

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The Milwaukee Christian Center Youthbuild program (MCCYB) proposes to have 23 AmeriCorps members who will construct affordable and accessible homes while receiving education and training that will lead to career paths and productive lives on the south side of Milwaukee. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for constructing two new homes. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage a minimum of 220 volunteers who will be engaged in general community service projects focused on specific community needs. This program will focus on the CNCS focus area: Economic Opportunity. The CNCS investment of \$167,083 will be matched with \$327,817 in public funding and \$58,557 in private funding.

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

1. Problem/Need -- NEED: MCCYB will be addressing two community needs: 1) Education, leadership, and workforce development services for Opportunity Youth, and 2) The development of accessible, affordable housing.

EXTENT OF NEED-EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES FOR OPPORTUNITY YOUTH: POVERTY & RACIAL DISPARITY: Looking at disparities in household income and unemployment for Black, Hispanic, and White workers in 77 metro areas, "One Nation Underemployed: Jobs Rebuild America" ranks the Milwaukee County metro area third to last (75th) when it comes to economic equality and confirms that the City of Milwaukee suffers from serious racial disparity in the area of economic well-being (2014 State of Black America, National Urban League, 2014). This racial disparity is further illustrated by the 2013 American Community Survey (2013 ACS), which reports that 29% of the population in the City of Milwaukee is living below the poverty line. This is more than twice the percentage of the population living below the poverty line at the state level (13.5%), and nearly twice the national percentage (15.8%). Moreover, poverty in the City of Milwaukee also disproportionately affects racial minorities: 39.9% of Milwaukee Black residents live below the poverty line, as do 36% of Hispanics (2013 ACS). This data corresponds to the population MCCYB serves. Since 2011, 100% were City of Milwaukee low-income residents, 41% were Hispanic, 41% were Black, 13% were White, 4% were Native American, and 1% was Asian American.

LOW EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: A notable cause of poverty in the City of Milwaukee is the persistence of educational attainment gaps. 37.8% of Milwaukee residents 25 years and older did not graduate from high school (2013 ACS). This statistic is especially reflected in the near north and south

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sides of Milwaukee where less than 50% of residents 25 years and older hold a high school diploma (The Citywide Policy Plan, Data and Demographics, 2010). Educational attainment varies widely by race throughout the city too. 65.4% of Black and 67.3% of Hispanic students graduate from high school, compared to 80% of White students (2013 ACS). Of MCCYB members who completed the program since 2011, 70% entered without a high school diploma.

**FEW LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:** There is a severe lack of leadership opportunities for Opportunity Youth in the City of Milwaukee. As documented in the 2012 study "Pathways into Leadership", unions, religious congregations, voluntary associations, and political parties have lost most of their young members since the 1970s, making leadership opportunities in these venues rare. While the armed services provide leadership opportunities, they enlist one fourth as many young people now as they did from 1950-1973. High schools and colleges still offer leadership opportunities for youth, but since the majority of Opportunity Youth are disengaged from school they do not have access to these leadership opportunities (Center for Information Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, Tufts University, 2012). According to this study, the network of YouthBuild affiliated programs like MCCYB, provide one of the few routes to engage Opportunity Youth in leadership development.

**UNEMPLOYMENT:** In addition, Opportunity Youth come from communities suffering from high unemployment. In the City of Milwaukee, the percent of the population 16 years and over that are in the labor force and unemployed is 7.3%--higher than both the WI state and national rates, 4.3% and 5.3% respectively. Focusing on the population aged 16 to 24, the percent that are in the labor force and unemployed is 17.95%, which is higher than the state and national level, 12.55% and 17.33% respectively (2013 ACS). 100% of MCCYB members are unemployed or under-employed upon entering the program. By offering job training in construction and related fields, MCCYB is preparing Opportunity Youth to enter a growing job market. Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development currently reports that carpentry, with an average hourly wage of \$21.99, is among the top 25 professions in the state with the most job openings. Additionally, a number of construction-related professions are ranked among the top 25 growing professions, including carpenter helpers, who make on average \$14.42/hour; glaziers, who make on average \$23.17/hour; and insulation workers, who make on average \$25.93/hour ("Occupations with the Most Openings." State of WI DWD, 2014). Trained in carpentry, insulation, window installation, roofing, siding, and trim work, Opportunity Youth graduate from the MCCYB program with a flexible skillset suited for the growing construction industry.

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EXTENT OF NEED: THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING--The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) strongly recommends that programs in the City of Milwaukee be established to help stabilize and improve older neighborhoods by constructing affordable and accessible housing for the low- and middle-income aging and disabled. The Milwaukee Metropolitan Statistical Area was included in a nationwide SEWRPC survey of 155,000 housing units. This survey revealed that 11% of households in the Milwaukee Metropolitan area have a household member with a physical disability, 57% of which had at least one member over the age of 65. Of these homes, only 10% had extra-wide doors and hallways that would accommodate a wheelchair or walker. Ramps were present in a very small percentage of houses surveyed. Handrails and grab bars, which also assist persons with disabilities, were present in only 20% of houses sampled ("Regional Housing Plan Implementation Report: 2013", SEWRPC). It is important to note that the HUD GIS Portal shows a high concentration of people with disabilities on Milwaukee's south side--precisely the area where MCCYB constructs new homes. All of MCCYB's construction incorporates "Universal Design" principles that include wide doors/hallways, grab bars, electrical devices at accessible height, and zero-step entries. At least two houses built have had ramps at the rear and the remaining are designed to easily construct a ramp at sale if needed. All 13 homes constructed by MCCYB since the inception of the program were sold to low-income homebuyers.

HOW THESE NEEDS WILL BE ADDRESSED BY MCCYB'S PROGRAM: Opportunity Youth in MCCYB's program will: 1) Receive academic assistance to achieve their GED; 2) Build a set of construction and job readiness skills that will increase their employability; 3) Develop leadership skills that will enable them to rise as leaders in their communities; and 4) Add new, affordable and accessible homes to the City of Milwaukee's housing stock for low-income Milwaukee residents who are aging or living with disabilities.

2. Theory of Change and Logic Model -- MCCYB is a program that is working to meet the needs of City of Milwaukee Opportunity Youth, ages 18 to 24. Members receive assistance remediating basic skills, preparing for the GED, and accessing post-secondary education. Simultaneously, members receive hands-on construction training while building homes on Milwaukee's south side and develop their leadership skills by implementing a variety of service projects in the community--all within a culture of acceptance, love, and high expectations.

By providing academic instruction, leadership development, and construction skills training, including the hands-on experience of building two houses from the ground up, 23 AmeriCorps members will significantly improve their educational attainment, employability, and leadership ability while the

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community will gain two new, fully-accessible homes for ownership by low-income families. In addition, by recruiting a total of 220 volunteers for community service projects and completing 100 hours of community service per member, members will be adding to Milwaukee's cadre of volunteers while addressing specific community needs.

**ROLE OF AMERICORPS MEMBERS:** 20 part-time AmeriCorps members will be placed in service, along with three full-time AmeriCorps members, two of which serve as construction assistants and one which serves as a classroom assistant. **FULL-TIME** members are recruited to serve as program assistants and mentors to part-time members. They have already received a college degree but desire to deepen their skills in construction or teaching to become more employable. **PART-TIME** members receive academic assistance to attain their GED and to prepare them for higher education, training in home construction, and leadership development via their participation in community service projects. **ROLE OF LEVERAGED VOLUNTEERS:** While in service, members receive training to equip them to recruit a minimum of 220 volunteers to participate in community service projects. These volunteers work collectively with members to address a variety of pressing community concerns like improving blighted or underutilized parks.

**INTERVENTION RELATIONSHIPS TO OUTCOMES: EDUCATIONAL REMEDIATION AND ADVANCEMENT--**Members needing a GED receive educational programming for an average of four hours per day, four days per week for 30 weeks. Those with high school diplomas but with academic deficits, receive tutoring in the classroom for the same frequency, duration, and intensity, to work on specific deficit areas--like reading--or on construction-related academic skills--like construction math--to further qualify them for post-secondary education. Members also receive help preparing post-secondary education applications for three hours/week for four weeks and go on a daylong college tour to explore local post-secondary education options. **CONTRIBUTION TO THE STATED PROBLEM:** These interventions lead to more Opportunity Youth receiving their GED and enrolling in and completing post-secondary education.

**CONSTRUCTION & JOB READINESS SKILLS TRAINING--**The construction of new affordable and accessible homes on the south side of Milwaukee forms the core of the members' service and job training. They spend 20-26 hours per week during their term on construction sites receiving high-level instruction in home construction from two Worksite Supervisors. They also complete certification trainings including: the Home Builder's Institute Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Training, certified First Aid/CPR training, Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Standard (HAZWOPER) program training, and Forklift training. This is augmented by a weekly three hour

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class for the duration of their term that builds job readiness skills like writing a resume and cover letter, interviewing, and obtaining or recovering driver's licenses. CONTRIBUTION TO THE STATED PROBLEM: This training gives members technical skills for construction jobs, qualifications for further training in the trades, and job readiness skills applicable to all industries. This will lead to more Milwaukee Opportunity Youth being employed and two new affordable and accessible homes being added to Milwaukee's housing stock.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY SERVICE--Members develop leadership skills and become more civically engaged while performing valuable community service. They complete three hours of community service/week for 30 weeks. Projects range from conservation work to reading with children and frequently are determined by pressing local needs. 40% of members also sit on an in-program Youth Leadership Council that meets one hour/week for 30 weeks, which influences program policies and accountability measures and plans a 100% student led service project.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE STATED PROBLEM: This provides members the training needed to implement service projects and recruit volunteers, while equipping them to rise as leaders and to do community service beyond the program.

3. Evidence Base -- We have STRONG EVIDENCE to support how our program model achieves our long-term outcome of developing leaders who in turn affect change in their communities. In the statistically significant 2012 study "Pathways into Leadership: a Study of YouthBuild Graduates" published by The Center for Information Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University there is evidence to support that the YouthBuild USA's program model combining education, community service in the form of building homes, job training, personal mentoring, and leadership development under the guidance of caring and loving professionals transforms members into exemplary civic leaders. In fact, 55% of the members queried in the study go on to hold public office or to become church leaders, professional educators, or youth workers. 90% become leaders in their families, amongst their friends, and in their communities (CIRCLE 41).

The 2012 study "Pathways into Leadership: A Study of YouthBuild Graduates" is a highly rigorous study that measured the effectiveness of YouthBuild as an intervention for Opportunity Youth. It has quantitative, qualitative, and observational aspects, and a dimension of community-based participatory research. CIRCLE surveyed and conducted intensive interviews with 344 YouthBuild alumni and used a diverse sample of 54 of those survey respondents when compiling their findings. Because of the similarity between the structure of the YouthBuild Program to MCCYB's program, we are confident MCCYB will have similar results.

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82% of the alumni surveyed in CIRACLE's study were low-income people of color from urban centers (CIRACLE 50). The study cites previous studies to describe YouthBuild members upon entering the program: 94% lack a high school diploma or GED, 78% are youth of color, 32% have been adjudicated, 11% have felony convictions, 45% receive public assistance, 19% live in public housing, 33% are already parents, and on average, they read at the 7th grade level (Belfield et al., 2012; YouthBuild USA, 2010; Hahn, Leavitt, Horvat, & Davis, 2004). Of MCCYB's graduates since 2011, 87% were people of color, 70% lacked a high school diploma or GED, 36% had been adjudicated, 45% were already parents, 100% came from the Milwaukee City urban center and were low-income, and on average, they read at the 7th grade level--all data which shows a strong correlation between the demographics in CIRACLE's study and MCCYB members.

The CIRACLE study found that pre-program, YouthBuild alumni were marginalized, especially at school where they perceived that teachers held very low expectations for them. 71% respondents recalled family conflicts, such as having a child of their own at a young age, dismissing their potential (CIRACLE 17). Upon entering YouthBuild programs, "almost all of the graduates recalled feeling that they were outsiders, confused about their identity, and/or unsure whether and what they could contribute to the community" (CIRACLE 18).

YouthBuild has a culture of family-like support, safety, patience, and high expectations and incorporates frequent opportunities for members to grow as leaders. CIRACLE found respondents strongly recall these values in action while in the program and attributed them to building their own leadership skills. 98.8% felt safe learning and working at YouthBuild, 98.8% said that staff were patient with their progress, 98.8% recalled that staff believed in their potential, and 96.4% felt that staff cared about them (CIRACLE 24). Mentored each day by their Work Site Supervisors, their teacher, the full-time AmeriCorps members and program staff, MCCYB members benefit from a similar supportive culture.

The positive impact of YouthBuild on the surveyed alumni's identities was striking. 96% felt the program had high expectations for them, 92% were inspired to give back, and 97% of them were inspired to do more with their lives (CIRACLE 25). Alumni recounted the positive effects of role models in the program who overcame similar obstacles to their own. "...for the first time, they were able to see people who were like them taking on leadership roles and making decisions in both the organization itself and on a policy level. They began to think that they too could be role models to new people entering the program" (CIRACLE 26). In addition, the alumni reported the power of the civic engagement opportunities, such as participating on a Youth Leadership Council, provided for them

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while in the program. 90% claimed "their recommendations were taken seriously and that they were encouraged to take leadership roles" and many recalled positive opportunities tutoring or teaching peers which showed them they had the capability to benefit other students and that they were intelligent (CIRCLE 27). Most notably, the alumni reported that while in the program they became "quite confident in their own skills as active citizens" and were inspired to apply these skills in their own neighborhoods by volunteering on their own time or telling their own story at a public speaking event (CIRCLE 28). They claimed that "YouthBuild offered opportunities to discover and develop talents; it was often the beginning of a path leading towards career, college, and citizenship" (CIRCLE 29). Offering similar opportunities for growth is at the heart of MCCYB's program. 40% of MCCYB members sit on the program's Youth Leadership Council, which develops program accountability measures, plans and implements a 100% member-led service project, and assists in resolving peer conflicts. Additionally, on a rotating basis, all members act as "crew leaders" on the work sites, partnering with the Work Site Supervisor to delegate tasks, build morale, and problem solve when conflicts arise.

In addition to CIRCLE's study, we have MODERATE EVIDENCE to show how MCCYB's program design meets its educational and employment outcomes. Since MCCYB is an affiliate of YouthBuild USA's program, YouthBuild USA's statistically significant research, with data representative from a large sample size of 131 affiliate programs, validates the efficacy of MCCYB's program design in assisting members in furthering their education and getting employed. According to their most recent research, of the 78% who had completed YouthBuild affiliated programs, 63% obtained a high school diploma or the equivalent by the time they graduated from the program, 60% were placed in college or jobs with an average wage of \$9.20/hour, and 25% enrolled in post-secondary education (YouthBuild USA, 2009 & 2010).

CIRCLE's study and YouthBuild's most recent data show there is strong evidence-based research to validate that MCCYB's program is designed to meet its outcomes.

4. Notice Priority - MCCYB falls within the 2015 AmeriCorps Funding Priority of Economic Opportunity. By engaging economically disadvantaged individuals, ages 18-24, MCCYB Opportunity Youth become positively reengaged in the community, receive a variety of educational opportunities addressing identified deficits and personal goals, develop leadership skills, and learn construction work skills that easily translate to other industries. The larger community benefits from the building of two new, affordable, and accessible houses, community service events, and the development of a new cadre of volunteers. MCCYB also addresses Milestone #4 of President Obama's "MY BROTHER'S

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KEEPER" Initiative: Successfully Entering the Workforce. In a state with the highest Black male incarceration rate--49% of males in their 30s have already spent time in prison--and the greatest gap between Black and White children in reading and math in the nation--only 5% of Black 8th grade boys achieved proficiency in math, with 4% in reading last year--the future is grim for Black Wisconsin youth (Pawasarat, J., & Quinn, L. (2013). Wisconsin's Mass Incarceration of African American Males: Workforce Challenges for 2013. Employment and Training Institute. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2013). This especially holds true for the City of Milwaukee, which has the greatest concentration of Black residents in the state: 40% of City of Milwaukee residents are Black with a total of 65% of residents who are people of color (2010 Census). MCCYB assists young people of color in beating the odds by preparing them for apprenticeships and jobs in the construction field and by aiding them in attaining certifications in high demand areas such as Fork Life and HAZWOPER. Notably, since 2008, of 97 members who successfully completed the program, 82 were people of color (85%) , including 41 Black men (42%).

5. Member Training --In order to provide effective service and to prepare members for college and career, members are required to complete the following training: OSHA-10--a CareerSafe® Online curriculum training; HAZWOPER--a hazard and work safety class delivered by Rick Barecelli, certified instructor with Milwaukee Community Service Corps; and First Aid/CPR--led by a Red Cross Certified instructor. In addition, a Fork Lift training class, taught by Pete Montijo, a Certified Forklift Instructor, is offered on a competitive basis to 12 members. These certifications lead directly to jobs in high demand fields. Additionally, all members participate in job readiness training delivered by John Fleet, MCCYB Career Development Coordinator, for 3 hours/week for the duration of their term. Home construction is at the core of member training. They spend an average of 20-26 hours/week for the duration of their term building homes under the direct supervision of the Worksite Supervisors, who have a combined 75+ years of experience in the home construction trades.

MCCYB Program Coordinator, Lois Nugent, ensures that AmeriCorps prohibited activities are explained in detail to members during orientation. The prohibited activities are printed in the Member Handbook and on a wallet-sized card given to each member at the beginning of their service.

Volunteers are also apprised of the prohibited activities as part of the volunteer screening process. Any community project that the members participate in is also reviewed by the Program Coordinator to make sure it does not involve any prohibited activities.

6. Member Supervision -- MCCYB's staff has a combined 100+ years of professional experience in education and construction. All are trained in their specific area of expertise and in working with

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Opportunity Youth. Staff attends all AmeriCorps sponsored trainings and participates in other youth-oriented trainings offered by community organizations. Members meet all staff before they are accepted into the program and are assigned to a Worksite Supervisor their first week. In addition to informal mentoring that occurs daily, staff conducts bi-monthly conferences with all members to discuss progress toward goals and corrective measures as needed. Worksite Supervisors complete mid- and end-term evaluations, which are discussed with the Program Coordinator and members. Should a member need improvement, an improvement plan is developed and weekly update meetings are held.

7. Member Experience -- The MCCYB program provides four types of experiences: 1) EXPERIENCES TO PROVIDE EDUCATION & BUILD EMPLOYMENT SKILLS--Members receive training to build job readiness skills including: communication skills, teamwork skills, personal responsibility skills, and financial literacy skills--all of which are valued by employers. Members receive First Aid/ CPR certification and a series of construction-related certifications. Those needing a GED receive individual and group preparation for the GED test, and those with academic deficits receive one-on-one instruction. Members also receive on-the-job training in home construction while they build new affordable and accessible homes for low-income, first-time homebuyers. 2) EXPERIENCES FOR MEANINGFUL SERVICE & REFLECTION: Each member participates in 100 hours of community service throughout the program year. In addition to assisting children build their literacy skills and completing conservation projects in local parks, members plan and implement one 100% member-led service project addressing a community issue of their choice. Members reflect on their experiences orally at Morning Meetings each day, as well as in a weekly journal writing activity. MCCYB members are also provided the opportunity for occasional service outside the focus of this program in order to better understand their community and to participate in National Days of Service. These hours may be counted towards the member's term of service if they do not interfere with their normal service hours or conflict with prohibited activities, the service is approved by the Program Coordinator and the volunteer supervisor signs an agreement certifying the service and hours performed. 3) EXPERIENCES TO CONNECT WITH FELLOW MEMBERS: Members build relationships with fellow members via a series of rituals that emphasize teamwork and reflection: "Tool Safety Talks" at worksites, celebratory lunches and raffles, and weekly Youth Leadership Council meetings. They also share their pictures and reflections on a MCCYB Facebook page to engage the extended community. 4) EXPERIENCES TO DEVELOP CITIZENSHIP SKILLS: Through collaboration with the KK River Implementation Coalition and the Next Door Foundation, members experience what it is like to be an engaged citizen and learn how to recruit community members to join them in activities like

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neighborhood clean-ups. 40% of members also influence program policies and accountability measures through their participation on the Youth Leadership Council, and on a rotating basis, all members serve as "crew leaders" at the work sites--partnering with the Work Site Supervisor to delegate tasks, build morale, and problem solve when conflicts arise.

RECRUITMENT: MCCYB requires that members be City of Milwaukee residents and confines its recruiting activities to high need central city areas. By reaching out to community organizations, churches, and workforce development programs, MCCYB recruits members who not only need the training and experiences we provide, but who will also return to their communities with new skills and the ability to lead an engaged, productive life within it.

8. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification -- All potential members receive an explanation of the Corporation for National and Community Service, particularly the AmeriCorps program, as part of their orientation. The history, scope, and importance of MCC's association with AmeriCorps are presented during every stage of the application and orientation process. Members are clearly identified when serving in public by their uniforms that prominently display the AmeriCorps logo. Members are provided three t-shirts and a sweatshirt that they are required to wear whenever serving. The AmeriCorps logo is also displayed at the program site, as well as at the home construction sites where members regularly serve.

### Organizational Capability

1. Organizational Background and Staffing-- The Milwaukee Christian Center (MCC), founded in 1921 as the American Baptist missionary project, provides a comprehensive program for Opportunity Youth to mitigate the issues underlying poverty in the City of Milwaukee. MCCYB has been running successfully since 2004, receiving 3-year competitive AmeriCorps Grants in 2006 through 2011 and formula grants in 2012, 2013 and 2014. The highly qualified staff has extensive experience in working with Opportunity Youth, maintains sound practices and procedures to run the program safely and efficiently, and has a track record of success. Since 2008, we have enrolled 173 MCCYB members--graduating 56% of those--and have engaged 3,816 community members in service projects across the community. WRTP-Big Step, the Milwaukee Community Service Corps, the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, and UMOS partner with MCCYB to offer members supplementary job search assistance, GED testing, and training for certifications, as well as post-program construction apprenticeships.

MCCYB staff: Program Coordinator: Lois Nugent - M.S. Education; 30+ years teaching experience in schools and non-profits. Duties: Recruits and screens members, makes referrals, coordinates

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relationships with partner agencies, hires and supervises staff, teaches life skills, and coordinates program activities to achieve outcomes. Funding: CNCS

Adult Education Coordinator: Steven Barron - B.S. Philosophy; 3 years teaching adult education.

Duties: Completes academic assessments, tracks members' progress towards education goals, and teaches GED, life-skills, citizenship and job readiness classes. Funding: Match

Career Development Coordinator/Construction Support: John Fleet -- B.S. History, MBA Candidate; 8 years construction experience; 2 years as Habitat for Humanity supervisor. Duties: develops and monitors members' Individual Development Plans, facilitates career exploration activities, presents career development curriculum with assistance from community partners, mentors members, assists members with post-secondary education choice and application, supports Worksite Supervisors.

Funding: Leverage/Match

Worksite Supervisor: Floyd Hopkins - 42 years construction experience; 30 years crew supervision, including 12 years supervising his own company. Duties: Supervises members on work sites, counsels and trains members, assists in monitoring ISSs and job placements. Funding: CNCS/Match

Worksite Supervisor: Timothy Scott --35 years of construction experience, including 7 years supervising crews as a construction business owner; Journeyman Carpentry Certification; Lead and Asbestos Removal Certification. Duties & Funding: same as above.

Case Worker: Suzanne Xolot - Pursuing Associates Degree in HR; two-term MCCYB AmeriCorps member; six years of professional experience at MCCYB. Duties: Works with current and past members in accessing services and ensures compliance with various programmatic requirements.

Funding: Match/CNCS

2. Compliance and Accountability-- MCCYB has demonstrated compliance with the AmeriCorps and Serve Wisconsin rules and regulations for the last eight years. This has been achieved by staff keeping abreast of current State and Federal program guidelines including prohibited activities, internal processes to ensure compliance, and a resolution process for compliance concerns. MCCYB has rules in place that define prohibited service activities. Rules are published in the member handbook and reviewed during both orientation and as needed with members, staff and long term volunteers. MCCYB has seven internal measures to ensure on-going compliance: 1) A mandatory orientation program and a Members and Staff Handbook which includes a review of AmeriCorps rules; 2) A Contract of Commitment and Compliance signed by all members to participate in the AmeriCorps program; 4) Internal staff meetings to review, update, and answer questions related to AmeriCorps; 5) Timesheets to track member work, education, and community service; 6) An Annual Serve

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Wisconsin program review; and 7) An annual external financial audit. MCCYB seeks clarification of AmeriCorps regulations as required. Whenever instances of risk or potential non-compliance have been identified, MCCYB takes prompt corrective action.

3. Past Performance for Current Grantees-- PERFORMANCE MEASURES: Members met 22 of 32 (68.75%) of the Performance Measures during the past three years. Retention has significantly impacted Performance Measure attainment. To better meet Performance Measures, MCCYB staff has developed a three-prong corrective plan geared towards improving retention (detailed below). Based on prior program experience, staff is confident that by increasing retention, the program will better meet the Performance Measures.

MEMBER ENROLLMENT: To achieve 100% member enrollment, MCCYB targeted a wide audience in the City of Milwaukee. Recruitment posters and literature were distributed to probation agents, social service and job development organizations, churches, as well as at local businesses. As a result, MCCYB achieved 104% member enrollment during the last full year of operation. Therefore, the present marketing practices will be continued.

MEMBER RETENTION: During the 2013-2014 program year, 43.5 % of members completed their term successfully. MCCYB staff engaged in strategic planning to develop a corrective plan to increase member retention. This includes three specific actions: 1) STRATEGIC MARKETING: Staff has revamped the program's marketing strategy to cast a wider net in the community to recruit participants especially vested in entering the construction industry. In addition to creating new promotional materials, MCCYB staff has advertised the program in a broader spectrum of community institutions and strengthened relationships with probation and parole agents--a major source of program referrals. MCCYB staff also attended all of Northwestern Mutual's community planning sessions to get a better sense of how the company's \$450 million dollar construction project downtown--and their promise to employ 150 City of Milwaukee residents--will provide MCCYB graduates with future employment opportunities. At these sessions, MCCYB staff referred many parents and youth specifically looking to enter the construction field to the program. 2)

ORIENTATION PROCESS: During one-on-one orientation meetings, staff poses questions to members to uncover life situations that may interfere with completion such as probationary status, young children, AODA issues, homelessness, and lack of emotional support from family. These were frequently cited as factors among those who did not complete service. By uncovering these issues early on, the program can provide additional support as needed to prevent personal crises from inhibiting completion. For example, 12 2013-2014 members who were parents upon entering the program did

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not complete the program and cited significant issues with managing childcare as their reason exiting. This year, MCCYB staff has developed emergency plans with entering members who are also parents to proactively help them plan for potential conflicts. 3) INCREASE MEMBER BUY-IN: To further increase program retention, MCCYB staff has established more structure to build member buy-in, to better communicate program expectations and to incentivize compliance. This includes spending more time in Youth Leadership Council, holding daily morning meetings, conducting raffles, and awarding recognition certificates for regular attendance and punctuality. Staff also holds bi-weekly teambuilding meetings where food is served and members are recognized for achievements. Thus far this term (2014-2015), this corrective plan has positively impacted indicators that predict retention. Attendance thus far has averaged over 90% weekly, and 50% of the cohort have had perfect attendance during their first two months.

COMPLIANCE ISSUES: In the last three years, MCCYB has been prompt in correcting six minor non-compliance issues. They include: 1) A member timesheet issue--corrected by MCCYB staff verifying compliance between member punch cards and timesheets and obtaining and filing missing signatures, dates, and explanations where needed. 2) A Criminal History form issue--corrected by staff inserting a cover sheet in all members' files verifying that any service completed before the background check was completed was directly supervised by MCC staff. 3) A protocol issue for individuals being enrolled twice in the same program year--corrected by staff developing more explicit procedures. 4) A Member Exit paper work issue--corrected by staff allotting more time at the end of the program to allow for conferences and exiting members from eGrants and OnCorps. 6) An enrollment form and contract issue--corrected by staff creating an application flowchart that ensures members will not be given a start date until the enrollment process has been completed.

### **Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy**

1. COST EFFECTIVENESS: MCC continues to secure funds well in excess of the 50% match required. This funding covers two program costs: 1) Paying members to earn GEDS, to become more employable, and to serve their community; and 2) Funding an experienced and dedicated staff to fully support members. The MCCYB budget provides the funding that allows MCC to operate all functions of the Youthbuild program cost effectively and at a high quality level. The program's nine-year history using AmeriCorps funds to successfully achieve MCCYB's outcomes attests to this ability.

COST EFFECTIVENESS IN PROVIDING SERVICES FOR OPPORTUNITY YOUTH: MCC and its diverse group of funding partners believe that MCCYB is a cost-effective approach in addressing the community's needs: a lack of education, leadership, and workforce development services for

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Opportunity Youth, and a lack of affordable, accessible homes in the City of Milwaukee. By integrating educational remediation, construction and job readiness skills training, community service and leadership development opportunities, and affordable and accessible home building--all in one multifaceted program--we are addressing the community's needs cost effectively. COST EFFECTIVENESS IN BUILDING AFFORDABLE & ACCESSIBLE HOMES: All MCCYB homes are built on previously city-owned vacant lots that the City of Milwaukee was required to maintain. Instead of a vacant lot assessed at zero requiring unreimbursed city services, each new house is adding approximately \$100,000 to the city's tax base. Additionally, an invested homeowner begins contributing to the local economy.

NON-CNCS RESOURCES: MCCYB has raised or has a plan to raise the non-CNCS funds to fully support the program. The following amounts exceed totals used as match for budget purposes by 19%. 2015 secured funding from the City of Milwaukee include: \$200,000 -- CDBG, for YouthBuild program operation costs; \$250,000 - HOME, for construction costs; and \$41,250 --CDBG, for ramp and/or lift installation. MCCYB will also be re-applying for the following funding sources in 2015: State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) funding (\$50,000; received since 2005) and Charles O'Malley Charitable Trust (\$50,000; received since 2009). Finally, MCC is once again a partner in a 2014-16 DOL YB grant awarded to the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB). The match amount (including paid member slots) will be \$127,504 annually. MCCYB received grants from both the Greater Milwaukee and the Helen Bader Foundations for 2014-15 and from MAWIB a 2014-15 Workforce Investment Act contract for \$55,000. MCC will continue to apply for funding from these and other local and state funders such as WHEDA and Zilber Family Foundation. Finally, proceeds from the sale of MCCYB built homes will be available. MCC had accepted offers prior to the completion of its last two homes. Of the \$386,374 match budgeted, \$307,817 is secured. The plans for securing the remaining resources is best described as continuing to meet the goals of ongoing funding sources, building homes on blocks where buyers will want to buy them, and being creative in matching need and/or innovations with funders that typically do not provide ongoing funding, but may be convinced to provide one time funding.

COST PER MSY: At \$13,250 cost per MSY, MCCYB is requesting a lower cost per MSY than the Serve Wisconsin Board awarded MCC for the current program year. This is due to MCC having been successful in securing a modest increase in CDBG funding from the City of Milwaukee.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

#### I. PROGRAM BACKGROUND

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### i. Statement of Problem:

In the communities that the MCCYB serves, many barriers exist that prevent individuals from obtaining employment, a high school diploma, and leadership opportunities. Of the MCCYB members who completed the program since 2011, 100% were un- or under-employed and 70% entered the program without a high school diploma or its equivalent.

ii. Theory of Change and Logic Model -- MCCYB is a program that is working to meet the needs of City of Milwaukee Opportunity Youth, ages 18 to 24. Members receive assistance remediating basic skills, preparing for the GED, and accessing post-secondary education. Simultaneously, members receive hands-on construction training while building homes on Milwaukee's south side and develop their leadership skills by implementing a variety of service projects in the community.

**ROLE OF AMERICORPS MEMBERS:** 20 part-time AmeriCorps members will be placed in service, along with three full-time AmeriCorps members, two of which serve as construction assistants and one which serves as a classroom assistant. **FULL-TIME** members are recruited to serve as program assistants and mentors to part-time members. They have already received a college degree but desire to deepen their skills in construction or teaching to become more employable. **PART-TIME** members receive academic assistance to attain their GED and to prepare them for higher education, training in home construction, and leadership development via their participation in community service projects. **ROLE OF LEVERAGED VOLUNTEERS:** While in service, members receive training to equip them to recruit a minimum of 220 volunteers to participate in community service projects. These volunteers work collectively with members to address a variety of pressing community concerns like improving blighted or underutilized parks.

**INTERVENTION RELATIONSHIPS TO OUTCOMES: EDUCATIONAL REMEDIATION AND ADVANCEMENT--**Members needing a GED receive educational programming for an average of 4 hours per day, 4 days per wk/30 weeks. Those with high school diplomas but with academic deficits, receive tutoring in the classroom for the same frequency, duration, and intensity, to work on specific deficit areas--like reading--or on construction-related academic skills--like construction math--to further qualify them for post-secondary education. Members also receive help preparing post-secondary education applications for 3 hrs/wk for 4 weeks and go on a daylong college tour to explore local post-secondary education options. **CONTRIBUTION TO THE STATED PROBLEM:** These interventions lead to more Opportunity Youth receiving their GED and enrolling in and completing post-secondary education.

**CONSTRUCTION & JOB READINESS SKILLS TRAINING--**The construction of new affordable and

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accessible homes on the south side of Milwaukee forms the core of the members' service and job training. They spend 20-26 hrs/wk/term on construction sites receiving high-level instruction in home construction from two Worksite Supervisors. They also complete certification trainings including: the Home Builder's Institute Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Training, certified First Aid/CPR training, Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Standard (HAZWOPER) program training, and Forklift training. This is augmented by a weekly three hour class for the duration of their term that builds job readiness skills like writing a resume and cover letter, interviewing, and obtaining or recovering driver's licenses. CONTRIBUTION TO THE STATED PROBLEM: This training gives members technical skills for construction jobs, qualifications for further training in the trades, and job readiness skills applicable to all industries. This will lead to more Milwaukee Opportunity Youth being employed and two new affordable and accessible homes being added to Milwaukee's housing stock.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY SERVICE--Members develop leadership skills and become more civically engaged while performing valuable community service. They complete 3 hrs of community service/wk for 30 wks. Projects range from conservation work to reading with children and frequently are determined by pressing local needs. 40% of members also sit on an in-program Youth Leadership Council that meets 1 hour/week for 30 wks, which influences program policies and accountability measures and plans a 100% student led service project. CONTRIBUTION TO THE STATED PROBLEM: This provides members the training needed to implement service projects and recruit volunteers, while equipping them to rise as leaders and to do community service beyond the program.

### iii. Outcomes to Assess

#### Performance Measure 1 -- JOB TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT (O12 & O15)

- a. 12 economically disadvantaged members who are unemployed prior to their term of service, will complete their term, earn an education award, or leave due to compelling circumstances
- b. 6 of the above 12 members will secure employment during their term of service

#### Performance Measure 2 -- FIRST AID/CPR CERTIFICATION

- a. 100% of members who complete their term of service will complete First Aid and CPR Certification training

#### Performance Measure 3 -- CITIZENSHIP TRAINING

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- a. Members who complete their term of service will participate in a civic literacy curriculum
- b. 10 of those members who receive training and complete their term of service will demonstrate an understanding of citizenship concepts

### Performance Measure 4 -- GED TRAINING (O13 & O16)

- a. MCCYB will enroll 10 members who have not obtained a high school diploma or equivalent prior to the start of their term of service
- b. 5 members will obtain a GED/diploma during their term of service

### Performance Measure 5 -- VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT, AND SUPPORT

- a. MCCYB provides all members with the support, training, and opportunities to enable them with recruiting community volunteers
- b. Members recruit 220 community volunteers
- c. Community volunteers recruited by the MCCYB members provide 1,200 hours of service

### Performance Measure 6 -- AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLY DESIGNED HOMES (O4)

- a. 2 housing units are built for low-income families
- b. Ramps are constructed for disabled or handicapped applicants

## II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This evaluation addresses the following questions:

1. Do low-income youth, ages 18 to 24, exit the program with technical job training and employment readiness skills to secure employment?
2. Does the program provide remedial education necessary to lower educational attainment gaps?
3. Does the program empower low-income youth, to be engaged, responsible leaders in their community?
4. Does the program contribute affordable housing for low-income residents as well as improve the community of the near Southside of Milwaukee?

## III. EVALUATION DESIGN

The MCCYB implements a process evaluation to measure the effectiveness of its program interventions on Opportunity Youth. The process evaluation documents and analyzes the MCCYB's

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program and assess whether strategies were implemented as planned and whether expected outcomes were produced.

Our process evaluation includes:

1. A description of the MCCYB program environment is provided since it's important to understand the operation. The description includes the demographic of our members and is used to determine whether similar results may be expected in other communities or whether, as expected, the results are site specific.
2. A clear description of the process used to design and implement the program is documented.
3. A description and measurement of program outcomes is measured by using quantitative and qualitative data. The data is measured by comparing the performance achieved in the previous year.
4. Intervening events that may affect implementation and outcomes are identified and described. It is impossible to control intervening variables that may affect a program.

### IV. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

For each member, attendance, certifications, and test results are documented. The results of the Tests of Adult Basic Education is recorded every two months. Interviews with members are conducted during bimonthly conferences.

### V. ANALYSIS PLAN

MCCYB keeps files for each member which consists of the ONCORPS database and an Excel spreadsheet. The ONCORPS database tracks attendance, weekly timesheets, and certifications earned. The Excel spreadsheet tracks Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) scores. Data is compiled monthly and a report is generated.

### VI. TIMELINE

The evaluation occurs September 1st- September 30th which is at the end of the AmeriCorps annual term. The Program Coordinator and the Case Worker work together to aggregate monthly data and to write the final evaluation report. Reflections with program staff and YouthBuild members is included.

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The report is submitted to Serve Wisconsin as part of the annual AmeriCorps application process.

### VII. BUDGET

Given the internal nature of the evaluation, we have allocated \$1,250 (0.72% of the total budget). This expense covers staff time required to gather, compile and generate data evaluation reports.

#### **Amendment Justification**

N/A

#### **Clarification Summary**

Budget Clarification - MCCYB is requesting \$167,083, 13 Member Service Years (MSYs), 23 slots, at \$13,250.00 cost per MSY. The cost per MSY being requested is actually a lower cost per MSY than the Serve Wisconsin Board awarded MCC for the current program year. This is due to MCC having been successful in securing a modest increase in CDBG funding from the City of Milwaukee. The overall MCCYB budget makes efficient use of funding, using a multifaceted program to address significant education, leadership, workforce development, and housing needs within the City of Milwaukee. By integrating responses to these community needs in a single dynamic program, MCCYB is able to deliver cost effective results. MCC believes its proposed \$13,250 cost per MSY cannot be reduced without meaningful impact on program quality. Requested funding supports an experienced, dedicated staff integral to the MCCYB program's track record of success. The MCCYB program's nine years of experience have taught us the importance of staff maturity, as well as construction and teaching experience and skill, in mentoring members, delivering effective education and training, and building quality housing within our community. To support these skilled and experienced staff and the creation of quality accessible housing, MCCYB is requesting \$13,250 cost per MSY, and leveraging \$386,374 in matching funds within the current request. While the cost of constructing housing is expensive, MCCYB delivers an effective, efficient program.

Budget Compliance Clarification - City of Milwaukee HOME Funds is a federal source of match and MCC has been given permission to use these funds as match for this requested CNCS award. MCC's annual award letter, dated December 19, 2014 from Steven Mahan, the Community Block Grant Director with the City of Milwaukee, identifies the City of Milwaukee HOME Funds as federal funds (award letter available by request). Per MCC's communication, dated January 16, 2015, with Michael Martin, Senior CPD Representative with the Milwaukee HUD Field Office, "From our perspective,

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under 24 CFR 570.201(g) -- Basic Eligible Activities (570.201)- Payment of non-Federal share(g) reads that as long as the activity is eligible under HUD program, it can be used as a non-Federal match. The Federal HUD funds received can be used as match to the Federal AmeriCorps grant" (email communication available by request).

Performance Measure Clarification - Changes have been made in the Performance Measures screens.

Strategic Engagement Slots - While MCCYB has included, and plans to continue to include, members with disabilities through its existing targeting of Opportunity Youth, MCCYB's recruitment process will not explicitly target members with disabilities. MCCYB's emphasis on hands-on construction training limits its effectiveness with some populations of individuals with physical and/or mobility disabilities. However, it is MCCYB's experience that members recruited through existing targeting of unemployed, out-of-school Opportunity Youth often have "less visible" cognitive, emotional, and learning disabilities. While moderate numbers of MCCYB members have cognitive, emotional, and learning disabilities, their status as out-of-school youth often makes official record of their disability difficult to obtain. Therefore, MCCYB will not be requesting additional MSYs or specifically targeting individuals with disabilities in its recruitment strategies. MCCYB will continue to engage members with disabilities recruited through its focus on Opportunity Youth, and continue to work internally and with partners to support these members.

MSY with No Program Funds Attached - MCCYB is not requesting No-Cost MSYs.

### **Continuation Changes**

N/A

### **Grant Characteristics**