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Executive Summary

The Iowa AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach proposes to have 30 AmeriCorps members who will deliver positive youth development opportunities at approximately 14 sites across Iowa. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for the improved engagement of 90% of students completing AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach supported youth programs. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 1165 volunteers who will support the delivery of K-12 educational activities.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus areas of Education and Healthy Futures. The CNCS investment of \$406,988 will be matched with \$414,706 in cash and in-kind support, \$321,637 in public funding and \$93,069 in private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

1. PROBLEM/NEED

The AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach program, with its flexible intermediary approach, provides in-school programming, out-of-school programming, and summer programming to communities that would not otherwise have access to these valuable educational learning experiences. Through this AmeriCorps program, rural communities in Iowa, as well as communities with high levels of poverty, receive support for youth in order to increase academic performance. Youth also receive out of school time (OST) support and programming while their parents/guardians are working in order to keep them connected and active. Programming consists of evidence-based curricula, STEM activities, life skills, and healthy living. Communities are selected to receive services through the AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach program by a competitive application process insuring applicants can demonstrate need and a commitment to evidence-based programming, and the ability to sustain programming through match requirements. For the majority of our host sites, our program is the only one available; isolated rural conditions, lack of adequate transportation, lack of public transportation, and limited family resources preclude residents traveling to other communities to receive the programs.

Past, recent, and ongoing research provides persuasive evidence that poverty is linked to negative academic outcomes as indicated through lower school performance in students from economically disadvantaged families or in economically challenged areas (i.e. smaller rural communities). According to the 2013 Iowa Condition of Education Report, students eligible for free/reduced-price

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school lunch (an indicator of low socio-economic status) had an average reading score more than 20 points lower than students who were not deemed eligible. The report showed a similar correlation in science testing scores.

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2014 KIDS COUNT report, just over one-fifth (21%) of Iowa's low-income families are considered "working families" - meaning the adults work away from the home at least 35 hours per week. Another 21% are considered "under-employed" meaning the adults work outside the home but are not classified as full-time in a single job. Both of these family types lead to school-aged children with little or no supervision during out-of-school time due to the tendency to work longer hours and/or multiple jobs. This unsupervised period of "self-care" is associated with more accidents and injuries, increased behavior problems, and lower academic achievement (2011 National Association of Child-Care Resource and Referral Agencies). Children who spend out-of-school time in enrichment activities, on the other hand, have better grades, better work habits, and more positive relationships with their peers (2011 National Association of Child-Care Resource and Referral Agencies). After-school programs give children the opportunity to develop creative thinking, problem-solving, communication, and self-direction skills that are linked with success in the workplace (Nellie Mae Foundation, 2009).

Out-of-school educational learning experiences not only increase school performance and community connectedness, they have a significant impact on youths' health and healthy behaviors. Just under half (44%) of Iowa youth report they do not exercise on a regular basis, and 28% of Iowa youth are classified as obese (Kids Count, 2013). According to the National Institute on Out of School Time (NIOST), obesity rates are higher in youth lacking organized OST activities. Afterschool programs play an important role in promoting healthy lifestyles for youth. Physical fitness activities after school not only promote health but also serve as crime deterrents, teach youth positive values, and impart knowledge and skills to help youth establish lifelong healthy habits (2014).

Selection of sites for the AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach program is supported through the 2012 U.S. Census American Community Survey based on need indicators such as rural population, percent of children at or below poverty level, lack of OST programming, schools in need of assistance, and percent of youth with below grade-level reading and math scores. In recent years, program sites have included: 1) Centerville, a small city of 5526 residents with a 27.3% poverty rate for youth under 18, a

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median household income \$20,000 below the state median, and all four schools on the Schools in Need of Assistance list for both reading and math (State Report Card 2013); 2) Muscatine County, a rural county with a poverty rate of 23.6% for youth under 18, and where several schools are listed Schools in Need of Assistance; and 3) Sioux City where members serve at the Midtown Community Center located in a low income neighborhood and the overall poverty level in the city for youth under 18 is 25.6%. Sites in the upcoming year will continue to have similar characteristics as well as similar areas of need.

2. THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL

This program's multi-focus intermediary model helps sites across Iowa serve communities and neighborhoods that would otherwise not be able to provide resources to youth in need. The areas served are some of the most severely under-resourced areas in the state. The approach allows us to work with host site organizations (partners) to holistically address their identified community needs. As we collectively address these compelling community needs, we work to provide the youth with academic skills in safe and supportive environments while strengthening their community connectedness. As site needs are identified, the operational approach builds in additional ability to address a subset of priorities such as STEM education and healthy living, both of which have been directly tied to positive youth development outcomes.

Our intervention has typically used a network of both full-time and half-time members serving in approximately 14-18 host sites to deliver positive youth development experiences through in-school, out-of-school, and summer time programming to approximately 7,000 K-12 youth. Dosage and duration of programming varies based on the host site objectives and delivery mode. For example: an after school program may meet an 1.5 hours/day x 4 days/week x 9 months; a club may meet 2 hours/month x 12 months; a summer day camp may meet 6 hours/day x 5 days; a STEM workshop may meet 6 hours one day. Most host sites provide more than one type of programming, and many youth participate in multiple programs. Only youth who participate in at least 6 hours of programming will be surveyed.

The current request involves 50 members in up to 18 sites with participation of at least 9,000 youth. The exact numbers will be determined through the host site selection and member placement process and will depend on site activities/community needs, communities' assets, member experience, and

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population. All members will work directly with youth to deliver programming using the 4-H principles and practices of positive youth development. Activities vary with each site, but may include academic assistance, nutritional programs, physical activities, structured community activities, and service-learning, among many others. Full- and part-time members serve based on the duration and dosage of the programs provided, their experience, and on community needs and population. Members also may serve to recruit and train volunteers. Volunteers will be leveraged to increase the capacity of the host sites to provide needed programs and to serve additional youth.

A group of six sites that have a long history with the program form the core host site partnership and submit an annual description of member projects/activities. The core partner sites are: Centerville Community School District, Iowa Department of Human Rights, Midtown Family Community Center/Woodbury County Extension & Outreach, Nahant Marsh Education Center, NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative, and United Action for Youth. The remainder of the sites will be selected using an annual Request for Proposals (RFP) process to be released in April of 2015 with applications due May of 2015. This process allows new sites to participate, while maintaining the stability provided by the core sites. Applicants are ranked based on the community need, organizational overview, project overview, member service description, and member support and supervision. Previous performance as a host site is also considered. (About 75% of host sites re-apply annually.) Final site selection is announced in June. Host sites span the state and include partners such as individual schools and school districts, community foundations, education centers, youth clubs, county and regional Extension offices, and related State of Iowa department units.

Populations served in Iowa include economically disadvantaged youth (K-12), whether or not they are at risk of behavioral issues, illegal behavior, or poor conduct. Each program will provide in-school programming, summer programming, and/or out-of-school time programming. Student engagement will be evaluated through the use of pre/post attitude surveys.

Member contributions through our proposed intervention will lead to increased youth engagement, improved academic achievement and school participation, and ultimately to increased participation in post-secondary school for the youth served. In order to assess impact, AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach will use the national performance measure ED1 (number of youth beginning participation) and ED2 for output (number of economically disadvantaged youths completing participation in CNCS-supported

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K-12 education programs, as evidenced by completion of a pre/post survey). Performance Measure ED27A (the number of students K-12 who participated and demonstrated improved attitudes) will be used for outcome. The program uses a Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE) tool to assess additional outcomes such as character, recognition of community needs, interest in school and school environment, homework being completed, grades improving, and desire for additional school after graduation. An abbreviated RISE survey is used with grades K-3 to indicate appreciation for citizenship, attitudes toward learning, and beliefs (completing homework).

3. EVIDENCE BASE

The AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach program falls into the moderate evidence tier. The effectiveness of 4-H programming has been demonstrated over many years to positively impact the performance and intentions of youth in schools. A recent longitudinal quasi-experimental study conducted by Tufts University showed the structured OST learning, leadership experiences, and adult mentoring provided through participation in 4-H played a vital role in academic achievement, healthy living, civic involvement, and participation in science programs. The results of this study - which followed then 7,000 adolescents from highly diverse backgrounds across 42 states in the U.S. (including Iowa) and conducted annual surveys for eight years - are influencing research and practice around the world. Specific outcomes included youth involved in 4-H are four times more likely to make contributions to their communities; two times more likely to be civically active; two times more likely to make healthier choices; and two times more likely to participate in Science, Engineering and Computer Technology programs during out-of-school time (Lerner, R., Lerner, J., and colleagues, 2012). The full study is available at: <http://www.4-h.org/about/youth-development-research/positive-youth-development-study/>).

AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach has been assessed using a RISE pre/post tool for impact reporting. Responses to 11 statements about character, recognition of community needs, interest in school and school environment, homework being completed, grades improving, and desire for additional school after graduation have been analyzed for the past three years. Over 90% of completed surveys reported increased positive attitude/engagement. An abbreviated RISE survey was used with K-3 grades to indicate appreciation for citizenship, attitudes toward learning, and beliefs (completing homework).

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4. NOTICE PRIORITY

Iowa AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach program falls within the multi-focus intermediary priority by serving in severely under-resourced communities providing activities that collectively address compelling community needs in the areas of education and healthy futures. Additionally, the Iowa AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach program falls within the education priority by providing in-school academic performance assistance and OSTI enrichment activities centered around STEM activities. We have sufficient financial and management capacity to act as the umbrella organization for partners across the state, and we have 10 years of demonstrated program success.

Partnerships with established host sites with a history of successful AmeriCorps programming will be developed through a competitive RFP process. Sites demonstrating the ability to improve academic progress, increase connectedness, decrease unsupervised out-of-school time, and enhance skills in youth participants will be selected to have AmeriCorps members allocated to them.

5. MEMBER TRAINING

Over the past years as an AmeriCorps 4-H project, the capability of the model in recruiting, training and support of members has been evidenced as critical to success. AmeriCorps 4-H members are most often recruited from local host site communities under the belief that their understanding of the area, people, and problems can bolster success. Additional selection criteria includes previous experience and understanding of the 4-H program; understanding of positive youth development and youth education capacity; and the ability to bolster STEM topics and interests. Members may deliver programming at multiple locations.

During the first week of the program year, program staff present a mandatory orientation to all AmeriCorps member host sites via remote access technology. The AmeriCorps programs, policies and procedures, and the corresponding rules and regulations for CNCS, 4-H, the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service, and AmeriCorps 4-H are explained to all AmeriCorps members and site supervisors. Prohibited activities are discussed and outlined in members' handbooks and service agreements, including the need to monitor compliance by volunteers recruited or managed by AmeriCorps members. Members sign an agreement that verifies they have read, understand, and agree to all AmeriCorps service terms and conditions. Site supervisors provide orientation about the host site and local community, introduction to staff, the importance of quality out-of-school programs, how to

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develop programming within the community, and members' service roles. Introductions to advisory committees and community partners are included in orientation where appropriate. Member training is designed to encourage networking with other members and emphasize the sense of belonging to AmeriCorps. Additional local training specific to their host site activities will be provided as needed in order to insure adherence to modality, dose, and duration as well as to provide members with the skills necessary to deliver specific programs. By actively participating in state and local training, members develop the skills to perform the activities required to accomplish program goals.

At the state level, members receive training from program staff, 4-H staff, and consultants. During the first 45 days of service, all members are required to participate in training to introduce them to the research-based experiential learning and eight essential elements that are the basis for 4-H positive youth development. Additionally, they are trained in the community service-learning model and a STEM curriculum. Members are provided training on both formal STEM curricula as well as how to infuse STEM learning informally into on-going programming. The training agenda includes a service project and a reflection activity to illustrate how the practice can be used with youth programming. This training event also reiterates the performance measures and reviews the reporting requirements and tools.

Members are also required to attend the Life after AmeriCorps training in the spring. The agenda includes strategies to maximize a National Service experience on resumes and in job interviews, a reflection session on their service, using the education award, and an introduction to AmeriCorps Alums.

At state-level trainings, members are brought together to network and learn as a team. Other state and local host site trainings may be offered throughout the year to provide curricula that will enhance members' abilities to perform their assigned duties and support professional development. In addition to Positive Youth Development, training topics include Citizenship, Communication, Community Capacity Building, First Aid/CPR, Life After AmeriCorps, and Volunteer Management. The AmeriCorps 4-H online learning management system, operated by Moodle, delivers up to 10 supplemental trainings. Research-based training and curricula resources are also available to sites and their members to facilitate professional development.

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6. MEMBER SUPERVISION

The Program Staff provides accessible overall program and member supervision through the use of regular e-mail and phone communication, site visits, and training events. Host site supervisors are designated in the Host Site Application and provide on-site daily member supervision. Supervisors attend a mandatory orientation that covers AmeriCorps and program goals, expectations, regulations, reporting requirements, and prohibited activities for members and volunteers. Supervisors are required to sign a Prohibited Activities document verifying understanding and intent to comply. The Program Staff monitors these activities and is available by phone or e-mail to answer questions or address problems. Monthly conference calls and periodic webinars are used to address general member and program management issues and provide technical assistance on specific topics such as impact data reporting and member evaluations. Each host site signs a contract that specifies requirements and expectations. The Host Site Supervisor's Handbook is updated annually.

Site supervisors and program staff support members with programmatic and training questions. At the beginning of service, supervisors set personal goals with their members and meet regularly to review progress and assignments, and address emerging issues. If questions arise, program staff and site supervisors are available to assist members in effectively transferring training skills and resources to the local level programs. Supervisors review members' progress toward personal goals and review performance measures at midterm and end-of-term evaluations. In addition, regional 4-H Youth Development Specialists are available to each host site by phone, e-mail, or in person to assist with incorporation of positive youth development principles, training, and resources.

7. MEMBER EXPERIENCE

Host sites are selected based on the member experience they can provide. The skills and experience will vary based on the host site project. All members will have training and experience providing youth programming. All members are required to present a webinar highlighting their site activities for other AmeriCorps 4-H members. Some members will be recruiting/training/managing volunteers. Most members will build community partnerships to support the youth programs. All members will develop organizational and time management skills necessary to deliver programming and meet all reporting requirements.

Member training is designed to encourage networking with other members and emphasize the sense

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of belonging to AmeriCorps. At state-level trainings, members are brought together to network and learn as a team and to reflect on their service. Members are also required to submit a written reflection of their service experience at the completion of their term. Life After AmeriCorps training includes an introduction to AmeriCorps Alums and the opportunities it provides for a lifelong commitment to service.

Members are strongly encouraged to network locally with service members from other programs. Where possible, members participate in collaborative community projects to promote national service. All members participate in 3 Days of Service. To celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, members may facilitate youth community service learning projects or plan and/or participate in AmeriCorps Member projects. During AmeriCorps Week, members have participated in Member led projects, set up information tables on college campuses, been interviewed on the radio, and given presentations to community groups. All members participate in an activity to promote national service. For Global Youth Service Day all members facilitate a youth lead service learning project.

State- and local-level trainings provide members the tools, resources, and curricula needed to address AmeriCorps 4-H performance measures, and also provide members a minimum of two levels of on-going support to implement the training resources and strategies at the host sites. AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach members are almost exclusively recruited from the host site communities. These members report a new appreciation and connection to the local communities.

8. COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION

AmeriCorps 4-H provides all members with AmeriCorps clothing, lapel pins, and nametags. Host sites are provided signs and window clings to be displayed at their site. AmeriCorps 4-H policy requires members to wear AmeriCorps ID gear (lapel pin, clothing, nametag, etc.) during service hours and to use an e-mail signature block to highlight their AmeriCorps affiliation. Mandatory New Member Training includes a discussion of what AmeriCorps is and how to present it to the public. The display of the AmeriCorps logo on ID gear has generated questions that gave past members the opportunity to educate others about AmeriCorps and members' contributions to the community. Compliance with ID policies is monitored during host site visits and written communication from members.

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All host sites are required to use the AmeriCorps title in member recruitment efforts. All materials and documentation such as orientation materials, curriculum, and application forms include the AmeriCorps logo. The AmeriCorps 4-H website also includes the AmeriCorps name and logo.

Organizational Capability

1. ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND AND STAFFING

Iowa State University (ISU) and 4-H have administered thousands of federal and state grants totaling millions of dollars and have administered AmeriCorps programs since 1999. During the past five years of programming, over \$1,700,000 in cash match funding and in-kind contributions have been secured from ISU, host sites, and their partners.

Youth development programming in ISU Extension and Outreach 4-H has used research-based youth development curricula, practices, and evaluation frameworks since its inception in 1901. 4-H has earned recognition as a state leader in youth development. The AmeriCorps grant allows the organization to reach additional communities with these youth development resources. At the community level, site supervisors and community advisory boards manage each host site's programming related to the initiative. While giving AmeriCorps 4-H autonomy to conduct the initiative, 4-H provides important resources such as member training and regional-level 4-H Youth Development Specialists to help members and site supervisors manage and monitor educationally appropriate host site programming.

The primary AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach Program Staff responsible for the overall program and financial administration of the AmeriCorps grant will be the Program Director, Judy McCarthy (1.0 FTE) and the Assistant Director, Susan Hollenkamp (.5 FTE). Project Associate Keli Tallman (.05 FTE) will be the Primary Investigator and provide management support and subject matter expertise. McCarthy has a master's degree in business administration and extensive experience in project management. She has managed diverse projects with budgets as large as \$100 million. McCarthy has been the Program Director for Iowa AmeriCorps State of Promise since October 2007. Hollenkamp has a BS in Human Development and Family Studies with a focus on child and family services. She has an extensive background working with at-risk populations. Hollenkamp also has a background in developing online curriculum. She has been with the program since May 2011. Tallman has worked with ISU Extension since 1996. She is a 4-H Youth Development Program Specialist with responsibilities for statewide program evaluation, research, and reporting; leadership to

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Curricular Teams; liaison to National 4-H Afterschool; grants and contracts coach; and liaison for strategic 4-H partnership development. Tallman holds an MS degree in Human Development and Family Studies. She was an AmeriCorps Program Director for seven years at a statewide after-school initiative. Financial monitoring and reporting is done by ISU's Sponsored Programs Accounting, which has extensive experience with federal grants and knowledge of applicable rules and regulations.

Host agencies choose site supervisors. Technical assistance is provided throughout the year via web-based meetings, conference calls, and e-mail correspondence. The Program staff and site supervisors communicate on a regular basis to share successes and identify emerging needs.

To promote the 4-H mission, monitoring and feedback processes have been established. The Program Staff systematically tracks and evaluates each host site regarding impact made toward the performance measures. The Program Staff annually updates the performance measures, measurement tools, and a reporting template. Site supervisors, members, and volunteers submit quarterly quantitative and qualitative reports organized by content areas: member development, service activities, and strengthening communities.

2. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The program has been, and will continue to be, financially and programmatically monitored and managed by ISU. The extensive grant oversight and institutional capacity of ISU and the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service ensures quality financial, programmatic, and personnel monitoring of the AmeriCorps grant.

Annual mandatory Site Supervisor Orientation and monthly conference calls with supervisors that provide reminders and new information ensure host site compliance with AmeriCorps regulations and policies. All supervisors are required to read and sign a verification of their understanding of the prohibited activities, and its application to volunteers as well as AmeriCorps member. The New Member Orientation webinar and the mandatory New Member Training include sessions on the same policies and regulations included in the Supervisor Orientation, with special emphasis on prohibited activities and how the same prohibitions apply to volunteers recruited or managed by members.

Compliance is monitored with discussions conducted during site visits with supervisors, members, and

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volunteers. Members submit great stories monthly that provide insight into member activities and quarterly reports provide information on member activities, as well as impact data.

If non-compliance is identified, sites must develop and implement a compliance plan that will include frequent compliance reports. Additional site visits will be implemented specifically to monitor compliance. If a site fails to take corrective action, the site will be ineligible to participate in the future.

3. PAST PERFORMANCE

In 2012-2013, while the program exceeded the targeted number of participants in the programs (output), it failed to meet the targeted number of completed surveys. New performance measures, reporting tools and processes were developed for the 2012-2013 program to improve the quality and consistency of the impact data. As a result, host sites were uncomfortable with and misunderstood the use of the survey, so the number of completed surveys was well below what was expected. Results of the surveys that were completed did indicate the improved engagement that was expected.

In 2013-2014, the program again failed to meet the targeted number of completed surveys. In order to correct for issues encountered in 2012-2013, we again revised the reporting process, tools and instructions. Training on performance reporting was expanded to include a webinar with more detailed instructions on data collection and on how to administer the impact surveys for different age participants. Additional correspondence occurred with sites/Members, reminders of the critical importance of completing the attitude surveys were provided, and Members and supervisors were encouraged to ask questions. While the number of surveys completed was well above the 2012-2013 results, it was again below the target. However, survey results again exceeded expectations with over 90% indicating improved attitudes.

Corrective Action Plan: Program staff has set individual performance expectations with each 2014-2015 host site and will monitor results closely to ensure adherence to the goal. Performance against the goals will be considered in future site selection decisions. Performance targets have been adjusted to more realistically project the percentage of participants that will complete surveys.

ENROLLMENT: 103% for 2013-2014 included 1 full time refill

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RETENTION: 94.1% in 2013-2014, exceeding the 90% target. Retention rate for half-time members was 100%. One full-time member was terminated and the position was refilled, one full-time member failed to complete all her hours during the 12 month term.

Corrective Action Plan: Supervisor and member training will emphasize the importance of continuous monitoring of reported and scheduled service hours. Detailed review of reported and planned hours will be included in site visits.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

1.COST EFFECTIVENESS

As a Multi-focus Intermediary program, the AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach budget is designed to be sensitive to the financial realities of small non-profit programs with limited resources and rural communities that are dealing with shrinking budgets as populations decrease. At \$13,720/MSY, the cost is below the CNCS maximum allowable and ensures the program is accessible to communities that lack the resources and population to sponsor an AmeriCorps program. The budget provides logical coverage for administrative staff salaries and benefits, background checks, program supplies, member support, and administration. AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach is a statewide program, so the travel budget may be higher than local or regional programs to cover the mileage cost for member travel to a centralized location for training and staff travel to visit sites throughout the state. As a multi-focused intermediary initiative, costs can vary among sites and with activities. The budget is based on the experience of Iowa State 4-H Youth Development experience managing AmeriCorps programs.

Program oversight flows from Iowa 4-H and ISU, which has administered AmeriCorps programs since 1999. While AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach operates autonomously, 4-H provides important resources to a successful program, such as member training and youth development specialist expertise at the regional and state levels to support members and site supervisors in programming, monitoring, and evaluation.

The cost per MSY for 2015/16 is \$13,720, a decrease of \$152/member. The budget reflects a match of 50%.

Over the last 6 years AmeriCorps 4-H members have recruited and/or managed community volunteers who have contributed over \$545,000 in economic value to the host site communities

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2. BUDGET ADEQUACY

Non-federal cash match funding of \$272,240 will be provided by host sites and will come from state and local school discretionary funds, County Extension funds, community grants, community after-school fundraisers, student participation fees, and tax levies. Public and private donations will be received from local businesses, citizen associations, and congregations. Specific sources of cash match will depend on host sites selected. Historically 75% of cash match is from public funding and 25% is from private funding sources.

\$284,240 of in-kind match is provided in the form of member supervision and ISU unrecovered administration costs.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

A program evaluation will be performed in spring 2018. The evaluation will be designed to assess the success of the AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach supported high quality, research based, positive youth development programs in improving student engagement in school and community. Since our program grant is over \$500,000, the evaluation will be performed by the Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE). RISE has a long standing history of conducting comprehensive, integrated, research and evaluation studies to enhance K-20 education nationally and globally.

The study will provide additional, in-depth analysis of six years of pre/post attitude surveys used for performance reporting. Parents, teachers, AmeriCorps members, volunteers, mentors, and others that are in a position to observe student attitudes and behaviors will be surveyed on their observations of changes in student engagement as a result of participation in the AmeriCorps programs. The questions will parallel the attitude surveys (collected over the past 6 years) completed by program participants and include questions concerning citizenship (character, sense of belonging, interest in service activities); attitudes toward school; school performance (attendance, homework, grades); aspirations to pursue education/training after high school. Research questions will include: 1) What is the optimal number of programming hours to see a significant impact? 2) What delivery mode provides the greatest impact for youth? RISE will distribute and collect surveys, analyze the results and prepare a report. A budget of \$2000 is anticipated

Amendment Justification

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N/A

Clarification Summary

2015-2016 CLARIFICATIONS

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A. PROGRAMMATIC CLARIFICATION ITEMS

1. In-school activities at Centerville Community School District members build caring and positive connections, model positive behaviors and successful learning. In elementary schools members work with identified students in the classrooms to assist and enhance learning from classroom activities. During recreation and leisure times and during after school programs, members work with students in the area of teamwork, social skills and citizenship. In the middle and high school, students go to the AmeriCorps room during free or study periods for homework assistance, to work on service learning projects, or to receive other support provided by the AmeriCorps members. In other sites members provide enrichment activities in partnership with local schools. Those activities may include field trips associated with the local foods. At other sites the members work with youth in informal learning activities such robotics, gardening and/or cooking, 4-H Clubs during out of school time. Many of the part time members serve full time in the summer. Two members in Dubuque are planning day camps with themes such as Robotics,; Dirt, Works and Food; Gizmos & Gadgets, Dinosaur Adventures, engineering Design Process; A World in Motion ; Clover Cookie Factory; Exploring Science. Each program is targeted for a specific age group from 6 to 14. Another site is planning camping experiences.

In the annual Host Site Application, sites request the number of full time and half time members they will need to implement the programs specified, to meet the needs of the identified community. The program attempts to accommodate the successful applicant requests based on the available slots.

2. At County Extension sites, members work with local schools and provide accompanying summer programs, with lessons relating to growing, preparation and consumption of produce from community garden projects. At the NE Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative, 5 members partner with local school districts. Over the last five years, members have built and maintained 23 school gardens

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with youth participation; facilitated and developed 16 active school wellness teams with youth member serving on a majority of teams; helped develop over 19 Walking School Buses in the region with youth involved in mapping, advocating and leading school buses; provided over 1200 hours of nutrition education, mentored five youth-driven cafeteria coaching teams that help promote eating fresh fruits and vegetables in the lunch room; and developed four youth drive Food Empowerment Education and Sustainability Teams (FEEST) to learn how to advocate for health issues while bringing the community together around a healthy local meal. Another program will provide educational sessions in conjunction with the summer lunch program at a local schools

3a. The K-12 students are identified for service activities by local members. The process for recruiting students for service projects varies from site to site. At the United Action for Youth teen center, student members of the Service Club identify and organize projects. At the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council, members from around the state organize projects in their local communities. At other locations, youth volunteer or are recruited by members to organize projects. Host sites are chosen based on location and/or focus on serving economically disadvantaged and/or at risk youth. Students with exceptional needs are welcome in all of the programs, but currently there are no sites targeting this population.

3b. Volunteer service activities are defined by each host site to meets the needs of the local programs. In the NE Food and Fitness Initiative volunteers work with the Walking School Buses, drive or chaperone field trips. At County Extension sites, volunteers include club leaders, drivers, and chaperones. Local professionals and hobbyists share their expertise with youth in member organized learning activities. Other volunteers work as mentors. Each host site recruits and trains volunteers, based on the local needs.

The program ensures volunteers don't participate in prohibited activities by educating both site supervisors and members about prohibited activities and emphasize the prohibition extends to volunteers. Compliance is monitored during site visits with discussions of volunteer programs and prohibited activities.

4. The 6 hour duration/dosage number 4 was chosen to align with the 4-H reporting standard for K-12 educational activities on the annual ES 237 Report to the National Institute for Food and Agriculture, Division of Food and 4-H at the US Department of Agriculture. Youth impact surveys include hours

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of program participation. That data will be evaluated to determine if 6 hours is significant or if the number should be changed in the future.

5. STEM curriculum is site specific based on the learning goals of the host site. It is recommended that curriculum is research based. Members have access to 4-H research based curriculum and are trained in inquiry-based pedagogy for utilizing curriculum. Examples of previously used curricula includes Engineering is Elementary, Growing in the Garden and First Lego League. The governor's STEM initiative is another source of STEM curriculum used by sites.

B. BUDGET CLARIFICATIONS

2. 2. COST PER MSY: the revised cost/per MSY is \$13,566. This is \$306.40 below the allowable cost/MSY in the request for clarifications and \$154/MSY below the original application. The cash match for AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach is provided by host sites. As an intermediary program, our goal is to provide an opportunity for small youth serving non-profits and gov't agencies to receive the benefits of participating in an AmeriCorps program. These programs have limited resources, so it is just as critical to keep the cash match for host sites low as it is control the CNCS costs. However the cost of administering the AmeriCorps grant is increasing, limiting our ability to cut costs.

Section C. Staff and Member Travel Reimbursement Rates: Per Iowa State University policy, all staff members with an office located on Iowa State University campus are reimbursed mileage at the rate of .28 per mile. On campus staff also have use of university vehicles in lieu of using personal vehicles for work related travel. All staff with an office located off Iowa State University campus are reimbursed at the rate of .56 per mile. Members have offices at the host site they are serving at and do not have offices on Iowa State University campus therefore, members are reimbursed at the .56 per mile rate.

All other budget clarifications are addressed in the Budget Narrative section.

C. PERFORMANCE MEASURE CLARIFICATIONS

1. K-12 youth from economically challenged families have lower academic performance and limited

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access to enrichment activities during out-of-school time. The AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach program provides in-school programming, out-of-school programming, and summer programming to communities that would not otherwise have access to these valuable educational learning experiences.

Proposed program host sites include: Centerville, a small city of 5526 residents where members serve in the community school district, has a 27.3% poverty rate for youth under 18 and a median household income of \$30,044, compared to a state median of \$50,451; all three schools where members serve in Centerville are on the Schools in Need of Assistance 2012-2013 list for both reading and math (State Report Card 2012). Muscatine County, where members serve with Iowa State University (ISU) Extension and Outreach, is a rural county that has a poverty rate of 23.6% for youth under 18; in the Muscatine-Louisa school district, the high school, junior high and elementary schools are listed Schools in Need of Assistance. In Sioux City, population 82,684, members serve at the Midtown Community Center located in a low income neighborhood; the overall poverty level in the city for youth under 18 is 25.6%.

2. Host sites are chosen based on location and focus on serving economically disadvantaged and/or at risk youth. Students being served are primarily economically disadvantaged. Students with exceptional needs are welcome in all of the programs, but currently there are no sites targeting this population.

3. The 6 hour duration/dosage number was chosen to align with the 4-H reporting standard for K-12 educational activities on the annual ES 237 Report to the National Institute for Food and Agriculture at the US Department of Agriculture. Youth impact surveys include hours of program participation. That data will be evaluated to determine if 6 hours is significant or if the number should be changed in the future.

4. Each host site tracks student enrollment in each of their programs. Data is collected in a performance reporting log provided by Iowa AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach program to each of the host sites. The reporting log tracks both new and previously enrolled students separately to prevent duplication.

5. Iowa AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach measures program completion by those youth who complete the pre/post survey. Performance measure targets were determined by past program experience. Based on

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past experience, our program found that youth participants may complete a program without completing a program survey. The difference between program enrollments/program completion reflects not just student who don't complete a program but also student who chose not to complete a survey.

6. Iowa AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach will measure the following dimensions of academic engagement using the pre/post survey results: increased interest in school, improved perspective on school climate, increased attachment to school and increased educational aspirations.

7. Iowa AmeriCorps 4H Outreach uses a pre/post attitude survey developed by Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE) at Iowa State University. RISE has a long standing history of conducting comprehensive, integrated, research and evaluation studies to enhance K-20 education nationally and globally. The pre/post survey measures student attitudes about school, student beliefs about school and student aspirations after high school using a 5 point scale. Through the criteria stated in the CNCS Performance Measure Instructions, student improvement in a program is measured by "students should only be counted as having demonstrated improved academic engagement if at least one [or more] of these elements shows improvement without any of the other elements worsening." A one point or more increase indicates improvement.

D. STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT SLOTS

AmeriCorps 4- H Outreach is not interested pursuing this opportunity.

E. MSY WITH NOT PROGRAM FUNDS ATTACHED CLARIFICATION:

AmeriCorps 4-H Outreach is not interested pursuing this opportunity.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics