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Executive Summary

The Gila River Indian Community will have 15 AmeriCorps members who will work to build a veterans services program, coordinate community service projects within the Gila River Indian Community, and participate in professional development. At the end of the 1st program year, the AmeriCorps members will have created a Veterans Services Office to coordinate integrated services to veterans and veterans families and served 50 veterans and 10 veterans' families within the Gila River Indian Community.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Veterans and Military Families. The CNCS investment of \$292,500 will be match with an In-Kind contribution of \$90,752.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

Problem/Need

Native Americans in general have the highest record of military service per capita of any ethnic group, spanning over 200 years (US Navy) and yet are significantly more likely to be unemployed (DOL GAO, 2013). The Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008 required the US Department of Labor (DOL) to assess and report on employment needs of Native American veterans living on tribal lands. To date this assessment has not been completed and as a result there are no comprehensive data and no plan to collect comprehensive data by the DOL related to Native American veterans living on tribal lands due to the estimated cost to conduct such a survey. The United States Government Accountability Office has identified this lack of data as a significant detriment to providing effective services to Native American veterans residing on tribal lands (DOL GOA, 2013). Native American veterans are also significantly more likely to be homeless than their white, non-Hispanic counterparts and also have been found to have above average disability rates and the lowest incomes (Sylvester, 2014). Homeless veterans residing on tribal lands are not eligible to receive HUD-VASH, a housing voucher program designed to assist homeless veterans by providing Section 8 housing vouchers to chronically homeless veterans. Laws prevent Native American veterans from using the HUD-VASH vouchers for federally subsidized houses on reservations. Since most housing on reservations is federally funded; this housing option is not available to veterans living on reservations and can only be used if they decide to live off reservation. Additionally, HUD does not consider veterans living with family members to be homeless and therefore does not assist veterans in this situation with the option of housing vouchers. Many veterans reside with relatives and therefore do not qualify for the housing

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vouchers through the HUD-VASH program (Sylvester, 2014).

Veterans are not being effectively served within the Gila River Indian Community (the Community). No comprehensive survey has been conducted by the Community to determine the number of veterans living within the Community or the services required by veterans within the Community. Limited data has been collected by the Enrollment Office and is available, identifying 204 veterans residing on the reservation, but this list is not comprehensive. What we found in the Community is that veterans are not going to their local posts for services. Although our local posts do not offer services, we can refer veterans in need to the State. Since we are not seeing veterans come in for services, we are not sure of the numbers who need services. The State cannot tell us what the numbers of Native veterans statewide are, let alone for individual Tribes. Therefore we must try to develop strategies on how to better reach Native veterans in the Community. It is better if Native veterans have accessible services within their own Native communities, rather than having to go through the state.

The Community does not have a Veterans Services Office and as a result there is no comprehensive veteran's services coordination to assist veterans with identifying services and filing paperwork to receive those services. Veterans currently have to travel outside of the Community to central Phoenix, AZ or Casa Grande, AZ to file paperwork and receive services. It is difficult to coordinate transportation for veterans to get them to the service center in Phoenix or Casa Grande due to a lack of public transportation within the reservation and a lack of access connecting to public transportation outside the Community. Because the Community does not have a Veterans Services Office; there are no coordinated services to assist veterans with housing or finding employment. With a poverty rate of 48%, an overall unemployment rate of 12% and an underemployment rate of 50%, employment assistance is an important issue for the Gila River Indian Community (ARPI). Lack of awareness of available programs and services is a huge problem within the Community. We need to identify how to serve this population with health services, employment services and other veterans' benefits. Native veterans tend not to seek services at the State Veterans Offices, the local veterans posts or local One Stops. Native veterans tend to want to stay close to home and when there are no services available, they go unnoticed and un-served. Veterans tend to shy away from services; not wanting to be noticed, unaware that they may be suffering due to PTSD or other problems.

The Community would like to develop an AmeriCorps program to identify and address the needs of veterans within the Community. The Employment and Training department has begun to address the lack of services available for veterans within the Community by creating a group called Veterans

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Serving Veterans. This group meets monthly as a Community forum to identify veterans' needs and to strategize to meet those needs. The Veterans Serving Veterans group includes veterans from four different veteran's posts within the Community; the Pee Posh Auxiliary, Ira Hayes Post, Casa Blanca Veterans Group and the Black Water post 51. This group has identified lack of housing as a central problem; as well as alcohol and drug abuse, lack of access to VA medical services locally, lack of priority within the employment process within the Community, and suicide prevention.

Evidence Base and Measureable Community Impact

The Gila River Indian Community proposes to create an AmeriCorps program to create and staff a Veterans Services Office within the Community, as well as provide Environmental Stewardship and service learning projects to get the Community involved. A majority of volunteers (45 percent of MSY) will work on supporting veterans of the Community by coordinating a comprehensive survey of veterans within the Community to determine the number of veterans, required services, and identify any issues that veterans may need assistance with. This survey will include going into the Community door to door to find veterans. This strategy is necessary within the Community because currently veterans are not actively seeking services. Additionally, those members who work in the Veterans Services Office will complete an intake form with each veteran that comes in and take note of all needed services. Other members who are working at the Employment and Training site will conduct research on behalf of the veterans to determine all services that are available to them and assist with collecting and coordinating services. A follow up appointment will be set with each veteran during the intake meeting to follow up with a comprehensive list of available services and coordination for receiving those available services. We will research the certification requirements to assist with the submission of paperwork on behalf of veterans.

Other proposed services include working with Community Districts to develop special events and service projects with veterans, research available resources for veterans and provide outreach to Community veterans, coordinate family supportive services for military families, coordinate with local veterans posts of the Community to identify needs at the community level, act as a liaison between the Community and State and Federal Veterans Services offices, research the requirements to provide claimant services for Community veteran claims to National Veterans Office, coordinate needed veterans assessments such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder testing or career planning, provide referrals to outside agencies for supportive services, develop caregiver support services, develop re-integration programs for veterans, and develop a cultural component of veterans services within the

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Community.

There will also be up to two AmeriCorps members placed within the Gila River Department of Environmental Quality that will focus on Community service learning projects to include cleanup activities, wetlands restoration, and Community outreach related to energy efficiency. These two positions will assist the department with the coordination Community clean up events where all AmeriCorps members will participate and Community members will be recruited to volunteer. Three acres of tribal land will be restored, cleared of debris, and all recyclable material will be weighed and recycled accordingly. Additional Community clean up service learning projects will be held to get the Community involved in cleaning their neighborhoods, removing debris, and restoring a sense of pride in their community. Videos will be created of the Community clean up service learning projects and wetlands restoration projects and the videos will be placed on the intranet along with the time and date of the upcoming events in order to get more Community volunteers to assist with the service learning projects. These service learning projects will provide an opportunity for the Community to come together to improve and feel more connected to their community.

The Employment and Training program would like to enhance services to veterans through the AmeriCorps program by providing veterans with training programs to enhance their skills developed in the military and to increase their employment opportunities within the Community. One goal is to utilize the AmeriCorps program to place veterans within departments in the Community to participate in job shadowing and professional development to utilize their skills within the workplace and also gain workplace experience and develop new skills within the Community. The Gila River Indian Community is currently completing a Workforce Innovations grant to create a Career Pathways system to train Community members, including veterans, to qualify for needed industries within the Community. Participants receive training to qualify for entry level positions in a variety of Community departments and enterprises. The Career Pathways program has veteran and Community member preference to better assist Native veterans within the Community. The AmeriCorps program will also assist with recruiting volunteers to assist with serving veterans within the Community and identifying strategies that can be used to help veterans with issues that they are experiencing.

All Members will be offered professional development opportunities. Upon entry into the AmeriCorps Program, assessment will be done in three areas: academic, interest, and aptitude. The assessments will provide the foundation for further identification of a career area, occupational training requirements, and need for upgrade in academic levels or GED. From these results, an

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Individual Employment Plan will be developed which will address strengths and weaknesses and will detail a plan for employment in the participants identified career choice. Both soft skills and occupational skills training will be offered. Also a one week Work Readiness Class will be provided where participants will learn job search techniques, professional behaviors on the job, and what jobs are available in the local labor market. We are looking to provide each member with an awareness of what occupations would be suitable for them through interest testing and counseling, the development of the soft skills and occupational skills necessary for the career of their choice, and instruct them on the tools they will need to successfully obtain the job they desire in their labor market. The result will end in increased employability, increased retention in the jobs of their choice and an increase in their ability to become contributing members of their Community and to their families.

Based upon national information, Native American veterans are a high risk population for suicide and substance abuse, which can negatively affect transition to civilian and workforce environments. Certified staff of the Gila River Indian Community Employment & Training Department have developed and implemented a culturally based Equine Assisted Learning strategy that is specific to substance use and suicide prevention as a strategy to assist veterans with coping. This Kahv'Yoo Spirit (Horse in the O'otham language) program and Transcendental Meditation program will be mandatory as wellness strategies to military veterans who receive services through the member staffed Veterans Services Center. Participants will be required to participate in an 8 week, 8 hour equine program as well as a 2 day 4-6 hour meditation / stress reduction training.

These two programs will help the veterans to recognize their own needs with respect to mental health services, help staff recognize the mental health needs of the veterans, connect veterans to the community, and connect veterans to available services. The veterans will receive certificates of completion for their participation in the program. All members will also participate in both of these trainings and receive certificates of participation as well and members who are interested will have the option of assisting with this program as veterans participate. The plan is to train interested veterans to run the program in the future. Equine Activities are a First Nations Behavioral Health (FNBHA) best practice and has been proven to be a positive effective treatment of veterans with PTSD. It is estimated that 1 in 2 veterans has some form of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and this often goes untreated and unrecognized. (Horses and Humans.org).

Employment and Training will partner with the Facilities Maintenance department to assist with repairs to veterans dwellings as determined through the intake process at the Veterans Services Office.

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Repairs will be scheduled with disabled and elderly veteran preference, and interested members will be assigned to assist with the repair activities. Service members will be fully training in all aspects of completing repairs prior to assignment to include safety, repair techniques, and appropriate on site protocols.

District 7 is in the process of establishing a Veterans Office at the district level. We will work with this office to offer member services to assist veterans at the district level. We will also work with the four established Veterans posts throughout the Community to offer member services to coordinate efforts and provide a centralized office with outreach to all districts and established posts.

Member Training

Members will be trained upon entry to the Gila River Indian Community AmeriCorps program and prior to any service activity to ensure they have all the skills, knowledge and supervision necessary to perform the tasks required in their assigned project positions. The AmeriCorps Program Manager will develop all appropriate member training and Community site supervisor training for the AmeriCorps program. The Program Manager will ensure that site supervisors are keeping accurate documentation to demonstrate accountability of members and will provide the accountability to the National Corporation for Community Service for the work performed by the members through appropriate reporting and accurate record keeping.

During on site pre-service orientation in the first week of the program, members will receive background information on the Community to understand the social context of the work to be performed during their year of service. Cultural Sensitivity training will be performed by a Community Cultural Advisor. Orientation pre-service and training will enhance member security and sensitivity to the Community and will include member rights and responsibilities, program code of conduct, prohibited activities, requirements under the Drug-free Workplace Act, information related to suspension and termination from service, grievance procedures, sexual harassment policy, and other non discrimination issues. A training manual will be developed to guide the training process.

The second week of the program will include a week long work readiness training to prepare all members for work within the Community. The work readiness training is based on the Arizona Department of Economic Security Workforce Investment Act and encompasses labor market information, occupational education, career planning, decision-making, job preparation techniques, daily living skills, and work etiquette. The week long training will develop positive work habits, attitudes, and behavior such as punctuality, regular attendance, presenting a neat appearance,

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working well with others, exhibiting good conduct, following instructions and completing tasks, accepting constructive criticism from supervisors and co-workers, showing initiative and reliability, and assuming the responsibilities involved in maintaining a job. Work Readiness Skills entail developing motivation and adaptability, obtaining effective coping and problem-solving skills and acquiring an improved self-image.

The On-Site Orientation and Training provided to members by the site supervisors will developed by the AmeriCorps Program Manager and will focus on performance measures and include an understanding of the history of National Service, the background, purpose, and structure of the Gila River Indian Community including identification of community leaders, the roles and responsibilities of the service members, the roles and responsibilities of the supervisors, the job responsibilities of the supervisors beyond the AmeriCorps project, personnel and attendance policies for the Community including the use of equipment such as computers and the Internet, performance evaluations conducted by the Community, the expectations related to the day-to-day tasks on the projects, relationship of the tasks performed by members within the context of the work of staff members of the Community, the understanding of the Community staff of the role of volunteers, the Community's expectations of the work of the volunteers and the projects they will work on, the available resources, facilities, and supplies needed for the assignments, prohibited activities, and the reasonable accommodations available for persons with disabilities. The understanding that the work of volunteers cannot supplant the work of paid staff will be established.

The On-Site Orientation and Training will also include health and safety aspects to ensure that that service members are performing their duties will all necessary skills to ensure their safety. Ongoing member training will be provided through in-house trainers and the Human Resources Department covering work readiness skills, conflict management, communication skills, stress management and public speaking to ensure volunteers develop the necessary skills to perform their positions. Examples of ongoing monthly member training opportunities include computer skills, job shadowing, volunteer development and management, leadership development, project sustainability, mentorship, and other training to support networking among members.

Member contracts will outline the member's responsibilities as participants in the Gila River Indian Community AmeriCorps project. By signing the contract the member agrees to abide by the regulations set forth by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Gila River Indian Community and also signifies the member's commitment to complete his/her required 1700 hours of service. The Member Contract also details the start and end date for the AmeriCorps member

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service.

Member Supervision

The AmeriCorps Program Manager will develop a member supervision manual and member contracts to detail the expectation of all members, the terms of service, position descriptions, member benefits, rules of conduct, prohibited activities, release from term of service, grievance procedures, drug free work place act, and statement of non discrimination to guide the site supervisors to provide effective guidance to members. The AmeriCorps Program Manager will provide training to all Community site locations to ensure that all site supervisors understand the program goals, rules, allowable and prohibited activities, and hourly tracking system. The Community site supervisors will oversee the AmeriCorps members and provide day to day direction and guidance for the projects the members will work on. The site supervisors will ensure there is clear guidance to members related to departmental oversight, communication and operating expectations. Each member will have both an onsite supervisor, as well as overall supervision provided by the AmeriCorps Program Manager. The Program Manager will check in with all sites weekly to ensure that members are comfortable with their site location and have received adequate training to perform their duties as assigned. Training will be provided continuously to ensure that members develop the skills required to perform their assigned duties.

Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

All service members will wear the appropriate AmeriCorps branding and display the AmeriCorps logo with prominence and pride. All advertising and marketing will include the AmeriCorps logo. Short videos will be made by Edit Box, an in-house Employment and Training videography service, of service projects to be uploaded to the Gila River Indian Community Intranet to be viewed by Community Members and employees. These short videos will be used to encourage participation in service projects and to advertise the AmeriCorps program within the Community.

References

First Nations Behavioral Health Association (FNBHA). American Indian and Alaska Native Best Practices in Behavioral Health.

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US Navy. Native American Veterans and the US Military.

Sylvester, T. (2014). Tribes struggle to house their invisibly homeless veterans. High Country News.

US General Accountability Office (2014). Native American Veterans. DOL needs a clear plan to improve employment and training services on tribal lands.

Horses and Humans.org. Veterans Rehabilitation and Equine Assisted Activities/Therapies

Organizational Capability

Organizational Background and Staffing

The Gila River Indian Community (GRIC or "the Community") is a federally recognized tribe and covers a land area in excess of 577 square miles or 372,000 acres spanning Pinal and Maricopa Counties in south-central Arizona. The Community borders the Phoenix metropolitan area and was established by a Congressional Act in 1859 and expanded by Executive Orders to its present size. As a sovereign nation the Community partakes in the rights of self governance with a constitution adopted in 1939. The population of enrolled Community members today is 20,929.

The Community is the homeland of two distinct tribes, the Akimel O'odham (Pima) and Pee-Posh (Maricopa). The Huhugam are the ancestors of the Akimel O'odham, who have inhabited this land since time immemorial. The land, the rivers, and a vast irrigation system allowed them to grow cotton, corn, squash, and beans. Small bands of Yuman language speaking people lived along the lower Gila and Colorado Rivers. Each of these bands migrated eastward at different times; the last band is said to have left the Colorado River in the late 1830's. Upon migration, these people who became collectively known as the Pee Posh encountered Akimel O'odham and established a relationship. The two groups formed a single governing council and collectively became the Gila River Indian Community.

The Community Council provides direction to the Executive office, including the Office of the Community Manager (OCM). Division managers within the OCM office provide direction to the departments within their division. The Employment and Training department is within the Administrative Support Division, the Department of Environmental Quality is within the Cultural and Natural Resources Division, and the District Service Centers and the Facilities Maintenance Department are within the Tribal Development Services Division. The AmeriCorps program will be managed through the Employment and Training Department and will partner with the Department

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of Environmental Quality, District Service Centers and Facilities Maintenance to offer services through AmeriCorps members.

The Gila River Indian Community's Employment and Training Department provides integrated employment and training services to approximately 400 youth and adults annually. The Department has been operating Federal and State funded programs for over 35 years. We operate both Federal WIA 166 and State WIA Title 1B Funded youth and adult programs. In addition we operate Native Employment Works (NEW) for TANF recipients. We are the only tribe in the country to be funded for the Workforce Innovations grant through the U.S. Department of Labor. We meet and exceed our performance standards yearly and have been successful in operating Federal, State, and Tribal Programs, side by side.

The proposed project fits within the existing structure of providing employment training and services. The focus for this project will be expansion of the already required veterans priority process mandated through the Workforce Investment Act. The program will provide services to military veterans and their families and to assess what their needs are beyond the services currently provided. We propose to not only service veterans through our training and employment services; but to also provide assistance to veterans by creating partnerships with Gila River Community Housing, Gila River Health Care, Casa Grande One Stop, Casa Grande Veteran's Services, area tribes' tribal veterans offices, Phoenix Veterans Office, other State Veterans Offices, Arizona Coalition for Military Families, Ira Hayes American Legion Post 84, Black Water American Legion Post 51, Pee Posh American legion post, Casa Blanca Veterans Group, and Coolidge Veteran's of Foreign Wars.

The Employment and Training Department will partner with the Department of Environmental Quality to organize the Community service learning projects. DEQ has the staff and knowledge to implement the Community service projects effectively and to provide guidance to the AmeriCorps members to effectively organize and implement the proposed projects. DEQ also has experience with grant management and will keep accurate records of all members as well as in-kind matching hours. Additionally, DEQ also conducts community outreach and will provide guidance to the two full time AmeriCorps members within their department. Employment and Training will also partner with the District Service Centers to provide member assistance with organizing veterans' activities and services at the district level.

The Gila River Finance Department currently manages millions of dollars of grant funds and maintains all required checks and balances. The Community has established and maintains a financial management system in accordance with Generally Acceptable Accounting Practices

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(GAAP), federal OMB circulars, grant provisions and organizational policies and procedures. The Community has the established financial system necessary to track the grant expenditures, follows all rules and regulatory requirements, uses standard accounting practices with ledgers and charts of accounts that are supported by source documentation and have a clear audit trail, have up to date written policies and procedures, only processes financial transactions with appropriate documentation, has appropriate financial staff to manage finances, and has an audit completed annually.

Documentation of the finance department established procedures and capabilities have already been filed with the Corporation of National and Community Service prior to the acceptance of the AmeriCorps Planning Grant.

The Community is in compliance with the Department's debt management procedures, and has not been cited for fraud or criminal activity. The Community has the fiscal staff necessary to insure the safeguard of federal funds. The accounting department is headed by the Comptroller, who is responsible for overseeing various functions such as fiscal controls, accounting procedures, fiscal reporting, and ensures that financial management is being carried out in accordance to tribal policies and procedures as well as federal financial management procedures, rules, and regulations. The Community has policies and procedures for the following: accounting, payroll, audit, debt collection, procurement, sub grant management, recovery of funds, cash on hand control system and a payable and receivables system. We have proven our ability to financially and programmatically hire the personnel needed to successfully meet our obligations regarding on time reporting, successfully meeting performance standards, and meeting our expenditure rates. The Community has been able to remain competitive in the salary structure to attract qualified people that assist and support the purpose of the AmeriCorps grant.

Compliance and Accountability

The site supervisor will ensure that members are not engaged in unallowable activities, illegal activities, or activities that pose a significant safety risk to the member or others. Unallowable activities include: attempting to influence legislation, organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes, assisting, promoting or deterring union organizing, impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements, engaging in partisan political activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials, engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing direct benefit to a business organized for profit, a labor union, a partisan political

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organization, a nonprofit organization that fails to comply with 501(c)3 requirements, or providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services. Members will sign in upon arrival each day of service and sign out at the end of the day. Members will keep a daily log of activities and reflection upon the work being completed. Members will also log any issues or concerns to be brought to the attention of the on site supervisor and the AmeriCorps Program Manager. On site supervisors will also keep logs of members' activities, concerns and issues to be brought to the attention of the AmeriCorps Program Manager. These member and on site supervisor logs will be reviewed weekly to detect infractions by members. A progressive discipline policy will be established to enforce the established code of conduct.

Any infractions will be addressed promptly and any member hours associated with illegal or unallowable activities will be deducted from the overall completed hours. Members will be terminated if infractions are of a serious nature as established by the rules of conduct detailed in the member contracts including: fighting or threatening violence in the workplace, reporting to the worksite under the influence of alcohol or drugs, sexual unlawful harassment, failing to notify program of any criminal arrest or conviction during term of service, engaging in behavior that may physically or emotionally damage members of the Community or Corps members or staff, unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession or use of any controlled substance or illegal drugs during term of service, violation of organizational policies or expectations for satisfactory performance or conduct. Members will also be released from service for compelling personal circumstances. Grievance procedures will be established to resolve any disputes.

All Community member site locations will be reviewed regularly to ensure that site supervisors are aware of all members activity at all times and that appropriate disciplinary actions are taking place in a timely manner if necessary. Monthly meetings will be held with all site location supervisors to review all documentation and ensure compliance with program guidelines. Sites that are not performing will be notified of infractions and the corresponding remedy will be discussed. If the site cannot ensure the established rules will be followed the site will be closed for member activity and members will be redirected to a different site. Monthly meetings will also be held with all members to gain feedback regarding their site locations and to give them a chance to discuss any issues.

The Community will maintain compliance with the AmeriCorps grant by ensuring that all program reports are submitted in a timely manner. All needs, expectations, problems and significant changes will be communicated promptly to the Program Officer. All program staff will attend required CNCS sponsored trainings as required by the grant. The Community will adhere to the

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program contracted as executed by CNCS. All required background checks and National Service Criminal History Checks will be conducted on all service members and staff prior to any service hours as required. All service members will wear the appropriate AmeriCorps branding and display the AmeriCorps logo with prominence and pride.

Continuous Improvement

The AmeriCorps program will monitor the program on a continuous basis and initiate improvements as necessary to ensure a strong program that is meeting all established goals. The AmeriCorps Program Manager will meet regularly with all member sites to obtain feedback and to monitor the progress of members. The weekly member and supervisor logs will be reviewed by the AmeriCorps Program Manager weekly to detect issues in order to implement improvements to ensure a successful program. The Program Manager will set up monthly monitoring site visits with site supervisors to review all documentation and ensure compliance. An AmeriCorps member meeting will be held monthly to monitor member activity and inform the Program Manager of suggested program changes. Site surveys will be developed and the collected data analyzed on a quarterly basis. This data will be used to implement program improvements.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

Cost Effectiveness

The Community is very large (577 square miles) with a high rate of unemployment (12%) and underemployment (50%), high rate of poverty (48%) and limited available local resources. Due to competing funding interests, the Community requires the maximum allotment of \$19,500 per MSY available for Indian Tribes in order to implement the AmeriCorps program. Without this level of funding it is not possible to implement the program due to limited local resources available to supplement the program. Although the AmeriCorps is a highly desirable program with much support from the Community veterans, Community Council and the Executive Office; there are needs within the Community that are a higher priority for limited Community funds such as housing, education, social services and youth and elderly programs. The Community is already operating with reduced funds due to the federal sequestration. With 34% of the adult population with less than a high school diploma; there is a focus on serving the population through housing assistance, educational assistance, and youth programming to address the basic needs of the Community members. The Community welcomes the AmeriCorps program, however, needs with the maximum \$19,500 per MSY funding level available to Indian Tribes in order to provide quality services.

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The AmeriCorps program is a cost effective approach to address the unmet needs of the Gila River Indian Community. 15 full time members serving 1700 hours would cost the Community at least \$361,854 at an hourly wage of \$9.88 and 44% fringe benefit rate. The Community cannot afford to allocate these funds to the program activities indicated within the application. Therefore a need exists without the funding available to appropriately address it. The proposed program achieves the goals and objective to improve the lives of Community members at a reduced cost to the Community

Budget Adequacy

The \$19,500 per MSY requested for the AmeriCorps program includes a budget of all required elements of the program. The budget includes the required member living allowance, the salary and fringe benefits for the AmeriCorps Program Manager, required AmeriCorps Staff travel, all required state and federal background checks, required member uniforms, required benefits for AmeriCorps members, member local mileage reimbursement, office supplies and five computers for AmeriCorps members to use to complete their work. The 24% required contribution will be met through in kind contributions of staff time working on the program.

The following is the budget justification for supplies, training, criminal background checks and healthcare for workers.

a. 5 Computer stations justification: After thorough examination of the budget, we have eliminated the 5 computers and have moved some of this funding into supplies, training and background checks where the need was greater.

b. Member Training: Training will be provided to members in order to perform their specific duties in the Community. Funding has been added to the budget for those trainings and certifications that may be needed to support members in conducting their specific job duties. Much of the training will be discounted as a result of the current partnerships we have developed:

* Our Human Resources Department provides a full array of training, time management, supervisory training, conflict resolution, effective communications, leadership, etc .

* Job skills and Career Development Training and services will be provided to members by the Employment & Training Department (E&T). E&T has both Federal (Tribal) and State Workforce

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Investment Act (WIA) programs. Our WIA staff are well trained in providing career counselling, resume writing assistance, assessment, job search, job match, and in addition conducts a job search class every Tuesday. WIA also has strong partnerships already established with all the Tribal Departments for placement and hiring within the Tribe. WIA staff receive annual and quarterly training from the Federal and State funding agencies in career development, assessment, case management, and in the development of individual employment plans. Members will receive these services as well as be trained to provide them to Veterans and their families.

* The Computer Training Center (CTC) Lab -- Computer training will be provided to the members by the CTC Lab. CTC conducts an initial meeting to assess the participant's computer skill level and then provides the training accordingly. CTC provides training in business software, i.e. Word, Access, Power Point, and Excel. They also provide GED and remediation. There are 2 centers, one on the west end and one on the east end of the reservation. This will assist all members, but especially the ones located in Veterans Office.

* Arizona Summit on Volunteerism -One of our E&T trainers, Ms. Conte serves on the Arizona Summit on Volunteerism and Service Learning, as part of their leadership team. She is experienced in providing training on the values of AmeriCorps etc. She was a contracted Program/Training Designer and Presenter for 3 years for the AZ Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism. She created a 2 hour Informational Training targeting Community-based, Non-Profit and Government (DES One Stop Centers) organizations. The purpose of the training was to introduce communities to National Service and explain the benefits for participants/members. Also presented was the idea of the efficacy of national service and volunteerism as a bridge or step toward employment. Participants were encouraged to present these ideas and benefits to their various clients (particularly those with disabilities often seen as "hard to hire," and veterans often struggling with issues that might be barriers to employment (or seen by employers as barriers) to consider national service as a reasonable pathway to employment. Ms. Conte's training on volunteerism will become part of the orientation and training module that will be presented to new AmeriCorps Members.

* Both in-house E&T trainers will work as a team to deliver a variety of soft skills training and provide a week long Work Readiness training comprised of 12 career elements as certified by the State which all Members will receive and will be trained on how to deliver these trainings to the Veterans as part of their service to Veterans.

* The State AmeriCorps staff, Bob Shogren, the Director of for the Governor's Commission on Service & Volunteerism, and Kimberly Broadie, the State Program Director for the Arizona Office visited our

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site and offered to provide us guidance in whatever we needed. We will be participating in the meetings and training that is provided for other AmeriCorps Programs in the State. They will also be assisting us in partnering with other Veterans groups. This will be an excellent resource to support and train our project staff, Veterans and the members.

* On March 20th, we attended the Veterans Summit in Arizona and met several veterans groups that have agreed to partner with us in providing training and other resources for Veterans.

* We have established relationships with other Community Departments that deliver a variety of training. Gila River Health Care provides suicide prevention training, wellness training, and drug and alcohol prevention trainings. Tribal Social services provides parenting classes that can be presented to Veterans and their families. Genesis provides nutrition and diabetes prevention training. Cultural sensitivity training will be provided by the Cultural Resources Department. We also have EMT, CPR, First Aid, and OSHA Safety Training that will be provided by our Emergency Management Services Department. Members will coordinate these trainings with local Departments through the Veterans Office and develop training schedules for delivery to Veterans and their families. We want to train Veterans when possible to deliver these trainings so that we truly have a model that has Veterans serving Veterans.

* Environmental Quality Department will provide training to the members working on their projects.

* Training in construction trades will be delivered by E&T's Building Trades Instructor when projects require construction skills. Our instructor is a certified Master Trainer for the National Construction Center of Education and Research (NCCER) and can deliver a 90-hour recognized training to those interested in employment in the trades. It is recognized internationally by the trades industry. This instructor is also the Construction Industry Sector Chair for our Workforce Innovations Grant, which is developing a construction career pathway to employment engaging employers in the design of construction training in accordance to our Community's employer needs. Employers involved in the design of their own programs have a tendency to hire people from the Community. The Career Pathways System that we are developing is designed to increase the skill levels of the workforce to enable our Community Members to compete in their own labor market.

* Members will be trained and certified by local State Veterans Offices to provide referrals and provide assistance with Veterans paperwork to gain services and file claims. These members will be working directly out of the Community's Veterans Office.

c. Criminal Background Checks for staff/members -- The 3 level Background checks have already

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been completed for the Director and the Administrative Assistant. The Building Trades Instructor is in the process of completing the 3rd level. The remaining 2 positions already have had a 2nd level done as a requirement of continued employment in the Department. We will be completing the 3rd level background checks on the other 2 staff upon receipt of the Grant and before any members are hired. This would include the Graphics/Web Designer and the Environmental Quality Manager. I have added additional background checks to include potential site supervisors.

d. Health Care Costs: The State of Arizona provides free health care for all adults who earn less than \$17,000 per year. AmeriCorps members will qualify for this coverage. We will assist members in applying for this health care coverage. The Project Coordinator can also assist members in applying for Obama Care coverage or with applying for health care under their parents policy if applicable. Also the Huhukam Hospital located within the Community provides medical coverage to all Native Americans.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Clarification Summary

a. Description of Roles & Responsibilities:

Environmental Program Manager -- This Manager will provide day to day direction and supervision to the members as they full fill the environmental project directives. The Manager will be responsible for the training in environmental subject matter and in coordinating the projects. The Manager will ensure that log books are filled out daily, attendance records are kept and reported to the Employment & Training Department on a regular basis. This Manager will report any concerns directly to the Project Coordinator, who will then report to the E&T Director.

Employment & Training Director -- The Director will serve as the Project Manager. The Director will ensure all policies are done, funding is spent in accordance with the specifications of the grant and adequate training is provided to the members, to the supervisors and to other staff involved. The Director will also do the financial and program reporting to the funding agency. The Director will hold regular meetings with all staff associated with the project and supervise the Project Coordinator who will in turn supervise the members' projects.

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Building Trades Instructor -- As a Veteran, the Building Trades Instructor will mentor members while instructing the construction component of the program which includes the basic repairs to veterans homes. This position will also coordinate and supervise all construction projects within the program. He will participate on the selection panel and will continue to be involved in Veterans Meetings to hear Veterans issues, will provide case management services, and provide trainings, to include the equine program.

Graphic /Web Designer -- This position will work with the AmeriCorps Grant and provide marketing support to the project. He will design the brochures, and other marketing materials for the project. This position will also create Public Service Announcements (PSAs) as we move through the project to document our experiences and successes. We will get video footage of individual members documenting their experiences.

Administrative Assistant(AA) -- The AA will provide administrative support to the project. The AA will process timesheets and /or payments to the Members and order supplies as needed.

See Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy narrative for budget justifications which will extend this narrative past the character limit.

B. PROGRAM CLARIFICATION ITEMS

1. Cost/MSY cost higher than the maximum of \$13,300 -- Justification can be seen on page 14 of the narrative. In addition to some of the difficulties described in regard to the Community's difficulties, the members themselves experience a hardship and sometimes this is the only income individuals will have in a household. Finally being that this is a new and developing initiative for the Community, start up costs are critical to support the program and participants in its first year. In the 2nd and 3rd year we will reduce the MSY each year.

2. Ability to raise/secure additional resources- Gila River Indian Community is the third largest reservation in the State of Arizona. There are many untapped resources within the Community to support this initiative. With the addition of gaming over the years, Departments and services have expanded and new Tribal enterprises have been developed. The opportunity is rich to leverage resources and partner with Departments and Employers to provide a variety of services. We are beginning to learn this through our Workforce Innovation Grant (WIF) as we work with our 5 Industry sectors, Medical, Construction, Government, Small Business and Hospitality. The

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partnerships that have been created as a result have provided resources that we would have not otherwise known about or even thought to tap into. Veterans remain a priority for the WIF grant as well. Gila River Health Care (GRHC) is partnering with us to provide veterans with suicide prevention training and drug and alcohol prevention training. We are also looking to partner with GRIC Huhukam Hospital to expand their trauma counselling to be more specific to PTSD. Identification of PTSD will be determined by the professionals in Behavioral Health. There are other resources in the Community such as the Tobacco Tax funding which we could apply for a year in advance. In an emergency situation we can request moneys from Districts or utilize some Tribal funding that the Tribe already has designated to our department.

3. Evidence of need for Veterans Office - During the 2013 planning year, a monthly Veterans Forum was created. "Veterans serving Veterans" began as a collaboration between the Gila River Indian Community's Employment & Training Department and Gila River Health Care. These partners will build on the AmeriCorps program. These forums organized efforts from four existing Veteran's posts plus those Community Veterans not associated with Veterans organizations. The forum was instrumental in identifying Veterans' needs, which brought attention to their need for the Community to offer "priority of services" to Veterans particularly in basic services, housing and employment. As a result of our early efforts, Two Tribal Departments have added a Veteran's priority space to their intake forms. We need to do more. A Veterans Office is needed because Gila River Indian Community is predominantly a rural community and many of the veterans lack transportation. Veterans will not go to outside agencies for assistance, but would feel more comfortable requesting services from a Native Veterans office located within their own Community that is run by fellow Native Veterans. A centralized Veteran's Office would increase the number of Native Veterans seeking services from State and National resources. A Community Veterans office would be able to connect the posts and create partnerships bringing Veterans together to share experiences and develop activities together. This is the beginning in drawing Veterans out to reconnect with their Community and other Veterans. A Veterans Office could advocate on behalf of all the Native Veterans bringing issues to the attention of the Tribal Council so that their voices can be heard. A Veterans Office could maintain an accurate data base of Veterans and provide a wide variety of activities, trainings and opportunities to Veterans and their families. AmeriCorps members will be trained and certified thru the National Veteran's Service Center to assist Veterans and Families of Veteran's seeking services. These members would also meet face to face with Veterans within the Community to reconnect those Veterans to the

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community through this Office. A Veterans Office will provide a culturally relevant environment where Veterans and their families will be able to participate in programs that promote a healthy lifestyle.

4. Veterans Numbers -- As a result of the Veterans' forums, our planning efforts and the strong support from Tribal Council and the Governor, our Tribal Enrollment Department was prompted to begin to identify Veterans in their annual Tribal census. Preliminary information from enrollment has identified more than (200) two hundred and less than (500) five hundred Veterans living within the community. The Enrollment Department has now taken on the task of reaching out to each of the 7 Districts in an effort to identify Veterans. We are waiting for the results. Our Grant intends to serve 50 Veterans and their families in the first year. With a conservative estimate of 3 to a family, we would potentially be serving 150 people. Community Tribal leaders agree with local Veteran Groups that the lack of Veterans Office prevent many Community Veterans from receiving the services that are available. Community leaders want a Veterans Office and are now identifying a location. In the last 4 months, we have been meeting monthly with leadership to discuss and brainstorm ideas around Veterans issues and potential services that a Veterans Office could provide. There is tremendous support from the Community to support their Veterans and this AmeriCorps Grant.

5. Veterans Office facilitating partnerships -- Through the Veterans Office partnerships will be formed and strengthened with local, State and Federal Offices as we develop and certify members coordinating the office to provide needed services. Partnerships will also be formed with other Tribal existing Offices on other reservations, whereby we can share ideas and resources that could lead to developing a stronger network of Native Veterans across the State of Arizona. This could lead to hosting joint activities and conferences, etc. Tribes that don't have Veterans Offices could be encouraged to develop an Office and provide Veterans services in a more formal way. Being that Gila River E&T Department sits on the only recognized State WIA Tribal Workforce Investment Board in the country is an additional avenue to network and connect with other Tribes who provide services. Due to the priority status that Veterans already have in WIA Workforce System, the WIB would be supportive in providing training and coordinating efforts to reach and provide services to Veterans. Within the Community, a recognized Veterans Office will give Veterans the status they deserve and will give them the authority to leverage resources and develop partnerships with Tribal Departments to access their services and develop a priority status as we do in the E&T Department. This status as a

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centralized Office will also give the Veterans the ability to partner with our Huhukam Hospital to join in an MOU with the State to be able to provide VA medical benefits directly from our hospital. Being a recognized Office of the Community, they could advocate for a Veterans Council sanctioned by the Council to address Veterans issues. These are all conversations that we are currently having with our leaders, who are in full support. The Veterans Office will be responsible in developing community partnerships between existing posts by attending meetings, circulating and distributing information between posts. The Veterans Office would become a hub providing information to the Community at large regarding events while recruiting community volunteers to assist Veteran's Posts in day to day operations but ultimately connecting them to the centralized Office. Members would also supply articles for the Community News paper (the GRIN) regarding Veteran concerns and high light active Military so that they and their family will be connected to the Veteran's Office increasing morale and support for returning Veterans.

6. Increasing employment opportunities - AmeriCorps Members will be trained by E&T staff to provide case management services as well as develop sites for placements, implement mentorship and job shadow programs, train mentors and place Veterans in Mentorships or job shadow experiences. Community Veterans seeking employment and or training for positions within tribal departments will be able to job shadow, mentor and volunteer within different departments, which include facility maintenance, Health care, Tribal Housing, Public works, Department of Transportation or fire and police departments. These departments are currently partners with the Employment & Training Department and offer some or all of these work experiences with the need to hire. Community Veterans will be recruited through local career and job fairs, local advertisement and focus groups that will be promoted and facilitated by AmeriCorps members. Veterans on sites will be monitored by AmeriCorps members and Supervised on site by Department personal. We will also partner with our Human Resources Department volunteer program to expand the volunteer opportunities so that Community Veterans have the opportunity to become gainfully employed. Our current relationship with our HR Department has been hugely successful. HR recognizes the value of training volunteers and participants referred by our Department can bypass the selection process if the department is willing to hire them once a volunteer placement has been made and is successful. Also through the Career Pathways Initiative, we are developing a process whereby job descriptions can be changed to accommodate Community Members who may not have the length of experience necessary but can be hired as interns in order to secure employment. Veterans preference points are already in place as part

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of the HR selection process. All efforts are made to hire Native Americans.

7. Kahv'Yoo Spirit/Transcendental Meditation Programs - A proposed method to promote and deliver well being and positive mental health services would include the Equine Assisted Learning program. This program currently exists and is delivered to our current WIA participants although has not been used yet with The Veteran Population. This program has been successful when used with Youth 14-24yrs of age in the prevention of Suicide and substance use. The Kahv'Yoo Spirit program has been identified as a strategy for prevention by the Indian Health Services and Equine therapies is listed as a Best Practice with First Nations Behavioral Health Services, U.S. Department of Defense, April 2012 issue, and an article on "Horse Therapy Helps Veterans breakthrough PTSD". This program utilizes the Equine Assisted Growth And Learning Association (EAGALA) model. The typical program is eight weeks in length, one hour per week. All Equine work is on the ground with no riding. Please refer to WWW.EAGALA.org for specifics in model description. The program is conducted by a certified Mental Health Professional (experienced in PTSD and trauma treatment), a certified Equine Specialist, and the Horses. Transcendental Meditation which is currently used in treatment of PTSD, www.MilitaryMental Health.org June 2011 Transcendental Meditation Helps Vets with PTSD, will be taught to all volunteers as well as to Veterans entering services. Both Programs will be promoted as health benefits for improved well being. All AmeriCorps volunteers will experience the Equine program and the Meditation so that they may gain a working relationship with the programs and enhance personal well being. Members will also be given the opportunity to receive training in identifying PTSD through professionals at the Behavioral Health Department so they can deliver this service to other Veterans. They will be supervised and trained by Behavioral professionals. This promotes our model in valuing the importance of "Veterans serving Veterans". One Veteran has already been certified by a local educational entity through WIA in counselling Veterans. He has agreed to be part of our project. Equine Assisted Learning and Transcendental Meditation will be delivered by certified instructors, from Gila River Health Care and Gila River Employment & Training who will partner with the AmeriCorps program. Members will be supervised and will learn to assist professionals in the delivery of this program. They may go on to become certified Nationally as Equine Specialists after participating in a years' mentorship program with our E&T Certified Equine Specialist, if desired. We are especially interested in seeing the results of the Equine program, because the horse is engrained into the fabric of this Community. Wild Horses still roam the Community and are left alone out of respect to this culturally revered animal. Watering holes have been developed in the desert to

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accommodate their migration patterns and vegetation has been planted to ensure their continued existence and presence within the Community.

8. No displacement or duplication of existing staff - Through our WIA program, we are also prohibited from displacing any workers or duplicating any existing staff. Our Community is well aware of this regulation and understands this policy. We have developed a worksite agreement that all worksites must sign stating a variety of requirements that must be met. Displacing a worker is one of them. A worksite supervisors Orientation is held and then the worksite agreement is signed. All of our WIA Coordinators continue to monitor the worksite monthly. We would use similar tools to insure this compliance.

9. AmeriCorps Member Training -- All members will receive an AmeriCorps and Veterans Orientation. In the Orientation AmeriCorps Members will be exposed to the benefits of volunteerism and the value of being AmeriCorps members. Ms. Conte, who was contracted by the State to conduct this type of training is developing this component of the Orientation. Members will be trained in how to work with Veterans within the first 3 weeks of the project. This training is be developed and delivered by Community Veterans working with outside local Veterans agencies. Our connection with the State AmeriCorps Programs and local Veterans Offices will also provide guidance and resources. PTSD, suicide prevention, and drug and alcohol training in relation to Veterans issues is being developed by Behavioral Health Professionals from Gila River Health Care and will be a part of the orientation.

10. Recruitment, Selection, and training -- Recruitment will be done at many levels. Recruitment will begin in the Community with local news paper articles, flyers distributed at each of the 7 District Centers, brochures, through the intranet, and advertising on the Community's website. We have also been attending Veterans Post meetings both within Gila River promoting the AmeriCorps Program. Interested individuals will be identified there as well advertising will be done at the 2 Indian Centers, one located in Phoenix and the other in Tucson in efforts to identify Native Veterans. Postings will be done through the NTNWIB website that all the Tribes throughout Arizona have access to. Advertising will be done in other Veterans Offices throughout Arizona. Being a rural close knit community word has gone out by through face to face contact with community leaders, Community members, Veterans groups as well as at community meetings. A local news paper article will be created should the community receive the award and positions will be posted throughout the community and in out

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laying towns. Selection: Potential candidates will be interviewed by a selection panel with Veteran representation from each of the 4 Posts or from the Community at large as well as comprised of site supervisors and staff from E&T. Training: AmeriCorps Orientation and training will be done prior to placement by the Ms Conte from E&T as she has experience in providing this type of Orientation and training for the State. Other types of Training on AmeriCorps, soft skills and computer skills will be scheduled once assessments are made and will begin as soon as all positions are filled within the first month. Orientation and training to members will include understanding AmeriCorps requirements and the benefits of volunteerism. Additionally we will focus on programs goals and program policies. Orientation to site supervisors will be delivered by E&T within the first month so that sites are prepared prior to any placement of members. Site Orientations and training will be expected to be provided by the training site to members beginning within the first 2 weeks of placement. Specialized training within specific areas will begin within the first 2 weeks but will be expected to be ongoing throughout the placement and will be provided by site supervisors. Training in the Veterans Office site will continue throughout placement and will be provided by E&T staff and the Project Coordinator. Community orientations will be presented throughout the Districts by AmeriCorps members. Community Orientations will be conducted on an ongoing basis to educate the Community on volunteerism and the benefits of the AmeriCorps Program.

11. Day to day Activities -- Placement: Three members will be placed at the Community's centralized Veterans Office where they will provide services to all Veterans in the community, Two members will be placed at the District 7 Pee Posh Veterans Office that serve Veterans from Districts 6 and 7, two members will be placed at DEQ where they will be involved in environmental quality service projects, two members will be located at E&T where they will be trained in providing career development services to identified Veterans who need employment and career development, two members will be placed at District 5 Veterans Center, two members will be placed at District three serving the Ira Hayes Post and two members will be placed at district one serving the Post 51 Veterans.

All members will work with Veterans in their respective Districts to identify Veterans and Veterans family needs. Members will do community outreach within their assigned District, refer Veterans to the centralized Veterans Office for State and Federal services, local counseling services, employment services, and other activities that the Centralized Veterans Office will be developing i.e., the equine program, the meditation programs, etc. Members will also assist Veterans in developing service projects and recruiting volunteers in their assigned District which can be advertised in the centralized

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Veterans Office so that any Veteran or family member of Veterans can participate. One day a week will be set aside for community projects that would include cleanup projects, basic repairs to Veteran homes, assisting the elderly Veterans, etc. All 15 members will be involved in each Districts projects. Training will be provided by the site supervisor specific to the project that has been identified. Coordination of this training for all members will be coordinated by the centralized Veterans Office.

Members will report to their assigned Districts or site at the beginning of the day. The day could start off or end with daily logs. Some of the outreach activities of the members assigned to the Districts could be doing presentations at the schools to educate the youth on AmeriCorps and volunteerism, presentations at the District meetings on Veterans issues, and reporting back to the centralized Veterans Office.

The centralized Veterans Office would be supervised by the Program manager. The day to day activities within the Centralized Veterans Office would include intake of Veterans or family members, case management and monitoring including completing paperwork for services, connecting by phone, email and face to face with local, state and national representatives and service providers. This Office would also coordinate and advertise the district identified service projects. Members will also visit clients that cannot physically get to the centralized Veterans Office. Roles will also include educating the community and Veterans through local media and focus groups about the AmeriCorps program and volunteerism. All AmeriCorps Members will continue to be trained so that they are proficient in providing services consistent with the centralized Veterans Office.

Weekly meeting of all members will take place at the E&T Department for debriefing and monthly training will be delivered to all members as needed. These training will be delivered in a group and developed based on member feedback and need as relayed to our department by site supervisors.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics