

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Over the next three years Washington state's volunteer centers and connectors will focus on Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) activities that support volunteerism as a strategy to support the educational success of students in our state. The activities will include support for STEM programs, reading initiatives, after-school programs, initiatives targeted to reduce disproportionality in educational outcomes, and preparation for post-secondary education. This emphasis is timely given the state's focus on improving educational results and the plan for a major increase in state funding for basic education, directed in part by a 2013 State Supreme Court order.

The reach and capacity of our statewide volunteer system has been enhanced by four years of VGF funding. As a result, we are well-positioned to carry out targeted efforts that support student success education by increasing the capacity and impact of education-related organizations, promoting youth engagement, and expanding volunteer center-sponsored programs for students.

This proposal leverages the support of parent organizations that sponsor the volunteer centers, investments from private and corporate funders, nonprofit fees, and \$112,920 of in-kind contributions from volunteer professionals providing consulting services.

Our program design will address all three aspects of the purpose of the Volunteer Generation Fund. It will:

- 1) Bolster nonprofits that recruit, manage, and support volunteers, particularly in planning and implementing programs that support student success.
- 2) Deploy skilled volunteers to strengthen the capacity of education-related nonprofits, including their ability to engage skill-based volunteers to effectively solve problems; and
- 3) Expand the capacity of Washington's volunteer centers to recruit, manage, support, and retain individuals in high quality volunteer assignments, particularly youth volunteers.

## Program Design

We feel it is important to begin with a description of prior VGF efforts, since this year's VGF proposal builds on the success of our state's efforts over the last four years. Washington state has increased the capacity of our volunteer centers and connectors (referred to just as "centers" in this section) through the state association, Volunteer Centers of Washington (VCW) and through 501 Commons, our state's

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management support organization, which operates a skills-based volunteer program, the Executive Service Corps (ESC).

In the first year of the grant, centers completed organizational assessments and worked with 501 Commons staff and volunteer consultants to build basic infrastructure through activities such as strategic planning, creating marketing plans, budgeting support, and revenue generation planning. Since then, mini-grants through VCW have supported the startup of two centers and replication of successful programs in several locations. Centers have shared expertise, templates, and resources, developing a more active and effective statewide association. In addition, VCW has customized volunteer management training and delivered it to thousands of volunteer managers and program staff. As organizational capacity expanded, centers have consistently exceeded goals for volunteer recruitment and volunteer hours, as well as targets for the number of nonprofits and individuals trained and the number of volunteer management practices impacted.

In 2011 we developed the Washington Serves plan which provides a framework for the volunteer ecosystem that supports two million volunteers each year. The plan sets goals and guides efforts to increase the number of volunteers and their satisfaction and impact. Washington Serves has been shared with all the state's community foundations, more than a dozen institutional funders, and key policy makers. It has been used to train and mobilize volunteer managers, executives, and program staff at several statewide conferences.

Disaster management and emergency preparedness strategies have been developed out of VGF support. Our Snohomish center utilized Year 3 VGF funds to partner with local emergency managers on a plan for a Volunteer Reception Center (VRC), which manage spontaneous, unaffiliated, volunteers (SUVs) during a disaster. The VRC was activated in the recent Oso landslide disaster, and serves as a model to communities throughout the state. In addition, 501 Commons volunteer consultants have created detailed emergency plans for 13 low income housing sites. This program was recognized in the 2014 "Transforming Communities through Service" publication.

VCW has increased youth volunteer programs, as well as began offering youth volunteer opportunities in all centers. In the 4th quarter of 2014, we will continue to work on plans, tools, and resources that support youth volunteerism for school officials, parents, nonprofits, and students. These will be

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available on the VCW website, which has been upgraded and expanded.

2014-15 Focus on Supporting Educational Success:

In 2014-15 our focus is to expand the capacity for volunteer centers to host volunteer-driven programs that support educational success of students in K-12. Centers will give their attention to helping educational programs make the best use of volunteers, as well as helping students build self-esteem and workplace skills through community service.

We have chosen this focus because too many students are not completing high school in Washington state. For 2013, Washington's four-year graduation rate was 76%, which is in the lower half of the nation. This drops to 51% of those with limited English proficiency, and to 66% for those who are economically disadvantaged. Each day about 60 students drop out of a Washington high school. For many of these students the pathway to dropping out started early in their school career, as far back as kindergarten. A high school dropout will earn \$200,000 less than a graduate over his/her lifetime and almost a million dollars less than a college graduate.

Many efforts to reduce the risk of students dropping out are outside of the classroom. Examples are health and human service programs that remove barriers to learning, mentors and extracurricular programs that provide connections and structure to encourage students, and homework and test prep assistance. These out-of-school supports often depend on volunteers for much of their program capacity. Expanding this volunteer "workforce" is critical to providing every at-risk child with the support they deserve.

Program Description:

Education is a top concern of the public in all parts of the state. Given that a hallmark characteristic of the VGF in Washington state is the distribution of resources and activities throughout the state, including to smaller population centers and rural areas, it is important that we focus on activities appropriate to a wide range of communities. Our program design provides for several approaches to supporting educational success and builds on the volunteer centers' deep understanding of their own communities and existing relationships with school districts and education-related non-profits.

Grant activities align with the CNCS strategic plan by engaging volunteers to support student success

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using three strategies: 1) Improving the volunteer management practices and systems of education-related nonprofits; 2) Recruiting additional volunteers to work in education-related nonprofits; and 3) Engaging youth in community service. The youth engagement strategy picks up from 2013-14 VGF-funded VCW work, and has two objectives. One is that youth benefit directly from being involved in community service and the second is that their involvement as volunteers for educational programs supports the success of other students.

All volunteer centers and connectors will continue to help education-related nonprofits recruit volunteers for program and skills-based roles. Most Washington volunteer centers/connectors have programs that support educational success, often in partnership with education-related nonprofits. Examples are United Way of King County's Volunteer Reader program and Thurston County's Ready to Learn and Raising a Reader programs. In addition, we will build on the well-proven United Way of King County Volunteer Impact Partnership whereby United Way and 501 Commons have worked to improve the volunteer management practices of more than 120 organizations in King County since 2010, including education-related organizations.

### Youth Community Service:

We have given additional attention to the program design around youth engagement. There is evidence that volunteering as a youth positively affects important work-related and social outcomes by strengthening work values and the sense of importance of community involvement. Youth engagement is a strategy endorsed by our state legislature in 2013 when they asked school districts to encourage youth to volunteer and consider adding a community service graduation requirement.

In 2008, Volunteering in America ranked Washington state number one in youth volunteering (42.2% of teens). In 2012, this ranking fell to 6th with 38.6% of teens volunteering. Research, including "Volunteerism in Adolescence: A Process Perspective" by Johnson, Beebe, Mortimer and Snyder and Benson (2010) and "Beyond Leaf Raking: Learning to Serve/Serving to Learn" by Benson and Roehlkepartain (1993) has shown that the best predictors of adult community involvement were youth volunteer experiences. Additionally, adults who were active in social justice issues tend to have participated in service projects as children and/or teenagers. The inference is that the early experience develops habits and mind-sets that can carry over into adulthood.

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Students are struggling more than ever to compete for college acceptance and find meaningful living wage jobs and careers. Community service can assist them in confronting both of these challenges. By placing youth volunteers in educational nonprofits we will magnify the impact of their volunteerism: older students mentor younger students, and, in turn, reap benefits for themselves. Youth also gain experience and connections with nonprofit staff and older, often skilled, volunteers. Finally, the education-related nonprofits, if trained to develop and appropriately manage student volunteers will value youth engagement more highly.

This strategy extends the activities of many centers already involved in promoting youth engagement. This includes some of smaller organizations. For example, the Varsity Lettering Program has been replicated in Stevens County, a rural volunteer center that started up in 2011 with support from VGF. United Way of Walla Walla, the newest member of the Volunteer Centers of Washington, recently replicated the Youth United program model which has been operating in Snohomish, Pierce, Chelan, Douglas, and Clallam counties.

### Actions Planned:

For the next three years, grant funds will be focused on delivering programs that impact student success. We will use volunteers, to help education-focused nonprofits be more effective as well as engage with middle and high school youth directly. The specific goals and activities that will be supported are:

1. Strengthen education-related nonprofits, including their volunteer programs.

- 1.A. Increase the effectiveness of education-related nonprofits:

501 Commons will recruit approximately 10 Executive Service Corps members to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of six education related nonprofits. This includes improving service delivery, learning to make better use of technology, developing plans to expand programs, reforming evaluation programs to match changing educational standards, and other organizational capacity building.

These projects will conform to the CNCS definition of capacity building because they are intended to support or enhance the program delivery; respond to the organization's goal of increasing, expanding,

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or enhancing services to meet pressing community needs; and enable the organization to provide a sustained level of more or better direct services. These activities will also increase the number of volunteers leveraged by education-related nonprofits as program improvements and efficiencies often lead to growing volunteer programs.

### SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND TIMELINES

Recruit organizations that need capacity building assistance and define the scope of the projects (October 2014-May 2014); Recruit service corps members for projects with education-focused nonprofits (October 2014-June 2014); Complete the projects (February 2015-August 2015); Evaluate the projects (June 2015-September 2015).

### OUTCOMES

- 1) Education-related nonprofits are able to address core issues that are impacting organizational effectiveness.
- 2) Organizations will identify specific outcomes for each project which will be guided by a written scope of work. At the end of the project they will be asked if they believe the organization's effectiveness has been improved as a result of the project.

1.B. Increase the volunteer management capacity of education-related nonprofits:

501 Commons volunteer consultants will work with education-related nonprofits using the United Way of King County VIP 360 program model which has strengthened volunteer management of over 120 organizations. Organizations will assess their volunteer programs and practices; prioritize areas for improvement, and to develop detailed plans for more successfully engaging volunteers. This program will be delivered to six organizations in partnership with United Way of King County's VIP 360 program and also offered to approximately six education-related nonprofits or schools outside of King County. Recruitment will include organizations and schools in the STEM Networks in Washington state and programs like TEALS (Technology Education and Literacy in Schools) and School's Out Washington that support STEM-based schools.

### SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND TIMELINES

Recruit Executive Service Corps members to participate in the cohort or individual volunteer management improvement programs (November 2014-May 2015); Recruit organizations to

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participate in the cohort or individual volunteer management improvement programs (December 2014-May 2015); Complete the assessment, planning and implementation projects (March 2015-September 2015); Evaluate the projects (June 2015-September 2015).

### OUTCOMES

- 1) Organizations develop an improvement plan. These often focus on clarifying the goals of their volunteer program, developing well-defined position descriptions, improving recruitment and training of volunteers and use of skills-based volunteers. They will complete a pre/post assessment.
- 2) Organizations implement three or more effective volunteer management practices as a result of capacity building services.

2. Build skills and self-worth in youth, by increasing and strengthening youth volunteerism.

VCW will work with nonprofits to put in place and/or improve youth volunteer programs, including defining volunteer needs and position descriptions. We will include youth leaders, via our Teen Leadership Council model, to help design programs and projects that will be more successful with youth, as well as encourage youth toward volunteering for and with education-based programs.

Grant activities will benefit older youth (grades 7-12), imparting new skills, confidence and community connection. They will also benefit younger children, when youth are placed into education-related programs. Youth service days and "calls to action" such as days of service and book drives will also allow youth to be innovative, working on their own designs and ideas, capturing their drive and commitment to education, and hopefully, igniting community action throughout their lifetime. These activities are linked to the achievement of the CNCS goal ED-9: Number of students graduating from high school on time with a diploma.

The role of the centers will be measured through capacity building performance measures and increased youth enrollment.

### SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND TIMELINE

Centers plan for youth engagement activities and prepare funding requests. VCW allocates funds to centers that commit to increasing youth volunteerism, with a focus on placing youth with education-

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related nonprofits (October 2014-November 2014); VCW convenes youth sub-committee, designs further expansion of the youth program model, and considers additional youth service opportunities (October 2014-December 2014); Design pre and post surveys to measure outcomes for youth volunteers and volunteer centers (October 2014-December 2014); Volunteer centers and connectors upgrade database systems to capture age-based information (December 2014-March 2015); Volunteer centers continue to mentor and support centers including trouble-shooting barriers and providing support and training (January 2015-July 2015); Conduct surveys, reflect on lessons learned and plan for 2015-2016 (June 2015-September 2015).

### OUTCOMES

- 1) Increased number of volunteer centers providing youth programs by supporting the replication of programs or development of new programs. Examples are Varsity Lettering programs, Youth United, youth days of service, and Teen Leadership Councils.
  - 2) Increased number of youth enrolled in volunteer center databases.
  - 3) Increased partnerships between volunteer centers/connectors, schools and education-related nonprofits.
  - 4) Increased number of volunteer centers/connectors with software capable of capturing age-related data for base-line data on youth volunteering and staff able to produce the reports.
  - 5) Volunteer centers' increased positive responses to the question: "How prepared are you to support the success of youth volunteers in your community?". The baseline of which will be asked in the fall of 2014.
3. Increase the capacity of volunteer centers to support improved educational results.

Using professional development, training, systems improvements, and resource materials hosted on the VCW website, as well as staff coordination capacity, the VCW state association will support the centers in their design and implementation of community-specific activities that directly impact student success. Exchanges among members will also facilitate the spread of successful models to additional communities, such as United Way of King County's Volunteer Reader program and the national Raising a Reader program.

### SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND TIMELINES

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Centers prepare funding requests for activities that will increase the capacity of education-related nonprofits. VCW allocates funds to centers who commit to increasing volunteerism in education-related nonprofits (October 2014-November 2014); VCW education sub-committee convenes and evaluates opportunities to expand volunteerism in education-related programs (October 2014-November 2014); Education sub-committee devises program guides, templates and frameworks for extending reader and other existing educational programs (December 2014- March 2015); Centers put volunteerism expansion plans into action with education-related nonprofits (December 2014-July 2015); Continued mentorship and support between centers to provide support and training for program replications. Centers continue to implement existing programs (January 2015-July 2015); Assessment and review (June 2015-July 2015).

### OUTCOMES

- 1) Increase in number of partnerships between volunteer connector organizations and education-related nonprofits.
- 2) Volunteer centers/connectors report more positive responses to the question: "How prepared are you to support the success of education-related nonprofits in your community?". (From baseline responses collected in the fall of 2014.)

### Performance Measures and Targets:

National capacity building performance measures will be reported for the general population as well as for youth volunteers, a target population for our program design.

G3-3.1 Number of community volunteers recruited by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants: 3000;

MEASUREMENT: volunteer center database registrations, 501 Commons reports, and volunteer registration forms. This is 50% increase over last year's target.

G3-3.1 Youth: Number of new youth volunteers recruited by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants: 1,500. MEASUREMENT: Volunteer Center database registrations and volunteer registration forms.

G3-3.3 Number of organizations implementing three or more effective management practices as a

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result of capacity-building services provided by CNCS-supported organizations or national service participants: 40 (A 100% increase over last year's target.) Pre and post surveys of organizations attending trainings or working with 501 Commons on capacity building projects.

G3-3.7 Hours of service contributed by community volunteers who were recruited by CNCS-supported organizations: 8,000 (a 100% increase over last year's target). MEASUREMENT: volunteer center database registrations, partner agency forms and 501 Commons reports.

G3-3.7 Youth: Hours of service contributed by youth volunteers who were recruited by CNCS-supported organizations: 3,500. MEASUREMENT: volunteer center database registrations and volunteer registration forms.

G3-13 Number of additional activities completed and/or program outputs produced by the program as a result of capacity building services: Number of new education-related agencies engaged in partnerships with volunteer connector organizations: 100. MEASUREMENT: Reports from volunteer centers and 501 Commons.

### Organizational Capability

Serve Washington, our state commission for national and community service, was created in 1994 to implement national service initiatives, provide training and technical assistance, evaluate programs, and leverage federal dollars with local, state, and private-sector resources. Serve Washington has administered \$225.8 million in federal grants. Our programs have worked in Washington's most vulnerable communities, providing help and hope to people facing economic hardship and social service needs.

Self-assessment and continuous improvement of both the programmatic and fiscal operation of grants overseen by Serve Washington are performed through the site monitoring process, fiscal reviews, review of progress reports and assessing if grantees are meeting performance outcomes. FFRs are reviewed. We ensure that each subgrantee maintains financial management systems that include standard accounting practices, sufficient internal controls, a clear audit trail, and written cost allocation procedures, as necessary. Financial management systems must be capable of distinguishing expenditures attributable to their grant(s) from those expenditures not attributable to the grant.

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Serve Washington has a track record of creating and sustaining new initiatives. Some of these include the Washington Leader Corps and the Leadership Forum for National Service Executives at the University of Washington Evans School for Public Affairs. We have successfully managed the VGF grant for four consecutive years, remaining in compliance with all required reporting, fiscal management and meeting/exceeding performance outcomes related to grant activities. Consistent with VGF Years 1-4, Serve Washington will subcontract with 501 Commons and the Volunteer Centers of Washington to perform activities outlined in this application.

Serve Washington and its partners have successfully completed program objectives, produced outcome and output reports, and complied with financial requirements. We will note that program activities are generally focused on the summer and fall given the timing of other programs and activities for 501 Commons and the volunteer centers, so billing activities are often concentrated in the final four months of the program year. Building on our past success, Serve Washington has the experience to meet federal reporting requirements and effectively manage subgrants. Key Serve Washington staff for this grant: Debbie Schuffenhauer, Executive Director, has been with the commission since 2006 and has worked in AmeriCorps since its inception. Mary Van Verst, Program Officer, will be the main point of contact and has been with the commission since 1997. Bruce Lehman will continue to serve as the Fiscal Analyst for the VGF grant.

Serve Washington's operational budget is \$858,074 and the VGF grant request represents 1.5% of the organization's budget.

### **Budget/Cost Effectiveness**

Over the last four years, 501 Commons, the Volunteer Centers of Washington, and its member organizations have significantly built up the capacity of the volunteer support system in Washington State. This proposal continues the trajectory of the last four years, while focusing on using that developed capacity to improve outcomes for Washington state students. The program will bolster student success by recruiting volunteers for schools and education related nonprofits, by strengthening education-related nonprofits, including their volunteer management capacity, and by engaging students in community service, including in education-focused programs.

We are requesting a total of \$307,600 and generating \$378,450 in match, including \$234,070 of in-kind, including the value of skills based volunteers who are serving in roles as consultants, advisors

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and as project managers. A total of \$131,037 is being generated in private grants and fees. While the fees are not secured, we do not consider them to be at risk. Fee based income is being generated by 501 Commons which has provided consulting services for over 25 years. Fees are charged on a sliding scale basis. The grant makes it possible for 501 Commons to provide services at a reduced level to nonprofits that are supporting student success.

Additionally 501 Commons has existing grant relationships and will develop others that will support the activities of this grant, including current work to secure 2015 funding from United Way of King County and Microsoft. The likelihood of this support is high given that United Way has been funding 501 Commons for volunteer management programming for six years and Microsoft has provided funding for three years.

The amounts used are conservative and consistent with past results and the private funds result from the completion of fee-based activities. While 501 Commons and VCW are always working to secure additional funds for these and other activities, the success of the activities included in the project is not dependent upon additional fundraising.

We have increased the amount of the grant request this year in order to carry out the focus on education and deepen the connection between the centers and the nonprofits and civic programs with which we are partnering. Some of the partnerships in the proposal are long standing and others will be developed through the grant activities. The success of new partnerships can be significantly enhanced by having grant funds that support some of the costs of the partner's engagement.

In the four years Washington state has been involved with VGF we have very intentionally chosen a strategy whereby grant activities benefit all organizations in the state. This is very important for a state that has so many small population centers surrounded by rural communities.

Because we are working with many small volunteer centers, connectors and partner organizations, ongoing capacity assistance from the VCW and from 501 Commons is needed. For this reason, it is important to have a statewide coordinator for Volunteer Centers of Washington. This person will be supporting the work of the education subcommittee, aiding member organizations in building partnerships among members and with education-related nonprofits, and carrying out evaluation

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activities. We will also be leveraging the growing skills based volunteer pool (500+) that 501 Commons has developed as well as the Nonprofit Essentials Training platform to support low cost training that can be accessed by any volunteer center or education-focused nonprofit statewide.

### CLARIFICATION RESPONSES

CNCS: If you are currently the recipient of a VGF program grant (10VGH and 13VGH grant numbers), you must include in the budget adequacy clarification of your application for a new VGF grant, a projection of your existing VGF grant's financial status. The clarification must present your projection of the amount of existing grant funds that will be left, or were left, unexpended as of the expiration date of your current VGF grant.

Serve Washington: All Year 4 VGF funds will be drawn down 100% by September 30th 2014. Volunteer Centers of Washington is hosting an in-person meeting the end of August, drawing down travel, supply and training dollars. There are 2 volunteer management trainings scheduled that will also draw down travel and training dollars before the end of the year. Mini-grant dollars will be drawn down 100% based on VGF-activities scheduled between now and September 30th. A contract has been signed for the emergency planning projects that are done by 501 Commons skilled volunteers. The consultants are assigned and working on the projects which were scheduled for mid-July -- mid September. The other three smaller projects 501 Commons is working on are for are all in process with consultants assigned. We also expect staff time to be drawn down in full as staff is involved with all of the projects in process at this time.

a. Budget Clarification Items a.1 and 2: changes were made directly in the application budget in eGrants.

b. Budget Clarifications

1). Please give a more complete description on the fundraising activities and how they will support the program.

501 Commons is soliciting grant funds to support the recruitment, training, deployment and

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management of the Executive Service Corps members on projects included in the grant. In some cases clients may also pay a sliding scale fee. Funds will be used to pay for the staff costs for the Volunteer Generation Program Manager, Program Coordinator, and Administrative Assistant as well as other program expenses not covered by federal funds.

501 Commons also has grant funds already confirmed from the Seattle Foundation and Social Venture Partners and while not yet contracted the 2015 United Way of King County funding for the Volunteer Impact 360 program has been budgeted by United Way. 501 Commons is working to confirm a \$5000 grant from Microsoft, but the organization has been providing annual funding over \$100,000 a year to 501 Commons.

The majority of the VCW member centers are housed within parent organizations, usually the county's United Way. As such, their rent, supplies, technology and almost all of their salaries are paid for by the parent organization. Those organizations raise funds from a variety of local sources, including the United Way workplace campaigns.

The few independent centers support themselves for the most part via several large grants. Examples include:

- Volunteer Center of Whatcom County has current grants from the City of Bellingham, and the Medina Foundation, among others. This center also stages several fund-raising events a year.
- The Upper Columbia Volunteer Center receives free space as an in-kind donation from the Kettle Falls Horizon Community Program. Most of their staff volunteer their personal time, and they have a small grant from the Inland Northwest Foundation to pay for a part-time staff position.
- Seattle Works receives funding from Microsoft, Safeco, Boeing and FedEx. Many companies donate employee time to volunteer projects, including Starbucks, UPS, Visa and Jet Blue.
- Starbucks also helps support the United Way of King County's volunteer program, by under-writing their "Day of Caring" volunteer event. United Way of King County receives funding from many other sources other than their workplace campaign, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Jeff and Tricia Raikes.

2). Please explain what is included in "program support to engage youth in service with education and engagement strategies for varsity letter in community service." Explain who will receive the funds and

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what type of program support they offer and/or receive. Explain why there is a specific program mentioned with a significant amount of the budget allocated to it when the narrative lists the varsity letter program as an example.

The "Program support to engage youth in service with education and engagement strategies for varsity letter in community service" is a mini-grant line item that would be allocated to VCW member centers through a competitive RFP process facilitated by the Volunteer Generation Program Manager and a selection committee comprised of member center representatives. The funding priorities for these mini-grants would include operations and programmatic costs for member centers to implement a varsity letter program in school districts where the program is not yet offered; and increasing participation and reach of current varsity letter programs through member centers with the potential to offer enhancements to their existing programming. This line item also includes mini-grant funding for member centers to implement teen leadership councils, replicating Pierce and Snohomish County's successful models. Additionally, centers could apply for these mini-grant dollars to implement youth days of service, which will provide teens an outlet to volunteer, and organizations who may not currently work with teens, to offer opportunities for youth to engage in their work through volunteering. The frequency of the youth days of service varies from monthly opportunities to a single large day of service, using best practices from member centers who currently offer a similar program to replicate a successful event.

### c. Programmatic Clarifications

1). Please provide additional details about Varsity Lettering programs, whether they are a pre-determined program that will be replicated, its track record of success, and why it was chosen.

The varsity letter in community service is a proven model that has been adapted by a number of centers in different ways. The model includes member centers partnering with local school districts and offering opportunities for students to volunteer in their communities. In order to receive the letter, students must volunteer a minimum of 145 hours in a school year. This is the same threshold of hours that students give to earn an athletic varsity letter, which is why the number was chosen. The longest standing varsity letter program is in Pierce County, where over 500 students earned letters in community service last year. The smallest varsity letter program in the state is in Kettle Falls, where 5

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students earned letters in the program last year. We hope to replicate the program using the best practices that our successful member centers have learned since adopting the program, to expand it to more centers throughout the state.

2). Please provide additional information about how this project will increase skill-based volunteers.

501 Commons and the volunteer centers will recruit new skills based volunteers to work with education related organizations. Additionally, the volunteer centers and the nonprofits they work with may also recruit skilled volunteers to support youth engagement projects.

In addition, existing members of the 501 Commons Executive Service Corps, most of whom are members for decades, will be deployed to work on projects that will improve educational outcomes by increasing the capacity of the organizations.

Skills based volunteers are attracted to project-based work with nonprofits such as those that 501 Commons is an expert in creating. These projects are guided by a defined scope of work and volunteers are supported and supervised throughout the engagement to assure a good experience for the volunteer and for the nonprofit.

501 Commons has been actively growing the service corps throughout the years that VGF has been providing funding, including in areas outside of King County.

3). Please provide additional details regarding Serve Washington's track record of raising funds to support service activities and initiatives.

Serve Washington partners with the VCW and 501 Commons for the VGF grant. The member centers of the VCW, and 501 Commons, have successful fund-raising practices in place, as described in the Budget Clarification section. Here, we would like to provide additional detail about the capacity of 501 Commons, which has a strong track record of fundraising for the activities outlined in this application.

501 Commons operates the Executive Service Corps of Washington, which includes nearly 500

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professionals of all ages. Based on their skills, these volunteers serve as management and technology consultants, leadership coaches, executive advisors, facilitators, project managers, writers, etc. All volunteers have their skills assessed when they join the organization and those skills are entered into a detailed database that allows 501 Commons to select a consultant for each project based on their skills.

Projects these volunteers engage in are defined in contract agreements that specify the scope of work, deliverables, and the time frame for the services the volunteers are providing. All projects are overseen by paid staff of 501 Commons. Clients receiving these services evaluate each consultant on 9 characteristics after the project is completed.

In some cases, the services are free to the organization because they have been funded through a grant or funding source and sometimes organizations pay, according to a sliding scale, for a share of the normal charge for the service being provided. In addition to VGF, funding sources for services provided by volunteers include the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Seattle Foundation, United Way of King County, The Boeing Company, Sherwood Trust, Greater Everett Community Foundation, Microsoft and more than one dozen more.

501 Commons' financial reports, audited by the Certified Public Accountants, Peterson and Sullivan, recognize the value of these donated services in accordance with accounting standards which state that "in-kind contributions are recognized if the services received require specialized skills, are provided by individuals possessing those skills, and would need to be purchased if not provided by donation." [2013 501 Commons Audited Financials].

### **Grant Characteristics**