

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The University of North Florida (UNF) proposes to have 30 AmeriCorps members who will participate in a Jacksonville Teacher Residency (JTR) program through which they will bolster student engagement and STEM teaching and learning in high-need schools while preparing for long-term careers as STEM teachers in Jacksonville, Florida. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for increasing students' academic achievement in math (ED5). In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 30-35 leveraged volunteers, who will be engaged in the screening of subsequent cohorts of JTR AmeriCorps members during Selection Day activities and supporting students in members' classrooms.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education--improving student academic performance including STEM. The CNCS investment of \$411,889 will be matched with \$161,375 in UNF match, \$29,028 in public funding and \$435,345 in private funding.

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

1. Problem/Need--The University of North Florida (UNF), in collaboration with the Duval County Public Schools (DCPS), the Jacksonville Public Education Fund and its Quality Education for All initiative (JPEF, QEA), and Urban Teacher Residency United (UTRU) propose to expand a successful Jacksonville Teacher Residency (JTR) program through which highly qualified college graduates with STEM backgrounds provide classroom support in high-need schools. AmeriCorps members will work in the classrooms of master teachers who will function as Clinical Residency Mentors (Mentors). They will also complete coursework toward M.Ed. degrees and certification in STEM subjects. After successful completion of the JTR program, members commit to teaching for at least three years in high-need schools.

Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) is a large, county-wide school district that serves urban Jacksonville, Florida and outlying areas. DCPS is the sixth-largest school district in Florida and the 22nd-largest in the nation, with 192 schools and over 125,000 students. With a county-wide child poverty rate of 23%, DCPS includes many urban schools whose students are overwhelmingly from high-need backgrounds (FL SDE, 2008).

This AmeriCorps-supported program will target eight such high-poverty middle and high schools: Raines High, Ribault High, Jackson High, Gilbert Middle, Ribault Middle, Highlands Middle, Butler Middle, and Northwestern Middle. These schools' students' free/reduced lunch eligibility ranges from 77-95%, and over 90% of students are African-American in all 8 schools (FL SDE).

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These schools' students are failing to achieve at high levels in math and science. In none are more than 62% of students reaching goals in math as measured by the FCAT, and in none are more than 25% of students reaching goals in science (id). This is in stark contrast to more affluent DCPS schools such as Stanton Prep High, in which 96% of students reach goals in math and 90% reach goals in science (id).

Teachers are the single-most important factor in improving student teaching and learning (Rand, 2012). High-need DCPS schools have a smaller share of teachers rated highly effective and have more inexperienced teachers, whose lack of experience can lead to less successful teaching and learning (ERS, 2011). 40% of DCPS's highest poverty schools have over 30% new teachers vs. only 9% of its lowest poverty schools (id).

DCPS schools' efforts to strengthen high-need schools' STEM achievement are hampered by ineffective recruitment, selection, and staffing (QEA, 2014). Title I DCPS middle and high schools average about 100 STEM teacher vacancies per year (ranging from 55-139 openings per year from 2009-2013) (DCPS, 2010-2013). STEM teacher attrition averages 50% in the first three years in the target schools (DCPS, 2010-2013). This turnover results in inconsistent teaching by inexperienced teachers and contributes to low STEM achievement.

UNF's teacher preparation program is not currently meeting the demand for STEM teachers. In 2012, only 1 of 247 degree completers attained science certification (in biology), and only 12 attained math education certification. 39% of last year's UNF teacher preparation graduating class was hired by DCPS, so UNF's failure to graduate STEM educators impacts many DCPS schools.

This project will address students' immediate need for help with STEM subjects while preparing JTR AmeriCorps members to be highly effective, committed STEM educators after their terms of service. For 4.5 days per week, JTR AmeriCorps members will provide support in target schools' STEM classrooms. This will yield immediate benefits in STEM learning. These field-based apprenticeships will be complemented with coursework toward M.Ed. degrees leading to teacher certification. Financial incentives will encourage members to teach in high-need schools, creating a pipeline of expert STEM teachers where they are most needed.

Approximately 50% of urban teachers leave the field of education within three years; however, 85% of residency program graduates stay in their schools beyond this term (UTRU, 2014). By preparing JTR AmeriCorps members to support student learning while equipping them to become STEM educators, this project will fulfill the aims of the AmeriCorps program and assure that high-need students in DCPS schools will achieve at high levels in STEM.

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2. Theory of Change and Logic Model--This AmeriCorps intervention will recruit, prepare, and deploy 30 STEM degree holders to work alongside veteran Mentor teachers in high-need urban schools, impacting 2,000 students in 20 mentors' classrooms. (Because these are middle and high school teachers, each mentor teaches 25+ students in 3-4 classes/day.) This project will leverage resources and expertise from CNCS, UNF, DCPS, JPEF, and UTRU to support and expand a program that achieves immediate STEM learning impacts while creating system change.

UNF and its partners' theory of change is that high-need schools fail to attract and retain talented STEM teachers because of inadequate preparation, both in STEM fields and for the realities of teaching in high-poverty urban settings. High-need schools are challenging environments, which makes it difficult to attract candidates; lack of knowledge of how to be most effective in high-need schools leads to frustration and burnout, causing rapid teacher turnover--especially in the STEM fields in which teachers can move to more affluent schools or transition to non-teaching careers. Rapid teacher turnover means that the highest-need students are often served by the least-experienced, least effective teachers. This leads to high achievement gaps that hamper high-need students' ability to achieve success in college and careers.

UNF and its partners will, with the support of leveraged volunteers from DCPS, recruit 20 Mentors who will work alongside AmeriCorps members. JTR AmeriCorps members will provide immediate classroom support in these Mentors' high-need classrooms. They will plan lessons, deliver content, and work one-on-one and in small groups with students 4.5 days per week, with the remaining half-day dedicated to training, study, and structured feedback. While they support students, JTR AmeriCorps members will take uniquely designed courses toward M.Ed. degrees. Student loans toward the M.Ed. degree will be repaid provided that members fulfill a three-year teaching term in a high-need school after their service is complete. This model is similar to that of the Boston Teacher Residency Program, an AmeriCorps program.

More support now will lead to more student engagement. Adequate preparation and incentives to remain in teaching will lead to high-quality, stable STEM teaching workforce. This positive feedback loop will assure that students from high-need backgrounds have the preparation to pursue STEM careers, including returning to be teachers in their own communities. UNF and its partners have established the following objectives:

a) By March 2015, recruit 30 candidates with STEM backgrounds for induction in the Jacksonville Teacher Residency (JTR) program;

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- b) By March 2015, with the support of DCPS leveraged volunteers, to recruit 20 veteran, highly effective Clinical Residency Mentor teachers in high-need schools;
- c) 2000 students will participate in the CNCS-supported AmeriCorps program, and 75% (1,500) will complete it (ED1, ED2); and
- d) Students completing the JTR AmeriCorps program will demonstrate higher achievement in math and science (ED5, ED30) (See logic model for specific targets by grade level.)

The assessments chosen, as shown in the logic model and performance measures sections, are matched to DCPS curriculum and to state learning standards and will measure the skills most important to long-term STEM achievement. The project team will compare the gains of program completers with matched peers in classrooms not served by the program to attribute gains to this intervention.

UNF anticipates that at least 80% of JTR AmeriCorps members will complete the program and attain certification over a three-year period. Because of high demand in DCPS schools, most of them will become STEM teachers in high-need schools. The proposed JTR AmeriCorps program will help students now while building a pipeline of future expert, committed STEM teachers.

The program will also increase alignment between UNF's teacher preparation program and the needs of urban schools, especially in STEM. UNF is partnering with DCPS to review and revise its graduate program of study leading to secondary teacher certification. This is coordinated by a faculty member on the Steering Committee.

Mentors will be carefully selected based on their expertise and positive impacts on student achievement. Leveraged volunteers from DCPS (teachers and administrators) will assist with recruitment and screening of these Mentors, who will partner with JTR AmeriCorps members on a day-to-day basis and provide weekly observations of their planning and instruction with structured feedback sessions. JTR AmeriCorps members will be matched with these Mentors on a 1-1 or 2-1 basis to assure they have consistent support. Mentors are crucial to helping members identify and overcome challenges that impede student engagement and contribute to teacher burnout.

While expert Mentors are selected because they are successful in reaching high-need students, additional student support is still needed. Classrooms remain overcrowded, and students who may have been hampered by years of poor preparation need one-on-one assistance as they grapple with complicated STEM topics. JTR AmeriCorps members will help students comprehend STEM concepts and make rapid strides toward academic mastery. In addition, program staff will work with UNF's teacher preparation program to leverage additional UNF student volunteers for members' classrooms.

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UNF and its partners are already piloting the JTR program with a nine-member cohort (selected from 35 applicants) that is achieving strong results. Early data shows residents are having substantial impact on learning and are developing high-impact teaching skills. Feedback on the current pilot's successes and challenges will help the program management team and Steering and Design Committees reinforce successful program components and remedy any shortcomings.

The proposed JTR AmeriCorps program will strengthen student engagement and reduce the achievement gap across the DCPS and will create a more diverse future STEM workforce that reflects the richness of American diversity. AmeriCorps support is vital to realizing this vision. As shown in the attached logic model, all elements of this project are complementary, logically linked, and will contribute to the sought outcomes and system change.

3. Evidence Base--Teacher residencies represent a comprehensive and multifaceted model of teacher preparation, and there is moderate-to-strong evidence that teacher residencies improve student achievement while bolstering teacher retention in high-need schools. UNF and its partners are working with Urban Teacher Residency United (UTRU). UTRU is a national nonprofit that serves a growing network of teacher residency programs. With Gates Foundation support, UTRU conducted a quasi-experimental study of teacher residency programs in the Aspire charter and Denver, CO public schools (UTRU 2014, and hereafter).

Early data demonstrated that teachers were used more high-impact instructional practices than matched peers. Program alumni were better at setting high standards, engaging students, providing effective student feedback, and promoting effective collaboration. These practices all strengthen student achievement.

UTRU has identified six qualities that are crucial to teacher residency success:

- A selection process that assesses the ability to take constructive criticism and persevere in addition to strong academic backgrounds
  - Coursework that is aligned with district standards
  - A structure for providing residents with effective coaching and feedback
  - An evaluation system that focuses on continual improvement for residents, Mentors, and the program
  - Host school systems with the same values and practices as the residency programs, including collaborative cultures, clear teacher effectiveness standards, and commitment to professional growth.
- These components are all present in the JTR program. Candidates are holistically assessed during the

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selection process, and only the strongest are chosen. UNF is revising coursework to better provide instructional strategies and pedagogical frameworks for STEM content courses to better meet the needs of urban schools. JTR AmeriCorps members will have close supervision and receive ongoing feedback to facilitate continuous improvement. Qualitative and quantitative data on JTR program operations is systematically collected and yields a data stream that is used to strengthen the program's impact. Finally, DCPS shows its commitment to the residency model by partnering with UNF and UTRU and welcoming JTR members into high-need schools.

A December 2012 study on Boston's teacher residency program, which is a CNCS-supported AmeriCorps program, gives more strong evidence for this approach. (Papay et al, 2012, and hereafter). This value-added analysis found that Boston Teacher Residency (BTR) alumni were more likely to teach math and science, more diverse, and more likely to remain teaching. While BTR alumni were initially less effective in math, they rapidly improved and outperformed veteran math teachers by years 4 and 5. Projections indicate that the BTR will lead to increased student achievement.

BTR, the program studied, is one of the co-founders of UTRU. Like the JTR program, BTR was conceived in response to community need and as a collaboration of engaged community stakeholders. It was designed to address the need for STEM teaching and learning improvements and it is an AmeriCorps program.

Finally, a 2011 critical research review of 15 empirical studies on new teacher induction and mentoring programs lends strong support for the teacher residency model (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011, and hereafter). Most studies reviewed showed that induction and support programs for novice teachers have positive impacts on teacher retention, teacher classroom practice, and, most vitally, student achievement. These two studies and the critical review provide robust evidence that this teacher residency program will prepare expert educators who will have immediate and long-term impacts on student achievement.

4. Notice Priority--The proposed JTR AmeriCorps program falls squarely in the 2015 AmeriCorps funding priority of Education--improving student performance including STEM. JTR AmeriCorps members will support high student engagement and achievement in STEM during their residencies and will function as highly effective and committed STEM teachers thereafter.

While the proposed UNF JTR AmeriCorps program is both a direct-service and capacity-building initiative, UNF is selecting AmeriCorps outputs ED1 and ED2, the number of economically

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disadvantaged students or students with special/exceptional needs who start in (ED1) or complete participation in (ED2) CNCS-supported K-12 education programs. The aligned outcomes selected are ED5 and ED30, the number of students with improved academic performance in literacy or math and other subjects. (This program focuses on math and science.)

The program management team will use pre- and post-assessments and standardized tests to gauge students math' skills before, during, and after members' terms of service.

5. Member Training--JTR AmeriCorps members and their Mentors will complete a three-day training institute. At this institute, they will review program expectations, begin collaborative planning, and devise plans for immediately impacting student learning. Post-institute training will be provided through school-based professional learning communities among members, Mentors, and other teachers in site schools; and through frequent instructional coaching and structured observations from Mentors, program staff, DCPS STEM coaches, and other UNF faculty. Members will also attend bimonthly meetings facilitated by the Program Directors that will focus on team-building and AmeriCorps program expectations. They will also connect JTR members with other AmeriCorps programs in the Jacksonville metro area to assure that members know they are part of a larger community service team. For instance, JTR is already partnering with the City Year program, which has invited JTR member participation at MLK Jr. and Sept. 11 Days of National Service.

The Program Co-Directors and Coordinator will assure that all participants complete CNCS-required trainings, including CPR training, disaster preparedness, diversity appreciation, citizenship, and disability awareness. Some of this content will be provided through graduate courses; other content will be provided during the three-day seminar or at bimonthly meetings. DCPS will provide CPR training. UNF will partner with community providers as necessary to assure members have preparation in these areas.

JTR AmeriCorps members will also complete M.Ed. coursework that will help them become effective teachers. UNF is working with DCPS to strengthen its teacher preparation curriculum. These interwoven supports will assure immediate and long-term impact on teaching and learning in high-need schools.

Notice of behaviors prohibited section 2520.65 of the AmeriCorps subtitle C programs will be clearly included in all application materials. UNF and its partners will review the list of prohibited activities during training and meetings. Members will be made aware that violations will result in written notice, and subsequent violations will result in dismissal, with no further eligibility for stipends or loan

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repayment.

6. Member Supervision--The Program Directors and Coordinator will provide ongoing guidance and supervision. They will convene bimonthly meeting for members and provide oversight of Mentors. Mentors will receive training on AmeriCorps regulations during the training institute and during site visits and will be provided with reference handouts detailing the regulations. They will be instructed to report concerns or violations to the Program Directors.

JTR AmeriCorps members will receive daily supervision from the Mentors with whom they are matched and in whose classrooms they will plan, teach, and engage students. Mentors will convene structured meetings with members 1x/week to review planning and instruction and provide technical assistance on dealing with the challenges of high-need schools. In addition, they will conduct monthly observations of members and prepare and submit quarterly reports and professional development plans for mentees.

Christine White, the DCPS Program Director, observes each JTR member 4x/year. Principals at assigned sites observe members 2x/ year, and DCPS STEM instructional coaches observe them on a regular basis to provide an additional layer of feedback. Finally, each member will have a UNF faculty internship supervisor who will conduct 4 structured observations while members earn M.Ed. degrees. This multilayered and comprehensive support will assure that JTR AmeriCorps members are having an immediate impact on student learning.

7. Member Experience--This AmeriCorps-supported project responds to DCPS' need for more effective STEM instructional supports and high-quality STEM teachers. The partnership with DCPS assures that the program targets the skills most sought by this large employer and in other urban districts. While this project aims to create a cadre of AmeriCorps alumni who are committed to STEM teaching in urban schools, the competencies it will foster will be of value in other settings. They will strengthen capacities to work in diverse teams and process constructive feedback, which are valued in a range of careers.

As discussed, JTR AmeriCorps members will work in high-need urban schools while completing M.Ed. coursework and learning from expert teacher Mentors and UNF faculty. Members will work in the schools 4.5 days per week, aiding teachers, helping students understand thorny STEM concepts, and learning the challenges, complexities, and rewards of teaching in high-need environments. This service is the crux of all project activities. Connections with other AmeriCorps programs and

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participation in National Service days will strengthen members' commitment to service.

Ongoing feedback from the wide range of classroom observers will facilitate member reflection. This will assure that members achieve a holistic understanding of their work. M.Ed. coursework will help students reflect on their AmeriCorps service and connect it to the teacher preparation program.

Members will also encourage other students in the UNF teacher preparation programs to volunteer in high-need schools.

During the 3-day training, program staff will educate members about the AmeriCorps program and its aims. A member email listserv will be established to help them connect with each other for support and encouragement. Program staff will convene bimonthly member meetings. Building connections with peers will help members reflect on, and renew their commitment to, leadership and service. Participants in other area AmeriCorps programs such as Duval Reads and Youth Transition will periodically be invited to meetings so members can gain more perspectives on AmeriCorps and explore opportunities for strategic collaboration. These links will also help members connect their students with service opportunities. Members will also participate in the September 11 and MLK Jr. National Days of Service.

By serving in high-need schools, members will understand the challenges with which many of America's urban communities are confronted. Training, coaching, and Mentoring will equip members with concrete strategies for addressing the STEM achievement gap. The camaraderie and sense of purpose to be fostered by team-building activities will bolster participants' commitment to active citizenship and public and community service.

Members have financial incentives to teach in high-need schools upon program completion. Student loans will undergo structured repayment after completion of the M.Ed., with 1/3 of the balance paid each year. Members who teach for three or more years will have loans paid in full; those who do not fulfill terms of service will be responsible for the balance remaining at exit. By combining training, support, and incentives, and building a collaborative team, this program will encourage alumni to serve long after their AmeriCorps terms.

UNF and its partners will recruit members from the high-need communities to be served to the greatest extent possible. Recruitment efforts include a JTR web page with information and application materials; outreach to graduating seniors in UNF's Biology, Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics Departments; use of universities' Career Services portals; filtering and contacting a list of non-admits provided by Teach for America; forming relationships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities' (HBCUs) STEM departments; and reaching out to minority chapters of STEM

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professional associations. Community members from high-need areas will serve on the Design Committee, which will help disseminate knowledge of the program among the target population and recruit candidates to the JTR AmeriCorps program. Finally, students in members' classrooms will be encouraged to participate in AmeriCorps programs for which they are eligible, which will instill in them a commitment to service in addition to strong academic skills.

This program will generate a pipeline of future JTR members from communities served by providing information about the program for high school juniors and seniors in target schools who are exploring college and careers. Helping these students excel in STEM coursework will increase the likelihood that they will choose STEM teaching careers themselves.

8. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification--All program-related web pages, promotional materials, application materials, and communications will include the AmeriCorps logo and notice that this opportunity is part of the CNCS AmeriCorps network. The program training and bimonthly member meetings will emphasize AmeriCorps identity and will focus on building a sense of camaraderie. During member training and at bimonthly meetings, an overview will be provided of the size, scope, and range of AmeriCorps projects. Members will connect with other AmeriCorps programs and participate in the MLK Jr. Day of Service and Sept. 11 Day of Service and Remembrance. The budget provides funds to purchase AmeriCorps shirts and badges for all JTR members. Members will wear AmeriCorps gear when working in DCPS school sites or participating in other program activities, and AmeriCorps signs will be posted in members' classrooms. A flyer about the program will be sent to families in target schools. Program management team staff will wear AmeriCorps badges during the training, at meetings, and when on-site in DCPS schools.

### Organizational Capability

#### 1. Organizational Background and Staffing

The project is being co-led by Program Directors Dr. Wanda Lastrapes, UNF JTR Director and Director of UNF Research Program Services; and by Christine White, M.Ed., the DCPS JTR Director. They will be assisted by Emily Putnam, currently a part-time Recruitment Coordinator, who will become full-time Program Coordinator.

Before joining UNF, Dr. Lastrapes served as Urban Education Program Coordinator for the University of Florida Alliance (UF), through which she established professional learning communities, facilitated targeted professional development, recruited students, and organized training opportunities for students and teachers. She administered a \$90,000 BellSouth Teaching Quality grant through which

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she worked to align university, district, and funders' goals to support novice teachers in urban secondary schools. As Director of the JTR program, Dr. Lastrapes has expanded and extended this experience.

Christine White has worked in and with urban DCPS schools for over 20 years. She has been both a teacher and administrator, with expertise in classroom management, instructional coaching, and pre-service teacher preparation and inquiry. For JTR, she partners with UNF to develop curriculum, impact goals and assessment systems; recruit residents, site schools and Mentors; and coordinate and monitor the JTR program. A doctoral candidate at UF, Ms. White will complete her dissertation on the JTR program.

Emily Putnam, Program Coordinator, will also be a key team member. She will help develop and extend recruiting strategies and will assist the program co-Directors with program administration, recordkeeping, data analysis, and supervision. Ms. Putnam has a BA in English and a background in marketing, communications, and program management.

Dr. Lastrapes and Ms. White will be assisted in induction and training activities by Dr. Lissa Dunn, Director of DCPS Department of Mentoring and Induction. Ms. Dunn serves on the Design Team referenced below. She provides professional development to Mentors and member instructional support in the M.Ed. program.

Core program management team members will meet on a biweekly basis to plan and implement program activities. As JTR AmeriCorps members begin serving in schools and taking classes, the team will review process data on program functioning to revise and refine activities to assure they meet the needs of all stakeholders.

In addition to the management team, the JTR program includes a Steering Committee and a Design Committee. The Steering Committee includes UNF's Dean/College of Education and Human Services, the Superintendent of DCPS, the President of JPEF, other UNF faculty (including Dr. Jeffery Cornett, who coordinates curriculum redesign), and the Program Directors. The Design Committee includes the Program Directors, other representatives from DCPS and UNF, and members from the served high-need communities. The Steering Committee meets on a quarterly basis, and the Design Committee on a tri-annual basis, to provide oversight, share information, align partner activities, and work collaboratively to meet program aims. This management structure will assure that program objectives are systematically achieved and that the program is having a strong impact on students and school communities.

Additional support for the Program Directors will be provided by UNF's 13-employee Office of

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Research and Sponsored Programs, which coordinates all grant activities at UNF.

The proposed JTR AmeriCorps program is the result of a vibrant partnership between UNF, DCPS, JPEF, and UTRU. It has been developed in response to local need and in collaboration with a wide range of community stakeholders. UNF is a public university that enrolls over 16,000 students. UNF's teacher preparation program is one of the best in Florida (Colleges Database, 2014). Over a quarter of DCPS teachers are UNF graduates.

JPEF is the education foundation that supports DCPS. As a nonprofit, it spearheads fundraising and communication outreach on behalf of DCPS. JPEF administers the Quality Education for All (QEA) funds on behalf of the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida.

In 2004, the Community Foundation launched the QEA initiative to identify impediments to learning in DCPS schools and bring together elected officials, school leaders, the nonprofit community, private donors, public education advocates, and members of the community to redress inequities and create a culture of high achievement for all students. QEA demonstrated that lack of highly effective STEM teachers and high teacher turnover were both huge impediments. JPEF has its roots in QEA and was established in its current form in 2009. In 2013, JPEF began administering the QEA fund, which exists to support community education needs.

Perceiving that the teacher residency model was a strong match for DCPS school needs, DCPS, with support from JPEF and the QEA fund, began collaborating with UTRU in 2013. DCPS and JPEF partnered with UNF shortly thereafter. A Memorandum of Understanding between UNF and DCPS sets forth each organization's responsibilities pursuant to the teacher residency model. JPEF (through QEA) continues to provide funding and works to build community links to sustain the JTR model. UTRU is providing ongoing training and technical support.

These partnerships arose organically, in response to community needs and feedback. The proposed JTR AmeriCorps program is a natural extension of the existing pilot and will provide vital support for current students in high-need schools while generating system change.

### **2. Compliance and Accountability**

The JTR program has numerous internal and external checks that will prevent compliance problems and assure their rapid correction. Observation and evaluation are interwoven with all program activities. These will provide a stream of data that can be used to assure strict fidelity to CNCS and AmeriCorps regulations. Regular program management team meetings will assure that key project staff learn of, and respond to, any issues.

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The Program Directors will work with UNF ORSP (sponsored programs) staff to develop and uphold strict regulatory and financial controls. Upon receipt of a grant award, ORSP meets with all Program Directors to review each grant's regulations and financial policies. ORSP's Research Integrity unit is charged with maintaining compliance with federal requirements; this unit will work with the Program Directors to develop a strategic plan for compliance and will provide technical assistance to assure fidelity to this plan.

ORSP's GAFM unit (financial controls) will provide oversight of fund disbursement. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014, UNF's research office managed seventy-two federal awards with \$4.78 million in expenditures. Audits conducted by agencies, state, and federal auditors require the office of research to maintain sound fiscal and internal controls. UNF has managed over \$80 million awards with minimal audit criticisms over forty years. These awards have included project grants in addition to research grants, such as a HRSA award of \$1,576,379 for nursing trainees.

A hold is placed on any grant charge that raises concern until its allowability is verified. In addition, ORSP will provide Dr. Lastrapes with quarterly reports on CNCS funds disbursed. The oversight of the program management team, Steering and Design Committees, and UNF's ORSP will create multiple layers of supervision and will enable any lapses to be rapidly identified and corrected.

UNF and DCPS have an existing Memorandum of Understanding that governs each entity's roles and responsibilities in conducting JTR activities. Upon receipt of CNCS AmeriCorps funding, the Program Directors will meet with key DCPS and JPEF staff to review this Memorandum and add any additional responsibilities indicated by CNCS regulations.

Regular program management team meetings will include review of data on program operations at partner sites. If any compliance or risk concerns arise, one of the Program Directors will make site visits to gather information and will convene a meeting to discuss the concern and develop a plan for its immediate redress.

As discussed, all training activities for both members and Mentors will cover AmeriCorps rules and regulations and prohibited activities. In addition, the program management team will prepare and disseminate handouts on prohibited activities to be distributed to administrators, teachers, and support staff in all partner school sites. The Steering and Design Committees include representatives from all grant partners. The Program Directors will assure that committee members are aware of and prepared to assist with compliance by reinforcing their importance with staff at school and partner sites.

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

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1. Cost Effectiveness--The program budget includes all funds that are reasonable and necessary to assure that the UNF JTR AmeriCorps program attracts high-quality members and achieves its short- and long-term aims. Funds are requested for the Program Coordinator's wages and benefits, member stipends and benefits, supplies, necessary travel, member background checks, AmeriCorps shirts and badges, and evaluation support. These funds are modest and reasonable in light of the total program scope.

Because STEM graduates can generally command high salaries in the private sector, stipends of \$20,000 are considered the minimum to recruit outstanding members who will have the requisite knowledge and skills to achieve success in high-need schools. Only \$6,400 of this is requested from AmeriCorps; the remaining \$13,600 comes from JPEF's QEA fund, which represents a long-term investment for strengthening teaching and learning in high-need DCPS schools. QEA is committed to supporting the JTR program for at least five years. Strong program outcomes will encourage continued support after this period. The diversified funding base of this program contributes to its current cost-effectiveness and will support its long-term sustainability using non-CNCS resources. UNF, DCPS, and JPEF are also dedicating substantial assets toward the success of this project. Program co-director Christine White's salary is included as match from DCPS. Nearly half of the Program Coordinator's salary will be paid by the JPEF QEA fund. UNF is covering the UNF program director's salary, unrecovered F&A, and a portion of travel expenses.

The strong, enduring partnership among UNF, DCPS, JPEF (and JPEF's strategic partner of the Community Foundation, which provides funding for QEA) demonstrate the long-term sustainability of this program after the period of CNCS support. UNF and DCPS have both indicated that with strong program outcomes, the salaries of co-directors Dr. Lastrapes and Ms. White will be absorbed into general operating expenses. By generating strong enrollment in UNF's M.Ed. program, this project creates its own revenue stream for UNF that makes this particularly feasible. DCPS is strongly committed to the teacher residency model, and the learning and system changes that this program will auger will yield continued support from community partners and philanthropists.

2. Budget Adequacy--The submitted budget includes no errors, includes description of all costs and how they were calculated, and was prepared in compliance with CNCS AmeriCorps instructions.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

### Amendment Justification

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N/A

### Clarification Summary

A1

The 30 Jacksonville Teacher Residency (JTR) AmeriCorps members to be recruited for this project will complete coursework toward their M.Ed. degrees at the University of North Florida. One of the required components of the M.Ed. degree is completion of a classroom internship that will assure M.Ed. graduates are equipped to be teachers of record in their own classrooms. Participation in the AmeriCorps program will count towards the internship requirement of the M.Ed. program. However, participation in the AmeriCorps program will not count toward any of the 36 hours of academic coursework that is required to obtain the M.Ed. degree.

A2

The JTR AmeriCorps members to be recruited for this project will not be merely student interns. They will provide targeted support to high-need students alongside teachers of record. They will help teachers assess students' learning preferences and differentiate instruction. They will also assist with classroom management. Ongoing feedback from teachers of record will be critical in helping them impact student achievement while they participate in the JTR AmeriCorps program. In addition to their time in the classroom during the regular school day, AmeriCorps members will provide one-on-one tutoring during out-of-school time (after school and weekends). This will assure that students in their classrooms are receiving the targeted support they need to overcome learning deficits and achieve at high levels in STEM classrooms.

B1

This project is strongly supported by all partners and recognize the current fiscal limitations. Therefore, JTR AmeriCorps program has reduced the cost per MSY from \$13,729.63 to \$12,308.62. This reduces the requested CNCS grant amount from \$411,889.00 to \$369,258.61.

### C. Performance Measures Clarification

#### C.1 Removed Outcome 18151

The applicant-determined performance measure, Outcome 18151, has been removed from JTR AmeriCorps performance measures.

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### C.2 Not opting into Teacher Corps Performance Measures

The JTR AmeriCorps program will not measure its members based on their decision to remain in the teaching field and therefore, not use the Teacher Corps performance measures.

### C.3 Performance Measure Clarification

The JTR AmeriCorps program will use Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) District's Curriculum Guide Assessments (CGAs) and End of Course Examinations (EOCs) to determine growth and gains in both middle and high school mathematics and science classrooms in JTR designated schools. DCPS curriculum and assessment specialists developed these assessments. They align with the curriculum (including textbooks and supplementary online materials) and assess the knowledge, competencies, and habits of mind that are taught in the curriculum and are considered most fundamental to mastery of the subject in middle and high school mathematics and science courses.

Baseline data will be collected in all designated classes in August. Three CGA Benchmark Tests will be administered (October, January, March) and data will be analyzed to identify students performing below grade level (bottom 25 percentile) and to determine student gains and growth for all identified students in JTR AmeriCorps members/residents' classrooms. It is expected that on CGA3 middle and high school science students will earn scores that reflect a 20% increase in growth. Targeted students in middle and high mathematics courses will demonstrate learning gains of 10-15% and is consistent with District benchmark data. This growth reflects an increase over previous District-wide learning gains based on DCPS 2014 assessment data that indicated math gains of 8-10 percentage points.

At the end of each academic year, data from District EOC exams (administered in mid-late May) will be assessed to determine mastery at 70% pass rates on middle and high school mathematics examinations and 65% on high school biology EOCs and 8th grade science EOCs. This assessment timeline will allow the Program to include culminating achievement data in the CNCS Final Progress Report due in August.

We are confident that learning gains will be attributable to the JTR AmeriCorps intervention because we will compare test results of students in demographically similar classrooms who are not benefiting from the intervention. In addition, students' prior year-on-year learning gains (grades and test scores) will be compared with gains after participation in the JTR AmeriCorps supported classrooms;

## Narratives

evidence of more rapid growth will speak to the efficacy of the intervention.

### C.4 Dosage for Number of Students with Improved Academic Performance:

JTR AmeriCorps members will instruct identified low-performing students one-on-one, in small groups, and whole group settings four days per week for 7.5 hours per day in their assigned high needs middle or high school. In addition, they will provide 3 hours of intervention monthly through after school or weekend tutoring sessions.

### C.5 Identical dosage for high school and middle school students:

The JTR AmeriCorps intervention model will be identical in both the middle and high school high needs classrooms targeting students who are performing below grade levels.

### D1

This project seeks to impact STEM learning in high-need schools. Each JTR AmeriCorps member must have a bachelor's degree in a STEM field to be eligible to participate. In the pilot, none of the JTR participants has an identified disability. UNF's College of Education and Human Services, which is leading this program, has an accredited, high-quality Department of Exceptional, Deaf, and Interpreter Education. Program staff will survey faculty in the Exceptional, Deaf, and Interpreter Education program to determine if any of its graduates are eligible for the JTR AmeriCorps program. UNF also has a Disability Resource Center that serves all students who need accommodations in classes. While the Disability Resource Center is prohibited from providing names of students who request accommodations without their permission, JTR AmeriCorps program staff will inform the Disability Resource Center coordinators about the program and will invite them to share information with STEM degree-pursuing students with special needs. It is hoped that this collaboration will result in the participation of JTR AmeriCorps members who have disabilities.

### D2

Because STEM degree holders, including those with special needs, are in high demand in the private sector, where they can generally command high salaries, we are not requesting additional MSYs to be filled by AmeriCorps members with disabilities. UNF will consider requesting them in future years if recruitment strategies and feedback from this proposed expansion demonstrate that UNF will be able to consistently recruit STEM degree holders with disabilities to serve as JTR AmeriCorps members.

## Narratives

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No additional No-Cost MSYs are requested at this time.

### Continuation Changes

N/A

### Grant Characteristics