

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative and the Division of Family Resource and Youth Services Centers propose to have 70 AmeriCorps members who will provide literacy tutoring and student mentoring in economically disadvantaged schools in Northern, Central and Eastern Kentucky. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for helping K-12 students meet expected literacy goals and increase positive behaviors. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 150 literacy peer mentors who will be engaged in helping Kindergarten to grade 5 students find pleasure in reading.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education. The CNCS investment of \$439,446 will be matched with \$174,000 and \$375,805 in public funding.

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

### PROBLEM/NEED

Kentucky is a predominantly rural state with hundreds of communities struggling with the effects of generational poverty in a weak economy that places more families into situational poverty. Generational poverty is a set of circumstances by which hardship, once started, is likely to continue without outside intervention. Situational poverty can result from any event that depletes resources: job loss, illness, or death. Poverty itself can be defined as the extent to which one does without resources. One pernicious effect of living in poverty is learning to do without resources as part of normal life. Individuals or families do what they must to get by, and the daily stress of making ends meet leaves many families constantly worrying about having food, shelter and safety. School children in such stress filled situations are often unprepared to be attentive or learn new concepts. Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (FRYSCs) have the task of removing some of these nonacademic barriers to learning for children and families who may not have the voice or resources to do it themselves. The FRYSC Corps is intended to help increase the capacity of host FRYSCs to meet basic needs of students, while meeting a complementary need of literacy tutoring in the school.

US Census Bureau 2013 data reports the median household income in Kentucky was \$42,158, placing the state eighth of those with the lowest incomes in the US. The percentage of children under 18 living in poverty, 38%, has not changed since 2010. Further, 2013 Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) data shows that free and reduced lunch (FR lunch) is offered to 58% of Kentucky students and less than half of those students are proficient readers. A higher percentage of low income students (55%) struggle to read, compared to the 45% students from any income that are below

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proficiency. The evidence shows a literacy advantage for students from economically stable families.

A survey of FRYSC Corps partners and potential partners confirmed that low reading skills and a lack of positive personal relationships are the top concerns for their students, the majority of whom receive FR lunch. Partner schools average 62% economically disadvantaged students and 59% are not proficient readers. To illustrate, in Fayette County, Mary Todd Elementary school provides FR lunch to 93% of their students, and 67% of them were not proficient readers. In Appalachian Wayne County, 82% of kids are from low income families with only 44% reading at or above proficiency placing them well below the state average of 55%. Furthermore a troubling fact persists that in each partner school the majority of reported behavioral incidents are attributed to low income students.

Half of FRYSC Corps' partner schools were ranked in the bottom 30% of all Kentucky schools after 2013 state assessments. The remaining 16 were ranked as proficient or distinguished. However, Kids Count 2012 analysis shows that the majority of economically disadvantaged students at each partner school live in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty - areas with poverty rates of 30% or more. The uncertainty of resources in poor communities perpetually threatens the safety net and the academic progress made at school.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation released a 2012 study called "Double Jeopardy: How Poverty & Third-Grade Reading Skills Influence High School Graduation," in which a direct link between reading proficiency and graduation rates is demonstrated. The conclusions: third grade students not reading at grade level are four times more likely to drop out of school, the likelihood of dropping out of school increases each year a student struggles with reading; and children who struggle with reading and also live in poverty are six times more likely to leave school without a diploma. As the focus of the US economy shifts toward knowledge-based technology and globally competitive jobs, people without solid literacy skills are at a deep disadvantage in the workplace, increasing their financial vulnerability. Literacy is a vital resource that is accessible to most children if they have the support to acquire it. FRYSC Corps members' mission of literacy tutoring, mentoring, and basic needs support make them unique contributors to their school communities. In addition to making an impact on increasing students' reading scores, members are deeply involved in projects that help feed students over the weekends, provide them with adequate clothing and shoes, and develop skills for managing peer pressure. FRYSC Corps members are a link to stability when the chaos of poverty affects a child.

### THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL

The FRYSC Corps addresses CNCS' education performance measure. 40 FRYSC Corps members

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(FT) will be placed with 12 school districts at 35 K-12 partner schools in Kentucky where greater than 50% of students are eligible for FR lunch or if more than 50% of economically disadvantaged students served by the school are less than proficient readers. School instructional teams will assign 700 students to FRYSC Corps literacy tutors for small group instruction.

FRYSC Corps tutors will be trained by a literacy specialist to use Reading Mastery, a research based reading curriculum designed to meet the 5 areas of basic literacy skills; and Classroom Connections' Reading Buddies program model that adds peer-mentoring support for struggling readers.

Members will monitor student progress to determine mastery of literacy concepts and identify areas where support is needed. School-based instructional teams will meet with FRYSC Corps tutors each week to ensure that members have the skills and materials and progress analysis to address the areas of concern for each student.

School instructional teams will assess student literacy progress quarterly to determine if students are meeting their expected reading growth goals. Evidenced-based assessments (MAP) determine concepts to focus on during small group instruction.

Instructional teams and members will identify at least 150 students assigned to FRYSC Corps intervention who will receive literacy peer-mentoring support within a Reading Buddies program. 150 students (grade 5 through 12) will act as peer literacy mentors are leveraged volunteers.

30 FRYSC Corps members (QT) will be placed in 20 K-12 partner schools in Kentucky to act as school-based mentors for 30 students identified as economically disadvantaged; who exhibit behavior that puts them at-risk for failure. Member mentors meet with students during their 6 month term to model positive social skills.

Core Activity 1: FT tutors conduct in-class reading tutoring with small groups of students for 9 weeks, 90 minutes weekly. Each member will be assigned small groups or reading students during class reading instruction for focused literacy concept work.

Core Activity 2: Literacy focused peer-mentoring programming during the academic year. 10 meetings of 45 minutes each with students tutored by FRYSC Corps literacy tutors.

Core Activity 3: School-based mentoring with QT mentors for 18 weeks, 3 meetings of 20 minutes each week with students identified by a school counseling team with behaviors that put them at-risk for school failure.

Output 1: 700 students will receive literacy intervention from a FRYSC Corps tutor.

Output 2: 150 students will receive literacy peer-mentoring.

Output 3: 90% of students will complete 13 hours of literacy intervention.

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Output 4: 80% of reading mentees will attend 10 peer-mentoring meetings.

Output 5: 85% of literacy intervention students will meet expected growth goals on evidenced based assessments.

Output 6: 30 K-12 students will receive school-based mentoring from a FRYSC Corps member.

Output 7: 80% of students will participate in 18 hours of school-based mentoring.

Output 8: 80% of students who receive school-based mentoring will show increased positive behavior (ex. classroom participation, attendance, homework completion) as measured by pre/post survey.

### Short-Term Outcomes

Students served by FRYSC Corps literacy tutors will have improved: academic results in reading or language arts; academic performance in other subjects; and positive behaviors while at school.

Students served by FRYSC Corps school-based mentors will have improved positive behaviors while at school as reported by parents, teachers or other school staff using a pre/post survey.

### Mid-Term Outcomes

Students served by FRYSC Corps literacy tutors will have successfully: completed academic year reading instruction; meet their expected reading goals as measured by evidenced based school assessment; been promoted to the next grade.

Students served by FRYSC Corps school-based mentors will have fewer absences; increased participation in classroom or school events; and are promoted to the next grade.

### Long-Term Outcomes:

Students served by FRYSC Corps literacy tutors and school-based members will be better prepared by grade 11 to meet college readiness benchmarks and graduate high school on time.

## EVIDENCE BASE

FRYSC Corps has been a school-based program grantee since 2003. Historically, the focus of the program was split between literacy and basic needs support. Pre/post literacy data provided the program mid-term outcome analysis. FRYSC Corps tutors used school curriculum to support students' literacy instruction and literacy scores show that nearly 70% of tutored students significantly improve their assessment scores. This evidence indicates our tutors may have an impact on students' scores and measurement of that impact requires thoughtful planning of programming.

The current proposal marks a shift in FRYSC Corps' program design and provides preliminary evidence for the effectiveness of our theory of change. Changes are based on "Student Educational Outcomes: Technical Report on Best Practices and Strategies for English Language Arts" prepared by

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the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Washington (OSPIW). Their July 2014 recommendations were used to develop standards of evidenced-based practice. They identified practices having the most significant impact on both improving the reading skills and the assessment scores of reading students. Additionally, A.M. Klem and J.P. Connell report in a 2004 Journal of School Health study, "Relationships Matter: Linking Teacher Support to Student Engagement and Achievement", that tutors who work with students during the school day build relationships that improve students' academic outcomes.

Standards of practice for school-based tutoring programs indicated by OSPIW research are: training tutors on effective literacy instruction strategies; requiring frequent collaboration with teachers to review student progress and focus on trouble areas; periodic assessment evaluating student progress; requiring tutors to track tutoring progress; and, following a systematic approach centered on learning principles. Cross-age and peer mentoring are also indicated as effective factors for changing academic performance and behavior.

The FRYSC Corps program design strives to implement these standards with tutors by providing ongoing intensive tutor training during their service term. Initial training with a literacy specialist focuses on the research-based Reading Mastery curriculum and guided reading techniques -- both of which are based on years of research of how children learn. The initial training is supplemented with fall and spring professional development and with weekly support from school instructional teams. Knowledge acquisition, modeling behaviors and feedback coaching techniques are practices that are reinforced with tutors.

School partners are required to include the FRYSC Corps tutor in weekly instructional team meetings. Teams discuss the progress of tutored students and identify problems that need attention through literacy interventions. Students are formally assessed every quarter and informally assessed in the intervening weeks to gauge progress. Tutors are required to track student performance after each tutoring session to inform instructional teams.

Full-time tutors are required to use the Classroom Connections model for establishing a peer literacy mentoring program. Quarter-time members will mentor at-risk students during non-instructional time at school. A school-based relationship is the core of the FRYSC Corps' mentoring model, based on Education Northwest's resources. Mentor training establishes a systematic approach to work with students. Members who mentor meet regularly with the counseling team which referred the student to discuss progress and to identify resources that may address specific problems. Building and reinforcing positive relationships in school will lead to improved ratings of positive behavior in at-

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risk students because, like tutors, mentors will be in the school as part of the instructional schedule. Klem's research on building relationships indicates tutors who believe in students' capabilities because they have direct experience with the students' school-time performance increase confidence, motivation, and engagement of those students in the classroom all of which ultimately leads to higher test scores.

According to the OSPIW analysis, programs that met at least 3 times a week brought higher gains than those that met twice a week. However, sessions that run from 10 minutes to 1 hour brought positive results when compared to a control group. The FRYSC Corps requires that tutors meet with students for a minimum of 30 minutes, 3 times each week. Mentors meet with students for 20 minutes 3 times a week.

### NOTICE PRIORITY

The FRYSC Corps program model is designed to address the Education focus area. The program partners primarily with rural Kentucky schools where the majority of K-12 students enrolled are eligible for free or reduced lunch. These economically disadvantaged children are disproportionately assessed as less than proficient readers, and they exhibit more negative behaviors that put them at risk for educational failure. FRYSC Corps intends to address lagging literacy skills and negative behavior with school-based tutoring and mentoring using small group and one-to-one interventions that are evidenced-based, and are focused on the academic and developmental needs of the student. Host sites ability to address the needs of more students is increased because a FRYSC Corps members' direct service allows them to identify student needs, and subsequently school and community resources to address those needs.

### MEMBER TRAINING

Member orientation begins during the interview process. Program staff shares the AmeriCorps tutor or mentor roles and responsibilities. This allows applicants to ask questions and make informed decisions about the commitment to AmeriCorps.

FRYSC Corps full-time members attend three days of orientation and tutor preparation during their first week of service. The AmeriCorps and FRYSC Corps missions, prohibited activities and the policies and procedures for reporting time, tutoring service, and volunteer recruitment are initial topics that are emphasized as the foundation of successful service. FRYSC Corps staff and 2nd year members participate in each activity as leaders and facilitators. Team-building activities, as well as

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opportunities to share meals and lodging, encourage corps relationships. Project planning, volunteer recruitment and management methods and interactive activities help members begin establishing peer-tutoring programs.

A literacy specialist with extensive experience using and demonstrating Reading Recovery methods teaches tutors how to use the Reading Mastery curriculum. Topics include interventions to address letter and sound awareness, phonics, fluency and comprehension. Significant time is devoted to learning best tutoring practices. Areas covered include organizing and planning sessions, behavior management, and especially collaborating with teachers. Members participate in role-playing to prepare for their first students.

Host sites commit to provide on-going member development connecting members with the respective administration and teachers, covering school policies and expectations, and introducing the member to collaborating instructional teams. Instructional teams analyze student progress and to ensure FRYSC Corps tutors understand both the materials and knowledge to address the needs of assigned students. Sites must include members in school wide professional development meetings.

Fall and spring face to face meetings allow members to connect with each other and meetings focus on tutor development and technical assistance for national service day projects. Teleconferences scheduled monthly throughout the service year provide the members with technical assistance and inform them of upcoming opportunities. Members must complete on-line courses on volunteer recruitment and management, event planning, and end-of-service planning through the National Service Resource Center. They also attend the Division of FRYSC's Victory Over Violence conference which offers professional development topics ranging from public health concerns for children, to strength-based programming for parents, to diversity issues.

Quarter-time members attend half-day training when they enroll. The AmeriCorps and FRYSC Corps missions, prohibited activities, and the policies and procedures for reporting time and mentoring service are presented. Members learn the foundations of building positive mentoring relationships using Educations Northwest's "Training New Mentors" school-based model. Members learn their role as someone who listens and encourages any student with whom they are paired. Mentors are typically practicum students in social work programs and in supported training.

Near the end of their service term, all FRYSC Corps members receive instruction about their Segal Education Award, resume support resources, and encouragement to join AmeriCorps Alums.

### **MEMBER SUPERVISION**

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FRYSC Corps partner sites provide direct supervision for service members. Their FRYSC coordinator acts as the site supervisor. These supervisors must participate in an orientation to AmeriCorps' mission and FRYSC Corps' grant goals in relation to the members' roles prior to member selection. Emphasis is placed on discussing both the memorandum of agreement and the member contract because each of these documents detail prohibited activities. Site supervisors are trained to orient service members to school procedures, introduce them to administration and teachers, and monitor that tutoring or mentoring activities are taking place. Sites must provide instruction materials, preparation space and access to technology, so members can report time and service activities. Members report daily to their site supervisor to review the day's schedule and to discuss site needs and goals. Members report their service time, progress tutoring students, supporting site programs and recruiting volunteers to the FRYSC Corps each month using our America Learns system. Site supervisors must review and approve time reports ensuring the reported time is allocated to service, training or fundraising, and that the reported time is not prohibited by AmeriCorps.

The program member coordinator reviews time reports and monthly reports of student progress and service reflections, as a second control to identify and address inaccurate reporting and prohibited activities. The coordinator also identifies areas in which members need additional resources or training, and whether to address issues during a phone call or a site visit. FRYSC Corps hosts a face-to-face member meeting about 60 days after service begins. Site visits occur during the 3rd or 4th month of service to evaluate member strengths and weaknesses, and, overall grant compliance. Site supervisors complete a mid and end of year evaluation of the members' service progress.

### **MEMBER EXPERIENCE**

FRYSC Corps members' speak about their service experience to civic groups, school boards and at school-based career fairs. They speak of a mission that is not only to help students in the classroom, but also to address students lacking basic needs teachers cannot adequately address. A FRYSC Corps alum and new teacher pointed out during her presentation that all teachers should be required to spend time volunteering with a FRYSC. Her experience working with students and their families outside the classroom gave her invaluable insight. She is not alone. FRYSC Corps members witness the struggle some students have each and every day to arrive at the school door adequately clothed, fed, and emotionally and mentally prepared to learn. Whether they grew up in relative wealth or poverty, each member is motivated by the need for a change and their own potential in bringing it about. The work for that change when planning for direct and National Service events.

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FRYSC Corps informs the member service experience with a series of research-based presentations about the impact poverty has on children and families. Members also attend a FRYSC planned conference where they learn best practices and new information relevant to helping struggling children and families. Quarterly reporting allows FRYSC Corps members to reflect and write about topics related to service, community and civic responsibility. Members learn about their community support networks and how to access them as part of helping the students they serve. At FRYSC Corps meetings, members talk about what inspires them to act, and how that happens. Members are encouraged to connect with FRYSC Corps' social media and each other to develop peer networks and resources and share their service stories.

Many FRYSC Corps alums move on to teaching and social services careers. Over 60% of our members are new education graduates. Principals say that service members are well-prepared for their own classrooms because tutors have an invaluable chance to practice fundamental skills of lesson planning and instruction and student assessment. Alumni are active volunteers for schools, churches and non-profits using their experience to connect community needs with community resources. They participate and lead in PTAs, non-profit advisory councils, and events that make a difference in their communities.

### **COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION**

The Kentucky Commission for Community and Volunteer Service hosts a statewide member event with the aim of connecting members, celebrating their service and illustrating the breadth of AmeriCorps in our state. In preparation for that event and for introducing themselves to potential partners and beneficiaries, our members practice an elevator speech explaining their AmeriCorps mission.

FRYSC Corps is asked to dress the part of AmeriCorps members. Each one receives AmeriCorps signs and posters to display at their host sites. They wear shirts, pins or lanyards with the AmeriCorps logo during service hours. All members receive an AmeriCorps t-shirt when they finish orientation. Small rewards come at other time intervals. For example, members get a 500 hours AmeriCorps water bottle, a 900 hours AmeriCorps sweatshirt. At the end of the service year, members receive an AmeriCorps alumnus service pin and handmade bookmarks to commemorate their service experience.

### **Organizational Capability**

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING**

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Partners in the FRYSC Corps program proposal include the Division of Family Resource and Youth Services Centers, the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative, and each school district committing to support tutors.

DFRYSC is an agency of the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Mandated by the Kentucky Education Reform Act, FRYSCs launched in 1991 and continue to be funded only by state dollars. The primary goal of these centers is to remove nonacademic barriers to learning to enhance student academic success. FRYSCs provide services to students and their families from pre-school through grade 12. Centers offer programs and services determined by the needs of the community. FRYSCs record of success is based on improved student performance in class work, homework and peer relations. Parents report they experience greater satisfaction and involvement with the schools as a result of assistance through their local FRYSCs.

Each Kentucky school district requests funding for FRYSCs for their schools based on the number of students who receive free and reduced lunch; therefore, funding is often just enough to support the salary of the coordinator. Local partnerships with businesses, non-profits, churches and government agencies are required resources to fund FRYSC programs, including AmeriCorps. In addition to cash match, each local site provides in kind services to the members. Members receive space in which to tutor students, supervision from the FRYSC coordinator, tutoring materials, and supplies for community service projects. Members also receive Internet access, training, and professional development opportunities at their host sites.

The Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC) serves as fiscal agent and primary contact for this grant. The division, the secondary contact, retains supervisory authority over staff and approves all expenditures prior to submission for payment. Because the division is a part of state government, the payment of all expenditures and handling matching funds from local programs would require extensive retooling of internal accounting systems. OVEC provides experienced stable grant administration.

In 2013 OVEC administered \$5.2 million dollars in federal grant funding through the US Departments of Education and Health and Family Services in addition to the CNCS grants. These grants include the present CNCS AmeriCorps State formula grant for the FRYSC Corps as well as the competitively funded SUCCESS Corps.

The contract with OVEC ensures that the grant and cash match funds provided in support of FRYSC Corps are used only for the FRYSC Corps. It is not tied to the Division's budget. Though the DFRYSC does provide significant in-kind support to the FRYSC Corps grant in the form of office

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space, travel, training funds and supervision, no part of the grantee share or CNCS contribution supports DFRYSC operations.

DFRYSC provides oversight and promotion of FRYSC Corps' service goals and OVEC provides human resources and accounting management. To ensure FRYSC Corps is integrated with the culture of the division the corps staff participates in division meetings and workgroups and visit and monitor centers statewide. An advisory council for the Corps includes division representatives and program stakeholders. The DFRYSC director is the primary supervisor of the program staff and ensures service goals are being met by the FRYSC Corps program director. The FRYSC Corps program director reports current activity, completed program projects and upcoming program deadlines to the division director. The DFRYSC director identifies FRYSC Corps program strengths and weaknesses and provides resources to continue the successful management of this grant. The division director conducts performance evaluations for the FRYSC program director each year. The DFRYSC training director works with the FRYSC Corps to bring effective and timely professional development topics to members and program staff. This resource allows FRYSC Corps to offer high quality training to members at a greatly reduced cost.

OVEC has managed FRYSC Corps' grant's funds for the last six years. OVEC's chief financial officer oversees all fiscal reporting, disbursing funds and managing cash and in-kind matches from host sites. OVEC maintains its own system of approval requirements for expenses incurred by the program which is in addition to the approval required by the DFRYSC Director. The FRYSC Corps reports all time and employment records to OVEC's human resource coordinator. FRYSC Corps member record management policy must meet OVEC policy which ensures the program is compliant with federal and state employment regulations.

The FRYSC Corps has two staff members. Heather Musinski, the program director, has managed the FRYSC Corps since November 2006. Responsibilities include program planning and implementing site and member recruitment, technical assistance, and monitoring of local sites to ensure compliance with grant goals. This position ensures member files are compliant with CNCS requirements. The program director promotes the program and AmeriCorps in Kentucky schools and other state government agencies. This position oversees budget expenditures. The FRYSC Corps member coordinator, Carie Kizziar, served as an AmeriCorps VISTA and State member. She maintains member enrollment files, completes service site visits, provides technical assistance to members, and plans and leads training activities. The member coordinator reviews member time and service reports and collaborates with the program director to strengthen assistance and training.

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### **COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

The FRYSC Corps has been reviewed by the Kentucky State Commission as a successful and compliant program since 2003. Program staff attends all meetings and trainings provided by the state commission, as well as checking the AmeriCorps website regularly for updates.

Members and site supervisors must attend orientation at the beginning of their service. Prohibited activities and rules and regulations are reviewed during meetings and site visits to ensure awareness that noncompliance can mean that service hours will not count toward their service, and sites that do not comply will lose their member.

Members' time is recorded using the America Learns time keeping system, which documents service categories and requires a description of service activities. Site supervisors are trained to reject timesheets that reflect prohibited activities. Program staff reviews member timesheets to ensure compliance.

Compliance monitoring of sites and members occurs least once each year by program staff to ensure they avoid prohibited activities and are not displacing existing staff or volunteers. A monitoring tool based on the state commission's monitoring is used to ensure the right questions are being asked. The site monitoring tool is shared so sites can prepare for site visits by FRYSC Corps staff. Site supervisors conduct midyear and end of year member evaluations. Members complete monthly reports about student progress and service activity. Visits with principals and teachers determine the member's performance and to answer questions about the program goals and collect information about how to improve service. When issues with compliance or with service activity or service satisfaction come up they are addressed immediately by FRYSC Corps staff. The goal is to correct the issue by providing relevant guidance and appropriate resources and additional monitoring to ensure corrections are effective.

### **PAST PERFORMANCE**

In 2013, the last complete year of FRYSC Corps competitive funding, 110% of the slots awarded were filled. Quarter-time slots were refilled by members who completed their service. The partners committed to the remaining slots operate during the summer. Retention was 86.4%. Two full-time and 6 quarter-time members left for full-time employment. One member left for compelling personal circumstances. Though agreeing the service commitment was clearly stated, the offer of steady employment was cited as the reason members left before completing their term. FRYSC Corps staff

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responded to this by developing an alternative system of managing service time. Members who state they are searching for full time employment are encouraged to serve more hours each week to help them prepare to finish their service term and earn their education award. Time records for those members are regularly monitored to gauge their progress and they are reminded to adhere to their plan.

The Division of Family Resource and Youth Services Centers completed the second of a three-year competitive grant. FRYSC Corps exited 57 members with education awards in 2013. Performance measurements for reading tutoring were met or exceeded over the last year of funding. A total of 572 students received tutoring from FRYSC Corps tutors. Each member served an average of 20 students meeting target of 20 - 35 students. 526 students completed 21 hours or more tutoring with their tutor. FRYSC corps members met the goal of increasing reading scores of at least 311 students. Reading assessment scores increased by 50%, meaning students reading assessment scores improved at least half a reading level during the tutoring period. Reading assessments do not tell the entire story about student progress. Teachers, in evaluating each student's progress saw significant improvement in reading skills in 473, or 90% of the students tutored by FRYSC Corps members. Members had a goal of recruiting and managing 12 volunteers for FRYSC and school events during their service year. Members exceeded that goal with average of 63 volunteers. A total of 1911 non-AmeriCorps volunteers served 15,000 hours in episodic events of tutoring and event assistance. Demographic information shows that approximately 8% of FRYSC Corps recruited volunteers are baby boomers. About 28% of reported volunteers are college students. Disadvantaged youth and children make up an additional 53% of volunteers with FRYSC Corps activities.

Gallup estimates that from 2008-2012 26.5% of KY families with children are food insecure. Every service year FRYSC Corps members support their host sites by partnering with their host schools, churches and businesses to collect food items. In one quarter of 2013 over 12,000 pounds of food was collected and distributed to approximately 200 families so they had a reliable source of food over the winter holidays. FRYSC Corps members built or maintained weekend backpack food programs at their host schools. Members and volunteers pack and deliver bags of easily prepared food to over 600 children in need to take home over the weekend that quarter and every weekend during the school year.

Service often focuses on public health issues. In 2013 members organized support for 22 mobile dental office appointments. The School of Dentistry at the University of Kentucky, and a nonprofit, Kids First Dental Care, gave screenings and services to at least 1000 students.

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Every service year members organize events that bring people together and meet needs in the community; events like family reading nights, career days, recycling programs and school festivals. National Service days motivate members to involve students in service learning projects recognizing the service of our veterans and learning the power of voting in mock elections. Individual talents and skills lead our members to start fitness classes, book clubs, and art lessons. Thousands of Kentucky students and families are touched by events planned, organized and supported by FRYSC Corps.

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

#### **COST EFFECTIVENESS**

The FRYSC Corps requests 47.94 MSY at a cost of \$11,409. This is a decrease from the current FRYSC Corps MSY allocation of \$11,700. Thirty quarter-time education award only members allow FRYSC Corps to increase the capacity sites have to serve their communities.

Family Resource and Youth Services Centers are funded by state dollars. Each center receives funds based on the number of students receiving free/reduced lunch; therefore, funding typically supports a single employee. Coordinators find additional funding from local businesses and organizations and compete for diverse grant sources. These funds support programming.

The cash match made by the center and required to support FRYSC Corps has increased since 2004 when the match was \$4500. FRYSC Corps requires \$5875 cash match and in kind donation of workspace and technology, supervision and work supplies from sites in 2015. The Division of FRYSC provides office space and technology services for program staff use as in kind contributions. The director of the Division of FRYSC acts as the direct supervisor of the program staff and DFRYSC provides the use of state cars and mileage for program related business.

#### **BUDGET ADEQUACY**

The FRYSC Corps cash match required to host a member will increase from \$5500 to \$5875 in 2015. This increase allows the program to meet the necessary costs of providing member support. By increasing the match, the program is making investments in tutor and mentor training and support to improve the quality of direct service members provide to students. The division is committed to providing additional in-kind donations to decrease CNCS funds requested.

### **Evaluation Summary or Plan**

40 FRYSC Corps members (FT) will be placed with 12 school districts at 35 PS-12 partner schools in Kentucky where greater than 50% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch or if greater than

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50% of economically disadvantaged students served by the school are less than proficient readers. School instructional teams will assign 700 students to FRYSC Corps literacy tutors for small group instruction.

Core Activities: FT tutors conduct in-class reading tutoring with small groups of students for 9 weeks, 90 minutes weekly. Each member will be assigned small groups or reading students during class reading instruction for focused literacy concept work. Literacy focused peer-mentoring programming during the academic year. 10 meetings of 45 minutes each with students tutored by FRYSC Corps literacy tutors.

Output 1: 700 students will receive literacy intervention from a FRYSC Corps tutor.

Output 2: 150 students will receive literacy peer-mentoring.

Output 3: 90% of students will complete 13 hours of literacy intervention.

Output 4: 80% of reading mentees will attend 10 peer-mentoring meetings.

Output 5: 85% of literacy intervention students will meet expected growth goals on evidenced based assessments.

Short-term outcomes predict that students served by FRYSC Corps literacy tutors will have improved academic results in reading or language arts as measured by pre/post assessments, improved academic performance in other subjects, and improved positive behaviors while at school.

Mid-term outcomes predicts that students served by FRYSC Corps literacy tutors will successfully complete academic year reading instruction, successfully meet their expected reading goals as measured by evidenced based school assessment, is promoted to the next grade as indicated by school records.

Evaluation Hypotheses: More students who receive tutoring services from FRYSC Corps tutors will reach expected reading goals during the term of service than students who do not receive FRYSC Corps intervention.

30 FRYSC Corps members (QT) will be placed in 20 PS-12 partner schools in Kentucky to act as school-based mentors for students identified as economically disadvantaged who exhibit behavior that puts them at-risk for failure. Member mentors meet with students during their 6 month term to

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model positive social skills.

Core Activity: School-based mentoring with QT mentors for 18 weeks, 3 meetings of 20 minutes each week with students identified by a school counseling team with behaviors that put them at-risk for school failure.

Output 6: 30 K-12 students will receive school-based mentoring from a FRYSC Corps member.

Output 7: 80% of students will participate in 18 hours of school-based mentoring.

Output 8: 80% of students who receive school-based mentoring will show increased positive behavior as measured by pre/post survey.

### Short-term Outcomes

Students served by FRYSC Corps school-based mentors will have: Improved positive behaviors while at school.

### Mid-Term Outcomes

Students served by FRYSC Corps school-based mentors will have: Fewer absences, increased participation in classroom or school events, and is promoted to the next grade.

Evaluation Hypotheses: More students who receive mentoring services from FRYSC Corps mentors will increase positive school behaviors than expected reading goals students who do not receive FRYSC Corps intervention.

The FRYSC Corps contracts program evaluation services through the Kent School of Social Work at the University of Louisville. The evaluator will use data collected by FRYSC Corps members and maintained in the FRYSC Corps America Learns database to analyze student gains and determine whether predicted outcomes occurred each academic year. The evaluator will consult with program staff to develop report questions that accurately collect data needed for analysis.

The evaluator must have 1-3 year(s) experience with statistical analysis and evaluation design.

A budget of \$2000 has been committed to evaluation services.

### Amendment Justification

N/A

# Narratives

## Clarification Summary

### 2015 Clarification Items

#### A. Programmatic Clarification Items

1. Please verify that staff supervising members have expertise in tutoring.

FRYSC Corps partner sites will be required by a memorandum of agreement to ensure that member tutors serving at their site be part of the instructional team for the students they are assigned. The instructional team must include students' classroom teacher or reading teacher or a staff member with certification as a reading instructor. The member tutor must meet with the instructional team every week to discuss student progress and plan targeted instruction with the supervision of the certified staff.

#### C. Performance Measure Clarification

3. Please explain how the program will ensure that students receiving both interventions will be counted only once in all outputs and outcomes.

Students receiving tutoring services receive a confidential identification number used to track student progress in the FRYSC Corps record keeping system. Students participating in the peer-mentoring program (reading buddies) also receive an ID number if they are not previously assigned to a FRYSC Corps tutor. Each student will receive only one ID and interventions and progress reported for that student will be unique to that student.

FRYSC Corps school-based mentoring recipients will work exclusively with quarter-time FRYSC Corps mentors. Quarter-time members are recruited through post-secondary social work practicum programs. The schools those quarter-time members serve do not host FRYSC Corps literacy tutors and their students will not receive literacy tutoring from the FRYSC Corps program.

4. Please explain how each of the instruments described in ED5 meet CNCS's definition of "standardized test". For each instrument specify the amount of gain from pre-test to post-test that is necessary to be counted as improved.

FRYSC Corps tutored students' assessment scores must meet the expected growth goal set by their instructional team to be counted as improved.

FRYSC Corps partner schools chose the reading assessments based on recommendations for reliability and validity from the Kentucky Department of Education.

The following assessments are in use by FRYSC Corps partner sites.

## **Narratives**

Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Process (MAP):

Areas measured -- Reading skills

Grade levels -- Grades 2 - 10

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS):

Areas measured -- Reading comprehension, Decoding, Cipher Knowledge, Phoneme Awareness, Letter Knowledge, Phonological Awareness.

Grade levels -- Pre-K to Grade 3

Renaissance Learning's STAR:

Areas measured -- Reading Comprehension

Grade levels -- Grades 1, 2, 3 and higher

Renaissance Learning's STAR Early Literacy:

Areas measured -- Reading Comprehension, Decoding, Cipher Knowledge, Letter Knowledge, Semantics, Phonological Awareness.

Grade levels -- Pre-K to grade 3

Discovery Think Link:

Areas measured -- Reading Foundational Skills, Reading Comprehension

Grade levels -- Grades 1-10

### **D. Strategic Engagement Slots**

2. In order to increase the number of individuals with disabilities serving as AmeriCorps members... The FRYSC Corps is not seeking additional strategic engagement slots. FRYSC Corps orientation includes training on requesting reasonable accommodation to perform service activity if a member has need. The FRYSC Corps intends to post the service position opportunity and position description with regional and local independent living programs and disability resources centers at local universities. Applicants from these sources will be considered competitively with all other applicants.

### **E. MSY with No Program Funds Attached Clarification**

1. The number and type of slots requested.

## Narratives

Thirty (30) 450-hour (QT) slots, 7.94 MSYs. The members are recruited through post-secondary social work programs. The service activity for these members is school-based mentoring. They serve with Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (FRYSCs) to help address non-academic barriers to school success.

2. The Description of resources provided to support the additional MSYs.

Thirty (30) QT FRYSC Corps members will receive orientation to the FRYSC Corps program including prohibited activities training, mentoring methods, time reporting and activity reporting. Program related forms and materials will be available to members on the FRYSC Corps web site. Criminal history checks will be completed for each QT member. QT members may attend FRYSC Corps training sponsored. Members receive an AmeriCorps branded pin and signs. Orientation and additional training and reporting support is provided by existing FRYSC Corps program staff. Site supervision for QT members is an in kind donation of services provided by host site FRYSC coordinators. Host sites also provide in kind donation of work space and communication technology.

### Continuation Changes

N/A

### Grant Characteristics