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Executive Summary

The Emerald Youth Foundation proposes to have 55 AmeriCorps members who will serve in afterschool/summer and tutoring programs in Knoxville's inner city focused on helping students with their homework, providing literacy, math, and science academic enrichment activities, tutoring, leading fitness, nutrition, and recreation times as well as providing enrichment experiences and direct service opportunities. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for helping to contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged elementary through high school students. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 150 volunteers who will be engaged in tutoring, fitness activities, and general program support.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education. The CNCS investment of \$192,427 will be matched with \$192,427 in private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

a. Problem/Need

Knoxville is located in Knox County in the Tennessee Valley between the Cumberland and Great Smoky Mountains and is the largest city in East Tennessee. Knoxville ranks as the third largest city in the state with over 183,000 people and 99 square miles within the city limits. The majority (76%) of the population is white with the balance African American (17%), Latino (5%), and other ethnicities (2%) (2010 U.S. Census). Emerald Youth's AmeriCorps program, The Emerald AmeriCorps Members (T.E.A.M.), seeks to improve the educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged elementary through high school students in Knoxville's inner city by providing afterschool/summer programs and tutoring. Our work is predominantly in the city's African American neighborhoods - in 2013 the 1,400 students we served were 60% African American, 28% white, 3% Latino, and 9% other ethnicities.

According to Dr. Bob Lupton, founder of Focus Christian Strategies in Atlanta and author of "Toxic Charity" published in 2011, failing communities are created when capable, achieving, educated, politically-active, spiritual, business-minded, upwardly mobile, role model neighbors choose to leave. When this happens, service and retail outlets leave for greener pastures, investors turn the housing stock into rental property, and the neighborhood becomes defined by the less economically mobile residents who remain and replace those who flee. Homeownership lags, and crime and the perception of crime and vagrancy rises. Children living in these areas are typically being raised by single parents

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and have poor educational outcomes. Families are under stress to survive financially, and high-stress home environments can develop.

Knoxville's inner city has many characteristics of a failing community as described by Dr. Lupton. For example, according to 2010 U.S. Census data, one inner-city neighborhood has over 64% rental homes with a median home age in the early 1940's to early 1950's, 52% of the households are headed by single parents, mostly moms, and over 20% of families live below the poverty line. Educational outcome data bears out that students in the city lag substantially behind their suburban peers. As summarized in Knox County Schools' report on 2011-12 academic progress:

- Educators regard ACT scores that meet or exceed benchmarks in English, math, reading, and science as strong indicators of college success. However, only 21% of Knox County high school students achieved all four benchmarks, and only 1% and 3% at the two inner-city high schools (Fulton and Austin-East) included in the service area of this project met these benchmarks.
- In the six high schools that serve students from urban neighborhoods, an average of 27% of 9th graders graduated in four years and scored a 21 or better on the ACT; the two inner-city schools had the lowest percentage of students who met this benchmark, 7.0 and 15.9%. The average for all high schools in Knox County was 40%.
- Students living in the city also have lower rates of graduation and thus college attendance. The inner-city high schools graduated 84% and 85% of their seniors, both below Knox County's overall average of 90% and the current state goal of 90% and the 2020 state goal of 100%.

Additionally, in 2013-14 13% of Knoxville's urban 8th grade students were proficient or advanced in math on TCAP (Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program) standardized tests, compared to 36% of this cohort being proficient as 6th graders - a 64% decrease. In contrast, 37% of all Knox County 8th graders were proficient or advanced in math, compared to 50% of this cohort being proficient as 6th graders - a 26% decrease. Not only are urban students performing lower than compared to students across the County but the rate of decline from 6th to 8th grade is worse compared to the district average. When comparing ACT scores at the 2 inner-city high schools against the 3 top performing high schools in Knox County, there is also a significant gap in achievement. Experts agree that a minimum ACT composite score of 21 is required for success in college (Jeff Allen and Jim Sconing, "Using ACT Assessment Scores to Set Benchmarks for College Readiness," August 2005). However, only 14% of students at inner-city schools scored a 21 or above compared to 67% for the top-performing county schools; 5% of city students scored 24 or above compared to 47% of top-performing students; and 1% of inner-city students scored a 27 or above compared to 29% of top-

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performers (Tennessee Department of Education Report Card, 2013-14). In 2013, the University of Tennessee entering freshman class had an average ACT score of 27.

ACT projections, from scores on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAPs) assessment, for elementary and middle school students in Emerald Youth's programs indicate that a majority of them are projected to score less than a 16 in reading or math, a third are projected to score a 16, and less than 3% are projected to score a 24. This compares unfavorably with the average 2012 ACT math score of 20 for Knox County's non-urban high schools (Tennessee Department of Education Report Card). In addition, using thousands of data points over many years, the ACT organization has determined benchmark scores that correlate with passing grades in freshman-level college courses. They range from an 18 in English to a 23 in Biology. (Jeff Allen, "Updating the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks," September 2013). It is evident from these ACT projections that Knoxville's urban students are poised to fall woefully short of being capable of college-level academics.

b. Theory of Change and Logic Model

To turn failing communities around and provide healthy places for kids and families to thrive, interventions and investments need to be made in these communities. Quality housing, jobs, and educational opportunities need to be available. Supportive and caring positive role models need to be present in the lives of kids, and active skill-building needs to be happening for adults and young people (Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D., "Building Adult Capabilities to Improve Child Outcomes: A Theory of Change," 2013). Afterschool/summer and tutoring programs can be used to provide an additional network of caring adults as well as focus on academic skill-building once the school day ends. High quality options need to be low-cost and close by for families to take advantage of them. Parents also need to understand the importance of a good education, understand what resources are available and how they can become involved in helping their children achieve strong academic outcomes.

Over the past 25 years, Emerald Youth has worked to reverse poor outcomes and level the playing field in Knoxville's most threatened neighborhoods. We have worked to connect students with needed academic supports afterschool, place volunteers in school classrooms, and help students transition into post-secondary education experiences. For example, in December 2011 4 elementary students from one of our afterschool programs were recognized for their scores on a district-implemented standardized test - most improved math in 2nd grade, most improved reading in 4th and 5th grades, and highest reading score in 5th grade. Four out of the top 5 scores on the ACT taken by the junior class in 2012-13 at one of the urban high schools were made by students in our ACT Prep course including the highest scorer who earned a 29. We believe that it is important to give inner-city young

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people the opportunities needed to break the cycle so many are in and help them become leaders who can make a positive difference in Knoxville and other local and global communities. Otherwise they risk being a generation of adults that is at best underemployed and at worst has limited life skills, lacks a sense of responsibility, and depends on others for their subsistence.

The specific intervention proposed by T.E.A.M. is to provide high quality afterschool/summer and tutoring programs to inner-city students in Knoxville. There will be 7 service sites in different inner-city neighborhoods within urban churches and faith-based organizations which provide space, volunteers, and other in-kind resources. AmeriCorps members and volunteers will also be on-campus in the 2 urban high schools. This intervention will help improve educational outcomes and support economically disadvantaged students as they prepare for success in post-secondary educational institutions.

A total of 67 AmeriCorps members will serve in support of these outcomes. Nine members (6 reduced half-time during the school year and 3 minimum-time in the summer) will ideally be certified teachers or upper-level college students seeking a teaching degree. These members will be responsible for implementing computer-based learning labs where students are assessed to identify their academic skill deficiencies and then provided a personalized educational plan to work on closing their skill gaps. The members will also help lead literacy, math, and science enrichment activities for younger students as well as ACT Prep and college entrance workshops for high school students. Fifty-three members - 26 during the school year (20 reduced half-time and 6 quarter-time) and 27 minimum-time in the summer will help implement the balance of the programming including helping students with homework, assisting in the literacy, math, and science activities, leading fitness, nutrition, and recreation times, providing enrichment experiences, and directing service opportunities (past projects have included Graffiti Busters, Teenage Pregnancy Awareness). Members will assist in transporting young people from school, on field trips, and to swimming lessons.

In addition to this program implementation role, members will help recruit volunteers and build key relationships with students, families, and the urban schools. They will spend time with individuals or small groups of students outside structured program time as opportunities for mentoring, additional help with homework, or outings. Members will visit teachers and other campus personnel to stay informed regarding a child's academic needs and any behavior issues. Members will volunteer at the schools including coordinating volunteers who serve during the day at school tutoring, organizing clothes to be distributed from 'clothing closets,' assisting teachers by making copies, etc.

An additional 4 members - 2 quarter-time serving during the school year and 2 reduced half-time

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serving year round - will serve in a sports program run by Emerald Youth Foundation. This program is open to young people in the afterschool/summer and tutoring programs as well as other young people living in the city and provides opportunities for physical activity. Sports currently offered include soccer, volleyball, basketball, baseball, lacrosse, flag football, track, swim, and performance training. Responsibilities of the AmeriCorps members will include student and volunteer coach recruitment, duties needed on the day of practices and games, planning end-of-season banquets, etc.

Although it is expected that all T.E.A.M. members will help recruit volunteers, 1 reduced half-time member will serve T.E.A.M. as the Volunteer Coordinator focusing solely on this effort year round. Volunteers are important and help students with homework, tutor, lead fitness activities and coach. Therefore this member will assist Emerald Youth's Staffing Manager in volunteer recruitment, screening, placement, and management. This includes attending recruitment fairs at area colleges, speaking with different churches including the ones implementing the afterschool programs, civic groups, and businesses about volunteer opportunities, running background checks on volunteer applicants, leading volunteer orientations, and planning and implementing appreciation events.

AmeriCorps members add unique value. Emerald Youth Foundation and the churches would not be able to serve as many students at the quality level desired nor provide the variety of offerings if not for AmeriCorps members. For example, the afterschool program has a 1:8 adult to child ratio for safety, quality, and effective relationship building. The availability of AmeriCorps members allows for this ratio which is lower than state-monitored childcare settings which range from 1:24 to 1:32 depending on age. Members with interest and experience in education and fitness are also sought to place at each service site. These members take the lead in such activities increasing the level of enthusiasm displayed during an activity as well as offering valuable experience to the member. Lastly, through AmeriCorps members, young people can actually see people live out what our organization and AmeriCorps try to impart. In communities where many support services are offered, an entitlement culture can become predominant. Young people are reminded daily in their interactions with members the importance of getting things done and acquiring the skills, education, and training they need for productive employment. This reminder is even amplified when members are indigenous to the neighborhoods T.E.A.M. serves. In the 2014-15 program year, 6 of the 57 members are indigenous.

c. Evidence Base

Emerald Youth has shaped our intervention plan by drawing on the following evidence:

(1) Quality afterschool/summer and tutoring programs are important to struggling families because

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they provide a safe and supervised environment for kids afterschool and in the summer, academic enrichment activities, healthy snacks, and a network of caring adults who can serve as positive role models. It is reported that African American and Latino children can especially benefit from such programs as their communities typically see disparities in education as well as extracurricular activities. Research shows that African American and Latino students attending afterschool programs had encouraging results such as gains in their standardized math test scores after 2 years of regular attendance, higher aspirations concerning finishing school, and better behavior during the school day (Afterschool Alliance, "The Importance of Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs in African-American and Latino Communities," July 2013).

(2) Search Institute has identified 40 skills, behaviors, relationships, and experiences necessary for healthy youth development. Over 4 million young people across the United States of different races, socioeconomic backgrounds, and situations were surveyed, and it was found that the more assets a young person has or has been exposed to, the least likely they are to engage in negative behaviors and the more likely they are to engage in positive behaviors and become contributing adults ("A Framework of Developmental Assets," 1990).

(3) Harlem Children's Zone has identified 3 key factors that can help transform the life of an inner-city child. First, focus on a concentrated geographic area to produce a "tipping point," or a critical mass of young people who can be self sufficient. Second, walk with children from birth through graduation from college in order to ensure lasting impact. Lastly, address all of the barriers to a child's academic success, such as healthcare, a chaotic home life, unfamiliarity with the college application process, etc. (Danielle Hanson, "Assessing the Harlem Children's Zone," March 6, 2013). Harlem Children's Zone reports 100% of their pre-kindergarteners are "school ready," 95% of their high school seniors have been accepted into college, and 954 of their students are attending college (FY2013 Fact Sheet).

(4) Individualized learning interventions help students make the largest academic gains. On-line software solutions can easily help do this. Students using individualized Student Work Plans provided through Compass Learning's Odyssey coupled with the assessment ability of Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) designed by the Northwest Evaluation Association have been shown to be 2.3 times more likely to grow academically compared to a non-usage group. A study also showed that the more students use Odyssey, the more they grow academically. (Compass Learning, "Do Compass Learning solutions help students learn?," 2014).

Emerald Youth Foundation started providing afterschool/summer programs and tutoring early in

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its existence. The quality of the programs has continued to increase through incorporating Search's 40 developmental assets into programming, staffing changes, such as hiring a K-6 and high school certified teachers to manage the academic programs, continually updating curricula and using technology to enhance learning, upgrading the training of AmeriCorps members and volunteers, and developing a "Program 360" quality assurance monitoring system that examines all aspects of the program from different implementation viewpoints such as AmeriCorps member, volunteer, staff, and administrator. Like Harlem Children's Zone, Emerald Youth Foundation concentrates on a geographically defined service area where 12,000 economically disadvantaged students live. We provide a holistic approach focused on faith (not included in this AmeriCorps program), learning, relationships, and health to support young people and their families, and in 2011 Emerald Youth made the decision to 'walk with them longer' and extend our programming to include young adults. Ideally, Emerald Youth is in a relationship which begins with young people in the first grade and continues to shape their lives all the way into their early-mid twenties. Lastly, we have begun developing personalized educational plans using MAPS and Odyssey, both of which are aligned with Tennessee educational standards. In the 2013-14 school year, 57% of the students involved in Emerald Youth afterschool programs who took a MAP pre- and post-test in math and 59% in reading achieved or exceeded their target growth, the growth needed to be progressing on pace with other students nationally at the same academic achievement level, projected for them. 78% of the students achieved or exceeded the target growth in one or the other subject.

d. Notice Priority

The proposed program falls within the 2015 AmeriCorps funding priority of Education. Activities such as homework help, tutoring, computer-based learning reinforcement, ACT prep, communication with teachers, and field trips to see career opportunities seek to contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children, improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools, and support economically disadvantaged students as they prepare for success in post-secondary educational institutions.

e. Member Training

To orient members to the AmeriCorps program, Emerald Youth, the community they will be serving in, their placement sites, and to the service they will perform, Emerald Youth offers a 1-2 week pre-service orientation and training. The first day of a member's service is for orientation to the AmeriCorps National Service program, and to T.E.A.M. and Emerald Youth. On this day members define AmeriCorps, discuss its history, review their position descriptions and member service

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agreements, learn what to expect during their service term, review Emerald Youth and AmeriCorps policies and procedures including prohibited activities, and complete appropriate forms. The AmeriCorps Program Director reinforces the importance of certain rules and prohibited activities by reviewing them more than once and by discussing the disciplinary process.

In order to insure properly prepared staff, AmeriCorps members, and volunteers, Emerald Youth has an excellent, in-house training program through Emerald Youth University. Emerald Youth University is an integrated, experiential education program designed to train urban youth workers. Courses have been developed based upon extensive and intensive ministry experiences with urban children and youth occurring for more than two decades. The steps of the Instructional Systems Design Model (analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation) were used to create learning modules that provide instruction to staff, members, and volunteers in the implementation of the organization's policies, procedures, strategies, techniques, and best practices. Emerald Youth University first delivered training in August 2004 for certification in Urban Youth Work, an internal certification designed to equip the learner for direct service with urban children and youth through program implementation and relationship-building. A training manual, curriculum, instructor guides, video and PowerPoint presentations have been developed in-house to help in the training delivery. Instructors are Emerald Youth staff who have several years experience in implementing our programs and/or experience as classroom teachers. This training begins for members on their 2nd day as "classroom" training. It introduces them to the programs in which they will serve and prepares them to perform all the activities they will engage in during their term of service. When classroom training ends (typically 5-7 business days later), members begin an approximately 2-week on-the-job training. Members receive over 20 hours of pre-service training in 6 training topics including Emerald Youth Overview, Learning, Relationship Building, Health Improvement, Safety & Security, and Citizenship. The completion of 3 assignments signifies the conclusion of training. At this point, they receive an Urban Youth Worker Certificate during a graduation event held in-house.

Volunteers also receive orientation and training through Emerald Youth University. During orientation, volunteers learn about Emerald Youth and its programs as well as learn about expected boundaries with kids and families and prohibited activities. Training is provided for their specific role.

Once a month, members will also engage in member development opportunities entitled AmeriCorps Development Days. See Member Experience section for more information.

f. Member Supervision

The first encounter members have with their supervisors is to complete the 3 training assignments

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briefly highlighted in the Member Training section. One of these assignments is a thorough discussion of the specific neighborhood in which they will be serving. Another assignment is a site checklist providing a time to meet key staff, team members and volunteers which will help ensure AmeriCorps members are ready to begin their service term. This checklist also details position information including schedules, information on when and how their living allowances will be distributed; building information including a tour, emergency information, communications and technology, parking, security, and cleaning; people information including team members, volunteers, students, families, and church members; community information including the location of the schools and key school personnel; and program information including student records required, supplies, program calendar, and transitions. The last assignment is an assessment designed to be completed at the end of the members' two-week on-the-job training. This assessment provides a private platform for supervisors and members to openly discuss how each individual member is doing so far with each significant part of their service expectations. If a member is lacking in any area, the supervisor and member identify those areas together and discuss improvement moving forward.

A course through Emerald Youth University has been developed called "Supervising AmeriCorps Members" to help AmeriCorps supervisors understand the National Service Program, prohibited activities, and appropriate ways to supervise members. This course is offered to all new AmeriCorps supervisors by the T.E.A.M. Program Director who is in routine contact with them for support and oversight. The T.E.A.M. Program Director, a former T.E.A.M. member, is in routine contact with all members as well through team time, service events and training activities and is available to assist members with problems they may have during their service.

Members serving in learning labs will be supervised by Emerald Youth staff who are licensed teachers. Members serving in a program support role will be supervised by the Emerald Youth Children's Director or Youth Director at their service site. The Volunteer Coordinator will be supervised by the Staffing Manager. Many of these supervisors are former T.E.A.M. members themselves, and all have supervised AmeriCorps members in previous terms. This familiarity with the AmeriCorps program will help ensure members will receive adequate support and guidance throughout their term.

g. Member Experience

Once a month, T.E.A.M. members across all service sites will come together for development, reflection and team building, called AmeriCorps Development Days (ACDD), led by Emerald Youth staff including the T.E.A.M Program Director. These ACDDs include topics that not only help review

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and gain skills helpful for their current service but review skills that are important for the workforce. Topics include, but are not limited to, communication, problem solving and critical thinking, and job readiness (including information on the education award). The majority of these topic materials come from the U.S. Department of Labor's "Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for the Workplace."

T.E.A.M. members will also be given opportunities to establish connections with each other during their weekly site meetings. These meetings are a time of reflection, celebration and discussion on program issues, changes, or news. They will additionally have opportunities to establish connections with the broader National Service network through AmeriCorps service events. These events occur at least once a school year semester including Make A Difference Day (MADD) and Martin Luther King, Jr Service Day. For these activities, T.E.A.M. members will join AmeriCorps members from at least one other program in Knoxville and sometimes from other programs in the region. Together, these AmeriCorps members will provide service in a local community such as painting, light construction, creek clean-up, etc. which not only benefits that community, but also builds esprit de corps with members from the other corps. After the service, there will be a time for members to meet together on site in groups to reflect on their service time.

In addition to the service/work skill sessions, ACDDs will encompass training centered around the importance of active and productive citizenship. The curriculum for this is from "Active Citizens 101", Corporation for National and Community Service, Constitutional Rights Foundation, 2001 as well as from "Our Great Democracy, a Patriotic Civics Program" developed by Modern Woodmen of America. Subjects covered include active citizenship, leadership, basic rights, etc. T.E.A.M. members will develop and implement a "child appropriate curriculum" on active citizenship to be delivered in the afterschool/summer programs. There is no better way to learn something than to have to teach it to someone else. This allows members to reflect on their own experience and articulate it to others.

Recruiting from within the partner churches serving as the placement sites for T.E.A.M. members as well as from twenty years of past Emerald Youth participants will not only provide a strong pool of candidates, but also a strong group of people selected to serve as AmeriCorps member who are indigenous to the communities T.E.A.M. serves and represent several traditionally underrepresented populations including low income individuals and African Americans. People from the community are not only applying but being selected. In the last three program years, as few as 6 and as many as 9 indigenous individuals have served as AmeriCorps members each year.

h. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

As mentioned earlier, during orientation members are introduced to AmeriCorps and its history.

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They learn that they are signing on to a nationwide opportunity, a national movement, to directly impact communities and the people in these communities. The new members hear that this commitment should be taken seriously. At the end of orientation, members stand up, hold their right hand in the air and "swear in" to AmeriCorps stating the pledge out loud.

Emerald Youth staff and AmeriCorps supervisors refer to T.E.A.M. members as "AmeriCorps members" when in discussion about them or introducing them to anyone, such as other team members, kids, parents, and volunteers. AmeriCorps members are identified as such in public releases.

Identification of AmeriCorps members is visual with members wearing t-shirts with the AmeriCorps logo on the sleeve. During orientation, the AmeriCorps Program Director thoroughly reviews Emerald Youth's AmeriCorps dress code policy which requires T.E.A.M. members to wear AmeriCorps identification anytime they are serving hours. They are also made aware of when not to wear AmeriCorps gear and are told only AmeriCorps members or alums are allowed to wear gear. T.E.A.M. members receive five AmeriCorps/Emerald Youth t-shirts during pre-service training.

Internal and external signage at AmeriCorps service sites is posted.

Organizational Capability

a. Organizational Background and Staffing

In the late '80s, Emerald Avenue United Methodist Church began a summer outreach program with children in the urban neighborhood surrounding the church. As the program grew, the need for a separate organization arose, and Emerald Youth Foundation was incorporated in 1991. Since then, Emerald Youth has been actively shaping the lives of urban youth, taking the hands of at-risk boys and girls in the heart of Knoxville and walking with them until they are young adults. Through its programs, Emerald Youth provides opportunities for learning, physical activity, fun, leadership development, and discipleship for preschool-young adults. The mission is to raise up a large number of urban youth to love Jesus Christ and become effective leaders who help renew their communities. Emerald Youth works with more than 1,600 children, youth, and young adults in the city.

The organization is managed by a 3 member Executive Team: Steve Diggs serves as the President/CEO and helped found Emerald Youth after starting as a part-time youth pastor at Emerald Avenue United Methodist Church. His degree is in business administration, and he is very well-respected not only for his knowledge and drive to impact urban kids but also for his relationships with donors. Emerald Youth is referred to by many as "the best run non-profit in Knoxville." Dr. Shara Shoup is Emerald Youth's COO. She has been on staff for 11 years and volunteered for 5 before joining full-time. Shara has a Ph.D. in inorganic chemistry and, prior to joining Emerald Youth,

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managed two business units for MicroCoating Technologies, Inc., in Atlanta. In that capacity, she wrote and managed over \$6 million in government grants, while developing sales, marketing, and customer relations strategies. Scot Braun is the CFO on a contract basis. Scot holds an Executive MBA and has more than 25 years of experience in corporate finance, capital raises and restructurings, risk management, operational streamlining, strategic planning, regulatory and corporate governance, and management consulting for both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. Scot also serves as a governor-appointed member of the State of Tennessee's Building Finance Committee.

A strong management staff helps with day-to-day programs including operations and curriculum/program development. Rachel Davis serves as the Staffing Manager and AmeriCorps Program Director. Rachel holds a M.A. in Human Resource Development from Tusculum College. She served as a T.E.A.M. member in 2003 for two consecutive years prior to her current position. In her second member term, Rachel served as T.E.A.M.'s Corps Council Representative at state events. Kent Stanger manages the afterschool/summer and tutoring programs. Kent attended schools served by Emerald Youth, completed a business management degree, served as a T.E.A.M. AmeriCorps member for 2 years, and has been on staff since 2007. Emerald Youth has two certified teachers with teaching experience on staff who develop our academic programs. Heather Taylor is a K-6 teacher, and Christi Cardwell is a high school teacher who previously taught for 7 years at one of the inner-city high schools referenced here.

Emerald Youth has been continuously administering an AmeriCorps Program since 1998. This has included management of the financial and student records as well as routine reporting and evaluation. Emerald Youth has had strong audit results of its financial systems and processes.

The afterschool/summer and tutoring programs will be done in partnership with 7 urban churches and faith-based organizations. A signed Covenant Agreement exists for each partner and Emerald Youth Foundation. The longest partnership has been in place since 2007 with the most recently affiliated expected to sign in early 2015. The partners contribute cash and/or in-kind resources, including facilities, each year as well as meet up to 6 times each year to discuss programming. Significant planning occurs among the churches, faith-based organizations, and Emerald Youth to ensure needs of the neighborhoods are met and quality program implementation happens.

b. Compliance and Accountability

Compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations will be ensured in several ways. The AmeriCorps Program Director and Emerald Youth COO will review the AmeriCorps Provisions and contract once a year at minimum. The Program Director will review the member service agreement

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before each term to ensure it is inclusive of the latest provisions, rules and regulations and will then review it with supervisors. New members and supervisors will discuss the responsibilities of the members and the prohibited activities each term. Member candidates will be "invited" via eGrants by the Program Director no later than the orientation start date. The Program Director will notify CNCS's National Service Trust, via the MyAmeriCorps Portal, within 30 days of a member's start date. During orientation, members will have the opportunity to indicate whether they have a disability and what, if any, requests they may have for reasonable accommodations or can waive completing it. To transition into the service experience, age and citizenship verification documents will be submitted by the last day of the pre-service training to ensure T.E.A.M. has the appropriate documentation on-hand. Timesheets will be reviewed, signed and dated weekly by the supervisor and Program Director to ensure members are on track with their service hours and not performing prohibited activities. Discrepancies or questions will be addressed immediately. Service sites will be monitored frequently both informally and formally for quality assurance and to detect any risks or non-compliance issues. Issues will be reported in writing to the supervisor, pastor of the church, and COO with a timeline for correction and a follow-up date. Follow ups will be documented in writing with completed corrective actions noted.

c. Past Performance

For the 2011-12 and 2013-14 project years, all of the performance measures were met. In the 2012-13 project year, one program goal was not met. Only 51 of the 75 students projected achieved their target academic growth. Training for AmeriCorps members responsible for the learning labs was improved, and the staff person managing the members instituted weekly meetings to review each student's academic performance. In the 2013-14 project year, this performance measure was exceeded with 120 students out of the projected 75 achieving their target growth.

For the 2013-14 project year, we filled 100% of our awarded slots through recruiting primarily within the JustLead service sites and neighborhoods, our pool of past participants, our volunteer registry, local colleges/universities, and local mega churches.

For the 2013-14 project year, we retained 95% of our members with 3 out of 59 exiting early. One member exited because she did not fully consider the commitment required of her as an AmeriCorps member and the class load she would carry in the spring. Another member failed to uphold our Agreement of Personal Standards and instead of working with us on this chose to quit abruptly. The last member was exited for disciplinary reasons. We will remind future applicants about the commitment required and how this is different than an hourly paid position since the slot can't be

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refilled after a certain period of time. We will also have a specific conversation asking them to consider all they will have going on in their life should they be selected to serve in AmeriCorps (e.g. college classes, another job, etc) as well as their finances to ensure that this is a commitment they can complete.

An audit of the 2012-13 year indicated some areas of improvement. These included ensuring members were dating timesheets and authorization forms granting permission to use their name or photograph and documenting which members were authorized to serve with vulnerable populations and which needed to be accompanied pending approval. One member had been overpaid, and one Financial Status Report had been submitted late. Corrective actions have been put in place for each of these.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

a. Cost Effectiveness

We believe that this budget is sufficient to carry out the program effectively and aligns with the proposed activities. It is a cost effective model that uses less than full-time members in order to maximize the number of members serving in the programs. The type of member has been specifically selected for the role and the number of hours needed to effectively fill that role. Volunteers will help supplement program activities. The cost per child for this program (including staff time not added in cost share) is comparable to the \$1500/child the Tennessee Department of Education has determined reasonable for a high quality afterschool program providing transportation (2014 LEAPS Manual). Another 500+ young people will benefit from AmeriCorps member and volunteer support provided to the sports program. It should be noted that while Emerald Youth Foundation is a faith-based organization, no AmeriCorps funding nor Emerald Youth cost share is used for religious purposes.

Emerald Youth's cost share is 50%, or \$224,221, and will be both cash and in-kind through a variety of sources including individuals (cash), churches (in-kind), businesses (in-kind), and foundations (cash). 47%, or a total of \$105,304 of the match has been secured. This includes the in-kind commitments as well as \$37,500 in cash from a family foundation. Meetings with other family foundations are being scheduled to gain their commitment. The cash from individuals will come primarily through events planned in 2015 and 2016.

The Cost per MSY is \$11,478 compared to \$11,508 approved during the previous grant cycle.

b. Budget Adequacy

The budget is without mathematical errors and contains a narrative for each line item as to how it was calculated. It includes the sources of cost share Emerald Youth will use to cover its 50%.

Narratives

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

A. Programmatic Clarification- 4/14/15

1. Tutoring is implemented by members and volunteers and can take place at either the site of the afterschool program or in one of the schools we serve. The members and volunteers who tutor with this program are NOT considered to be employees of the schools. As required in 45 CFR 2522.940, any member who tutors must be at least a high school graduate or have earned the equivalent and complete pre-service and in-service tutor training. Members self-verify they have graduated from high school or completed their GED when submitting an application for service and will provide a transcript or copy of their high school diploma/GED as well. They will attend pre-service and in-service tutoring training tracked by sign-in logs which also include the date completed. Therefore, members will meet the qualifications required to tutor.

The strategies or tools used to assess student progress and measure student outcomes are on-line, software solutions. Personalized educational plans are developed for each student using Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), designed by the Northwest Evaluation Association and used with 3,000,000 students each year. Students take a MAP pre-test in the fall of each school year and a post-test in the spring. This tool is a computerized adaptive test that reflects the instructional level of each student. The assessment adapts to the student's ability measuring what a child knows and needs to learn. The difficulty of each question is based on how well the student has answered the questions up to that point. As the student answers correctly, the questions become more difficult. If the student answers incorrectly, the questions become easier. In addition, MAP measures academic growth over time, independent of grade level or age. Typically MAP is used for young people in 2nd -10th grade but can be used through the 12th grade depending on the skill level of the student. MAP is integrated with a skill development software called Odyssey. Odyssey creates an individualized Student Work Plan which includes interactive activities commensurate with the student's learning needs. Skill assessments are built into Odyssey so that adjustments to a student's learning plan can be made over the course of the year. Both MAP and Odyssey align with Tennessee educational standards.

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Pre-service and in-service training is used to prepare tutors to help a student. Our school district is using Common Core standards for reading and math. Therefore the tutor training helps a tutor understand what the Common Core standards are and thus how to reinforce what students are learning in the classroom. For elementary and middle school students in reading, tutors are trained on how to implement a pre-assessment and then how to use tools to tutor students in 5 Common Core Foundational Skills - phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and phonemic awareness. The assessment helps guide which area the tutor should focus on with that particular child. For elementary and middle school students in math, training is similar with how to use a pre-assessment and then the tools to help tutor in 5 Common Core Math Domains -- counting and cardinality, operations and algebraic thinking, numbers and operations, measurements and data, and geometry. For either subject, formative assessments can be used throughout the tutoring period to check for understanding and to help direct the course of tutoring. For high school students, tutoring needs are typically ACT prep or subject-specific tutoring. In training, the sections of the ACT and good scores for each section are reviewed with tutors. Tutors are shown how to use warm-up questions, how to implement the ACT Prep curriculum, taught how to determine at what point assessments could be used to help drive the tutoring path (there is a pre-assessment, periodic assessments approximately every 4 weeks, and a post-assessment), and when a parent should be contacted. Subject-specific tutors typically support homework help in a particular subject in which they have skills - most of the time matching their major or job. In this case, the school drives the curriculum and the tutor is letting the student ask questions or helping them with example problems. When the tutoring is going to be provided in the schools, the training also includes how to interact professional with school staff and how to appropriately present themselves in that setting. All tutors are also trained on how to give feedback information weekly regarding a student's progress. This is done using an on-line form builder where tutors provide the student's name, age, grade, date(s) tutored, subject tutored, common core basic skill(s) covered, number of minutes tutored, and general comments. Staff supervising tutors receive this information and can provide feedback to the tutor.

Elementary and middle school tutors are supervised by an Emerald Youth staff member who is a licensed, Highly Qualified, K-6 teacher and taught in Knoxville for 3 ½ years. High school tutors are supervised by a second Emerald Youth staff member who is a licensed, Highly Qualified, high school teacher with a Master's in Theory and Practice in Teacher Education. She has 10 years of classroom

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experience in Atlanta and in Knoxville at one of the urban high schools served by this program, and for 3 of those years, she served as the 9th grade Dean supervising 15-20 teachers. These staff members are responsible for developing the tutoring and other academic assistance training as well as developing the academic curriculum the program uses.

In selecting and qualifying elementary tutors, most adults with a high school education can help with reading but not necessarily with upper elementary math. Prospects are asked about their interest area, comfort level and available time commitment in addition to the actual tutoring time as preparation before tutoring, record keeping, and communication are also needed. For middle school and high school, more subject area knowledge is needed and ability to tutor is assessed by looking at professional experience, major, or interest area. Tutors for all ages are interviewed about how they can handle kids, what experiences they have had with kids, and if tutoring within a school, what they know about the specific school. Tutors will be at least high school graduates. This information is listed as part of their application and will be verified using transcripts or copies of their high school diploma. Both members and volunteers will attend pre-service and in-service tutoring training tracked by sign-in logs which also include the date completed.

Reading curriculum is diverse and based on an individual's needs. Beginning readers learn the foundation reading skills they need to be successful including concepts of print (reading from left to right, top to bottom etc.), letter recognition, matching sounds to letters, and automaticity of high frequency words, all of which are research-based. The curriculum used is different for each child. It depends on the level of the tutor and level of the child -- both of these managed by staff. For example, for a low/emerging reader, it will be as simple as a few minutes of word work (improving automaticity with flash cards), few minutes of reading aloud an on-level text, and a few minutes writing/drawing about what they read. Tutors who aren't as experienced are given "The Reading Road" curriculum or packaged Common Core texts. The majority of the time, students focus on word work and real reading practice. Math is similar. We focus on reinforcing their platform of basic skills so they are more successful in the classroom with the higher level skills that Common Core demands (i.e. integrating problem solving/critical thinking into word problems etc.). Curriculum examples would include numbers and operations (identifying numbers, matching numbers to groups of objects, skip counting), operations/algebraic thinking (adding, subtracting etc., identifying for unknowns, using symbols), geometry (identifying 2d & 3d, angles, lines), and measurement and data (telling

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time, using tools to show measurements of distance or volume etc). We blend both drill sheets to improve automaticity and then hands on instruction using manipulatives to demonstrate concepts (i.e real clocks, counters, base ten blocks, cubes etc.). For high school students, the ACT curriculum comes from The Real ACT Prep Guide, ACT's official Test Prep Guide. It has been re-formatted by our staff for a non-teacher to implement and categorizes the content into different skills tutors can work on depending on the student's needs. In addition to addressing content area skill, the curriculum also is designed to teach high school students test-taking skills for the ACT such as why to guess, how to guess best, and how to pace answers for each section of the test. For subject-specific tutoring, students are bringing in their homework, projects, old tests, etc. and covering questions they need help with or missed.

2. AmeriCorps members receive pre-service training led by our staff, the certified K-6 teacher, in 4 areas -- Learning Overview, Homework Help, Learning Lab, and Math and Science. This prepares them to implement the non-tutoring, academic assistance portion of our afterschool program. Elementary, non-tutoring, curriculum is divided into two age levels -- lower elementary (K-2) and upper elementary (3-5). Middle school is 6-8. Curriculum is always written to align with Common Core Standards. All lessons show the linkage between content and the standards, and the curriculum contains ways to differentiate for lower- and higher-level students. Lessons are cross-curricular and take into account the multiple ways in which students learn (i.e., kinesthetic, verbal, visual, etc.) The curriculum follows a typical classroom lesson plan with an anticipatory (intro), direct instruction, guided practice, independent practice, and a closing. Much of it is scripted to help with implementation. Examples of these are used in training depending on which age group a member is working with, and training becomes specific as to how to interact and communicate with young people of different ages. At the completion of this training section, a group game is played where members are asked questions to review the content covered. There is also a two-week in-service, formal assessment period where members observe staff and apply what they've learned in the classroom. This gives an opportunity for supervisors to provide positive and constructive feedback to each new member regarding their performance with the goal of helping members be successful in providing a quality program and preventing future performance issues.

3. There are an array of services provided by AmeriCorps members. These can be divided into the categories of Academic Support (homework assistance, tutoring, assistance in literacy, math and

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science activities, learning lab), Health (providing snacks, leading fitness, nutrition and recreation), Relationship Building and Other (providing enrichment experiences and directing service opportunities. The Academic Support and Relationship Building categories directly impact the selected performance measure.

SCHOOL YEAR

- 6 reduced half-time members will spend on average 75% in Academic Support, 10% in Health, 10% in Relationship Building, and 5% in Other (these members are responsible for primarily implementing the learning labs)

- 20 reduced half-time members will spend on average 45% in Academic Support, 18% in Health, 12% in Relationship Building, and 25% in Other (these members implement the balance of the afterschool program)

SUMMER

- 3 minimum time members will spend 50% in Academic Support, 15% in Health, 25% in Relationship Building, and 10% in Other (these members are responsible for primarily implementing the learning labs)

- 22 minimum time members will spend 23% in Academic Support, 23% in Health, 36% in Relationship Building, and 18% in Other (these members implement the balance of the summer program)

YEAR ROUND

- 2 reduced half-time members will spend 95% of their time in Health and 5% of their time in Relationship Building (members serving the sports program)

- 1 reduced half-time member will spend 100% of his/her time in Relationship Building (the Volunteer Coordinator)

4. Both Title 45 CFR Sec. 2520.40 on the circumstances where AmeriCorps members may raise resources and 2520.65 on prohibited activities in AmeriCorps subtitle C programs were reviewed by both our AmeriCorps Program Director and Chief Operating Officer. Members and supervisors will certify each week on the member timesheets that none of the hours and activities listed include prohibited activities. We confirm that the program will be compliant by not engaging in any of these prohibited activities.

5. The Volunteer Coordinator does not supplant or displace paid staff. The position reports to the

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Staffing Manager who directs the member's responsibilities. The Staffing Manager has the role to help determine, with Executive Management approval, policy and procedure for recruitment, screening, and other volunteer management processes. The AmeriCorps member is an implementer of the mechanics. The Staffing Manager will also implement, but with the volume of volunteers, having a member to support this effort increases our capacity to mobilize and manage large numbers and increases the quality with which we do this. Also, we have a large number of volunteers who help lead our organization's faith development activities. The member does not handle the recruitment, screening, or management of these volunteers leaving these to the Staffing Manager.

B. Budget Clarification

Revised Executive Summary

The Emerald Youth Foundation proposes to have 56 AmeriCorps members who will serve in afterschool/summer and tutoring programs in Knoxville's inner city focused on helping students with their homework, providing literacy, math, and science academic enrichment activities, tutoring, leading fitness, nutrition, and recreation times as well as providing enrichment experiences and direct service opportunities. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for helping to contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged elementary through high school students. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 200 volunteers who will be engaged in tutoring, fitness activities, and general program support.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education. The CNCS investment of \$192,427 will be matched with \$192,427 in private funding.

We have been able to lower the Cost per MSY from the funding consideration of \$11,522.57 to \$11,481.

1. While not listed individually in the budget, the intent of listing the positions and describing the specific people in the Organizational Background and Staffing section was meant to assure you that

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we have adequate and experienced people to supervise and manage a quality AmeriCorps and youth program from grant management to staffing to curriculum and training to program implementation. All of the people listed have direct influence, management, and implementation responsibilities in this program. We have a history of meeting our match, and their time has not been used in the past and is not needed now to reach our commitment of 50% and was therefore not included in the budget. Emerald Youth's Staffing Manager is the same person as the AmeriCorps Program Director, Rachel Davis.

2. As part of our afterschool program, we provide learn-to-swim lessons through our Swim School. This is a collaboration with the City of Knoxville and Emerald Youth Foundation where the City leases one of its facilities to us and covers half of the utility costs with Emerald Youth paying the balance and providing staffing. This program provides students with an outlet of recreation to help balance the time after school while teaching them an important life skill. Each semester students have 4 week (2 times per week) learn-to-swim lessons. The school operates year round because of the volume of kids. We see it somewhat like recess, giving students a break from the academic portion of our programming especially since they come immediately following the school day.

3. This is updated in the Budget narrative.

4. This is updated in the Budget narrative.

C. Performance Measure Clarification

1. The National Performance Measures focused on volunteer management have been removed.

2. All students being counted in performance measures ED1 and ED2 come from schools in which the largest percentage of students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The elementary schools served range from 71-98% of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, middle schools served have 50-92% of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (the specific students we serve from the school with 50% live in or around a housing development), and high schools served have 79 and 88% of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. These are above the Knox County average of 50%. This data is from Knox County's 2014 Report Card data.

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3. The number of hours/days required in attendance by students to complete a program activity is dependent on the program, season, and age group. For example, the program for elementary students meets more often than middle school students; the elementary program meets more days during the school year than in the summer, ACT prep sessions are different lengths depending on whether held during the school year or summer. Therefore, the threshold we use to consider whether a student has completed a program activity is if they have attended 75% of the time. Attendance for each activity is tracked for each student in our database from which reports can be run to show the number of days, hours, dates, and type of activity attended.

4. The amount of progress required to count as "improved academic performance in literacy and/or math" is identified as the target growth that MAP is projecting. Each fall when the student takes the MAP assessment, they receive a score that indicates what he/she knows, is ready to learn, and is projected to achieve -- their target growth -- during a fall to spring implemented program. Therefore the amount of progress needed to reach the target is known ahead of time but is different for each student. When the student takes the MAP assessment in the spring, the score achieved is compared against their target growth projection to determine if the goal was reached. The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) has spent 30 years and tested more than 35 million students to develop the MAP assessment system including the target growth projections.

5. The standardized assessment tool, MAP, is administered by the program. It is an on-line assessment that we pay an annual subscription for each student who takes the test. It is independent of the local education agency.

D. Strategic Engagement Slots

1. 0% of our MSYs are targeted to recruiting members with disabilities. In recruiting members, the opportunity is presented to broad audiences for example, all students at a university including students with disabilities, all members of a church, former and current volunteers, etc. We do not specifically target groups that focus solely on persons with disabilities when recruiting members. All applicants are treated consistently, and those selected as members are done so based on their experience, qualifications, availability, and ability to perform the service responsibilities required. We have accepted members with physical and other disabilities.

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2. We are not interested in requesting additional MSYs to be filled by AmeriCorps members with disabilities at this time.

E. MSY with No Program Funds Attached Clarification

We are not interested in requesting No-Cost MSYs at this time.

CLARIFICATION SUMMARY -- updated 4/17/15

1. The Executive Summary has been updated in the Executive Summary section of the application narrative.
2. In trying to maximize the value of the \$192,427 funding consideration along with the type of member slots that align best to implement the program, the result mathematically was the 16.76 MSYs and the 56 member slots. We have now dropped to 55 member slots which is 16.55 MSYs in order to be under the 16.70 MSYs and also had to drop to \$190,617 in funding with a cost per MSY of \$11,518. The budget and performance measures have been updated.
3. Following is the revised information to reflect how the 55 members will spend their time.

SCHOOL YEAR

- 6 reduced half-time members will spend on average 75% in Academic Support, 10% in Health, 10% in Relationship Building, and 5% in Other (these members are responsible for primarily implementing the learning labs)
- 20 reduced half-time members and 2 minimum time members will spend on average 45% in Academic Support, 18% in Health, 12% in Relationship Building, and 25% in Other (these members implement the balance of the afterschool program)

SUMMER

- 3 minimum time members will spend 50% in Academic Support, 15% in Health, 25% in Relationship Building, and 10% in Other (these members are responsible for primarily implementing the learning labs)
- 21 minimum time members will spend 23% in Academic Support, 23% in Health, 36% in

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Relationship Building, and 18% in Other (these members implement the balance of the summer program)

YEAR ROUND

- 2 reduced half-time members will spend 95% of their time in Health and 5% of their time in Relationship Building (members serving the sports program)
- 1 reduced half-time member will spend 100% of his/her time in Relationship Building (the Volunteer Coordinator)

4. 6 of the 8 quarter time positions were originally allocated to implement the balance of the afterschool program mostly with middle school students and the remaining two were allocated to serve in the sports program. With only the reduced half time and minimum time positions, the number of students we will serve will be reduced though we will try to minimize that reduction by seeing if volunteers are available to support in the same area.

5. The costs associated with the swimming pool lease and utilities have been removed.

6. This has been updated in the budget.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics