter the fourth grade.

Reading Partners believes that it is neither inevitable nor unalterable that students' current struggles in reading force them to repeat the cycle of poverty. That is why we focus our services on students in grades K-5 attending Title I elementary schools who have fallen six months to 2.5 years below their proficient peers in reading. On average, 94% of students who participate in Reading Partners are eligible for Free or Reduced Priced Lunch, a standard proxy for poverty in education research. At the time of enrollment, the average student is reading 1.1 years below their actual grade-level. Through collaboration and community service, Reading Partners believes we can get students back on track for success in the classroom, workplace, and civil society. We are proud that AmeriCorps members are a driving force in our work. In DC, we have 16 MSYs from Serve DC and we would place 3 National Direct MSYs here as well. In Baltimore, we have 10 MSYs from the Maryland GOSV and we seek to add 2 additional National Direct MSYs. In California, we have 63 ACMs through California Volunteers and we hope to add 35 National Direct MSYs to fulfill the need in our Silicon Valley region. Of the remaining 28 National Direct slots, 19 will serve in South Carolina and 9 in Oklahoma.

2.B. Logic Model: Reading Partners believes that our schools and teachers need and deserve more help in providing individualized academic support to struggling young readers. To that end, we view

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community volunteerism as a powerful yet under-utilized force when it comes to increasing instructional capacity at our schools. By engaging volunteers as tutors and integrating their service into the normal school day, Reading Partners directly helps to increase the amount of time, personnel, and resources available for differentiated instruction for struggling young readers. We believe full-time slots are optimal for our MSYs because our program offers tutoring both during the normal school day and after school, so we need members on hand for the full work-day.

There are several key drivers of Reading Partners' ability to produce tangible improvements in student learning. First, we intentionally developed the program to be one-on-one to target each student's unique learning needs. We assess students at regular intervals throughout the year and develop Individualized Reading Plans (IRP) for to create a roadmap to achievement goals. Secondly, we emphasize consistency and attendance. Learning to read takes ample practice, and so we require all students to maintain at least 90% attendance to their regularly scheduled sessions. When a student misses a session, we arrange for a make-up session within one week of the missed date. Finally, we designed the Reading Partners curriculum to be skills-based and user-friendly. Reading Partners is much more than a volunteer simply reading aloud to a student. Our tutors use a 150+ level curriculum that reinforces mechanical and comprehension skills so that students can master what they struggled to understand the first time around. Every lesson comes complete with a lesson plan, books calibrated to the lesson's content and level of difficulty, worksheets, and games. In this way, no matter a volunteer's prior experience with education or children, he or she can support student's skill mastery. We are proud that 97% of volunteers last year reported satisfaction with their tutoring experience.

Over our 14 years of operation, our data corroborates the power both of our model in improving academic outcomes. Our historical data indicates that year over year, nearly 9 in 10 students accelerate their rate of learning. To specify, the average student enters our program learning at a depressed rate of 0.6 months worth of skill development for every month of instruction (proficiency = one month of skills per month of instruction). Once enrolled in Reading Partners, that same student nearly triples her rate of learning to an average of 1.6 months worth of new skills for every month of tutoring. In FY13, 88% of target students in Reading Partners accelerated their rate of learning. This boost in skill mastery helped 72% of target students narrow their achievement gap to their peers. Additionally, 92% of principals reported school-wide improved reading progress thanks to our partnership. This is remarkable because it speaks to the fact that the positive impacts of our program extend well beyond the students who regularly visit the reading center.

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2.B. Evidence Base: Reading Partners is currently an evidence-informed program working to become evidence-based. To underpin our growth to national scale, building a research-validated base of evidence for our program has been a pillar of Reading Partners' 2010-14 strategic plan. Our most important progress towards this goal has been to conduct a randomized control trial (RCT) in partnership with leading research firm MDRC. The study took place over the 2012-13 school year and has two major goals: 1) to determine the impact on literacy skill development the Reading Partners program has on students who participate and 2) to assess the fidelity and consistency of our program implementation across the country. MDRC collected data at 19 schools in California, New York, and Washington, DC, from 1,265 students enrolled in Reading Partners or in a peer control group. Program and control students were assessed at the beginning and end of the school year, with a final sample size of 1,166 (92% response rate for both groups). A forthcoming study to be published by MDRC in May 2014 will show positive effects for Reading Partners on most measures.

As an evidence-informed program, Reading Partners' program design is consistent with a number of studies that point to the efficacy of one-on-one literacy intervention for elementary students at risk of reading failure (for examples, see [1], [2]). The most comprehensive of these studies is a meta-analysis of other studies of reading interventions: "How Effective are One-to-One Tutoring Programs in Reading for Elementary Students at Risk for Reading Failure? A Meta-Analysis of the Intervention Research" [3]. In addition, a more recent meta-analysis of seven studies, four of them randomized control trials, by Slavin and colleagues entitled "Effective Programs for Struggling Readers: A Best Evidence Synthesis" [4] provides further supporting evidence of the efficacy of one-on-one literacy interventions.

Elbaum et al's analysis sought to answer one key question: how effective are "supplemental, adult-delivered, one-to-one interventions for elementary school children with low reading skills?" (p.615). Their results indicate that as a complement to classroom instruction, trained and properly supervised community volunteers can indeed deliver significant academic support to struggling readers. Moreover, engaging volunteers as literacy tutors can be a cost-effective strategy for schools with large populations of students needing intervention. Slavin et al's analysis found that "one-on-one tutoring is clearly very effective, and when resources are limited, well-structured programs making use of paraprofessionals and volunteers may reach more struggling readers for the same cost as serving many fewer children with certified teachers (p.56).

The work of Elbaum et. al and Slavin et al. [3, 4] points to the efficacy of our model, and our specific

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program design operationalizes many of Dr. Wasik's [2] recommendations for high-quality tutoring programs (p. 565-569). To provide real-time feedback and problem-solving support to volunteers, we station an AmeriCorps member at each school. Structure is important to successful tutoring programs, and our curriculum's lesson plans provide exactly that for volunteers. Intensity and consistency are necessary attributes for effective tutoring, which is why we emphasize high attendance rates. Successful tutoring programs use research-based materials, which our curriculum is based on, including key learning standards in the Common Core State Standards. Regular assessments are important and are likewise hallmarks of our program. Finally, effective tutoring programs should align with classroom instruction as much as possible, which our ongoing efforts in aligning to the Common Core State Standards are helping to accomplish.

[1] Vadasy, P., Jenkins, J., Antil, L., Wayne, S., & O'Connor, R. (1997). The Effectiveness of One-to-One Tutoring by Community Tutors for At-Risk Beginning Readers. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 20(2), 126-139. [2] Wasik, B. (1998). Using Volunteers as Reading Tutors: Guidelines for Successful Practices. *The Reading Teacher*, 51(7), 562-570. [3] Elbaum, B., Vaughan, S., Tejero Hughes, M., & Watson Moody, S. (2000). How Effective are One-to-One Tutoring Programs in Reading for Elementary Students at Risk for Reading Failure? A Meta-Analysis of the Intervention Research. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92(4), 605-619. [4] Slavin, R.E., Lake, C., Davis, S., & Madden, N. (2009, June) Effective programs for struggling readers: A best evidence synthesis. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education.

2.C. Member Training: When Reading Partners designed its training for ACMs, our main objective was to ensure that members thrive throughout their service experience. Accordingly, we developed a training plan that spans the entirety of the service year, with emphasis on three major phases: initial introduction to and learning about their service commitment and environment, the assumption of their daily responsibilities as they transition into the service environment, and the efficient and satisfactory completion of their normal routines and tasks for the duration of their service commitment.

When AmeriCorps members join the Reading Partners team in August, their training begins with three weeks of pre-service orientation (PSO). Members participate in PSO in their unique region of service, but the training plan is standardized so that all members across the country receive the same content and caliber of instruction. The pre-service orientation serves three main goals. First, it serves to educate members about the history of national service, the conditions of their service and prohibited

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activities, and other CNCS-required subjects, as well as to sign their contracts. Secondly, it serves to prepare members for their service at Reading Partners by introducing our program model and their daily responsibilities. For members serving as SCs, we train them on how to use our curriculum, how to coach tutors, and how to interact with school staff. For members serving as VCs, they receive training in public speaking and professional communication, building relationships with different types of community partners, and assisting volunteers through the typical life cycle of a RP tutor. Finally, pre-service orientation is an important team-building opportunity.

After pre-service orientation, members serving as SCs are placed at their specific service sites and receive two weeks of reading center-based training. During this time, they learn about the community where they will be serving and conduct community mapping exercises to learn more about what it's like to live and work there. As members set up their reading centers in sites, Reading Partners Program Managers circulate between a portfolio of five to six schools to provide 1:1 coaching and to help members problem-solve. Members also use this second phase of hands-on training to meet with school personnel to discuss the program structure and to review the student enrollment process. Once school begins, members complete classroom observations, schedule volunteers for orientations, and conduct student assessments before regular tutoring begins in late September. Under supervision, VCs use this time to begin connecting with returning volunteers, to make introductions to our existing community partners, and to begin canvassing for new recruitment.

At the completion of this second phase of training, it is our intention that SCs will command an understanding of the five domains of literacy and possess the interpersonal and administrative skills necessary to manage a reading center. VCs will understand best practices for volunteer recruitment, demonstrate mastery of our database, and profess comfort with public speaking.

For the duration of service term, both SCs and VCs receive weekly personalized coaching from their supervisor, as well as group training opportunities. Supervisors provide on-site support and rely on weekly check-ins to remind members of prohibited activities and to course-correct any aberrant behavior at its outset. One Friday a month, all members come together for a group training. These training days reinforce the team's dynamic, allow time to share experiences and to problem-solve, and engage members in new training topics such as Life after AmeriCorps.

Volunteers with Reading Partners likewise go through a robust training phase before beginning tutoring with their student. Training for volunteers includes an online orientation and an in-person introduction to the program. All volunteers must undergo a background check and sign a Volunteer Code of Conduct that outlines allowable and unallowable activities as a RP tutor.

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2.D. Member Supervision: Reading Partners integrates multiple levels of support for our AmeriCorps members. Volunteer Coordinators (VCs) are supervised by Outreach Managers (OMs) who have 3-6 years of volunteer management experience. SCs are supervised by Program Managers (PMs), all of whom have extensive experience in the education field. All managers attend a comprehensive orientation and training in June/July, participate in weekly check-in meetings with their direct supervisors, and participate in bi-weekly team meetings. PMs and OMs are supervised by either the Program Director or the Executive Director (ED), who reports directly to one of two VPs of Regional Operations. OMs and VCs work together at the regional office. In addition to constant contact over email and phone, PMs visit each SC and RSC at their school site at least once a week to provide in-person guidance, coaching, and problem-solving support. Staff from our Regional Operations Department and the AmeriCorps Director also periodically join PMs on school visits to ensure fidelity to the program model.

Members also receive support from their AmeriCorps Program Manager (ACPM). The ACPM ensures that members understand the commitment to AC during Orientation, provides prohibited activities supervision, monitors member satisfaction, and collaborates with PMs in designing and delivering professional development and career path planning for members. The ACPM relies on training sessions, surveys, and one-on-one check-in meetings with members as supervisory tools. Additionally, members must always be under supervision from an approved Reading Partners manager during any and all National Days of Service and/or pre-approved community service opportunities.

2.E. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification: To further enhance our AmeriCorps branding, Reading Partners has established an AC Branding policy, which requires members to always be identified as AC members while serving. Members must wear AC gear to service events and trainings, and every reading center has clearly presented an "AmeriCorps Serving Here" sign.

Organizational Capability

3.A. Organizational Background and Staffing: As a national nonprofit, Reading Partners has a management structure that has proven to be effective over the past four years as a nationally scaled AmeriCorps program managing six AmeriCorps grants and two Social Innovation Fund (SIF) subgrants. Reading Partners consists of six major departments: Office of the CEO, Advancement (development and communications), Regional Operations (housing AmeriCorps, regional operations, and community engagement), Research and Evaluation, Talent, and Business Operations. As a single

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501c3, Reading Partners is able to improve our cost effectiveness and limit overhead expenses in each region by sharing the costs of these departments across the regions and national office. Sharing departmental operations across regions also enhances inter-regional and inter-departmental communication as staff from across the organization must collaborate to fulfill their duties. Most senior-level managers supervise staff in different regions, which provides for broad oversight paired with clear avenues for up-and-down communication. We have also created regular opportunities for lateral communication between regions and staff positions (e.g., Program Managers in all regions participate in a bi-weekly video conference). These staffing and communication structures encourage a culture of shared responsibility for our AC program because everyone interacts either with members, PMs, ACPMs, or the Director of AC Programs.

The direct administration of the AC program falls under the purview of Reading Partners' AmeriCorps department. Reading Partners created this department when it received our first AmeriCorps grant in 2010 for \$172,900 for 33 ACMs. This year, we are managing five AmeriCorps state commission grants, one National Direct grant, one VISTA grant, and two SIF subgrants. The AC department enables us to coordinate efforts throughout the organization to train all managers and department leaders on AC and to familiarize them with compliance regulations. Leading the department is Director of AmeriCorps Programs, Kristarae Flynn. She oversees national grant management regulations and member support structures. She came to Reading Partners in 2010 after serving as the Director of Community Development at Public Allies. To assist Ms. Flynn with member support and grant compliance monitoring, we employ two AmeriCorps Program Managers.

3.B. Compliance and Accountability: Reading Partners holds itself accountable to compliance regulations on several different levels. To prevent and detect compliance issues in grants management, Reading Partners adheres to a Federal Grants Manual. This document outlines policies and procedures for all major federal grant regulations and deadlines, including CNCS and AC. We ensure accurate billing to grants by training staff on their time allocations on different federal grants prior to the start of the program year. This is also an occasion to train staff on prohibited versus acceptable activities under AC. All staff then use ADP time and attendance system throughout the year to record and monitor their actual time spent on each grant. The accounting, development, and AmeriCorps departments also meet on a monthly basis to discuss each grant's fiscal progress, to plan for upcoming program or fiscal deadlines for any grant, and to announce and review updates of new CNCS regulations.

In regards to ACM management, Reading Partners holds itself accountable to instances of risk by

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conducting multiple internal audits each year of member files, hours, health benefits, and payroll. For instance, the AmeriCorps Program Director conducts a quarterly audit of member files for all AC grants to ensure that member files are complete and updated. The ACPM and AmeriCorps Director meet on a quarterly basis to analyze and audit member hours and time sheets for accuracy, and to determine if ACMs are on track to meet their 1,700 hour commitment.

To hold members accountable to compliance regulations, Reading Partners relies on ample training and signed contracts. For ACMs, Reading Partners outlines acceptable conduct and prohibited activities, as well as required reporting and consequences of violations, during the month-long pre-service orientation described in 2.C. ACMs sign their AC contracts at the end of training to indicate their understanding of allowable versus prohibited activities. We reiterate prohibited activities during timesheet training, and ACMs submit bi-monthly time sheets that require manager review and approval. Finally, we remind members and supervisors of prohibited activities by a revolving section highlighting different inadmissible activities in our monthly AmeriCorps newsletter. If there is any uncertainty about an activity's or Reading Partners' general compliance, the AC Program Manager will immediately seek advice and guidance from our AmeriCorps Program Officer.

Reading Partners also works to educate our school and volunteer stakeholders about the importance of compliance with AC regulations. During the school selection and MOU-signing process, Reading Partners explicitly outlines to principals the expectations of having ACMs serve in their building, as well our expectations for immediate reporting of any suspected violations of acceptable ACM conduct. To confirm, our school partners are not subgrantees; Reading Partners retains full authority over member activities and conduct. Tutors receive similar explication of AC-prohibited activities during their initial training, and when they sign our Tutor Code of Conduct, their signature indicates their understanding of allowable versus prohibited AC activities.

In the event of a violation, Reading Partners has a Prohibited Activities Policy that outlines the action steps needed if a prohibited activity has occurred. The Director of AmeriCorps must be notified right away so that she may notify the appropriate state commission and/or CNCS Program Officer. The policy also describes the consequences of violations, thus ensuring our team and sites understand the seriousness of these activities.

3.C. Past performance for current grantees only: Reading Partners is currently completing our third year of three as a National Direct grantee. In each of the past two years, we have exceeded or matched the actual numbers as stated in our performance targets. In 2011-12, Reading Partners

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placed 40 ACMs and we sought to enroll 1,290 students. Our performance target stated that at least 864 students complete the program and receive at least 16 hours of tutoring, and that 505 of these students would increase their literacy skills by at least one grade level. By the end of the program year, we served 1,614 students, surpassing our enrollment goal by 324 students. 1,365 students received at least 16 hours of tutoring -- 501 students over our goal -- and 658 students improved their literacy skills by at least one grade level, bettering our target by 158 students.

In 2012-13, we matched our anticipated performance targets. Reading Partners placed 18 ACMs and we aimed to enroll 518 students. According to our goals, 347 students should have received at least 16 hours of tutoring, with 201 students increasing their literacy skills by one full grade level. By June 2013, our 18 ACMs had enrolled 602 students, surpassing our enrollment goal by 85 students. Three hundred seventy-one (371) students received at least 16 hours of tutoring, which is 24 students over our stated goal of 347. Of students receiving a full dosage of tutoring, 203 increased their literacy skills by one grade level, thus virtually matching our stated performance target of 201.

Our Director of AC Programs and Senior Vice President of Research and Evaluation work closely together to establish and approve our metrics and outcomes language. In 2014 and beyond, Reading Partners requests to update our ED5 outcome to state: "Reading Partners will ensure that 65% of students who complete the program will gain more than one month of literacy skills for every month they are enrolled in the program."

We make this request in order to capture the growth of our full population of students served, as well as the full impact ACMs bring to the program and our students. Reading Partners targets students reading anywhere from six months to 2.5 years below their target grade-level. While there are many and complex factors that contribute to any student's struggle to read proficiently, there is a one common indicator shared by all below-proficient students: a depressed rate of learning. On average, students who participate in Reading Partners enter the program learning only 0.6 months worth of skills for every month of learning time in school. Our goal is to help students attain, and even surpass, a proficient rate of learning - one month's worth of skill gains for every month of instructional time - so that they can get back on track for proficiency.

Although Reading Partners did not experience any major compliance issues in the last full year of program operations, we have identified some areas of risk - e.g., AC branding and Member Retention). To address the risk of compliance issues for AC branding, we created an AC Branding Policy which is now a mandatory module for all staff and member Program Orientations. To

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minimize the risk of low member retention, we have created a Progressive Discipline Policy and Performance Improvement Plan Template. These tools, in addition to our performance evaluations and management trainings for supervisors, bolster member success by ensuring all members have clear expectations and specific goals.

Reading Partners enrolled 100% of our MSYs granted during the last full year of program operation. However, Reading Partners had 88% retention because two of our ACMs ended their service prematurely. The first case was performance-related. After going through the disciplinary process with that member after repeated instances of poor performance, we decided that in order to protect the quality of our program, the integrity of our relationship with the school, and student outcomes, we had to terminate the ACM's service. The second case was due to an ACM having personal family issues that did not qualify for a CPC.

Reading Partners strives for 100% retention, and we stress to ACMs the many deleterious effects on our students, school partners, and volunteers of prematurely ending a service term. We are committed to using the full arsenal of training, support, disciplinary, and improvement plan tools at our disposal to ensure members have a successful service experience. In the first case described above, we are confident that the disciplinary process worked as well as possible, and that ultimately, early exit was the best option.

3.D. Continuous Improvement: Reading Partners collects data to inform continuous improvement on the efficacy of our curriculum and on how we can further drive student achievement. Reading Partners seeks to provide a high-quality learning experience for students that complements their classroom instruction. To that end, we are constantly improving upon our curriculum materials. Our most significant effort in this arena is our ongoing push to enhance alignment between our curriculum and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Reading Partners' original curriculum was written to align to the Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools. In 2012-13, Reading Partners staff collaborated with expert advisers from Southern Methodist University, the University of Michigan, and the University of California - Irvine to strengthen alignment to the CCSS. The revision process will continue for the next several years based on implementation feedback and student data. In 2013-14, we are pleased to incorporate increased emphasis on informational texts and Tier 2 vocabulary development into the curriculum.

To evaluate student progress and achievement, we gather three sources of data. First, we collect

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results from a research-based elementary literacy assessment tool (we use STAR Early Literacy for our younger readers and the Rigby PM Ultra for our older students) that we administer to all students at their entry into the program, at mid-year (early February), and end-of-year. Site Coordinators are responsible for administering these assessments under the supervision of their Program Manager. We use these data to develop IRP for each student, to monitor their progress over the course of the year and make adaptations to the IRP, and to assess their accomplishment of achievement goals at the end of the school year.

As a second data source, Reading Partners collects state standardized test scores and school-based evaluations. These data give us a more comprehensive picture of how students are doing relative to state English Language Arts standards. Finally, we gather perceived impact data on improvements in students' reading skills, self-confidence, and classroom participation through twice-annual teacher, principal, and tutor surveys. We also use surveys as a way for teachers, principals, and tutors to communicate their satisfaction with the program and to suggest improvements.

In addition to these formal data, Reading Partners gathers informal data on each student on a weekly basis. Specifically, we ask tutors to record qualitative notes at the end of each tutoring session to track in real-time students' struggles and breakthroughs. Program Managers and Site Coordinators regularly review these notes to suggest supplements or adaptations to each student's IRP.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

4.A. Cost Effectiveness: Reading Partners' total budget for this program is \$3,030,278. In addition to CNCS funding of \$871,000, RP will raise \$2,159,278 to support this project. For this particular budget, RP budgeted for the following major expenses: 1: Personnel Salary and Benefits (\$1,117,083); 2: Staff Travel to required RP and CNCS events and trainings (\$22,177); 3: Member Travel to required RP trainings (\$15,108); 4: Member Gear (\$4,690); 5: Supplies and equipment such as books, curriculum and worksheets for new centers (\$51,000); 6: Member Training Costs for disaster preparedness training, as well as RP recommended CPR Certification Training (\$6,700); 7: Fingerprinting Costs for all staff, members, and volunteers (\$62,700); 8: Member living allowance, FICA, Worker's Compensation, and Health, Vision and Dental coverage (\$1,286,400); 10: Federally Approved 18.1% Indirect Cost Rate (\$464,420). Together, these expenses total to \$3,030,278. To manage and operate an AC program beyond a CNCS fixed amount grant, Reading Partners will raise additional revenue from earned income (\$720,000) through fee-for-service contributions from our school partners and from private philanthropy coming from foundation, corporate, and individual donors (\$1,439,278 total). Each region in which members serve will contribute to this total goal by

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tackling unique portions of it: California at \$839,278; Tulsa, OK at \$300K; Charleston, SC at \$200K; Washington, DC @\$50k; and Baltimore at \$50k.

Fee-for-service is an important and distinguishing element of Reading Partners because it speaks to our school partners' buy-in. All school partners currently contribute a fee-for-service, which is negotiated in the MOU process.

Over the past five years, Reading Partners has steadily grown our organization-wide philanthropic revenue and we project that in 2013-14, it will grow across all regions by 33%. To execute on our projections, one of our dominant important strategies is to launch and/or expand regional advisory boards. With their depth of knowledge and experience within specific communities, our regional board members provide support in our efforts to increase our local brand awareness and to broaden our network of funding partners (e.g., engaging more corporate partners). Board members also support their local Executive Director with strategy and vision planning. In Washington, DC, the board currently includes eleven members. Charleston has nine board members. Our regional advisory board for Silicon Valley has seven members. Both Tulsa and Baltimore are building out their advisory committees and expect to launch full boards by June 2014.

4.B. Budget Adequacy: Reading Partners recognizes that a diversified revenue portfolio is critical to securing our current operational stability, as well as our long-term sustainability. In addition to funding from CNCS, Reading Partners currently relies on revenues from in-kind sources, earned income, private philanthropy, and the Social Innovation Fund to support our operations.

Reading Partners receives in-kind support from our school partners in the way of classroom space that we transform into our reading centers. We also receive in-kind donations of books and instructional supplies throughout the year. In FY14 (July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014), we expect in-kind donations to contribute about 12% of total revenues.

Reading Partners' earned income takes the form of fee-for-service contributions from our school partners. We ask our partners to contribute 20-25% of the cost of the program. In 2013-14, Reading Partners has an organization-wide goal of \$8.8M in private philanthropy, which represents roughly 70% of our FY14 revenues. We solicit donations from foundations, corporations, and individuals, and our development team tailors our solicitation strategies and funding targets to the unique philanthropic market of each region.

Currently, Thirteen percent (13%) of our revenues come from a \$3.5M Social Innovation Fund (SIF) investment, administered by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (EMCF) for CNCS. Receiving a

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SIF investment requires working closely with a team at the Bridgespan Group and EMCF to plan for sustainability and growth post-SIF. When the SIF grant expires at the end of FY14, Reading Partners will launch a growth capital campaign.

Given our past experience with designing AmeriCorps program budgets, we are confident that our budget is fully adequate to support our program design and objectives. With so many stakeholders involved in funding our program, we are confident in our ability to compensate for any unexpected funding fluctuations.

As of 1/3/14, we have secured roughly \$11.1M in non-CNCS commitments. About 22% (\$2.2M) of these funds come from fee-for-service contributions. SIF represents 30% at \$3M. Reading Partners' 2013-14 private fundraising goal is \$8.8M, and to date we have raised 61%, or ~\$5.88M. Foundation grants represent 72% (\$4.3M), corporate sponsorships 12% (\$680K), and individual donations 14% (\$900K). The remaining comes from government contracts and other sources.

Reading Partners' fiscal year runs from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014. At this point in the FY, our primary focus falls to private philanthropy fundraising. To ensure we hit our fundraising goals, we rely on a system of portfolio management. In this system, every region has a pipeline of renewal and prospective donors categorized by an assessment of their current likelihood of making a donation. We have quarterly benchmarks of pipeline health that help regions to evaluate whether they have enough likely donations to meet their goal and if not, what they need do to bolster their pipeline health. By 3/15/14, all regions should have raised 80% of their goal, and we seek to have over 90% of each region's fundraising goal pledged by 5/15/14 so that we can use the last month of the FY to secure any outstanding gifts. Every region is also responsible for raising enough funds to produce a roughly 2% net on the FY, which funnels directly into our operating reserve.

In Oklahoma, the George Kaiser Family Foundation is our lead investor at \$700k. Some of our most promising prospects include: the Lobeck-Taylor Foundation, Tulsa Community Foundation, and the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation. In South Carolina, we are actively stewarding relationships with the Trident United Way (\$90,000), Charlestown Promise Neighborhood (\$40k), and the Duke Endowment (\$42k). In the Mid-Atlantic (Baltimore and DC), we recently secured a \$350,000 from the Deerbrook Charitable Trust and a grant from the Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation, Inc. for \$250,000 over two years. We also just renewed a \$50k grant from the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation. And in California, examples of our partners include the Sobrato Family Foundation (\$282k), Tipping Point Community (\$137k), and the Peery Family Fund (\$50k).

Evaluation Summary or Plan

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Evaluation Design and Methods

The MDRC evaluation of Reading Partners is a student-level randomized controlled trial (RCT) design. The research team selected among a large group of eligible students in grades 2 to 5 those that received Reading Partners during the 2012-13 school year. MDRC conducted random assignment separately by school and grade level. The analysis will pool together a sample of over 1,200 students across 19 schools in three states (CA, NY, and DC) and compare outcomes for students receiving Reading Partners with those not receiving those services, with intent-to-treat impact estimates as the central impact estimate. Because students are assigned to the two groups randomly, this design is considered experimental. Estimates of impacts on student outcomes will be calculated by comparing outcomes for the program versus the control group overall, and for key subgroups, as discussed below in the research questions section.

Research questions include: Do students who have been offered to participate in Reading Partners have a different reading proficiency level than students who have not been offered to participate in Reading Partners, as measured by test scores?

Do students who have been offered to participate in Reading Partners exhibit a different attention level in the classroom than students who have not been offered to participated in Reading Partners, as measured by a school-day teacher survey?

Do students who have been offered to participate in Reading Partners have a different rate of assignment completion than students who have not been offered to participate in Reading Partners, as measured by a school-day teacher survey?

In addition, to the extent allowed by sample size, this evaluation will answer three exploratory questions:

1. Do impacts differ for students entering the program with higher levels of achievement versus those with lower pre-intervention achievement levels?
2. Are impacts different for students in the younger grades (grades 2 and 3) compared with those in the older grades (grades 4 and 5)?
3. Do impacts differ for students identified as English Language Learners (ELL), compared with students who are fluent in English?

To help interpret the impact findings, the study will explore four broad categories of implementation questions during the Fall 2012-Spring 2013 school year:

1. Service delivery: Was the program delivered as intended or with fidelity? What were the barriers to and facilitators of program delivery? Did particular aspects of the model pose special problems?

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2. Context: What were the characteristics of the schools included in the study and the students served by RP in those schools? Who delivered the program, and how were they recruited and trained?
3. Service Contrast: What is the difference in academic support offered to students in the program and control groups? What other teaching or programs does the school offer that might affect the outcomes sought by the program?
4. Implementation Lessons: How did local contextual factors influence the implementation of the models of instruction, what implementation challenges were encountered, how were they addressed, and what are lessons for other programs that may wish to implement similar strategies?

Outcomes

The organization's data management system should be addressed if it will be used to collect data for evaluation. Baseline data used in the impact evaluation will be collected from the RP program application, the study assessment, and the records data from participating school districts. Follow-up data will be collected from the study assessment and teacher surveys. The RP applications will be distributed and collected by RP program staff and school staff as part of the program application process prior to random assignment. As applications with signed consents are returned, students will be assessed by members of the research team. (MDRC will work with a survey firm to administer assessments and school-day teacher surveys.) As part of the random assignment process, RP will provide MDRC with a database indicating that a valid application and consent form is in hand for each potential sample member, along with a completed test. A request for school records data on students in the study sample will be submitted at the end of the implementation year so that spring achievement test scores can be included. The assessment measures and demographic characteristics of students collected at baseline will be used to assess equivalence of the two groups. The data collection mode will be the same for each group. In using these data for the analysis, we will follow practices used in prior studies. MDRC has extensive experience administering baseline achievement tests, accessing student records, and using program application data as baseline information. Follow up data collection in Spring 2013 will include the administration of the study achievement tests to all students in the study sample, and a survey of school-day teachers about student academic behavior. Both will be collected in the same way for members of the program and control groups. Additionally, school records data will provide information on student performance on state achievement tests. These data can be used as a supplementary measure of academic performance in reading. However, the study sample includes schools across different states. Thus, to pool data across schools and estimate the overall program impact, each student's test score will need to be standardized, making it

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more difficult to interpret the impact finding.

For any given student, the time lapse between baseline testing, which will occur immediately before random assignment, and follow-up testing may be as little as five months or as much as nine months, depending on when volunteers are recruited and paired with students. The time elapse between the baseline and follow-up tests will be used in two ways. First, this variable will be included in the impact model to account for the different amount of learning due to time elapse between these two tests. This applies to students in both treatment and control groups. Second, it will be used as a proxy to describe the amount of treatment received by the treatment group members and to help interpret the impact findings. Note that the impact finding we focus on is "intent-to-treat" impact of being assigned to Reading Partners.

The implementation questions for the study will be assessed through a combination of interviews, observations of program activities, and MIS data collected by RP staff as part of their regular monitoring of program performance. To monitor program performance, RP surveys volunteers and teachers and assesses students throughout the year. Data are collected and entered into RP's MIS system.

In addition to using RP's program data, MDRC will also visit the programs to conduct interviews and observations with participants and staff. The research team will develop a structured observation protocol that will track and quantify fidelity to the model and quality of implementation. In the spring, surveys will be administered to regular school-day teachers who have both RP and non-RP students in their classroom, to understand whether and how these students' participation has affected instruction and classroom management -- for example, whether it has allowed teachers to spend more individualized time with students who are not receiving RP. The survey will also include questions about other relevant school-day or after-school programs where students, both RP and non-RP students, may be getting additional reading support services.

Statistical Analysis of Impacts

The analysis of these data will use an "Intent to Treat" framework that includes all students assigned to receive Reading Partners in one group and those not assigned to the program in the other, regardless of the level of program participation. This generates an unbiased estimate of the average program effect for participants offered the program. The design also allows the research to detect effects among subgroups of students that are defined by characteristics depicting a student's pre-random assignment condition. To be parsimonious, subgroups that reflect three theoretically relevant

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and policy-relevant characteristics will be examined: subgroups based on students' grade levels, baseline academic performances, and ELL status.

A description of how the evaluation results, both interim and final, will be used. The impact results will determine whether Reading Partners has an effect over and above what control group students receive, and determine if there are differences by subgroup, as well as highlight the magnitude of the effects in specific reading skills (phonics, fluency, and comprehension). We anticipate using the impact data to consider changes to our program model -- whether it is total number of tutoring sessions provided, delivery of instruction to ELL students, differentiated instruction for students in earlier vs. later grades, etc. At the same time, we will use the implementation lessons learned from this evaluation study to improve our program model and site operations. If, for example, fidelity of implementation to the model varies too widely across sites, the program and regional operations teams will discuss what changes may be necessary to our existing quality assurance system to ensure greater fidelity and quality implementation of tutoring sessions.

Amendment Justification

NA

Clarification Summary

CLARIFICATION 2014

Submitted: 6/16/14

New Operating Site:

Reading Partners is expanding to Seattle, WA and will place 4 National Direct members in the region. Our total number of MSYs remains 67. Members in Seattle will serve as Site Coordinators (2), a Regional Site Coordinator (1), and a Volunteer Coordinator (1).

Submitted: 4/11/14

1) Programmatic clarification items

a) Please explain whether California, DC and Maryland member positions (slots) being requested as part of this application are also duplicated in any other application (new, recompute, or continuation) currently under review by the Corporation. If applicable, indicate how many slots are duplicated and the applications(s) in which the duplicate slots are requested. Please explain whether the national

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direct members would serve in the same schools as the commission grant supported schools.

There are no slots in this application that are duplicated in any other AmeriCorps grants for which Reading Partners has applied. Each slot requested as part of this application would be to expand services further, serving unique and additional students at new schools that regions are expanding into.

b) Please explain how the request for members to serve in states where existing grants are being continued are not the same project.

The members requested under this National Direct application will serve a different target community since they will be serving at different schools in different neighborhoods than their peers funded by a state commission grant. Each member will only serve as part of one specific AmeriCorps grant. While our program managers may have both state commission and National Direct members under their supervision, our staff time keeping system (ADP) requires managers to differentiate their time spent on each grant. Thanks to our CRM software Salesforce, Reading Partners tracks students served and volunteers recruited by each site, allowing for accurate and discrete progress reports for both the state commission and national direct grants. Our expense tracking system, Concur, allows staff to allocate expenses to the grant the activity is supporting, enabling accurate invoices for our commission's cost-reimbursement invoices and accurate tracking of expenses for the national direct grant. For example, if a facilitator costs \$100 for a member training in DC and 90% of the members in attendance are funded by Serve DC and 10% are funded by national direct, the manager would be able to allocate \$90 towards our Serve DC grant, and \$10 towards the national direct grant within the one expense report.

c) Please explain the role of the regional site coordinator and how this role differs from the site coordinator role.

Reading Partners's staffing model typically stations one AmeriCorps site coordinator (SC) at each school we serve to manage the day-to-day logistics and operations of the program. A regional site coordinator (RSC) is unique from the SC role because s/he is assigned to a portfolio of 4-6 sites and rotates between those schools to provide additional program implementation support. RSCs enhance the quality and fidelity of our program execution because they provide extra bandwidth for task

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completion, tutor coaching, and tutoring. For example, an RSC can visit a site on a particular busy tutoring day and ensure data entry, audits of student and/or tutor paperwork, and curriculum materials refills still occur with no disruption to tutor coaching or student support. Or, during busy sessions, a RSC can provide tutor coaching simultaneously to an SC, thereby ensuring our volunteers are not wanting for immediate problem-solving help. RSCs also help to ensure we meet our enrollment goals by tutoring themselves at their portfolio of sites when tutors are unavailable or there is a no-show.

Our program requires the mobility inherent to the RSC position because of the following factors:

- Many Reading Partners₂ sites enroll 55+ students, with some sites serving upwards of 70 students. At this capacity, the volume of direct service merits additional support so that SCs can maintain an appropriate work-life balance;
- When a SC is sick or otherwise absent, the RSC can seamlessly step in as a substitute and support the site for the day without forcing a program manager to sacrifice supporting a different site;
- A RSC can collaborate with a SC to problem-solve a difficult situation if a Program Manager is not immediately available; and
- A RSC supports program managers in ensuring best practice sharing across school sites.

The number of RSCs working in a region is determined by the program need as judged by the Executive Director and Program Director (if that role is staffed in the region). In Tulsa, we will have two RSCs for our 12 schools. In Silicon Valley, we will have 6 RSCs for our 24 schools. In Charleston, we will have 4 RSCs for our 15 schools. In DC and Baltimore, our desired RSCs will be supported by our state AmeriCorps grants.

d) Please provide the following information for each of your operating sites in the appropriate field in eGrants Multi-State Operating Sites tab (see below screenshot): organization name, address, city and state, zip code, amount of funding going to the operating site, and number of proposed AmeriCorps members that will be located at the site.

This has been completed.

e) Please confirm that the address submitted for this application is correct. This application was

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submitted with a DC address and your organization is based in California.

Reading Partners confirms that the address has been updated to reflect our headquarters address in Oakland, CA.

2) Budget clarification items. Please make the following changes directly in the application budget in eGrants and/or in the Clarification Summary section of the narrative:

a) Based on a review of the cost effectiveness section in your application we feel your program did not make a compelling case for the requested cost per member service year (MSY). Please consider decreasing your cost per MSY by revising your CNCS share of the program budget or explain why your program is cost effective in terms other than what exists in the application.

Please explain the range of cost/ msy from \$12,635 (3 sites) to \$13,141 across the state and national AmeriCorps portfolio and explain why this application was submitted at \$13,000. Adjust the budget if possible.

Reading Partners is a cost-effective approach for improving elementary literacy proficiency across the country because our model leverages community volunteerism to increase instructional capacity at Title I elementary schools. By recruiting, training, and continuously coaching private citizens as reading tutors, Reading Partners is able to help more children receive individualized attention than our school partners might otherwise be able to do on their own. Reading Partners is also cost effective because we transform unused classroom space into reading centers at no additional cash cost to schools. Schools may donate the use of classroom space, which we project to be worth over \$576,000 in the national direct portfolio. Reading Partners thus saves on cash expenses by not needing to rent space, and schools incur no additional cash cost through the in-kind donation of space.

Reading Partners will be lowering its cost per MSY to \$12,635 and this has been reflected in the updated budget section of this application. We have spoken with our Executive Directors in regions with state commission grants who had to budget this amount per MSY in 2012-13 after CNCS made the 5% cut across the board for new applications for 2013-14 programs. When considered against the existing fundraising efforts within our National Direct portfolio, these conversations gave us the confidence that lowering the cost per MSY is reasonable for the regions included in the this

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application.

A \$12,635 cost per MSY will support Reading Partners's high-touch supervision and professional development model. We believe this model is critical to equipping our members with the skills they need to effectively engage the thousands of community volunteers with whom they work. We cap our program manager to member ratio at 1:6, which enables us to provide members with an unusually high degree of support. Consequently, we have a 94% average retention rate over the past 3 years. The \$12,634 cost per MSY will also help support the background check reimbursements we provide to all of our staff, members, and over a thousand volunteer tutors, totaling nearly \$63,000.

b) Please confirm that the SIF funds are not being used as match for the AmeriCorps Reading Partners Program.

Reading Partners confirms that SIF funds are not being used as a match for the AmeriCorps Reading Partners program. We ensure compliance on this question by regularly reconciling data from our accounting software, the Financial Edge, with our fundraising database, Salesforce. These systems enable us to track allowable versus disallowed match sources. Additionally, we train our staff on the allowable grants to which they may code their time and activities. Our timekeeping system ADP then requires staff to record their time and activities against those specific grants. Managers use the reporting functions in ADP to audit their staff's timesheets and monitor compliance. Our Accounting and AmeriCorps departments also work together to conduct regular internal audits to ensure all funds are being used per their intent and requirements.

c) 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 federal or non-federal share. Please verify that criminal history checks (in addition to the fingerprinting process) will be conducted on all members, employees and other individuals as described above. Describe your process for this. You may revise the budget to include these costs, if necessary, but may not exceed the level of funding for which you are under consideration.

Reading Partners can confirm that we complete the four-part (State of residence, state of

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service/employment, FBI, and NSOPW) criminal history checks on all members and employees who are covered by the AmeriCorps grant. All of our volunteers undergo background checks as well. These costs are included in our budget, as outlined in the original application submitted. Background checks for members and staff begin with NSOPW, state, and FBI checks, which are initiated before or on their start date. We use Asurint in all states where they use the approved CNCS repository. If Asurint does not use the approved repository, Reading Partners uses the approved repository by going there directly. Reading Partners plans to submit an ASP for Accurate Biometrics to better streamline the FBI fingerprinting process across the country.

Our AmeriCorps Program Manager and HR staff conduct NSOPW checks on all staff and members before their start date. The print-outs are timestamped with the date and filed in each person's personnel file. State and FBI results are stored in a separate folder. We require members to document who supervises them at all times while they are still in need of accompaniment. We currently use OnCorps timesheets, which has a function available for this type of documentation. The AmeriCorps team audits member files on a quarterly basis to minimize risk of missing documents or audit findings. The Director of AmeriCorps Programs also conducts a Criminal History Check audit to determine compliance for all staff who are on the grant.

2) Please make the following changes in the Performance Measures screens in eGrants:

The additional detail below is being provided to supplement what is in the PM Section due to character limits in the PM text box.

The application states that over 14 years of the program operating participants are tripling their rate of learning to an average of 1.6 months of learning new skills for every month of instruction that the performance measure would establish the goal of gaining one month per each month of service.

Please explain why 65% of students making gains at an on-track pace is ambitious and adjust ED5 as necessary.

Reading Partners's performance measure that 65% of students will gain one month per each month of service is ambitious because of the variability of our student population from year to year. Reading Partners has more than tripled the total amount of students we're serving, from 2,000 in 2010-11, the year that we expanded to a national scale with an award from the Social Innovation Fund, to 7,000 in 2013-14. Our annual compound growth rate has been 48% since 2010-11, and accordingly, 70% or more of our students are new to the program each year. The consequence of this reality is that the size

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of students; average skill deficit upon enrollment varies dramatically and unpredictably year to year. Some years the average grade equivalency gap is closer to a one year, other years it is closer to two. Historically, students enter the program having learned only 0.6 months of skills per month of instruction, and they exit the program gaining 1.6 months of skills for every month in the program. These are averages; the magnitude of student skill increase in the program is a range of values: some of our students gain well over 2 months of literacy skills for every month they are enrolled in Reading Partners, while other students' learning rates increase, but remain below 1 month of skill gain per month of instruction.

Reading Partners set our performance measure at 65% of students increasing their rate of learning to gaining one month of skills per month of service to accommodate the variability and unpredictability of student need at the beginning of each school year. We will not know until the school year begins what magnitude of deficit our students face and consequently what specific measure of gains is realistic for this particular student population. This is especially important given that all regions included in this application will be significantly growing their operations and welcoming large cohorts of brand-new students to our program. In the face of this unpredictability, though, we can still confidently say that we will help at least 65% of our students will increase their rate of learning to at least one full month of skill gain per month of instruction. By gaining at least one month of skill per month of instruction, students' grade equivalency gaps stop widening; and those whose skill gains are higher than 1.0 months of skill per month in the program will actually narrow their grade equivalency gaps.

4) Strategic Engagement Slots Clarification:

a) What percentage of your slots will be targeted to recruiting members with disabilities? What is your program's plan, if any, for outreach and recruitment of members of the disability community?

Currently, we have 0% of slots specifically reserved for members with disabilities, but we certainly welcome applications from members with disabilities and are committed to making accommodations so that they may serve with Reading Partners. We are still in the process of creating more sophisticated recruitment systems that will engage the various subgroups we want as part of our corps, including veterans and those with disabilities. We have a recruitment process in place to

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encourage those from all backgrounds to apply. As our recruitment capacity is strengthened, we hope to request more MSYs next year that are targeted just for those with disabilities. To help build our recruitment capacity, we have created a new position in our HR department: AmeriCorps HR Coordinator. This person is charged with creating a national vision and strategy for recruitment, assisting members with healthcare, and processing all requests for reasonable accommodations. This role will provide us with more capacity in the upcoming year to focus on recruiting targeted groups within our communities.

b) In order to increase the number of individuals with disabilities serving as AmeriCorps members, CNCS is offering applicants the opportunity to request additional MSYs to be filled by AmeriCorps members with disabilities. The additional MSYs would be funded at the clarification cost per MSY level. Applicants must describe their intent to recruit, engage and retain additional members with disabilities and provide a detailed outreach plan for how these members will be recruited and supported (e.g. established recruitment partners or strategies.) In addition, programs receiving these additional member positions will be required to report specific details on the success of the recruitment, supervision and retention of AmeriCorps members with disabilities in semi-annual progress reports. If you would like to request additional MSYs to be filled by AmeriCorps members with disabilities, please describe your intent as requested above. Also indicate how many MSYs your program would like to request, the number of slots by slot type, and where the additional members will serve. Add these additional MSYs to your budget.

NA

5) Healthcare Clarification Items - Health care clarification items are to be addressed by programs with full-time members (excluding EAP and Professional Corps):

- a) Please provide the name of the health insurance provider you are proposing to use to insure your AmeriCorps members.
- b) How did you select the provider? (for example, direct marketing ,through the Health Insurance Marketplace or other means)
- c) Does your proposed budget for member healthcare provide for Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC) coverage, as defined by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), for your full-time members?

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

e) If you do not have enough information to answer question (d), please explain why not and/or what prevented you from being able to obtain the necessary information.

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

Summit America through The Corps Network

b. How did you select the provider? (for example, direct marketing , through the Health Insurance Marketplace, or other means)

We chose this network through the The Corps Network to better manage health insurance for a nationwide corps of AC members serving at Reading Partners.

c. Does your proposed budget for member healthcare provide for Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC) coverage, as defined by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), for your full-time members?

Currently, no. Our budget is based off a monthly cost of about \$150 per member, per month. It would be extremely challenging to budget for next year based off of individual plans priced from the market place or Medicaid, assuming we could implement a reimbursement system for those members. Our accounting team of seven staff members could not take on the administrative burden of processing hundreds of individual reimbursement requests on a monthly basis for their monthly health care premium.

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

We would need a significant increase in our grant award to cover the additional costs. ACA compliant plans that include CNCS requirements such as a \$250 deductible and maximum out-of-pocket \$1K will be at least \$550 per member, per month. We would then need to add another \$30 or so to cover dental/vision packages. The challenge with this is that if programs budgeted almost \$7K per member, per year in healthcare premiums and then if even a handful of members chose to use another plan, we would have a significant amount of match not met by end of year. Our plan is to offer Summit America and support their efforts to offer an ACA compliant plan by September 1st, 2014 for our new cohort of members.

e. If you do not have enough information to answer question (vi), please explain why not and/or what prevented you from being able to obtain the necessary information.

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There are quite a few variables to consider before knowing exactly what would be necessary for the budget to accommodate an ACA compliant healthcare plan. Our main challenges are: 1) We know we can't afford to offer members the same healthcare plan we offer employees. The business model of fringe costs based off of living stipends would also increase significantly, much higher than 25%, and 2) We do not have the administrative capacity to manage hundreds of requests for healthcare reimbursement on a monthly basis.

6) MSY With No Program Funds Attached Clarification (No Cost MSYs):

Applicants may request MSY with No Program Funds Attached (No-Cost MSYs). These additional no-cost MSYs are national service positions in which no grant funds will be awarded. In other words, grantees could receive additional AmeriCorps positions but no additional grant funds. Programs will be responsible for using their own or other resources to pay program costs, member support costs and other operating expenses. Keep in mind that full-time AmeriCorps program costs include expenditures for the AmeriCorps living allowance, health care and criminal history checks. Programs are not required to pay living allowances or cover health care for less-than-full-time members.

If you would like to request No-Cost MSYs, please edit your budget to reflect the change in MSY. Please ensure your performance measures align with these additional MSYs. Lastly, you must include a response to each item below in the Clarification narrative field after creating a heading entitled NO COST MSY CLARIFICATION:

- a) The number and type of slots requested. Please confirm that for the MSYs requested the additional members will only engage in activities aligned with the proposed member activities outlined in the application narrative.
- b) A description of resources that will be provided to adequately support the additional members and how they are sufficient to; support the member support costs, management, oversight, program operations, and the program activities.
- c) Source(s) of non-CNCS funds. Provide a brief description of the amount, classification (cash or in-kind), source(s) (State/Local, Federal, Private) for all resources secured to manage, monitor, and support these additional members.
- d) The organization's capability and capacity to successfully implement, manage, and monitor the additional members.

Reading Partners will not be requesting no-cost MSYs at this time.

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Continuation Changes

NA

Grant Characteristics