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Executive Summary

The Greater Chicago Food Depository, Cook County's food bank, proposes to have 12 full-time AmeriCorps members for the duration of the 2015-2016 program year. Two full-time members will complete their years of service at host sites, with the remaining full-time members based at the Food Depository. Of the members, five will be assigned to work alongside the organization's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Outreach team, four will focus on the organization's work with veterans, and three will aid in the Food Depository's initiatives to alleviate childhood hunger. The job assignments for each of these members will be described further in the program design narrative.

At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will aid in the enrollment of SNAP benefits for low-income Cook County residents as well as assist in hunger relief efforts for veterans and children experiencing food insecurity. This program will focus on the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) focus areas of Healthy Futures as well as Veteran and Military Families. The CNCS investment of \$145,259 will be matched with \$192,709 entirely in private funding raised by the Food Depository.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

1) PROBLEM/NEED

The Greater Chicago Food Depository is a food distribution and training center that serves Cook County, IL, the second most populous county in the United States, home to approximately 5.2 million residents. Distributing emergency and supplemental food through a network of 650 member food pantries, soup kitchens and homeless shelters, the Food Depository's mission is "providing food for hungry people while striving to end hunger in our community." More than 812,100 Cook County residents, or one in six, are now relying on one of the Food Depository's network member agencies or meal programs each year.

The Food Depository collaborated with Feeding America on the recently released Hunger in America 2014 study, the largest and most comprehensive study of hunger in the United States. The study captures information about the difficult circumstances that food insecure individuals face. The results of the study emphasize an unrelenting need in Cook County. For example, 69 percent of client households have incomes that fall at or below the federal poverty level, and 54 percent of client households have annual incomes of \$10,000 or less. This forces families to make difficult tradeoffs. According to the study, 62 percent of clients served by the organization's network have chosen

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between paying for food or medical bills, and 73 percent of clients have chosen between paying for food or utility bills. In response to this need, the organization remains committed to ensuring sufficient distribution of nutritious food to fight hunger, specifically focusing on benefits access and serving vulnerable populations such as veterans and children.

SNAP Outreach

A critical component of the Food Depository's hunger relief strategy is connecting clients to benefits through SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) Outreach, which ensures that clients have consistent access to nutritious food on an ongoing basis. The organization's SNAP Outreach team targets underserved populations and conducts application assistance throughout the county. The hunger study revealed that approximately 28 percent of the organization's network is potentially eligible for SNAP benefits but are not enrolled in the program, demonstrating a great need for a team of dedicated staff to provide SNAP outreach. The organization's SNAP Outreach team provides assistance in completing applications as well as ensures follow-up once applications are submitted. In fiscal year 2014, the team was successful in assisting 4,366 households with SNAP applications. This was done alongside a group of trained partners throughout the organization's network as well as AmeriCorps members. This response generated more than \$18.5 million in local economic impact and \$10 million in SNAP benefits.

Hunger Relief for Veterans

In addition to providing benefits assistance to connect clients with access to food, the organization strategically addresses the needs of populations that are increasingly vulnerable to the effects of hunger, including veterans. The state of Illinois is home to approximately 700,000 veterans, more than 221,000 of whom reside in Cook County. It is estimated that nearly 30,000 of these veterans are living in poverty. The Hunger in America 2014 study reveals that 18 percent of households receiving food assistance from the organization's network include at least one member who has served or who is currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. In fiscal year 2014, the Food Depository launched a strategy to address the food insecurity needs of this growing population by launching a weekly pantry at the Jesse Brown Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Chicago. AmeriCorps members from the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 program years have been instrumental in supporting the operations of the pantry as well as providing necessary outreach and support in the community. In addition SNAP Outreach is provided at distributions, targeting benefit access for the veteran population. Since its

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launch, the pantry has served 3,385 unique veterans and has distributed over 186,000 pounds of nutritious food. In November 2014, a second veterans pantry was launched at the Edward Hines, Jr. Veterans Affairs Hospital in Hines, IL, serving 137 unique veterans during its first distribution and increasing the organization's reach. To date, the pantry has served 265 unique veteran households, including 734 individuals, distributing more than 6,600 pounds of food. Both pantries are open weekly. The organization also provides food and benefits access at the bi-annual Chicago Stand Down for Homeless Veterans, a resource fair for veterans in Chicago. The events are a collaboration designed to bring resources to upwards of 1,100 veterans, many of them homeless.

Hunger Relief for Children

In addition to strategically serving veterans in Cook County, the Food Depository focuses heavily on alleviating childhood hunger. Currently, one in five children in Cook County are food insecure, not knowing when or from where their next meal will come. When children do not have enough to eat, there are lasting residual effects. Hunger among children is linked to increased hospitalizations, developmental problems, headaches, stomachaches and even colds. The number of children in Illinois who qualify for free and reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program has been on the rise; however, more than 449,000 children who receive free and reduced-price lunch in Illinois, for example, don't receive school breakfast, ranking Illinois 36th in the nation according to the Food Research and Action Center. In response to the need, the Food Depository collaborates with area schools, after-school and summer programs to provide nutritious food year-round to approximately 250,000 children in Cook County.

In partnership with Chicago Public Schools, the organization operates school-based Healthy Kids Markets. In fiscal year 2014, the Food Depository distributed nearly 1.5 million pounds of nutritious food through this program, including 75 percent fresh produce. The Food Depository is projecting an increase from 11 Healthy Kids Markets to 20 in fiscal year 2015 by focusing on the communities with the most critical needs. Critical children's programming also includes Kids Cafe, which partners with after-school and summer programs to provide children with a healthy meal prepared by students and production staff in Chicago's Community Kitchens, the Food Depository's workforce development program. In addition to ensuring meals for children while they are not in school, host sites provide nutrition education and homework assistance for students. In total, children received more than 741,000 Kids Cafe meals in fiscal year 2014.

Additionally, for children in communities without access to summer feeding programs, Lunch Bus

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is a mobile distribution of daily meals to children throughout the summer. Piloted in fiscal year 2010 to meet the growing need for children's meals in under-served communities with few or no summer feeding programs, the Lunch Bus operates along three routes on the South and West sides of the City of Chicago and south suburbs of Cook County. The summer of 2014 was the largest summer feeding response in the organization's history, distributing more than 252,000 meals to children. The organization intends to evaluate this response in preparation for the summer of 2015, with the assistance of AmeriCorps members, to ensure that children in underserved communities have access to healthy meals.

AmeriCorps members for the 2015-2016 program year will play active roles in the organization's response to the need by providing SNAP benefits access assistance as well as enhancing and increasing targeted distributions and program strategies that serve children and veterans.

2) THEORY OF CHANGE

The Food Depository proposes to host 14 full-time AmeriCorps members and four minimum-time members for the duration of the 2015-2016 program year. Six full-time members will focus on providing SNAP Outreach, four full-time members will work with the organization's programs for veterans, and four full-time members will provide assistance services to the Food Depository's children's programs. Additionally, four minimum-time members will assist in childhood hunger relief efforts, specifically during the summer months. Their service will produce significant and unique contributions to the organization's mission of "providing food for hungry people while striving to end hunger in our community."

AmeriCorps Member Roles - SNAP Outreach

During the 2015-2016 program year, six full-time AmeriCorps members will conduct SNAP outreach alongside the Food Depository's team of five full-time SNAP Outreach staff. After extensive training on application procedures and protocol by the Food Depository's SNAP team, members will provide application assistance to clients via the SNAP phone line. Additionally, members will perform outreach at member food pantries and soup kitchens so that they can meet with clients on-site and provide in-person application assistance. Of these six members, the Food Depository's recruiting efforts will seek one SNAP AmeriCorps member who is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces. This member will provide designated application assistance primarily for veterans seeking to apply for benefits, both over the phone and on-site at the Jesse Brown V.A. Medical Center and the Hines V.A.

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Hospital food pantries. This is a critical role to fill as the organization increases its focus on food insecurity among the veterans population in Cook County. Their performance will be measured in the Veterans and Military Families category.

The Food Depository will measure the success of AmeriCorps members' work in providing SNAP Outreach through a number of outputs, such as the number of clients assisted, applications completed and outreach visits performed. It is projected that the six members will each complete approximately 45 SNAP applications per month on behalf of clients during their year of service. Additionally, members will each perform six outreach visits to member agencies per month, providing on-site application assistance to clients. AmeriCorps members will see the outcomes of their intervention through increased awareness of SNAP benefits and resources, an increased number of households reporting lower food insecurity as a result of receiving SNAP, and improved awareness and understanding of benefits access among V.A. hospital and member agency staff, volunteers and clients that they interact with throughout the year.

AmeriCorps Member Roles - Hunger Relief for Veterans

Four full-time AmeriCorps will focus on veterans programming during the 2015-2016 program year. The Food Depository will actively recruit veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces to fill these four AmeriCorps member roles. Two members will coordinate and operate the veterans pantries in Cook County. One will be hosted at Jesse Brown V.A. Medical Center and the other at Hines V.A. Hospital. As part of their service, each member will oversee all operations of the distribution at their respective food pantry. Before their service begins, both members will participate in a comprehensive training process with the organization's Community and Network Relations and Compliance teams so that they are aware of the organization's food safety and food program operations standards. Utilizing the Food Depository's templates, members will develop outreach materials and strategies to keep the veterans community informed of the distribution schedule. In addition, they will recruit volunteers who are veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces to take part in the set-up, operation and clean-up of each distribution. Further, these members will partner with the Food Depository in building the capacity of these pantries as they serve the community, engaging volunteers and focusing on improving upon both the efficiency and reach of the food program as well as the nutritious food offered to veteran clients as a choice-style pantry.

The two full-time members at the V.A. medical center and hospital food pantries will measure the direct impact of their work through key outputs, such as the number of veterans served through the

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pantry distributions and the number of volunteers recruited to assist in the operation of the food program. Additionally, the Food Depository will track the amount and types of food served at the pantries. The outcomes of their intervention will include a higher number of veterans accessing food programs in Cook County and a lower number of veterans reporting food insecurity.

The other two full-time members will primarily focus on expanding the Food Depository's response to hunger among veterans across Cook County through the organization's member agency network. Based at the organization's facility, these members will review and analyze service gaps in Cook County based on the geographic location of the organization's current veterans pantries and focus on identifying needs among veterans in underserved communities. Utilizing this knowledge, they will provide assistance to Food Depository staff to enhance the organization's response to the growing needs of veterans in Cook County. In particular, these members will explore opportunities related to developing alternate service models offered to veterans in the community. Furthermore, members will collaborate with key organizations and engage the Food Depository's network of member agencies, building their capacity to serve the veterans that visit their programs on a daily basis.

These members will measure their service work through the data collected on veterans and their needs in Cook County, as well as through quantifiable interactions with community partners and stakeholders as well as clients themselves. The outcomes of their intervention will be a higher number of veterans accessing food programs in Cook County and a lower number of veterans reporting food insecurity. In addition, members will provide support at the bi-annual Chicago Stand Down for Homeless Veterans.

AmeriCorps Member Roles - Hunger Relief for Children

Four full-time AmeriCorps members will work directly with the Community and Network Relations team at the Food Depository to evaluate opportunities to enhance the services of the organization's response to childhood hunger. The Food Depository is currently serving children through the Healthy Kids Market school-based pantry program, the Kids Cafe after-school and summer meals program and the Lunch Bus summer feeding initiative. Members working in this capacity will play a critical role in the development of children's programs and promoting additional resources for children, recruiting new participating schools, summer camps and other sites with the ability to coordinate a feeding program. This will be done in tandem with identifying the areas in Cook County that are experiencing high food insecurity rates and have minimal food programs or other resources. In addition to onboarding new partners, AmeriCorps members will be responsible for

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training sites and performing subsequent compliance visits to ensure that they are in accordance with the organization's food service standards as well as the standards of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

The four minimum-time AmeriCorps members will also work on childhood hunger relief initiatives, specifically through the Lunch Bus. During the summer months, the Lunch Bus operates along three routes, making stops at locations specifically designated as low-income, under resourced and high-need communities. This initiative ensures that children receive nutritious meals during the summer when school is out and they are not receiving breakfast or lunch at school. AmeriCorps members will ride on the Lunch Bus along with a volunteer driver for the Food Depository, distributing meals to children at each stop as well as ensuring that all program guidelines are being followed. The members that assist with Lunch Bus initiatives will monitor and record how many meals are distributed to children at each site.

The AmeriCorps members focusing on childhood hunger relief will demonstrate multiple direct outcomes of their work. The organization will measure the increase in children's feeding sites located in underserved neighborhoods, an increase in awareness about available children's food programs and ways to access food, and reports of families with children experiencing greater food security. Additionally, the number of trainings, compliance visits, and site visits to a children's feeding partner will be measured.

3) EVIDENCE BASE

The Food Depository has identified strong evidence supporting the need for AmeriCorps intervention in the areas of SNAP Outreach and hunger relief for veterans and children.

SNAP Outreach

The American Journal of Agricultural Economics reports that economic trends have contributed to a rapid growth in the number of households seeking and receiving federal food assistance. The number of people participating in SNAP, the largest federal food assistance program in the country, rose to a new high of 47.6 million in 2013, up from 33.5 million in 2009. These programs are proven to help to alleviate hunger and poor nutrition for millions of food insecure individuals in the U.S., and specifically, SNAP participation is shown to substantially decrease the risk of household food insecurity. According to the Brookings Institution, SNAP was estimated to keep 4.9 million Americans, including 2.2 million children, out of poverty in 2011. Similarly, the program also had an

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outstanding impact on the poorest Americans, reducing the number of Americans in extreme poverty in half, from 1.6 million to 857,000 in 2011.

The USDA's SNAP Food Security In-Depth Interview Study, which was conducted for the Food and Nutrition Service of the USDA from October 2011 to September 2012, found that SNAP eases the financial tradeoffs required in food insecure households by freeing up additional income to expend on other household expenses. The study indicates that SNAP recipients see their benefits as a "lifesaver" that "enables them to buy more and healthier food than they otherwise might by ensuring that a portion of their resources, the SNAP benefit, is devoted solely to food." The Food Depository, in response to this evidence, strategically employs a comprehensive SNAP Outreach program to ensure that eligible Cook County residents receive access to the monetary benefits available in an effort to reduce the likelihood of food insecurity.

Hunger Relief for Veterans

As the need among veterans grows in Cook County, the Food Depository has tailored its response to serve this population. In the fall of 2014, the Food Depository conducted an independent study at the Jesse Brown V.A. Medical Center food pantry, administering voluntary surveys to clients visiting the distributions during August and September of 2014. The survey was 17 questions in length and asked for information regarding food insecurity, personal history of utilizing food pantries and federal benefits, and the impact of visiting the food pantry. The study emphasizes the critical need for this type of intervention. With a completion rate of 38 percent, 313 veterans clients participated in the survey. Using a two-question food insecurity screen, 94 percent of clients answered "often true" or "sometimes true" to at least one of the following questions: "Do you worry about having enough food to eat before you can buy more?" and "Does the food you buy not last and you would be without money to get more?" According to this same food insecurity screen, 32 percent of client respondents are at risk for more severe food insecurity, answering both questions as "often true."

The positive impact that the food pantry has on clients is evident in the study's results. Among those experiencing an elevated risk of food insecurity, 82 percent said they worry less about having enough to eat knowing they can come to the food pantry, and 69 percent of clients say that their consumption of fresh produce has increased since coming to the pantry. Thirty-six percent reported that visiting the pantry has allowed them to pay for other necessities such as medication, utility bills, housing or other personal items. Additionally, 73 percent of client respondents said that their participation in the pantry program has increased their engagement with the Jesse Brown V.A.

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Medical Center. The results of this study reveal that only are more veterans in Cook County obtaining access to quality, nutritious food, but the presence of the food pantry in the V.A. hospital is encouraging access to additional V.A. services.

Hunger Relief for Children

Share Our Strength, a national anti-hunger organization, reports that 16 million children in the United States are living in households without consistent access to adequate food. In addition, research conducted by Children's HealthWatch and reported on by Feeding America finds strong ties to nutrition and overall health and well-being of children. Food insecure children are 90 percent more likely to have their overall health reported as "fair/poor" rather than "excellent/good" than those from food-secure homes. Food insecurity is linked to increased hospitalization and obesity, and hungry children are more likely to experience serious short- and long-term health issues, impacting adulthood. They also often have trouble learning and are more prone to behavioral and emotional problems.

Share Our Strength's study "Hunger in the Classroom: Share Our Strength Teacher Report 2012" surveyed 1,095 K-8 public school teachers across the United States on issues relating to childhood hunger and potential solutions. According to the study, 56 percent of teachers report that "a lot" or "most" of their students depend on school meals as their primary source of nutrition. Beyond the school day, teachers see the importance of alternative meals programs being offered. Food assistance from programs such as food pantries, soup kitchens and weekend feeding programs provided an added safety net for children and families who have inadequate sources of food.

4) NOTICE PRIORITY

The Food Depository's proposal for AmeriCorps members focusing on SNAP Outreach, veterans initiatives and combatting childhood hunger align directly with the 2015 AmeriCorps funding priorities. Members will demonstrate measurable impact serving communities with limited resources, specifically as it relates to providing SNAP Outreach and closing the gap in both children's and veterans programs in Cook County, creating and monitoring programming that will reach those who are living in underserved communities. The AmeriCorps members at the Jesse Brown V.A. Medical Center and Hines V.A. Hospital food pantries as well as those performing outreach to veterans in Cook County will directly impact veteran and military families, positively enhancing their quality of life.

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5) MEMBER TRAINING

AmeriCorps members are given a two-week orientation and training at the beginning of their year of service. On site at the Food Depository, members begin with an introduction to the organization. This includes an overview of the history and mission of the Food Depository, a tour of the facility and introductions to senior leadership and other relevant staff members. Members are also given training on food and life safety during this time. In addition to general training on the organization's core values, breakout sessions are held on more specific areas of the organization, such as SNAP Outreach and food insecurity in Cook County. Following their orientation to the Food Depository, members receive a comprehensive introduction to the AmeriCorps program, including its history and mission as well as key guidelines. This includes member rights and responsibilities, member benefits, the program code of conduct, prohibited activities, the service calendar, and the "My AmeriCorps" portal. Performance measures for the year are discussed so that members are aware of what will be expected of them throughout the year. This is reviewed with the Manager of AmeriCorps and Veterans Programming so that any necessary clarification in regards to the training manual may be addressed during orientation.

AmeriCorps members participate in multiple service projects at the organization's facility as well as member agencies, throughout the orientation period in order to become familiar with the Food Depository's culture and the community it serves. The Food Depository also conducts monthly training sessions for AmeriCorps members, which cover a range of topics such as volunteer recruitment and retention, financial planning, and employment and education opportunities following their AmeriCorps year. These trainings will equip members with skills for use during their year of service and beyond.

6) MEMBER SUPERVISION

The Food Depository's AmeriCorps program is managed by Emily Daniels, Manager of AmeriCorps and Veterans Programs, who also oversees the organization's response to hunger among veterans in Cook County with the support of the Director of Production and Veterans Programs. Offsite members are required to attend weekly check-ins with their site supervisors as well as conduct monthly meetings with the Food Depository to relay job performance, successes and solutions to overcome challenges as they occur. As an AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) alum, Daniels is acutely aware of the demands of membership as well as the requirements to be fulfilled throughout the duration of the program. The six SNAP Outreach members will have daily support

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from the Manager of Government Programs and the eight childhood hunger members will be supported by Director of Community Programs. The four members working on veterans programming and outreach will report directly to Daniels.

7) MEMBER EXPERIENCE

The Food Depository is a premier organization for supporting internships and workforce development at the facility and through its community programs. The organization has hosted numerous groups such as Urban Alliance and the University of Illinois at Chicago, to provide opportunities and learning experience to those pursuing an interest in human services or public policy. The organization is committed to maximizing the value of each AmeriCorps member's experience so that they are able to grasp the importance of community service and remain active in the community long after completing the program, while being prepared for life after AmeriCorps.

Members will be provided with multiple opportunities to reflect on their service through monthly check-ins. Additionally, members will gain skills and experience that can be utilized and valued by future employees after their service term is ended. For example, members are provided with tailored discussions on life after AmeriCorps and how to navigate employment while also continuing to uphold the values of the AmeriCorps program. Furthermore, the Food Depository will provide a number of structured opportunities for AmeriCorps members to work together on other local projects. Activities are planned for AmeriCorps Opening Day and national service days and volunteer days at the Food Depository's facility during AmeriCorps Week.

The Food Depository recognizes the value of peer interaction for AmeriCorps members, and will foster gatherings that will allow members to share their experiences and build relationships. Members will contribute stories to the Food Depository's blog, quarterly newsletters, and agency publications to highlight the impact of AmeriCorps service.

8) COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION

Members will receive AmeriCorps and Food Depository co-branded attire, including collared shirts and vests, to wear at all times during their service under the grant. Members are also identified by branded badges. The organization makes every effort to ensure the AmeriCorps name is represented alongside its members in service as appropriate. The Food Depository strategically displays its partnership with the AmeriCorps program during relevant activities such as displaying a banner of support in the organization's warehouse during AmeriCorps Week and at veterans food pantry

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distributions.

Organizational Capability

1) ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND AND STAFFING

Since 1979, the Food Depository has evolved from an initial start-up grant from the City of Chicago and donated space to a 268,000 square foot warehouse and training center that opened in 2004. In fiscal year 2014, the Food Depository distributed more than 67.5 million pounds of food, including 22.4 million pounds of fresh produce, throughout the community.

Guided by its five-year strategic plan (2010-2015) focused on linking partnerships and leveraging its resources to serve the community, the Food Depository's goals are to: 1. Ensure the adequate supply, delivery and access to healthy food options for all people in need; 2. Strengthen and encourage community-based responses to ending hunger; 3. Mobilize the public to end hunger; 4. Establish measurements beyond pounds that reflect impact; and 5. Invest in people, technology and infrastructure critical to achieving the mission. The Food Depository is currently in its final year of this five-year strategic plan, and is developing a new plan for the next three to five years. This plan will be completed in April 2015.

The organization has a long history of administering federal grants. In addition to hosting 51 AmeriCorps service members since 2009, the organization has worked closely with USDA and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) for more than 20 years to administer the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) in Cook County. Last year, the Food Depository distributed more than 13.5 million pounds of food through this program. Furthermore, since 1993, the Food Depository has been a local sponsor of the USDA's Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), which reimburses after-school and summer meals for children.

One of the Food Depository's strongest advocates in the fight against hunger is Executive Director & CEO Kate Maehr. She leads the organization's senior team along with the Food Depository's staff of 160 employees in advocating for those who are food insecure and ensures that the organization is actively involved in meeting its goals. Caroline Howe, Chief Operating Officer, oversees all operating activities of the Food Depository, including leadership of the Food Depository's Senior Team. Senior Team members oversee each of the five strategic goals and advance the organization's mission. This team includes the Vice President of Supply Chain, the Vice President of Fund Development, the Vice President of Community Partnerships, and the Chief Financial Officer.

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2) COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

As outlined, the Food Depository provides members with the required guidelines to ensure that they act in compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations as well as the organization's policies and procedures. The Food Depository will also ensure that host sites and external partners are trained on prohibited activities and will receive ongoing support and guidance if clarification is needed. Host site supervisors will also be thoroughly briefed on program requirements during a full-day training session at the Food Depository, led by the Manager of AmeriCorps and Veterans Programs.

3) PAST PERFORMANCE

During the 2013-2014 service year, the Food Depository was awarded funding for a total of 11.42 AmeriCorps members who completed SNAP application assistance and provided summer meal assistance, emergency food distribution, health and nutrition education and cooking demonstrations. Six AmeriCorps members, placed at Food Depository member agencies, focused on volunteer recruitment, retention and management. Four members conducted SNAP Outreach and one member provided nutrition education and training for Food Depository member agencies. Two minimum-time members supported the Food Depository's summer Lunch Bus program. All roles were filled at the start of the year; however, two members ended their service in February 2014 to pursue full-time employment opportunities, creating changes in role allocation. One SNAP Outreach member transitioned to a role at the Jesse Brown V.A. Medical Center. The health and nutrition position was not refilled. Over the course of the year, members recruited 870 new volunteers who gave 11,531 hours of volunteer service, including 106 veterans who aided in the startup and function of pantry operations. Since its opening in November 2013, 3,385 unique veterans have been served by the pantry and 523 veterans have been prescreened for SNAP benefits eligibility.

Prior to ending her service year in February 2014, the Health and Nutrition member connected 1,665 individuals with nutrition education materials, averaging just over 400 contacts per month. This member was on track to reach the outcome goal of 5,250 individuals by the end of the full year of service. The four remaining full-time AmeriCorps members performed SNAP outreach and assisted 2,014 individuals with the SNAP application process, 843 of which resulted in individuals receiving benefits. The two minimum-time AmeriCorps members aided in the distribution of nutritious meals to approximately 1,410 unique children between June and August 2014.

AmeriCorps members during this service year met their target performance measures, and members reported a high level of satisfaction and service orientation upon completion of the program

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(with recommendations for improvement. Life after AmeriCorps resulted in one member signing on for a second year of service, one entered a master's degree program, one member joined the full time staff of a member agency, three obtained staff roles at other nonprofit organizations and three members joined the Food Depository as full-time employees.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

1) COST EFFECTIVENESS

The Food Depository's cost per MSY is \$13,730 with a total cost of \$409,245 for the service of AmeriCorps members in the program. The Food Depository diversifies the work completed by members of the AmeriCorps program to ensure that interested applicants have a range of roles when choosing to work in human services in Cook County. The Food Depository's commitment to the program allows the organization to keep costs per member charged to CNCS low, while continuing to meet the matching requirements through generous philanthropic support of the organization's donors.

2) BUDGET ADEQUACY

The Food Depository is requesting a total of 14.85 AmeriCorps members with an MSY of \$13,730 per member. This cost includes extensive training in support of the Food Depository's AmeriCorps program, as well as co-branded logo wear, travel, and expenses for AmeriCorps service days. The Food Depository is committed to providing AmeriCorps service members with the support and resources necessary for success during their service year(s) at the organization.

The Food Depository's AmeriCorps program represents \$203,890 of the organization's \$32 million operating budget. The organization is matching above the required percentage for its tenure in the AmeriCorps program through its general operating budget. The Food Depository has a broad and varied base of more than 59,000 generous philanthropic supporters that provide the support necessary for the organization to complete its work in the community. The Food Depository's Fund Development team is dedicated to stewarding existing donors as well as prospecting and cultivating new donors to continue meeting the organization's budgetary requirements, including soliciting funding for the AmeriCorps program.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

The Food Depository has developed an extensive data gathering and evaluation plan for the AmeriCorps program to ensure members and partner sites are reporting the needed data and

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outcomes relating to performance measures. AmeriCorps members are required to complete monthly reflections on their service term, needed adjustments and/or resources required to complete their service. In addition, the Food Depository's Manager of AmeriCorps and Veterans Programs conducts mid-year and year-end evaluations with AmeriCorps members and partner sites to troubleshoot any issues and ensure compliance. Monthly site visits are also completed by the AmeriCorps manager. There is a pre-evaluation of need completed with partner sites prior to service to identify how the member can provide capacity building assistance to sites. A second evaluation is then completed when the organization is completing the AmeriCorps service year-end evaluation.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

A. PROGRAMMATIC CLARIFICATION ITEMS

1. Please provide an explanation regarding the definition of "emergency food" as it is related to the intervention: In addition to ongoing and supplemental assistance through regular distributions at food pantries, the Food Depository provides emergency food to clients as result of non-routine events that affect food security. In the focus area of Veteran and Military Families, two veteran outreach members will provide emergency food assistance and referrals at the Chicago Stand Down for Homeless Veterans. Additionally, members performing outreach to veterans in the community will connect individuals to emergency food resources in Cook County.

B. BUDGET CLARIFICATION

1. Lower cost per MSY: With the adjusted grant amount and cost per MSY, the Food Depository is absorbing more of the program cost, with a 57 percent match, and will not be proposing a lower cost per MSY.

2. Section I.F. Contractual and Consultant Services: The Food Depository's budgeted member trainings are crucial to the success and professional development of the AmeriCorps members for a variety of reasons. Several training programs are designed for all AmeriCorps members, including "Cultural Diversity," a standard training for Food Depository staff, as well as "Conflict Resolution

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Training" and "Life After AmeriCorps." Within Cook County, members will be working in a diverse range of neighborhood and environments and interacting with individuals and organizations from various cultural backgrounds. Being aware of their surroundings and environment are vital to the Food Depository's work and the organization has found benefit from having this training available to all members. In addition, members can work through sample scenarios that might arise as they are working on the front lines with clients who are facing difficult circumstances. Furthermore, communicating about the AmeriCorps experience in interviews and resumes following a year of service can be challenging, and the "Life After AmeriCorps" training is designed to provide job search resources and best practices for communicating their experience in a professional environment.

Two additional training programs are restricted to specific member roles, including "Food Safety Certification" and "Volunteer Recruitment & Management." Food Safety is paramount in the efforts of the Food Depository in providing food for the 812,000 residents of Cook County utilizing the organization's network of member agencies or meal programs each year. Both the children's program and veteran pantry members will need a foundation of food safety training to ensure this standard is kept and maintained throughout the program year. Two of the members will be managing the daily operations, volunteer recruitment and training and logistics at food pantries for veterans. These two members will receive additional training on best practices for managing, recruiting and training volunteers to support the work of their service year.

3. Member Training: Program orientation is 5 days in length for 6-7 hours per day, covering topics such as AmeriCorps and Food Depository history, programs, best practices, community demographics, and specific role training. Lunch is provided during orientation so members have an opportunity to meet with AmeriCorps alumni on staff at the Food Depository to share national service year experiences and advice. Members and the director also meet once per month, typically for lunch or coffee, to discuss their service year, goals for the coming month and expectations moving forward.

4. Member Training: Please see Budget Narrative. Removed from section.

5. Member Training: Please see Budget Narrative. Removed from Budget.

C. PERFORMANCE MEASURE CLARIFICATION

Narratives

1-6. Please see Performance Measures.

7. This performance measure has been adjusted to reflect the change in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that will occur as a result of the intervention. H11/H12 is the appropriate measure for this intervention, however Nutrition Education was the only available option to select with no opportunity to edit.

8-10. Please see Performance Measures.

D. STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT SLOTS

1. The Food Depository will not specifically target the recruitment of members with disabilities; however, the organization is an equal opportunity employer. It is the Food Depository's policy to grant equal employment opportunity to all qualified individuals without regard to race, color, age, national origin, sex, religion, pregnancy, ancestry, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, military or veteran status or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local law. This policy extends to the recruitment of AmeriCorps members. The Food Depository will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability in compliance with federal, state, and local law.

2. The Food Depository will not request additional MSYs to be filled by AmeriCorps members with disabilities.

E. MSY WITH NO PROGRAM FUNDS ATTACHED CLARIFICATION

1. The Food Depository will not request No-Cost MSYs.

2. Not applicable.

3. Not applicable.

4. Not applicable.

Narratives

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics