

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service (ICVS) plans to utilize the Volunteer Generation Fund grant to build on the success of our first four years through three main activities: 1) Strengthening and expanding the state's volunteer infrastructure to increase the number of volunteers across the state. Beginning in January 2015 ICVS will provide 3-5 Community Planning Grants and 8-10 subgrants to Volunteer Connector Organizations to provide capacity building services, engage and retain skill-based and community volunteers, and to recruit, engage and retain volunteers in disaster services and weatherization; 2) Increasing the capacity of nonprofit organizations in Iowa to effectively engage volunteers to meet community need, through the Service Enterprise Initiative (SEI) and volunteer management training; and 3) Create an issue based Volunteer Connector Organization focused on mentoring with the Iowa Mentoring Partnership, with specific goals of recruiting volunteers for STEM mentoring and mentors, particularly for boys and young men of color and Opportunity Youth. These goals are in alignment with the Governor's priorities, our State Service Plan and with the CNCS focus areas of Capacity Building, Disaster Services, Education and Environmental Stewardship.

## Program Design

The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service (ICVS) plans to build on the success of our first four VGF years through three main activities: 1) Strengthening and expanding the state's volunteer infrastructure through the support of VOLUNTEER CENTER DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION to increase the number of volunteers across the state; 2) Increasing the capacity of nonprofit organizations to effectively engage volunteers to meet community need, with a focus on strong volunteer management and use of skill-based volunteers, through the SERVICE ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE and volunteer management training; and 3) Create an issue based Volunteer Connector Organization focused on MENTORING with the Iowa Mentoring Partnership, with the goals of recruiting volunteers for STEM mentoring and mentors for boys and young men of color and Opportunity Youth. Through the previous VGF grant, ICVS participated in the Required National Performance Measure related to the number of community volunteers managed and the number of hours served by these volunteers, as well as the Complementary National Performance Measure related to the number of organizations implementing three or more effective volunteer management practices. ICVS proposes to continue this practice with the new grant. In addition to Capacity Building, the proposal also includes initiatives that recruit, train, and deploy volunteers, including skill

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based volunteers, to addresses the CNCS focus areas of Disaster Services, Environmental Stewardship, and Education, as well as the need for STEM programming for youth and the My Brother's Keeper initiative of mentoring opportunities for boys and young men of color.

Targets for year one include: 1) 5500 community volunteers managed and 22,000 hours served by managed volunteers; and 2) 325 organizations implementing three or more effective volunteer management practices as a result of capacity-building services provided. Data on the performance measures will be reported on a regular basis by sub-grantees and aggregated and analyzed by ICVS for submission to stakeholders. ICVS reports to CNCS, the Governor, State Legislature and Commission. ICVS uses the information to determine which programs are most effective, offer technical assistance and guidance for program improvement and consider as a factor for continued grant funding.

### VOLUNTEER CENTER DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION

A nationwide survey showed that only 6% of nonprofit organizations surveyed perceived they effectively balanced the use of volunteers' skills. (TCC Group, "Positive Deviants" in Volunteerism and Service, 2009) The same study further found that only 17% of nonprofits scored "strong" in the CCAT; a measure of eight specific volunteer management behaviors in the survey showed that there is "opportunity across all [effective volunteer management] behaviors to improve management practices." This survey indicates that despite long standing knowledge of the impact of effective volunteer management (Managing Volunteers, UPS, 1998), nonprofits have not made significant strides in utilizing key effective volunteer management practices.

Engaging skill-based volunteers seems to be what the "new" generations of volunteers want. In the Minnesota Association of Volunteer Administration's (MAVA) Rural Volunteerism survey (MAVA, 2012), 33% of respondents reported they had seen an increase in volunteers seeking shorter-term assignments in the past year. The report also noted that many Boomers and younger volunteers do not want to do routine tasks such as stuffing envelopes and are looking for ways to apply their workplace skills to have an impact as volunteers. Particularly in rural states like Iowa, engagement of skill-based volunteers is critical. For example, MAVA reported that 60% of emergency food, activities for youth, firefighting and transportation for older adults is reported to be done primarily by

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volunteers in rural communities.

A 2010 study by the Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center (Meeting the Technical Assistance and Training Needs of Iowa's Nonprofits, 2010 and 2011) had several relevant findings for this proposal as well. More than 4,800 Iowa nonprofits participated in the survey, which was a random sample of the more than 16,000 Iowa nonprofits identified through 990 forms. First, it indicated that Iowa nonprofits reported "fund development and grant writing, recruitment, evaluation and assessment, board development and training and information technology" as their greatest needs. These are all areas where skill-based volunteers could make a significant impact for community based organizations. Furthermore, the study indicated that organizations reported having an average of 130 volunteers each and that "most Iowa nonprofits are small organizations serving fewer than 500 individuals" and that "these organizations rely heavily on volunteers".

These findings seem to indicate that while Iowa nonprofits have numerous volunteers, these volunteers are not engaged in meeting the organization's most pressing needs. This seems to be further evidenced by the fact that these agencies reported the same need areas in 2011 when a follow-up survey was conducted. The survey also reported that nonprofits would prefer to receive their training online or one-day regional events as this was best-suited to their schedules and budgets. This evidence supports the development of a robust skill-based volunteer recruitment process and training program in Iowa for volunteer connector organizations who can provide the training on a regional basis.

Currently there are regions of the state not yet covered by a Volunteer Center (VC) to allow for such trainings to occur. Experience with the previous VGF grant in Iowa has proven that new VCs can be successfully created when there is strong community support, starting from the beginning planning process. In order to expand and create VCs in new communities, the ICVS will offer 2-5 Community Planning Grants annually to build volunteer infrastructure. Using a structure similar to what ICVS has implemented with AmeriCorps planning grants, applicants would complete an application identifying community need and resources, key stakeholders who would be involved in the process, potential ideas for meeting the four key volunteer center functions, and a timeline of activities with target completion dates. State-wide issued based organizations, such as the State of Iowa's Department on Aging, would also be eligible to apply, to create a structure for a statewide issue-based

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VC, increasing the potential to reach even the most rural communities in Iowa.

Furthermore, the VGF grant will allow the ICVS to expand the capacity of existing VCs by annually providing 8-10 sub-grants and training/technical assistance (T/TA) to local organizations. These VCs will, in turn, work with local nonprofits (NPOs) to expand their capacity to recruit, retain, manage and support skill-based and unskilled volunteers serving in high-impact assignments. The work of the VCs will increase the volunteer "boots on the ground" across the state. The ICVS will provide T/TA which will equip VCs with the knowledge and resources to develop a comprehensive plan for engaging skill-based volunteers in meaningful opportunities in their organizations and communities. In turn, VCs will provide T/TA to local NPOs and partner with local businesses and corporations to fully engage skill-based volunteers. Additionally, VCs will be required to provide programming in their community that meets community need in one of the six CNCS focus areas. ICVS will work with subgrantees to track and report, specifically on skill-based volunteer engagement.

ICVS also plans to utilize VCs to address identified state priorities by utilizing skilled volunteers and developing infrastructure for effective volunteer engagement. Improved energy efficiency has been identified by the Iowa legislature as a priority and is also included as a goal within the State Service Plan. Through a partnership with the Iowa Office of Energy Independence (OEI), the goal will be to increase the number of skill-based volunteers providing weatherization resources to vulnerable households. According to the 2010 Home Energy Affordability Gap study, Iowa households with incomes below 50% of the federal poverty level pay 44% of their annual income towards home energy bills. The gap between what individuals can afford on energy bills and what they are actually paying has increased 82% over the past 8 years. ICVS has secured funding to provide mini-grants to volunteer connector organizations to engage volunteers in implementing energy savings activities. Participating VCs will track the number of units improved, number of trainings held, number of individuals trained, number of volunteers leveraged, and the number of skill based volunteers leveraged.

The other state-identified priority is also closely aligned with CNCS' Disaster Services Focus area. In the seven-year period between 2007 and 2013, Iowa experienced 18 major disaster declarations, contrasted with the previous seven year period in which only five major disaster declarations occurred (source: FEMA). In Iowa, ICVS has been implementing Volunteer Reception Centers (VRC) or Emergency Volunteer Centers in partnership with volunteer connector organizations since 2008, with

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at least one Volunteer Reception Center being activated every year since. Iowa's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEMD) sees unaffiliated volunteer engagement as an important role for the commission and our VC partners. ICVS serves on the board of the state VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters) and hosts a web-based disaster volunteer recruitment system. HSEMD has an agreement with ICVS that they will utilize the active Volunteer Reception Center leaders (in most cases VCs funded under the VGF grant) to provide training for community volunteers, emergency management officials and others to increase the number of communities that have VRCs in their disaster management plans. In the event of a disaster, VCs will track the number of volunteers and number of hours served by volunteers through the VRC.

The community planning grant, sub-grant, and weatherization mini-grant application process will take place October-December, annually, with January 1st start dates. Training and technical assistance will be ongoing throughout the year. The network of VCs in Iowa is strong and through continued funding, the Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) grant will simultaneously strengthen the ability of Iowa's nonprofits to effectively engage skill-based volunteers, while supporting the ICVS and Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) missions of improving lives, strengthening communities and fostering civic engagement through service and volunteering. In order for this endeavor to be successful, a certain amount of volunteer infrastructure must continue to be developed for organizations to effectively use skill-based volunteers to meet critical community needs. Resources will be focused on addressing areas in Iowa, such as rural communities and areas that lack volunteer infrastructure where skill-based volunteers are most needed; and connecting volunteers with the right skills, developing meaningful opportunities, and connecting volunteers to the opportunities that are the best fit to strategically meet community needs, including energy efficiency and disaster services.

### **SERVICE ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE**

Although the economy continues to recover, nonprofit organizations are still challenged to raise the necessary financial resources to support their efforts to address community needs. And yet, recent research from TCC Group, a national program and evaluation firm, demonstrates that nonprofit organizations that effectively engage volunteers outperform peer organizations on all measures of nonprofit effectiveness and organizational capacity.

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In December 2009, TCC Group, analyzed the data of 1,500 organizations nationwide that had completed its Core Capacity Assessment Tool (CCAT). The CCAT measures a nonprofit's effectiveness in relation to four core competencies: leadership, adaptability, management and technical capabilities, as well as organizational culture. TCC Group's data and analysis found that nonprofits engaging volunteers well are significantly better led and managed; nonprofits that engage 50+ volunteers via a strong volunteer management model have increased organizational capacity; such organizations are more adaptable, sustainable, and capable of going to scale; and, nonprofits that engage at least 10 volunteers are as effective as their peers without volunteers, but at almost half the median budget. This implies that organizations that break the barrier of 10 volunteers have as much capacity as peer organizations that do not engage volunteers, but do not require the same level of financial resources to deliver the same level of services. Despite this link between effective volunteer engagement and organizational capacity, the TCC Group research found that less than 15% of nonprofits nationwide were operating as "Service Enterprises". A Service Enterprise is defined as an organization that fundamentally leverages volunteers and their skills as a core strategic function to achieve the social mission of the organization. Service Enterprises view volunteers as an integral part of their overall strategy and seek ways to engage volunteers in a variety of ways and roles to increase their capacity- programmatic delivery, specific skills-based engagements, and administrative support.

ICVS proposes the utilization of VGF support to further implement the Service Enterprise Initiative (SEI) in Iowa. The SEI has been developed with CaliforniaVolunteers and Points of Light and is a comprehensive research-based assessment, training, coaching and certification model rooted in organizational change that increases the effectiveness and impact of organizations through the strategic engagement of volunteers. The SEI program includes a rigorous research-based assessment tool (the Service Enterprise Diagnostic- SED) developed collaboratively by researchers from TCC Group and the RGK Center for Philanthropy and Community Service at University of Texas at Austin; a 4 module, 16-hour curriculum designed to assist participating nonprofits in deepening their understanding of the Service Enterprise concept and how to apply it to their own organization, including strategies for effectively engaging skills-based volunteers; and a certification program for organizations that demonstrate mastery of the Service Enterprise concept.

Given the organizational change often involved in becoming a Service Enterprise, it is estimated to

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take nonprofits 6-12 months following the completion of the training and coaching portion of the program model to earn certification. Participating nonprofits have responded favorably to the curriculum, with 90% of training participants stating that they "gained new knowledge", "training was worth time and resources" and "recommend to others". Further, in September 2014, a follow-up survey will be administered to all organizations participating in the initiative to date to measure growth in volunteer engagement, particularly as it relates to skills-based volunteers. To date, organizations participating in this initiative are seeing more than 50% growth in volunteer engagement, principally skills based volunteers, as well as the implementation of plans for strategic volunteer involvement.

In Iowa, the United Way of East Central Iowa (UWECI) is the only organization currently serving as a training hub, and eight organizations, including ICVS, have completed the training and consulting program and are working toward certification. Over the three year period, the VGF grant would allow ICVS to support over 200 organizations in becoming Service Enterprises, increasing the effectiveness of their volunteer engagement strategies, volunteer involvement (particularly among skills-based volunteers), and organizational capacity to meet community needs, all while providing a foundation to increase the number of organizations certified in future years. In Year One ICVS would become a Service Enterprise Hub, and together with UWECI, 15-25 organizations (including pilots with a NPO, state agency, and city government) would receive training and technical assistance. In Year Two, in line with expected recommendations from the Iowa Governor's Council on National Service, state funding is anticipated to expand the ICVS capacity by two staff members, increasing the number of organizations served by ICVS to 40 annually. Also in Year Two, 3-5 organizations would become Service Enterprise Hubs or accountability partner sites, with expanded regions of the state covered by a Hub and a total of 65-90 additional organizations receiving training and technical assistance. In Year Three an additional 3-5 organizations would become Service Enterprise Hubs or accountability partner sites, further expanding regions of the state covered by a Hub, with 80-130 additional organizations receiving training and technical assistance. Volunteer Centers would be the primary audience for becoming a Service Enterprise Hub, and all new Hubs would attend the Service Enterprise Hub Train the Trainer in the Fall of 2015 and 2016. Initial outreach and selection of participating organizations would take place in October through December, with the implementation of the Service Enterprise model in January through June.

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In order to support the initial start-up of the model in Iowa, VGF support will also be used for the SEI State Commission Licensing and Applications Fees. Additionally, each of the organizations that serve as Service Enterprise Hubs will receive VGF support (to be matched by the organization with non-federal funds) for costs associated with Service Enterprise.

VGF support will also be used to allow ICVS to become a Service Enterprise Hub and provide training to areas of the state not covered by a Hub, as well as to further build out internal capacity to support the initiative in the future. Anticipated examples of this include: strengthening staff capacity to fund and implement this work, building out the consulting expertise of the Service Enterprise Hub, and additional funds to educate stakeholders and promote the initiative locally. ICVS will also provide additional volunteer management training opportunities throughout the state to support the emphasis on volunteer management in the SEI model through statewide, regional, and one time trainings and conferences.

With the initial VGF investment, Volunteer Centers, and the state's volunteer infrastructure as a whole, will be put on a path of sustaining expansion. The SEI process puts the utilization of volunteers, and the importance of effective volunteer management, at the forefront of creating effective and efficient organizations. Companies and foundations wishing to see their investments go further are anticipated to support community organizations in participating in the SEI process, and prioritize funding for organizations that have. This will build nonprofit capacity and increase volunteerism in the long term, as the necessity of volunteerism becomes apparent to funders and organizations, and Volunteer Centers are viewed as the expert on Volunteer Management Best Practices.

### MENTORING

Iowa's population is changing, with growing urban areas and growing diversity. Between now and 2040, only four counties (those with Urban centers), are expected to experience growth rates over one percent, in contrast, between the 1990 and 2010 census the state's Hispanic population grew by 361%, and from 2000 to 2010 the African American population grew by 44.5%. This growth is expected to continue with Hispanics making up 12% of the state's population in 2040. Yet academic success has not been equitably reached by these groups. A 2011 report by the Iowa Department of Education

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showed that an achievement gap persists between White and Black students. On average, the percent of Black Iowa 11th Grade students proficient in Reading on standardized tests was 30 percent less than the percent of White students, and 36 percent less in Math. Furthermore, a 2007 study by the Sentencing Project in Washington D.C. found that Iowa ranked worst in the nation in the ratio of black- to-white incarceration, incarcerating blacks at a rate of 13.6 times that of whites, double the national average. The achievement gap and disproportionate incarceration rates demonstrate the persistent opportunity gaps faced by individuals of color.

Furthermore, Iowa's future workforce is not adequately prepared for the future job market. A 2012 Drake University Study comparing 2008-2018 employment projections in Central Iowa with ACT data from 6,000 Central Iowa students found that though the number of jobs in STEM related fields is growing, the number of students proficient in the skills needed for those positions is not. For example, the Computer, Math and Engineering Field is expected to have a 9% increase in openings in the next 10 years, yet the number of students certain of the field as a career choice is 8%, and of those, only 5% have the math proficiency necessary. This demonstrates not only a gap in students' level of interest in pursuing STEM related careers, but also deficiency in the academic skills necessary for success in STEM related careers.

Research published in the January 2014 publication *The Mentoring Effect* supports the concept that quality mentoring is associated with positive outcomes for youth. The benefits of mentoring can be seen across many facets of an individual's life, including better attendance and attitude toward school, less use of drugs and alcohol, improved social skills and interactions with peers, more trusting relationships and better communication with parents, and an increased chance of continuing on to higher education. Young people who had mentors report setting higher educational goals and are more likely to attend college than those without mentors. High expectations and higher educational attainment are key factors in life success.

The Iowa Mentoring Partnership (IMP) is a division of ICVS and supports quality mentoring programs across the state. It serves as the certifying body for mentoring programs in Iowa, ensuring that local programs are upholding the Elements of Effective Practice that have been established by the National Mentoring Partnership. The IMP includes 78 mentoring programs which jointly support 7,478 mentoring relationships. In order to support programs in utilizing volunteers to meet

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community needs in education through mentoring, the IMP will serve as a statewide Issue Based Volunteer Connector Organization. The IMP will meet key VCO functions by providing a statewide online mentor referral system, recruitment through National Mentoring Month and the Coaches Challenge, recognition through the Excellence in Mentoring Awards, support to communities starting mentoring programs as a way to meet community needs, and training to increase capacity and implement volunteer management best practices. The IMP will also serve as a model for other potential issue-based VCOs throughout the state.

The IMP will support mentoring programs in utilizing volunteers to meet specific community needs, including volunteer mentors for boys and young men of color and Opportunity Youth and volunteers to support STEM activities. The IMP will offer training to IMP programs in recruiting, training, and managing volunteers to mentor boys and young men of color and Opportunity Youth, supporting the My Brother's Keeper Initiative. Additionally it will conduct outreach through the "Coaches Challenge" targeting the recruitment of mentors for boys and young men of color and Opportunity Youth. The IMP will also offer training to IMP programs on empowering volunteer mentors in incorporating STEM activities into match meetings. Through training, the IMP will also help programs learn ways to engage STEM professionals as mentors and program volunteers. The IMP will participate in the Million Women Mentors campaign to engage female STEM professionals as mentors for young girls, an initiative supported by Iowa's Lieutenant Governor. Finally, the IMP will also serve as a connector between mentoring programs and regional Governor's STEM hubs for resource sharing, including Iowa STEM Active Learning Community Partners.

The Coaches Challenge Mentor recruitment campaign will take place annually in the fall, with the goal of recruiting 1,500 new mentors, including a focused effort of recruiting volunteers to mentor boys and young men of color and Opportunity Youth. Trainings will be provided to mentoring programs in the spring and fall, with technical assistance and support resources provided on an ongoing basis, allowing more programs to implement three or more practices of effective volunteer management. The IMP is currently seen as a resource for mentoring best practices in the state, and with the support of the VGF grant, will emphasize and affirm the importance of effective volunteer management practices for providing quality programming. It will also ensure key functions of a volunteer center will be accessible to all mentoring programs, including those in rural areas not served by a traditional VC.

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Both the My Brother's Keeper and STEM mentoring initiatives will be further supported through the use of subgrants to certified mentoring programs. Subgrants will be used to assist mentoring programs in developing and expanding programming in these areas. Grants will be awarded using the same structure used for Volunteer Center subgrants, with recipients contributing increasing amounts of local match annually. This funding will increase the number of volunteers deployed to focus on the My Brother's Keeper and STEM initiatives.

ICVS' proposal is in alignment with Iowa's State Service Plan (SSP) and will meet the VGF performance measures of building and sustaining the capacity of organizations to recruit, retain, manage, and support a significant, measurable increase in the numbers of volunteers, both skilled and unskilled, who serve in high impact assignments. This project is designed to support the entire state, working with organizations to use service as a strategy to solve community problems and connect people with opportunities to serve. Working collaboratively with community partners is an important component in changing perceptions, so volunteering is viewed by leaders and citizens as a solution to community challenges.

Iowa has a long history of individuals being engaged in meaningful service in their communities. Iowa currently ranks 5th in the nation for adult volunteering rate, with 3 cities in the country's top 10. We plan to build on this success, while simultaneously addressing significant gaps in volunteering in our state. While Iowa may have many volunteers who serve, there is much more work to be done. A recent national survey indicates that "more than half of nonprofits (57%) indicate that they do not have the infrastructure in place to effectively deploy an influx of volunteers." [2009 Deloitte Volunteer IMPACT Survey]. The model proposed supporting VCs, implementing the SEI, and reaching more areas through a Mentoring VC will help prepare NPOs to use volunteer management practices and skill-based volunteers to meet their missions. The better the volunteer infrastructure, the higher the return on investment for using skill-based volunteers. That is why the primary beneficiaries for this project are Iowa's nonprofit and government leaders that engage volunteers. This includes the VGF grantees themselves, as well as the local nonprofit staff with whom they work at the local level. Ultimately, all Iowans will benefit when volunteers can be effectively engaged in meaningful service focused on Iowa's needs.

### Organizational Capability

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This project will be managed similar to AmeriCorps, with subgrants to local sites and long-term training, support and monitoring to ensure the impact and durability of training and support activities. ICVS utilizes strategic processes, including monitoring, program assessments, training/technical assistance, and grant review/evaluation to help projects increase capacity and infuse innovation into their programs. ICVS has continually proven itself successful at building partnerships and community support with state agencies, city governments, and nonprofits. In the past ten years, ICVS has successfully quadrupled the number of AmeriCorps members in Iowa using this model. This expertise will be invaluable as we continue to build a VGF model that will have a similar positive impact in addressing significant community needs through skill-based volunteering. ICVS will use its monitoring system to ensure compliance with the VGF grant regulations/provisions. The system includes desk reviews, on site visits, focus groups with key constituents, financial review, performance measure collection and review and program evaluation.

ICVS has a stable and competent workforce of nine. Key staff assigned to the VGF project include: Executive Director, Adam Lounsbury, (11 years at ICVS), Senior Program Officer, Kristin Honz, (10 years at ICVS), Program Officer, Michelle Raymer (7 years in Volunteer Engagement and Management) and Strategy and Development Officer, Rachel Bruns, (6 years in Volunteer Engagement and Management). Lounsbury has extensive experience in, and will be responsible for, overall project oversight including resource development/fundraising, strategic partnerships, advocacy and awareness. Honz, Raymer, and Bruns have experience with volunteer management, capacity-building, consulting, grant-making and training expertise. Honz will provide overall project management, particularly related to compliance and financial management of the project, is a former Volunteer Center Director, and provided overall project management to the previous VGF project. Raymer will be project director, providing day-to-day support, coordinating training and technical assistance, conducting monitoring and oversight and data collection/reporting. Raymer has experience in program coordination and National Service, and is currently overseeing the ICVS VGF project. Staff utilizes and regularly reports on ICVS and programmatic accomplishments, keeping the focus on achieving ICVS' long-term goals.

ICVS manages the following federal grants: AmeriCorps and Commission Support (all since 1993), Homeland Security Block Grant Program, Disaster Response Cooperative Agreement, and Volunteer Generation Fund. The current budget of ICVS is \$7.1 million and the VGF grant would represent 6%

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of the total budget. The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) serves as the fiscal agent for ICVS. IEDA undergoes ongoing financial reviews and an annual audit, conducted by the Auditor of State. As a state agency, IEDA/ICVS has well-defined fiscal, program and personnel policies that are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. IEDA provides fiscal oversight for numerous federal programs, representing approximately \$500 million in federal funds (FY2009). Terry Roberson (37 years financial and administration experience) and Katie Caggiano (16 years of financial experience) will provide the overall financial management, including fiscal reporting, and ensuring financial compliance.

The ICVS budget is developed on an annual basis and expenditures and revenues are tracked and allocated appropriately in the state's financial management system (I-3) that has been designed specifically to meet the needs of the state. IEDA/ICVS has a sound record of securing and properly managing public grants. ICVS has been subject to several financial reviews, including AmeriCorps (94.006) being selected as a major program by the Auditor of State in FY2014. While we have not received the final report, the exit conference indicated no major findings or questioned costs. ICVS strives to work with sub-grantees and partners to ensure that programs are measuring and reporting on outcomes that demonstrate improved performance. ICVS has and will continue to implement the use of the Capacity Building National Performance Measures for VGF, which allows us to better report on the collective impact of the work.

In the first three years of VGF grant, the area of the state covered by a volunteer center expanded by 300%. While two volunteer centers were not successful in the long term, the lasting effects of improved infrastructure have remained, including community participation in an online volunteer connector site and inclusion of a volunteer reception center in the community's disaster response plan. We have learned from these experiences in the process of "expanding out", and moving forward will focus on "expanding up" or stabilizing volunteer centers to succeed long term. In the first two years of the grant, there were eight performance measures. Subgrantees met or exceeded the targets on 50% of the measures, including some of the key measures around referring and managing volunteers and connecting with potential volunteers on-line, some of the other peripheral measures, such as partnerships, Days of Service volunteer engagement and volunteer management training fell short. In years three and four, the measures were changed to align with the CNCS capacity building national performance measures for AmeriCorps. In year three, subgrantees substantially met the primary

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performance target around training and capacity building services. However, subgrantees didn't reach the targets set for improved efficiency and effectiveness, which was set without baseline data and was likely too ambitious. Due to timing, we are approximately halfway through year four with our subgrantees and do not have data to report at this time. We have used baseline data to establish more realistic targets, improved training and clarified definitions to improve results. Overall, we are pleased with the results of the project, including development of five new volunteer centers and expansion of three others. This allows more Iowans to connect with meaningful volunteer experiences and we continue to work to strengthen the capacity of our subgrantees to work with other nonprofits in their community.

### **Budget/Cost Effectiveness**

The budget is reflective of the program's goals and design. We have adequate, trained and experience staff budgeted to support and monitor subgrantees at all stages and additional resources dedicated to continued staff professional development and on-site visits.

We propose to engage a number of highly competent professionals in providing one-on-one and group training and consultation services to subgrantees. We have found that a higher level of skill development is required to take the grantees to the next level (for example, for them to develop fee-based services) and they need additional training to build confidence and competence to provide these services. Additionally, we plan to implement the Service Enterprise Initiative (SEI), as it is a comprehensive research-based assessment, training, coaching and certification model rooted in organizational change that increases the effectiveness and impact of organizations through the strategic engagement of volunteers. In addition, we continue our commitment to providing training. This year, we are proposing an enhanced role in increasing the number of NPOs that have access to training. We have continued our subgrant trajectory of decreasing federal funding and increasing local match to build sustainability for the subgrantees.

The federal share proposed is \$444,214, matched at 59% \$639,691 by the commission. Match is comprised of \$380,000 from local sites (will secure on a monthly basis beginning in January 2015), \$30,000 from state energy funds (secured), approximately \$37,500 in-kind state match for salaries and benefits (secured), approximately \$156,800 general fund appropriations for salaries and benefits (secured), and approximately \$10,000 from sponsorships and private fundraising dollars (will secure in Late Fall 2014) to support the Coaches Challenge Recruitment Campaign.

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**Continuation Narrative Updates**

**Clarification Responses**

**Grant Characteristics**