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Executive Summary

The American Red Cross proposes to have 33 AmeriCorps members who will improve the capacity of communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters and will provide direct assistance to individuals experiencing disaster in locations across Michigan with six main sites in Detroit, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Flint, Kalamazoo, and Traverse City. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for increasing the number of Michigan residents prepared for disasters both large and small. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 3,800 volunteers who will be engaged in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Disaster Services. The CNCS investment of \$432,899 will be matched with \$449,976 in private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

Problem/Need: Every day, nature shows us exactly how powerful it is and how vulnerable we can be. From home fires to severe winter storms, disasters strip innocent people of their essential needs, including their homes, food, clothing and comfort. According to FEMA records, between 2004 and 2013 there were a record-breaking 654 presidentially declared major disasters, the most of any 10-year span on record since the modern disaster-declaration system was established in the 1950s, and a 31-percent increase over the previous decade. The human scale of these disasters is no less serious: Between 2004 and 2013, nearly 21 million people in the United States were affected by disasters - almost five times more than in the previous 10-year period.

In the state of Michigan, the Red Cross annually assists over 3,000 families who are experiencing a disaster. While we are prepared to respond to incidents affecting our entire community - most Red Cross disaster responses in the state of Michigan are to single family home fires. Still, according to Michigan's 2012 Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment report, which analyzes information from the most recent Michigan Hazard Analysis (2012) and Michigan Hazard Mitigation Plan (2011) to identify and contextualize the threats and hazards faced by Michigan, the state is at risk for threats including: tornadoes, floods, thunderstorm winds and lightning, severe winter weather, wildfires, extreme temperatures, infrastructure failures, hazardous material incidents, structural fires, major transportation accidents, and petroleum and natural gas pipeline accidents, public health emergencies, terrorism, and civil disturbances. Despite efforts to better understand disasters, it remains impossible to predict when or how disasters will strike with any degree of certainty.

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For example, while hazard analysis indicates that the state is at risk of floods and infrastructure failures, the Southeast Michigan flash flooding in August still took residents by surprise. The combination of torrential rains and outdated storm water systems overwhelmed the infrastructure and caused widespread damage. In the following weeks, over 100 Red Cross volunteers provided direct financial assistance to 1,195 residents and provided clean up supplies to another 4,921 individuals.

Disasters are unpredictable. But we do know that one of the most important factors in recovering from disasters is being prepared for disasters. Despite years of public education programs on the importance of being prepared for disasters, the majority of people in America are not taking the necessary precautions. A recent nationwide Red Cross survey shows that more than half of U.S. residents have experienced at least one emergency situation where they lost utilities for at least three days, had to evacuate, could not return home or communicate with family members, or had to provide first aid to others. Yet the 2012 Personal Preparedness in America Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Survey revealed that only 39 percent of households reported having a disaster plan and discussing it with their families. Additionally, only 46 percent of respondents believed that a natural disaster would ever occur in their community. This is particularly concerning, since the two most commonly cited reasons for taking preparedness steps were having experienced a previous disaster (21 percent) and a belief that a disaster was likely to occur in their community (20 percent). Parallel data is unavailable for the state of Michigan; however the Red Cross does ask preparedness questions when we survey our disaster clients post-disaster. While this doesn't signify a statistically representative sample of the population, this data shows that more than 70 percent of our clients did not have a disaster plan and even fewer had discussed that plan with their families.

Disaster preparedness, response and recovery happen in a continuous cycle and so the AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program is consistently engaged in preparedness and response activities concurrently. In an average year, approximately 75 percent of a member's time is spent on preparedness activities and the remaining 25 percent is spent on response activities. However, that average can vary widely depending on the number of large scale disasters that occur each year.

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Theory of Change: The theory of change for the AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program holds that individual members of the community must be educated about how to prepare for disasters in order to actually prepare for disasters and secondly that families experiencing disasters must have somewhere to turn for help in order to successfully recover from disasters and return to a pre-disaster state. These measurable short term outcomes lead to the long term outcome of building community resilience, which is defined by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction as, "The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions".

The interventions embraced by this program include educating individuals about disaster preparedness (aligned with CNCS Priority D1: Number of individuals that received CNCS-supported services in disaster preparedness) and assisting families experiencing disasters to decrease the amount of time it takes to reach a pre-disaster state (aligned with CNCS Priority D2: Number of individuals that received CNCS-supported services in disaster response). These two interventions are detailed below.

A 2012 FEMA Preparedness Survey indicates that 55 percent of individuals who receive preparedness information take steps to prepare after receiving the information. Therefore, the primary objective of the AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program will be to plan and implement preparedness projects in communities across the state. The details of each project will be determined based on local input from volunteers and partner agencies. Additionally, each project will be modeled on a previously successful project. Previously successful community outreach project models include:

Home Fire Preparedness Campaign: This project model utilizes groups of volunteers to canvass neighborhoods with home fire preparedness materials and visit homes to install and repair smoke alarms, complete home safety checklists and help families develop a disaster plan. The duration of this project model is a one-time meeting with a household one-on-one. The dosage of this program model is less than 30 minutes. The target population is residents of neighborhoods that have experienced a recent home fire or are at risk for home fires based on available data.

Preparedness Education Presentations: This project model uses nationally recognized preparedness curriculums and delivers training via presentations at community gatherings or in schools.

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Presentations cover a wide range of topics including hazard specific education, hands only CPR, water safety, public health and disease prevention, and general disaster preparedness. The duration of this project model is a one-time presentation with a group of individuals; groups may schedule multiple presentations on additional topics as desired. The dosage of this program model is 30 minutes to one hour. The target population is school groups, community groups, and neighborhood groups who schedule preparedness training. Information about available trainings is sent annually to a wide variety of community groups including schools, child care centers, elder care centers, apartment communities, faith organizations, professional and social associations or clubs, and local non-profits.

Community Canvassing: This project model utilizes groups of volunteers to go door-to-door in neighborhoods and deliver educational materials about a specific hazard or general preparedness. The duration of this project model is preparedness information delivered to households. The dosage of this program model is a one-time delivery of materials to the household. The target population is residents of neighborhoods that have experienced a recent disaster or are at risk for a targeted hazard (flooding, tornadoes, etc.) based on available data.

In addition to working on preparedness initiatives across Michigan, AmeriCorps members will be expected to respond to disasters. The Red Cross model of disaster response has been in use for over 100 years and tested over time in many different kinds of disasters, large and small. The Red Cross, which is recognized as the subject matter expert, utilizes national standards to deliver disaster response, including casework, response and emergency responder support. This allows us to ensure uniform, consistent, compassionate, and accountable response that is nationally and locally recognized.

When a local disaster occurs, the Red Cross is contacted by emergency management officials to request support for the individuals affected by the incident. Trained Red Cross volunteers are deployed to the scene of the incident within two hours of notification from officials that assistance is required. Once on scene, the volunteers meet one-on-one with the affected families, assess the need for immediate food, shelter, and clothing and then provide necessary assistance. In the days and weeks following the incident, the Red Cross remains in contact with the family to provide additional support, resources, and referrals.

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Members will also be available to respond to national disasters as they occur. When a large national disaster occurs, the Red Cross system is activated to request volunteers willing to deploy in specific disaster functions. Each function requires specific training which is provided to AmeriCorps members during their Pre-Service Orientation. Available volunteers are deployed for two to three weeks depending on the scope of the incident and serve in various functions including working in emergency shelters, working to complete casework for clients affected by the disaster, or traveling into affected areas with food, water and clean-up supplies. With their advanced training, leadership skills and availability, AmeriCorps members are a huge asset that is sought out in times of national disaster.

The Red Cross also responds to family emergencies experienced by members of the armed forces and their families through our Services to the Armed Forces Emergency Messaging. During and after family emergencies or significant life events such as the birth of a child, an illness or death of an immediate family member, military members, their families and the military rely on the Red Cross to relay messages regarding such emergencies. Members will be trained to be knowledgeable about the availability of this service and how to initiate and complete casework to address these types of family emergencies.

The duration of our response model is dependent on the scope of the disaster and can last anywhere from three days to several months. The dosage of the response model is dependent on the needs of the family. Each family goes through a needs assessment and is provided with assistance based on the results of that assessment. The target population is anyone who has experienced a verified disaster. As a measure of the success of our disaster response activities, the Red Cross will evaluate survey data from disaster clients to ensure the quality of disaster response. We expect 90% of clients to report that the assistance provided by the Red Cross met their most immediate needs.

Finally, members will actively engage in volunteer recruitment and training in order to increase the capacity of the organization to plan and implement these types of preparedness projects and sustain disaster response activities. Working at the county level, members will recruit and train volunteers to support Red Cross Disaster Services and Services to the Armed Forces programs, with a goal of increasing the number of registered volunteers in each county to .08% of the total county population. The focus on measuring volunteerism on a county level is driven by several factors including the effect population density can have on the impact of a disaster, the time required to respond to a disaster, and

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to better coordinate with government emergency management officials who primarily operate at a county level. Our progress towards this volunteer recruitment goal would be tracked by comparing the number of registered volunteers in Volunteer Connection, the internal Red Cross volunteer management system, with census data to calculate the percentage of total county population. Volunteer Connection tracks personal data for volunteers including their county of residence.

AmeriCorps members are invaluable to the Red Cross because of their ability to bridge a gap between volunteers and paid staff. The day to day work of our paid staff focuses on long term program operations and capacity building which includes reporting on program activities, ensuring compliance with national standards for program implementation, and networking with emergency management and government partners. Alternatively, the day to day work of our volunteers focuses on immediate direct service activities includes client case management and maintaining office operations. Our members are dually focused on both immediate direct services activities such as meeting one-on-one with clients or providing preparedness education training and on longer term issues of capacity including community building activities and planning and implementing preparedness projects with volunteers and community partners.

Evidence Base: The AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program meets the criteria for Preliminary Evidence. The evidence base includes the 2012 Personal Preparedness in America: Findings From the 2012 FEMA National Survey which was published in July 2013. This survey of 2,013 U.S. households designed to evaluate the extent to which households around the U.S. are prepared for disasters, measure perceived vulnerability to disasters, and identify motivating factors for individuals to take steps toward preparedness. This national survey was also conducted in 2007, 2009 and 2011, allowing for the comparison for trends across a period of time. The findings of this survey not only indicate that more work needs to be done to help families prepare for disasters as only 39 percent of households reported having a disaster plan and discussing it with their families; but also indicates that reaching individuals with disaster preparedness resources is an effective means of motivating individuals to personally take steps towards being prepared as evidenced by the finding that 55 percent of individuals who receive preparedness information take steps to prepare after receiving the information. In addition, the Red Cross utilizes internal outcome based evaluations of disaster response activities through client surveys. According to the most recent client survey data, 98 percent of clients selected "Excellent" or "Very Good" in response to the question, "How would you rate the Red Cross on giving

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you help that was useful to you in beginning your recovery."

Notice Priority: The AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program falls within the funding priority area of Disaster Services. The sole focus of the program is on improving community resiliency through disaster preparedness and response. The interventions embraced by this program follow nationally recognized best practices and align with CNCS priority outcomes including educating individuals about disaster preparedness (aligned with CNCS Priority D1: Number of individuals that received CNCS-supported services in disaster preparedness) and assisting families experiencing disasters to decrease the amount of time it takes to reach a pre-disaster state (aligned with CNCS Priority D2: Number of individuals that received CNCS-supported services in disaster response).

Member Training: During the first week of service, members attend a five day Pre-Service Orientation and Training. The training begins with a review of member agreements with the Program Director, including a detailed discussion of prohibited activities, the differences between service and employment, performance measures, and reporting systems. In the following days, members participate in team building activities, learn about AmeriCorps and other streams of service through the AmeriCorps 101 orientation, and become well versed in the basics of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery through a series of sixteen Red Cross classes taught by authorized Red Cross instructors. Topics covered include, but are not limited to: Mass Care, Sheltering, Client Assistance/Casework, Preparedness Education Instructor Training, and Psychological First Aid. Members will also be trained in Volunteer Management and First Aid/CPR. The instructors of these courses must be certified by the Red Cross to teach the presented curriculums and are required to take multiple courses and to have hands on experience in the presented topic before being authorized to teach the course. AmeriCorps training is conducted by instructors with the most advanced certification possible to ensure members are learning skills from subject matter experts. During training, instructors identify anyone who may have difficulty with the material and request additional training or preparatory courses before the member is considered competent in the required skill. Finally, each member is matched with local leadership volunteers who provide on-site support and mentoring. These leadership volunteers are unpaid volunteers who have proven Red Cross experience. Each member also receives daily support from their site supervisor.

When members start service at their host site, it is the responsibility of the site supervisor to provide

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them with a local orientation to the chapter. This includes information about the local Red Cross, introductions to staff and volunteers, and a basic outline of the local community and its needs. All members meet one-on-one with the site supervisor regularly and are encouraged to reach out to leadership volunteers on an ongoing basis for additional mentoring and skills training throughout the year. In addition, the Red Cross in Michigan employs a large number of AmeriCorps Alums, many of whom serve as site supervisors. Current members are introduced to all AmeriCorps Alums and encouraged to reach out to these staff members for additional support throughout their term of service.

In addition to orienting members to their service site, the Program Director is responsible for orienting local staff and volunteers to the AmeriCorps program including education concerning prohibited activities to ensure that all Red Cross staff and volunteers understand the mission of the AmeriCorps members serving at their site.

A three day mid-year training is also developed for members to once again come together as a team and enhance their skill development and formal leadership training. Topics are identified in response to member interests, but will include Life after AmeriCorps, civic engagement, conflict resolution, non-profit management, project management, and a review of prohibited activities.

Throughout the year, whenever an activity or training presents itself to increase a member's professional skill development, we strongly encourage members to attend. This can include trainings that are available through the Red Cross for advanced skills trainings in Disaster Services functions, Diversity Web-Ex Presentations, and cross-functional trainings in Public Affairs, Communications or Instructor Training. Members also participate in weekly team meetings and if additional training needs are identified, relevant training is provided.

Member Supervision: Day to day supervision of members will be provided by paid staff at the host-site where the member is assigned who has agreed to taking on the role of Site Supervisor. Site Supervisors meet with the Program Director prior to the beginning of the program year for a one-day training that covers the following topics: prohibited activities training, national service overview, financial well-being of AmeriCorps members, using the OnCorps reporting system, AmeriCorps recruitment and national performance measures in Disaster Services.

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Ongoing support by the Program Director will be provided through quarterly trainings, monthly phone calls, topic specific conference calls, webinars, and individual in-person assistance as necessary. Topics covered in these meetings include reminders of prohibited activities, conflict resolution, team dynamics, grant compliance, service plan revisions, and member experience.

Supervisors are expected to meet weekly with their members and maintain open door policies to encourage consistent communication. Through these meetings, Site Supervisors help identify challenges and concerns and elevate problems to the Program Director. If issues cannot be resolved at that level, Site Supervisors take their concerns to the Program Director's immediate supervisor, the Chief Operating Officer.

Formal reviews of member performance are included in the member personnel files and occur mid-year and at the end of the year. An informal evaluation occurs after the third month of service to check-in with members and introduce them to the evaluation process. The Program Director also visits each site quarterly and meets with both members and supervisors, individually and together, to discuss program strengths and areas for improvement.

Based on our service year, Site Supervisors attend training in April, member recruitment starts in May, and members are placed within one of two cohorts. The first cohort of approximately 20 members starts their term and receives initial training in August. The second cohort of approximately 13 members starts their term and receives initial training in November. Mid-year training is then held in February. Currently, staffing is in place for all sites with Site Supervisors, however if changes are needed, each new site supervisor goes through the same training in order to understand fully what is expected from host sites.

Member Experience: The Red Cross is committed to ensuring that AmeriCorps members gain skills and experience that will translate into future employment and positive reflections on their year of national service. First, the Red Cross ensures members have access to ongoing professional development and training opportunities through the Red Cross and in the community that meet individual needs and interests. Additionally, site supervisors are required to specifically address future employment or education plans of each member during regular meetings and to help identify next

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steps to ensure success. And monthly team meetings are structured to provide an opportunity for each member to share challenges and successes and recognize peers, volunteers and staff that have gone beyond the expectation in their support of a member. Finally, the Michigan AmeriCorps LeaderCorps provides a statewide network in which Michigan's AmeriCorps Members share ideas, experiences and a spirit of service while taking a leadership position within their program. The AmeriCorps Together We Prepare LeaderCorps member is tasked with gauging the member experience and meets weekly with the program director to discuss opportunities for improvement.

In order to connect members with a larger sense of the power of AmeriCorps and to build esprit de corps, members are encouraged to complete a monthly service project with other non-profits and the AmeriCorps members from other programs. These monthly projects are coordinated by the members who alternate months and are encouraged to plan projects with non-profits that interest them in their future plans as a way to network and learn more about other local non-profits. Additionally, members are connected to local AmeriCorps Alumni groups to networks with past AmeriCorps members in the community.

The Red Cross further works to recruit potential members from the communities in which the program operates by recruiting from local volunteer populations, contacting local community colleges and universities and advertising openings through the state commission. Since this program serves the entire state of Michigan, the Red Cross is committed to recruiting a diverse cohort of members for each term of service.

AmeriCorps Identification: Members begin their term of service with an orientation that defines their critical role within the American Red Cross as AmeriCorps members. From email signatures to business cards, during internal meetings and in the community, members are always recognized as members of the AmeriCorps program. To prepare members to speak in the community about their AmeriCorps experience, the Red Cross utilizes two basic strategies. First, during member orientation a history of national service is presented to each member. Second, each member develops an elevator speech describing AmeriCorps and specifically the service provided by the AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program. Member apparel is important to the identification of AmeriCorps inside and outside of the American Red Cross. Members are provided, with the AmeriCorps logo or designation: name badges, business cards, t-shirts and sweatshirts. Members are required to at a minimum be wearing

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an AmeriCorps pin at all times.

Organizational Capability

Background & Staffing: For more than 130 years, the mission of the American Red Cross has remained constant: to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies. The Red Cross has a unique role as the only non-governmental partner directed by Congress to respond to disasters. We partner with emergency managers, local police, fire safety officials and hospitals to create collaborative plans and develop and conduct exercises, drills and preparedness campaigns to promote effective disaster response at the community level. All preparedness projects are planned and implemented in coordination with community partner agencies, local volunteers and community groups.

The American Red Cross serving the state of Michigan has supported an AmeriCorps program since 2005. Over the past nine years, the AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program has helped communities across Michigan prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. Throughout this time, the American Red Cross has demonstrated its sound planning and management ability of the AmeriCorps program.

The AmeriCorps Together We Prepare Program Director is Laura Osborne. Laura has been with the American Red Cross for over 11 years and has been in the non-profit sector for 12 years. Her experience with volunteer/staff management and development is vast -- ranging from working with all volunteers to overseeing 60 part-time instructors. Prior to accepting the Program Director position she was working with a grants management team within Red Cross and worked with 13 fundraising teams and 7 service delivery teams to implement \$1.5 million in grant funding projects. She has worked locally with AmeriCorps members her entire tenure. She took over the Program Director position in August after the previous director moved on to manage the National American Red Cross AmeriCorps program in Washington D.C.

The Program Director reports to the Regional Chief Operating Officer, La Forice Nealy. La Forice Nealy joined the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago in 1989. Throughout his career with the American Red Cross, Nealy has worked in various lines of service, including Human Resource, Disaster Services, Volunteer Services, Services to Armed Forces and Chapter Management. After over 22 years with the Red Cross of Greater Chicago, Nealy joined the Southeastern Michigan Region as Regional Chief

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Executive Officer in July 2012, overseeing all service delivery, fundraising and external relations for the region. Recently, La Forice Nealy took the position of Chief Operating Officer for the Michigan Region. His experience with AmeriCorps dates back to 1999. He is a great advocate for AmeriCorps having served as a program manager and site supervisor over his time with the Red Cross.

The financial management of the AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program is managed by a team of employees who are specifically assigned to management of all government grants for the national Red Cross network. This team provides all financial reporting and ensures compliance with all federal regulations. In addition to managing past AmeriCorps grant funding, this team has also successfully managed grants from the Michigan Department of Transportation (\$11,000) and a Capital Assistance Program Grant (\$137,370). Finally, we successfully completed a financial site visit from the MCSC in September of 2012 and have another scheduled for May of 2015.

The AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program also relies on up to 18 site supervisors who directly manage the service plan for each AmeriCorps member. These site supervisors are all paid Red Cross staff members and most often fill one of three roles within the Red Cross staffing structure: Disaster Program Manager, Volunteer Specialist, or Executive Director. Site supervisors are assigned to manage no more than three members.

Compliance & Accountability: The AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program has a long history of compliance with rules and regulations established by AmeriCorps and the Michigan Community Service Commission. The American Red Cross has demonstrated an understanding of prohibited activities within the AmeriCorps program and has effectively enforced these rules and regulations at service site locations throughout the history of our participation in the program. Starting with appropriate background checks required under AmeriCorps grant guidelines and Red Cross policies, the American Red Cross will continually prevent and detect compliance issues through a structured reporting system, consistent meetings, separation of duties and thorough training of AmeriCorps members and supervisory staff. The Red Cross will also provide accountability and consequences for members and host-sites deemed in noncompliance of the high standards established by the Red Cross, AmeriCorps and the Michigan Community Service Commission.

All host sites will have open and regular communication with the Program Director via e-mail,

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telephone, supervisory meetings and quarterly site visits. The Program Director will actively review and approve timesheets, set outreach objectives for the members and review the Great Stories submitted by the members. While reviewing the service report, the Program Director can determine if personal or professional issues arise for a given member. The Program Director will then initiate discussion with the site supervisor and member as appropriate. The Program Director will use American Red Cross Human Resources tools, such as a Performance Improvement Plan, to provide guidance and corrective action to the AmeriCorps member in non-compliance.

Each host site signs a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the needs of the program and each host site identifies a staff member(s) to act as site supervisor(s). All site supervisors are paid Red Cross staff members. Sites go through a series of orientations/trainings to review the program management policies and procedures. Communication is maintained through weekly departmental meetings and monthly conference calls with the state-wide team. Each host site works to achieve goals in the performance measures set by the grant. All host sites are responsible for timely and accurate reports submitted to the Program Director. In addition, each site will receive quarterly site visits. If there are any concerns, additional site visits will be scheduled.

The AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program will use an internal outcomes-based evaluation process to determine the level of accountability in the program. The assessment will evaluate the benefits and services the program is providing to the community above and beyond the stated performance measures. In the area of disaster response, the host site will survey local chapter volunteers to determine the satisfaction with member participation on local disasters. In addition, host sites will be asked to give feedback on the member's successes and challenges. This information will be compiled quarterly by the Program Director.

If, despite all efforts to ensure compliance, there is any instance of risk or non-compliance, the matter will be handled with a sense of urgency and consistency. Depending on the level of non-compliance in a particular host site, an evaluation will be done and the host site will be given an opportunity to correct the issue. If the matter is not addressed in the time given, there will be follow-up to find out why the non-compliance continues and discuss transferring the AmeriCorps member to an alternate site. Issues of non-compliance will be fully documented, handled on a case-by-case basis and reviewed first by the Program Director. If it cannot be resolved at the Program Director level, it will

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be escalated to the Chief Operations Officer. If the issue needs further review, the Chief Operations Officer will escalate it to the necessary leadership in the organization.

The Red Cross holds itself accountable to these policies and procedures by maintaining a structured reporting system and a separation of duties that allows for constant checks and balances. The Red Cross strictly adheres to a set of fundamental principles that have guided the International Red Cross movement since our founding over 130 years ago. Included in those principles are a commitment to neutrality and impartiality. The Red Cross does not under any circumstances engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature. In addition, the Red Cross does not discriminate on the basis of nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. Consequently, the American Red Cross renews its commitment to abide by the limitations on activities in which AmeriCorps members can support and participate. The American Red Cross has a long history of compliance in this regard.

Past Performance: The focus over the past three years of the AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program has been providing Disaster Preparedness Education with a goal of reaching 90,000 individuals over three years. In the first year (2012-13), the goal of 20,000 was exceeded and members reached 28,317 individuals with Disaster Preparedness Education. In the second year (2013-14), the goal of 30,000 was exceeded and members reached 34,099 individuals with Disaster Preparedness Education. As we enter the third year, the Red Cross is confident that we will meet our goal of providing Disaster Preparedness Education to 90,000 people over the three years of the grant cycle.

The AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program achieved a 100 percent enrollment rate in the most recently completed grant year. Our retention rate was 84 percent. Members who failed to complete their terms left service to pursue full time employment opportunities. The Red Cross continues to improve our recruitment process and add more training and recognition for our members. We believe that our retention rate will continue to increase with our persistent emphasis on ensuring the highest quality of training, strong supervision and administrative support so that each member is guaranteed a rewarding experience. The program has not experienced compliance issues in the past three years.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

A Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) study shows that for each dollar spent on

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mitigation an average of four dollars is saved post-disaster, and so we know that the financial impact of AmeriCorps members through their preparedness efforts are substantial. In addition, the Red Cross has been responding to disasters for more than 130 years and our time-tested model of response is cost effective through its use of volunteers and referrals to community partners for additional support.

AmeriCorps members are particularly effective because AmeriCorps members are able to bridge a gap between our volunteers and paid staff -- with a dual focus on both the immediate direct service activities taking place on a daily basis, which is most commonly the focus of our volunteers, and an understanding of the complex, long term capacity concerns that face the community, which is more commonly the focus of our paid staff. Because of their service year commitment to the organization, members are able to build strong relationships with volunteers, identify areas for improvement in our operations, and implement program improvements based on their observations, leadership skills and advanced training. Within the culture of the Red Cross, AmeriCorps members are a highly valued asset because of their consistency, innovation, community focus and creativity.

The proposed cost per MSY is \$13,118, which is lower than previously funded. Approximately 34 percent of the required matching funds are supported by the Proud to Be American Fund, which generates approximately \$150,000 annually through the sale of Michigan "Proud to be American" license plates. An additional 38 percent of matching funds are committed through the in-kind hours from Site Supervisors and additional in-kind supports. Local fundraisers raise the remaining balance of required matching funds through private funders.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

The AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program recently completed a third party evaluation of the program. Findings indicate that strengths of the program include that members report feeling empowered as leaders, members feel a strong connection to the Red Cross and the community at large, and members reported feeling they had room to grow professionally and the opportunity to explore and develop new skills. Evaluators asked members to rate the program on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, and the average for the program was 8.7.

Areas for improvement center around more detailed and frequent training for Site Supervisors, especially as the evaluation revealed that Site Supervisors are a major factor in ensuring that members have a positive experience and are empowered to be leaders within the Red Cross and the community.

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In every program year, AmeriCorps member's feedback is gathered both formally and informally. Informally, members and volunteers are trained to provide feedback whenever they lead programming together in the community; that feedback is documented quarterly for each member. Member evaluations occur three times during the course of the term of service, at the three-month mark or about 425 hours an informal review of member goals and community assessment(s) is completed; at six months or 850 hours a formal mid-year evaluation occurs reviewing member performance; between 1600 - 1700 hours completed members are formally evaluated on their entire term of service and asked to also complete a comprehensive program evaluation survey. To supplement this, our third party evaluator supplied the program with survey and evaluation tools to be used in annual program evaluation including a collaboration assessment, trust assessment and job satisfaction survey. For the overall program, quarterly reports are submitted to statewide leadership including Chapter Executives and the Chief Operating Officer. Changes are implemented based on the recommendation of leadership.

Additionally, the Red Cross regularly surveys external partners and community members on service quality and effectiveness indicators. These surveys are the core method for analyzing the AmeriCorps Together We Prepare program's impact in the community. This data is then used to make modifications to communities served, programs offered and member performance.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

Red Cross staff members focus on long-term issues of maintaining the organizational capacity to respond to disasters by ensuring that casework and reporting systems are in place, organizing advanced training for current volunteers, and maintaining relationships with government and other organizational partners. Red Cross volunteers focus on the day to day program activities, primarily responding to local disasters as they occur. AmeriCorps members focus on reaching out to individuals in the community in which they serve through disaster preparedness activities and volunteer recruitment. These delineations of roles are clearly communicated at annual AmeriCorps awareness presentations in each office that hosts members. These presentations take place before members begin their terms and are focused on educating current staff and volunteers about the role of members

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within the Red Cross, prohibited activities, and expectations of staff and volunteers in support of the AmeriCorps program.

Members working with the Red Cross Services to the Armed Forces Emergency Messaging program will not be working with any clients outside of their local Michigan communities. Their role supporting the program is to follow up with local military families to ensure all of their needs were met, refer the families to additional local community resources as necessary, and recruit volunteers to support the program.

The pre- and post-presentation surveys used to measure "increased knowledge" for the evaluation of disaster preparedness activities are specific to the course materials being conveyed via the presentation as well as the target population (K-3rd grade students versus adult populations). These surveys address knowledge about disasters and preparedness (Sample: How many minutes do residents have to escape a home fire?), as well as current preparedness behaviors of the participants (Sample: Have you checked whether or not your smoke detectors are operational within the last six months?). The presentations are designed to increase not only preparedness knowledge but also to help participants take concrete steps to increase their preparedness level during the course (Example: Many preparedness presentations ask participants to complete a basic family disaster plan.) To be counted as having achieved the outcome of increasing knowledge, participants must score 20% higher on the post-presentation survey than their pre-presentation survey.

The Red Cross will not request additional funding for strategic engagement slots. However, our member recruitment plan requires that available positions be posted on job boards with agencies that work with people with disabilities and we expect that 10-20 percent of our members will be individuals with disabilities.

The Red Cross is not requesting any no-cost slots.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics