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Executive Summary

The University of WI -Eau Claire Early Childhood Literacy Intervention Program, Services and Evaluation (ECLIPSE) proposes to have 45 AmeriCorps members who will provide literacy, language, social emotional and numeracy intervention services to low-income preschool children who are between three and five years of age in the Eau Claire and Altoona, Wisconsin area. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for improving the literacy, language, social, and numeracy skills of children to a point equal to or greater than children not directly served by the program. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 175 volunteers that will be engaged in creating a more engaged university campus and community, to improve opportunities and services for families in the Eau Claire community by working with non-profits and community entities that serve families.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education. The CNCS investment of \$86,717 will be matched with \$48,178 in public funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

1. PROBLEM/NEED

Early Childhood Intervention Program, Services and Evaluation (ECLIPSE) AmeriCorps members fill an important need in the Eau Claire area by providing one-to-one mentoring/tutoring to preschool aged children to enhance their emergent literacy, language, social, and numeracy skills. AmeriCorps members will serve in classrooms working individually with children to meet the needs of each child. A result of the ECLIPSE member's efforts is preschool children receiving higher quality preschool services. By targeting Head Start and other programs with high percentages of children from low-income families, ECLIPSE reaches children who ordinarily have little or no opportunity to receive personal, specialized attention. The ECLIPSE model is focused on 1) enhancing the learning experiences of young children from low-income communities, 2) supporting the development of college students as leaders in education, community involvement, and civic engagement, and 3) providing support to Head Start Centers for additional programming that helps address the many and complex needs of low-income families and the programs that serve them. ECLIPSE is an educational program with a focus on early childhood education and school preparedness meeting the Serve America Act focus on education.

In an ideal world all children would enter school ready for kindergarten, and would graduate from

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high school ready and prepared for the college or career of their choice. Our world is not ideal for all children. Poverty remains the single best predictor of children's failure to achieve in school. Children who start behind often remain behind, resulting in increased rates of remedial attention, school failure, ill health, and/or incarceration (Ready Kids, Ready Schools, 2004; Children's Defense Fund, 2014). The 2013 Kid's Count Data book, published by the Annie E Casey Foundation, identifies the percentage of children in Eau Claire county living in poverty as 17%, while the number of children receiving free or reduced priced lunches in the schools was at 42.5% in Eau Claire School district for the 2013-14 school year (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction December, 2014), indicating a high number of families just over the poverty line but still under 200% of poverty. The poverty rate for children from minority groups is much higher and has continued to climb with increasingly higher poverty in all groups from 2011 to 2012: in 2012 the poverty rate in Wisconsin for Asian and Pacific Islander children was 23%, for Hispanic and Latino children it was 36%, and for African American children it was 50% according to the 2013 Kid's Count data book. It is clear that children from low-income families enter school at a disadvantage. School success begins before children ever enter kindergarten. Readiness skills are skills that children typically acquire prior to the beginning of their formal education (e.g., kindergarten). These skills are needed for children to benefit from the instruction they will receive in the structured school setting. Children's readiness for language and literacy skills are critical for building a foundation on which they can continue to grow and master the skills that are needed at each step of the education ladder. Research goes back to 1941 concerning the differences in vocabularies between children from low-income families and those of higher social economic standing. Research released from the National Association for the Education of Young Children in October of 2013 identifies a two year lag in vocabulary by fourth grade for children from low income families. The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child published The Timing and Quality of Early Experiences Combine to Shape Brain Architecture: Working Paper No. 5 (February 2008) discussing how the brain develops over time and while critical periods are not an absolute in timing, early childhood up to five years of age is critical to brain circuitry. It is important for early experiences with picture books and shared reading experiences to begin early as children are developing language skills. The research states that shared experiences are critical so higher level circuitry can develop. The paper goes on to state that when those early experiences are impoverished, there are lasting detrimental effects on later brain development. Implications suggest that "early and effective intervention for the most vulnerable children will generate the greatest financial payback" (pg 7). The Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE), a standardized measure given

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to every child in each school district beginning in 3rd grade to evaluate how children are benefiting from the academic instruction they have received from year to year, is a good indicator of early childhood language and literacy skill development and clearly shows that those who start school behind often remain behind. Report Card Data from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's accountability report for 2011-2012 lists 51% of children in the Eau Claire School District scoring below proficient in mathematics on the WKCE. Using disadvantage as a principal factor the percentage increases to 68.8% scoring below proficient in mathematics. Without early intervention, these numbers are not likely to improve. Taken together, the above research paints a distressing portrait of the likely school failure of many of Wisconsin's young children. Early differences in literacy abilities persist and increase with time, leading to more expensive and less effective interventions in later grades. Children's readiness for instruction in mathematics is also critical as each individual skill forms the foundation for the skills that come next and mastery of these foundational skills predicts how children will perform as they move up the skill hierarchy. Number sense (e.g., counting, quantity comparison, numeral recognition, grouping quantities) seems to be especially important as a predictor of future mathematical outcomes. Children who enter school without sufficient number sense usually struggle to keep up and often begin an irreparable pattern of failure early in their elementary preparation. Unfortunately, many students underperform in mathematics on the WKCE. For example, in the state's report card for 2011, 49% of the 3rd grade students across the state scored below the proficient level in mathematics. In this particular region, the Eau Claire Area School District's (ECASD) WKCE results were quite similar with 51% of the 3rd grade students scoring below the proficient level in mathematics. The challenges families from poverty have in providing for literacy readiness are well understood. It is no different for mathematical readiness and we can see this in the evidence. For instance, when groups of underperforming students in Wisconsin as a whole and in the ECASD are stratified by economic disadvantage, we begin to see the particular role poverty plays in explaining these tragically disappointing results. In the ECASD, of the 388 students who failed to meet proficiency in mathematics by the beginning of 3rd grade in 2011, 266 (69%) were from economically disadvantaged families. Poverty also affects a child's social emotional development as families face more financial difficulties. The National Center for Children in Poverty show that young children from low income households were more likely to exhibit behavioral problems than children from higher income levels (Social-emotional Development in Early Childhood, Aug. 2009). Eau Claire County has a taskforce for mental health issues and has found an increasing need at younger ages for additional resources. Longitudinal research on quality pre-school education has shown convincingly

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that \$1 invested in the pre-school years can yield extraordinary returns of \$8-16 over the course of a lifetime: societal returns from savings in increased high school graduation rates, increased higher education rates, less propensity for involvement with the juvenile and adult justice systems, and higher average earnings over the lifespan (National Institute for Early Education Research, 2009). Economists have even estimated that the return on investment for quality early childhood education--estimated to be at least 12% for society and 4% for the individual--is higher than many, if not most projects that are customarily considered when we think of economic development (Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003). For the past twelve years ECLIPSE has served at Western Dairyland Head Start programs in the Eau Claire and Altoona area. All of the families served by these Head Start centers qualify as low-income.

2. THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL

The ECLIPSE program is founded on sound early childhood developmentally appropriate practices using guidance from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Corps members facilitate children's development following four key principles: 1) supporting children's early or emergent reading, writing, social, and numeracy skills in a natural environment, 2) utilizing developmentally appropriate practices, 3) striking a balance between adult and child-initiated learning, and 4) engaging children in active learning experiences. A total of 45 minimum-time members are recruited. Forty-four AmeriCorps members will serve in five early childhood centers, and one member serves as the volunteer coordinator. Host service site teachers complete the school readiness checklist on twice as many children as will be in the program, while members are in pre-service training. ECLIPSE members serve ten- twelve hours per week for twenty weeks in structured preschool classrooms working with children who are in need of extra assistance in one of the target areas of language, literacy, numeracy or social emotional skill development, as identified by checklist and teachers. Members are grouped into teams consisting of six to ten Corps members, who are each paired with two children. Five teams serve in five different early childhood/Head Start centers in Eau Claire and Altoona, WI. Teams of six to ten members allow for teams to build better working relationships and support systems which will lead to higher retention in college for members, and provide host sites with only the members they can fully support, and allows ECLIPSE to meet the need of the community. In addition to individually working with each child, Corps members implement these principles throughout the child's school day working with the classroom teachers, by providing additional support for each participating child's unique learning needs, which fosters an

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environment for growth. In addition, AmeriCorps members provide an opportunity for one-to-one reading with participating children at least twice a week during the ECLIPSE program year. The classroom-based and one-to-one support coupled with the overall caring provided by a well-trained Corps member, supports language, literacy, numeracy and social emotional development of young children. This level of individualized instruction is not available in the typical preschool classroom. ECLIPSE utilizes several strategies to achieve its literacy and language learning outcomes. ECLIPSE's focus on a one-to-one Reading strategy using Dialogic Reading is a key component to increasing vocabulary and oral language skills for children across race and income groups as found by the What Works Clearing House. By providing support to a child during classroom choice time, children may pick from a variety of activities, which provide opportunities to work on reading, writing, math and social skills. Corps members will encourage their partner child to make a plan for use of their time, carry it out, and then review their experiences after play. This "plan-do-review" method helps children develop self-regulation skills by becoming thoughtful and active participants in planning their routines and activities. Social Emotional skills are developed and supported by the regular and consistent interactions with the AmeriCorps members. By working directly in the preschool classroom ECLIPSE is able to support the classroom teachers and positively impact the other children in the centers that are served. This enables ECLIPSE to increase the impact of the program by serving additional children who are not directly served by ECLIPSE, an additional 250 children benefit from the improved teacher-to-child ratio in the classroom and receive language, literacy, social, and numeracy enhancement experiences. These include reading to children individually and in small groups and supporting teachers' efforts to increase literacy resources and activities in the classroom. Corps members will support the host service site's activities to engage parents by providing child care and other direct support for center sponsored, and other agency sponsored events. Throughout the school year, ECLIPSE Staff and Corps members will engage children and families to discuss upcoming events such as Dr. Seuss' Birthday for which ECLIPSE AmeriCorps members develop literacy games and activities then invite preschool children and families to attend, using space in a public school, or creating learning materials, and take-home activities. Working with our Head Starts and 4K program enhances the learning experience for children who need additional help.

One AmeriCorps member will serve in the role of Volunteer Coordinator to recruit and manage at least 175 volunteers from the university and community and also manage volunteer opportunities. The volunteer coordinator will plan and organize service for MLK Day and Global Youth Service Day, recruiting volunteers to serve alongside AmeriCorps members. Dr. Seuss' Birthday Party and the

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Literacy Festival are two literacy events that volunteers are recruited for that families are invited to attend.

While attending college full time, ECLIPSE AmeriCorps members are all earning Federal Work-Study due to high financial need. Members are committed to making a difference and gaining experience while working with children.

3. EVIDENCE BASE: STRONG EVIDENCE

ECLIPSE uses the School Readiness Checklist developed from the High Scope COR (Child Observation Record) preschool screening tool. High Scope is part of the Perry Preschool Project and recent research shows that the High Scope COR tool is predictive of risk for early school failure in low income populations (Sekino, & Fantuzzo, *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 2005). The COR has high reliability and validity statistics and is a valid observational measure of preschoolers' development. The School Readiness Checklist was developed from three of the COR subscales based on the developmental skills being assessed: Language-Literacy (8 items; e.g., the abilities to listen to and understand speech, and identify sounds and letters); Initiative-social relations (7 items; e.g., the abilities to express choices and initiate play, relate to adults and children, and resolve conflicts); and Mathematic skills (6 items; e.g., sorting objects, identifying patterns, comparing properties, counting, sequence). Complete COR sections are used for language and Literacy, Social Relations and Initiative. The School Readiness Checklist was developed as a pre- and post- test to evaluate the developmental level of each child at the beginning of the school year and then again after intervention by ECLIPSE. The tool consists of 21 items focused on language, literacy, social interaction, and numeracy skills. Classroom teachers are trained on the use of the checklist. Classroom teachers complete the checklist in September prior to Corps member's service, and again within two weeks after sessions are completed in May. Teachers complete twice as many checklists as the number of children who will participate in ECLIPSE, to allow for a selection process and a control group with which to compare growth. Children are chosen to participate in ECLIPSE through results of the checklists and consultation with the classroom teachers. Checklists are completed on the same children in the fall and spring. Piloting a different approach of working within the classroom only, improved the child attendance and completion for 2013-14. The CNCS National Performance Measures from 2013-14 were all met, with the children who participated in ECLIPSE having significant growth beyond the growth of the comparison group in each of the four areas of Language, Literacy and Social Interactions, and Numeracy. With meeting the measures in the other three areas, statistical

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significance at the .05 level was found in the area of numeracy skills.

Dialogic Reading was developed by Grover Whitehurst and the Stony Brook Reading and Language Project (1992). What Works Clearing House Intervention Report from February 2007 found Dialogic Reading meets evidence standards without reservations. Dialogic reading is a method that has been used consistently for one-to-one reading time with ECLIPSE children. To reach all the learning outcomes for children, ECLIPSE integrates developmentally appropriate practice and training approaches from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2009) for best practices in Early Childhood Education; the Dialogic Reading method; the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation; the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD); Get Ready to Read!; the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA); and, Teaching Our Youngest, published by US Department of Education. Through working with the classroom teachers, ECLIPSE also integrates portions of Teaching Strategies for early childhood, a part of Creative Curriculum, used in WI Head Start programs and Eau Claire 4K programming to gather, assess, and evaluate curriculum. Tools adapted from these approaches and the use of portfolio assessment (following the School Readiness Checklist) of each child three times during the program year helps Corps members to understand a child's progress toward emergent literacy, emergent writing, linguistic awareness, social development, and numeracy knowledge, and then plan for the individual needs of each child through knowledge from training, teachers, and/or the program director.

Additional tools are used to assess member and volunteer experiences and knowledge. AmeriCorps members will be given a pre- and post- test survey assessing Civic Engagement. This survey uses the Center for Information & Research on Civic Engagement's participant quiz (2003) to gather information on their service and active citizenship. Volunteers are tracked using a tracking tool developed in Microsoft Excel to maintain a data base of who volunteers, demographic information, the number of projects and hours that each volunteer contributes to the program and community.

4. NOTICE PRIORITY

ECLIPSE is in the 2015 AmeriCorps funding priority of education. School readiness is the focal point of ECLIPSE by working with Head Start programs and other childcare centers with a high percentage of low income preschool aged children. ECLIPSE Corps members focus on the areas of literacy, language, social, and numeracy which meet the National Performance Measures ED 23, 24 and 25 for Early Childhood Education, to create the foundation for lifelong learning skills in school and

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beyond. AmeriCorps members serve in Head Start Centers or affiliates working with children who need additional help and who will benefit from extra attention to master the skills necessary for success in the school system.

5. MEMBER TRAINING

ECLIPSE provides over 45 hours of orientation and training throughout the year for AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps members begin orientation in September with a focus on AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National and Community Service. This first orientation includes a welcome to the AmeriCorps community, reviewing the program handbook, which includes AmeriCorps guidelines and rules, including prohibited activities, and completing paperwork that includes the member contract, and a swearing in ceremony during which members take the AmeriCorps Pledge. Members are not placed in their assigned location or matched with partner children until mid-October after an intensive period of initial orientation and training is completed. The intensive, three-week, pre-service period includes at least 20 hours of training that covers in addition to AmeriCorps information and history, early childhood development, with focus areas in language, literacy, dialogic reading, numeracy skills and social development, shaken baby training, and health and safety of young children before site orientations are given where members receive an orientation at the host service site by the center director where they will serve. After AmeriCorps members have attended site orientation, they begin assisting part-time at host service sites, yet still attend training that focuses on skills necessary for working effectively with children while gaining practical experience. Training continues in the spring semester with a full day spring kick off focused on advanced language, literacy, social, and numeracy topics along with a session on working with economically challenged families. Members attend a weekly class during the spring with a focus on active citizenship and conflict management. Volunteers are given an orientation that includes AmeriCorps prohibited activities prior to any volunteer activity, and are invited to join in reflection after completing service. ECLIPSE believes that ensuring Corps member and volunteer compliance with AmeriCorps rules regarding prohibited activities is a critical responsibility of the organization. Information about prohibited activities is included in the ECLIPSE member handbook, contract, orientation, and again during the spring training.

6. MEMBER SUPERVISION

Once serving at sites, members receive formal biweekly coaching in the form of ongoing observation

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and feedback, review member performance, evaluation, and to support member development by the program director. The host service site's classroom teachers or the center director are always present when members are at sites and provide consistent feedback to both the members serving and to the program director. The program director meets with the site staff prior to the program year beginning for orientation to the program year. An agreement form is reviewed and then completed with the roles and responsibilities of the ECLIPSE members and program director, and the roles and responsibilities of the site staff so that member supervision is understood and accepted by all parties. The program director meets with the center directors at each site visit to maintain positive communication and address any concerns. Starting in January members attend a weekly class to allow for training and problem solving time. This also allows for additional training should special topics arise from host service sites. In addition to consistent, twice monthly coaching and feedback, ECLIPSE will conduct an informal performance review at mid-year and a formal review with each AmeriCorps member at the end of the program year. This process is designed to meet AmeriCorps requirements and support members in their professional development. The ECLIPSE office is located on campus and maintains office hours for members to stop in and discuss any concerns that have not been addressed through site visits, formal meetings or team planning meetings. The program director uses weekly e-mails for updates of pertinent information. Members consistently use e-mail correspondence to notify the program director of any updates or concerns.

7. MEMBER EXPERIENCE

AmeriCorps members gain skills in communication, team work, leadership, time management, community relations, topics in education and an understanding of civic engagement and community development. Members complete three reflection papers during their term of service, two use guided questions, such as "identify a way that you make an impact at your host site" or "what surprised you the most when you started working with your partner children?" One reflection paper is submitted to the state commission using criteria from the commission. Team leaders, who are usually second year AmeriCorps members, provide coaching and guidance to a team of six to ten Corps members. Team leaders have no supervisory role, but are responsible for observing Corps members and facilitating feedback, reflection, and planning meetings each week. Team leaders and the volunteer coordinator receive additional training in leadership, management, and event planning from the program director via weekly meetings to support and help them perform in their roles.

ECLIPSE throughout the past year has developed a stronger relationship with The Community Table,

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a local non-profit that through collaborations with a local food bank and other interested parties, serves one meal a day to those in need. ECLIPSE members have started volunteering one night a week to have a reading time available to any children who go in for that meal. This experience is allowing for members to see a different need in the Eau Claire community, yet at times seeing families from the host service sites who are there for a meal, and identifying the connections to services. Material from The Bonner Institute, The Civically Engaged Reader, and the National Service Knowledge Network are incorporated into the weekly course to help Corps members develop the skills they need to become connected, informed citizens capable of affecting positive change in their communities. The weekly class meeting allows members the opportunity to connect with the whole corps and develop relationships outside of the individual teams. UW- Eau Claire recognizes the need for diverse opportunities for students and faculty and provides forums with both national and international experts in diverse fields as speakers that cover many current topics relevant to society today such as David O'Connor discussing WI Act 31, which requires all Wisconsin public schools to provide instruction in the history, culture, and tribal sovereignty of the eleven federally recognized tribes in the state, and the importance of education and American Indian issues. AmeriCorps members are encouraged to attend these forums or artist series events to increase critical thinking, and gain a more global perspective. ECLIPSE volunteer coordinator and Western Dairy Land Fresh Start volunteer coordinator are working together for joint projects for two National Days of Service. Through a research project in 2007 on past corps members from our program we found that alumni were civically engaged in their communities, and the retention rate in higher education was higher than the average for UWEC.

ECLIPSE recruits students from University of Wisconsin Eau Claire who have high work-study allocations, and are from many different majors. Support in recruiting members is from across campus utilizing the Financial Aid Office, College Advisors, Student Support Services, The Center for Service Learning, current and former members, and through recruitment days.

Our AmeriCorps members will also be provided the opportunity for occasional service outside the focus of this program in order to better understand and benefit the 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 director, and the volunteer supervisor signs an agreement certifying the service and hours performed.

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8. COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION

ECLIPSE is committed to increasing awareness of AmeriCorps in the Chippewa Valley area of Wisconsin. Members have an orientation that covers what AmeriCorps is, and the types of AmeriCorps programs. The AmeriCorps pledge is recited during orientation. ECLIPSE and Western Dairyland Fresh Start have planned a service day together for the current program year. ECLIPSE AmeriCorps members are required to wear their service gear, which has the AmeriCorps logo placed above the ECLIPSE logo, at host service sites and any other service when members are earning hours. Each site has extra service gear in case a member arrives at a site without proper attire. All sites have a poster or decal identifying the site as a partner with AmeriCorps. Printed material and/or on-line material has the AmeriCorps logo on it. An ECLIPSE and AmeriCorps banner is displayed at all events. ECLIPSE AmeriCorps members participate in National Days of Service and in two other events as a full Corps. Corps members complete three reflection papers during their term of service, two have guiding questions for members to reflect in areas of service, citizenship, impact on their partner children or site, and overall impact of their year of service to AmeriCorps. In accordance with the objectives of the State Service Plan, ECLIPSE members complete the Serve WI member survey each spring.

Organizational Capability

1. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING

ECLIPSE is a component of the College of Education and Human Sciences. Dean Carmen Manning is the direct supervisor for ECLIPSE/AmeriCorps program director, and as such is the campus champion. Dr. Donna Lehmkuhl is the program director for ECLIPSE and the contact for this grant application. Dr. Lehmkuhl has twelve years' experience running the program, and has an extensive practical and teaching background in Early Childhood Education and Family Relations. Being a part of the College of Education and Human Sciences is a natural fit for the program as approximately 50% of the AmeriCorps members are a part of the college, with the remainder coming from various programs across the campus. The college provides a support staff person through the Dean's office, and other support comes from college departments aiding in the program running both effectively and efficiently. The College of Education and Human Sciences serves 23.5% of the student population at UW- Eau Claire with just over 2,400 students. Member training is enhanced through support from the Early Childhood Special Education Department, which also provides a faculty advisor to support member development. The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire has an excellent track record for providing fiscal oversight and sound management of programs including numerous external grants

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from sources such as the Department of Education, National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, the Corporation for National and Community Service ECLIPSE, and the Campus Kitchens Project. The Center for Service Learning monitors and supports service learning opportunities at UWEC, evaluates service-learning projects, and surveys community partners annually for program evaluation purposes. With a strong belief that Service Learning enhances the quality of education, it is a graduation requirement at the university. Research done by faculty on the Service-Learning program has demonstrated that it adds value to the undergraduate education of students, that community service is valued by recruiters and companies seeking to hire our graduates, and that our graduates go on to continue to be engaged civically as volunteers in the community at over twice the rate for persons in their age group (Lester et al., 2006; Tomkovitch, et al., 2007). Through the Activities, Involvement and Leadership office at UW-Eau Claire, national and international speakers have come to the campus that have been able to supplement the regular training that members attend by adding more diverse opportunities for members to gain experience and knowledge. Through Learning and Technology Services members have access to classes on computer software programs to increase computer skills such as Office, Adobe Photoshop, and other software applications. Members have developed materials through these services that assist in implementing ECLIPSE curriculum and have developed materials for host service sites. All people working in child care centers or with children under five years old in the state of Wisconsin are required to have training in Shaken Baby Syndrome by a state certified trainer, which the UWEC Children's Nature Academy has provided for training all ECLIPSE members. Host service sites are invited to an end of year wrap up and evaluation meeting to bring the host sites together to identify best practices and impact. Through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, ECLIPSE has been able to secure a student research assistant to assist with program evaluation. Also, UW-Eau Claire has an Assessment Director who will provide guidance regarding program evaluation strategies.

2. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The UW-Eau Claire Business Office will follow the applicable Federal and granting agency rules and regulations. The Business Office Grant Accountant assists with federal account set-up and monitoring of expenditures with the program director. The grant accountant has been in place since fall of 2011 and has fulfilled all responsibilities. Authorized expenses are coded and charged to appropriate categories. Time and effort sheets are collected monthly to account for payroll and salary match. Matching and in-kind funds follow similar procedures. The Business Office and State Audit Bureau

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audit the expenditures to ensure compliance with state and federal agency regulations. The grant accountant has monitored compliance with AmeriCorps on an annual basis, and the Office for Research and Sponsored Programs monitors feedback from Serve Wisconsin. Serve Wisconsin monitors ECLIPSE with a physical visit at least once a year, completing a random record check while monitoring. Eligibility forms are monitored annually. The program director monitors the service sites bi-weekly. Sites are provided annual training and a binder of important information including, but not limited to: AmeriCorps member handbook which includes prohibited activities and all AmeriCorps rules, member contract, Host service site agreement form, contact information, and all parent forms. There were no compliance concerns at any of the host service sites in the last year. The accountant will attend any fiscal training opportunities that are available and cost appropriate. Compliance issues will be reviewed with the Office for Research and Sponsored Programs.

3. PAST PERFORMANCE FOR CURRENT GRANTEEES

During the past three years ECLIPSE has met all performance measures. Through narrative comments from host site directors, such as from Heather Yates who is the Center Director at a Western Dairyland Head Start site, "Forming secure attachments with a caring adult (ECLIPSE member) establishes a model for future relationships. These relationships are critical to their social development as well as their academic success," and "ECLIPSE provided a needed service to children through one-to-one literacy intervention and social skills." Due to confidentiality there is not an ability to follow the children once entering the public school system. A single area of non-compliance for ECLIPSE concerned parts of the member contract that was not updated when Corporation language changed, thus creating an issue in the Host site agreement form which contains an appendix of the member contract. All corrections were completed and submitted to the Program Officer. All documents have been updated with current language. A closer check is being completed as to dates on all documents. One member was not enrolled in the 30 day limit due to her inability to get the help she needed from the help desk when completing her part of the enrollment form during the federal government shutdown in 2013. Documentation was kept. Enrollment for 2013-14 was 104.5%. When members left the program early, slots were able to be refilled without difficulty. All refilled slot positions completed the program successfully. Retention for 2013-14 was 95.7%. Two members left during their term of service due to feelings of being overwhelmed by school and work. The program director will spend additional time during bi-weekly coaching to help members to reduce stress and not to over-extend.

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Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

1. COST EFFECTIVENESS

Corps members will each contribute 300 plus service hours and with 45 Corps members the total for the year will be at least 13,500 hours. The total MSY for the ECLIPSE project is 9.52, and this computes to a cost per member service year of \$9,109, a cost that is well below the maximum allowed cost per MSY in Wisconsin of \$13,730. Indirect costs are requested at UW-Eau Claire's federally approved indirect cost rate [45% salaries, wages, and fringe benefits] - Corporation share [total x 0.0526], or \$4,333 from CNCS, \$33,313 from grantee, totaling \$37,646. The total requested from CNCS is \$86,717 (64%) and the grantee share is \$48,178 (36%), for a project total of \$134,895.

2. BUDGET ADEQUACY

The budget we have submitted allows for the full operation of the ECLIPSE program and maximizes support from all collaborators. We have streamlined our program and increased our efficiency and effectiveness while keeping the cost per full-time equivalent Corps member considerably lower than required. The budget is clear, reasonable, and aligned with the program narrative. Requests are limited to support for a program director, required travel to CNCS-sponsored training and for site visits, gear with the AmeriCorps logo, program supplies/expenses, and Corps member training. These items are all essential to the program activities as detailed in the narrative. For the past four years, ECLIPSE has received AmeriCorps formula funding through Serve Wisconsin. We have increased the match in the coming year to 34% as required. Match is provided by the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire in the form of in-kind effort by key administrators and indirect costs. We are also developing a sustainability plan that begins with developing relationships with foundations, corporations, and the community, so that we can raise any additional funds that are necessary and engage the community in taking more responsibility for the education of young children.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

CHILDREN: ECLIPSE uses a child School Readiness Checklist developed from the High Scope COR (Child Observation Record) preschool screening tool. Both the COR and the School Readiness Checklist have high reliability statistics and are valid observational measures of preschoolers' development. Three subscales for the Checklist can be derived based on the developmental skills being assessed: Language- Literacy (8 items; e.g., the abilities to listen to and understand speech, and identify sounds and letters); Initiative-social relations (7 items; e.g., the abilities to express choices and

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initiate play, relate to adults and children, and resolve conflicts); and Mathematic skills (6 items; e.g., sorting objects, identifying patterns, comparing properties, counting). The School Readiness Checklist was developed as a pre and post- test to evaluate the developmental level of each child at the beginning of the school year and then again after intervention by ECLIPSE. The tool consists of 21 items focused on language, literacy and social interaction skills and numeracy skills. Classroom teachers are trained to use the checklist. Classroom teachers complete the checklist in September prior to Corps member service, and again within two weeks after sessions are completed in May. Teachers complete twice as many checklists as the number of children who will participate in ECLIPSE, to allow for a selection process and a control group with which to compare growth. Children are chosen to participate through results of the checklists and consultation with the classroom teachers. Checklists are completed on the same children in the fall and spring. The use of portfolio assessment of each child helps Corps members understand a child's progress toward learning to read and write, specifically in the skill areas of print knowledge, emergent writing, linguistic awareness, and numeracy knowledge. Corps members assemble the portfolio by collecting samples of children's work every session. At the end of the school year, participating children and their families receive the portfolio, documenting their progress throughout the program year.

AMERICORPS MEMBERS: Corps members will complete three reflection papers during their term of service, one that is submitted to Serve Wisconsin for publication. These reflections have guiding questions for members to reflect in areas of service, citizenship, impact on their partner child, and overall impact of their year of service to AmeriCorps. Also, all ECLIPSE Corps members participate in a university course in the spring semester, which meets weekly. The course is designed around civic engagement and reflective thinking, and uses readings from "The Civically Engaged Reader" series of books, the Bonner Institute and the AmeriCorps Resource Center. AmeriCorps members will be given a pre- and post- test survey assessing knowledge of Early Childhood Education and Civic Engagement. This survey uses a modified version of the Teacher Beliefs Scale to determine knowledge of Early Childhood education best practices, and Constitutional Rights Foundation Pilot Participant Survey to gather information on citizenship.

VOLUNTEERS: Volunteers are tracked using a tracking tool developed in Excel to maintain a data base of who volunteers, demographic information, the number of projects and hours that each volunteer contributes to the program and community.

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DATA ANALYSIS: As data is collected it will be compiled and analyzed with the assistance of support staff from the Center for Service Learning. A data analysis program will be used to compile the data. Through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, ECLIPSE has been able to secure a student to assist with program evaluation. Also, UW-Eau Claire has an Assessment Director who can provide guidance regarding program evaluation strategies. Data will be used to monitor program progress, inform day-to-day operations, report to CNCS, and ensure consistent program improvement.

PRIOR PERFORMANCE: The performance measures used for 2013-14 were selected from the National performance Measure for Early Childhood Education. ED 20, 23, 24 & 25 were all met. Of the 52 children who started the program, 40 children were able to attend at least 28 sessions through the program year. Results in the areas of language and literacy, and social development were met with greater gains through the year for ECLIPSE children than there were for the control group of children. In the area of numeracy skills ECLIPSE also met performance measures with children in the program scoring high enough for statistical significance compared to the control group. In the area of volunteer recruitment, which is required by WI, ECLIPSE exceeded the number of volunteers recruited and the number of hours of service provided.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

Programmatic Clarifications:

Compliance: The ECLIPSE program director works with the University's Human Resource Office to meet compliance within the university system, and with a Serve WI program officer to stay in compliance with CNCS. A file checklist is on each member file to verify all documents are complete for CNCS and for additional program requirements. The program director and support staff verify file completion. Materials supplied by CNCS are used for training and compliance for both the program director and support staff.

Budget Clarification:

ECLIPSE original budget was \$90,330 with a cost per MSY of \$9,488, much lower than the maximum allowable cost per MSY. With the help of CNCS the cost per MSY has been lowered to

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\$9,390 and a total cost of \$89,399. This is greatly below the allowed cost per member. The budget has been reduced as much as possible while still maintaining program quality and managing cost increases. Further cuts will affect program quality.

Performance Measure Clarification:

Changes were made in the Performance measures.

Strategic Engagement Slots:

Members are recruited through the financial aid office, colleges, and recruitment activities on campus. Many members are recruited through volunteers from previous years, and through corps members sharing experiences in classes, orientations, and with friends. During recruitment of members there is no discrimination against any student at UWEC who has a work-study allocation to cover the term of service, or those who wish to volunteer a term of service. Individuals with disabilities have served without disclosure in the past. Efforts are made to increase diversity.

MSY with No Program Funds Attached Clarification:

UWEC - ECLIPSE is not requesting any No-Cost MSYs.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics