

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH) will have seventeen full-time and six half-time members engaged in service at homeless service agencies in Michigan. The AmeriCorps members will serve at least 1,000 economically disadvantaged individuals. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage 475 volunteers who will provide services to the economically disadvantaged. This program will target the CNCS focus area of economic opportunity: national measure O5 and outcome O11. MCAH will match the CNCS investment of \$266,976 with \$188,783.00 leveraged through host site match and local contributions.

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

### a. Problem/Need

Approximately one out of every one hundred people in Michigan is homeless in a given year. According to recent US Census data (Michigan: 2010, Population and Housing Unit Counts, 2010 Census of Population and Housing, Issued July 2012), Michigan had 9.8 million residents in 2013. An annual statewide data report (The State of Homelessness in Michigan: Our Work in 2013, The Campaign to End Homelessness), based on the Michigan Statewide Homelessness Management Information System (MSHMIS), reported an unduplicated count of 92,341 total homeless individuals in 2013. When looking at the state through a 10-region alignment, nearly one half of Michigan's homeless population was found in just two regions: 33% in Detroit Metro (Region 10) and 16% in West Michigan (Region 4). In the past, the program has typically placed roughly half of available member FTEs in these two regions. This, by no means, discounts the need in the remaining eight regions. As the data shows, the per capita incidence of homelessness does not deviate largely between urban and rural communities. In fact, capacity issues often reduce the level of services available in the more-rural counties in the state. Understanding the level of need and resource limitations in those areas, the Michigan State Housing and Development Authority (MSHDA) is partnering with the program to help underwrite host site match costs in what are determined to be underserved communities. Designated centralized in-take and referral agencies (also known as Housing Assessment and Resource Agencies, or HARAs) in underserved communities pursuing the single-point-of-entry system will be given a scoring preference. Members will provide direct services to economically disadvantaged individuals to help them gain access to benefits and resources, increase their income and self-sufficiency specific to housing and life-skills, and assist in the employment and housing process.

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### b. Theory of Change/Logic Model

AmeriCorps members will be serving at homeless service agencies throughout Michigan including HARAs, transitional housing and emergency shelters, domestic violence programs, and housing service providers. At these sites, members will provide direct service to economically disadvantaged individuals to increase their income and employment, and to obtain stable housing. Members will align with one of three designated focus areas: Income Generation and Management, Outreach Programs, and Housing Search and Information. A significant percentage of agencies are unable to pursue all three of these areas for various reasons, including funding limitations. Members may address these gaps by providing comprehensive support to individuals presenting themselves as homeless. Many individuals are not receiving the full scope of services needed to obtain housing and increase self-sufficiency. With AmeriCorps members taking on a role in one of these focus areas, host sites will increase their service capability and, in turn, help more economically disadvantaged individuals receive support and care needed to obtain housing.

The intervention of linking the homeless individual to appropriate housing services will lead to the person being moved into safe, affordable housing (short-term goal) which will, in turn, enhance the person's ability to increase his/her income and maintain housing (mid-term goal) and, in turn ultimately lead to a reduction in long-term homelessness. As a result of the intervention, the program will serve 1,000 economically disadvantaged individuals. This figure is based on program performance to date, along with proposed enhancements and targeted host site selection. Of the 1,000 individuals, 300 will show an increase in income or employment. Of the 1,000 individuals, 100 will obtain housing. In the Outreach Specialist position, members will: maintain regular contact with other local service providers to make appropriate referrals for clients, provide housing information and access to services to those on the streets and not engaged in care, conduct intakes for the MSHMIS screening process, link/coordinate with resource specialists for housing resources, link and provide information to mainstream services and benefits (Medicaid, SSI/SSDI, Sect 8, TANF, etc.) and provide follow-up services to outreach clients. For the Housing Search and Information Specialist position, members will: assist with intakes to assess the housing needs of the client, address housing barriers for the client, create/update lists of available housing for clients to choose from, connect clients with necessary funds to pay for security deposits, rental fees or utility payments, transport clients to view potential housing locations, maintain/develop relationships with local landlords, receive training for/conduct Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and other housing inspections, assist with independent living skills support related to addressing income and housing stabilization needs, and provide follow-

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up support services as needed. Members in the Income Generation and Management Specialist position will: network with employers to create access to employment opportunities, work to create employer mentorship programs, seek out employers/organizations who would be willing to assist at the agency for income and/or employment readiness, provide linkages to GED, education and other skill trade programs, support clients with job searches, assist with resume writing, help with filling out employment applications, transporting clients to interviews, work with clients to help balance budgets, create sustainable income living plans, teach life skills classes related to income and budgeting, provide information to clients related to other income sources (TANF, Medicaid, SSI, etc.), assist clients with applications for mainstream benefits, seek to establish a certified MI-BRIDGES portal at their agency, and connect clients with additional necessary resources. Every member will produce a significant contribution to their site since AmeriCorps members have more flexibility in the services and populations they serve. Members are able to provide one-on-one and small group instruction, whereas agency staff members are often spread too thin. According to the 2013 MSHMIS data, less than 2% (2,202) of the homeless population received employment services during case management. AmeriCorps members can provide targeted services to increase this number. Beyond direct member service, each member will cultivate at least 20 volunteers for service at host sites. These volunteers will complement and supplement agency needs to increase direct service provision to economically disadvantaged clients. Members will document the number of clients served and outcomes in obtaining housing and increasing income/employment. For tracking purposes, members will utilize the Michigan Statewide Homeless Management Information System (MSHMIS), a statewide database operated through MCAH, to enter client data. All members will receive significant MSHMIS training during orientation and through host sites, with additional on-going TA available as needed.

### c. Evidence Based

This program model is based on a number of studies from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the US Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), the US Department of Labor, and "The State of Homelessness in Michigan" 2013 Annual Report. While interventions have varied across communities and states, HUD is pursuing a funding policy that promotes the "Housing First" model, which emphasizes housing as the critical intervention necessary before addressing other related needs/issues. The Housing First approach recognized that, fundamentally, people will accept services that they want; the role of staff is to help people get those they say they want when they want them, along with intensive wrap-around supports. The Housing First approach created by Pathways to Housing is recognized in the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices

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(SAMHSA, November 2007). Michigan communities have been more effective in a rapid re-housing approach but have often fallen short with supportive services, leaving clients without the necessary supports to stay successfully housed. HUD has published a study about the accessibility to mainstream benefits and services for homeless individuals (Strategies for Improving People's Access to Mainstream Benefits and Services, HUD Office of Policy Development and Research, March 2010). The study targeted multiple communities around the country with varying demographics. It identified three barriers communities experience in providing these supportive services: structural, capacity, and eligibility. Structural barriers include those that prevent the person from getting the benefits (location, organization, requirements, etc.). The study found that to reduce structural barriers, problems must be addressed at the grassroots level via outreach. For example, in Denver's Road Home Program in 2007, 20 outreach workers provided grassroots outreach and liaised with other agencies. Having these dedicated outreach workers reduced chronic homelessness by 36% in the first three years of the program. The same study also found that having more services available at a "one-stop" agency created a better environment for the client and provided them with effective solutions to meet their current needs. AmeriCorps members in this program will have a direct role in outreach programs, thus able to assist in breaking down those barriers that prevent a person from accessing benefits. To end homelessness, housing is necessary. The Housing First model has been adapted and recognizes the need for formalized housing and a stability plan to help individuals become more self-sufficient. The US Interagency Council on Homelessness showed that housing retention rates increased by 88% through the Housing First model. Pursuing this model, many Michigan agencies have increased their capacity to help more individuals find housing. However, a gap remains on the resource side. AmeriCorps members in this program will have a direct role in housing programs, helping to prevent individuals from "falling through the cracks." With resources continually constricting and staff case loads growing, one vital service often falls by the wayside: employment assistance. In 2007, "Employment and Income Supports for Homeless People" (Long, et al) was presented at the National Symposium on Homelessness Research. It notes many barriers that must be overcome, including access to technology, transportation, training, and employment supports. The US Department of Labor studied homelessness and employment and determined work support to be necessary in the case management process. It has also been found that economically disadvantaged individuals are best served by focusing on employment services with the same intensity as housing services. Just as with the Housing First model, experience in employment services that are "no strings attached" and offered up front with other services has been found to help motivate people to maintain employment. The

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City of Los Angeles implemented a WorkSource Center through collaboration with their Workforce Development Division; the goal was to serve homeless individuals seeking jobs. They set up a "one-stop shop" where individuals could access services, learn new skills, apply for jobs with the city, and more. From April 2005 to September 2006, over 767 individuals were provided employment related services and 175 people were placed in jobs. AmeriCorps members in this program will have a direct role in employment/income assistance, assist in training, skill development, resource development, and employment assistance where agencies are currently lacking resources.

### d. Notice Priority

The proposed program falls within the Economic Opportunity Funding Priority. This program assists low-income, at-risk, and homeless individuals (including at-risk youth) throughout Michigan through the service agencies the program partners with. The members help contribute to the economic well-being of economically disadvantaged people by enhancing their financial literacy, improving their employability skills, and helping them transition into and remain in housing. The program includes requirements for volunteer generation and member participation in the National Days of Service.

### e. Member Training

An annual training calendar will be developed which includes training provided by the program and host sites. Because member interaction is limited by the statewide nature of the program, additional effort will be made to foster interaction through in-person trainings. The program director will also work with site supervisors to establish a host site training calendar. This must be approved before the member start date. It will ensure that members are receiving proper on-boarding at their site, basic first aid, knowledge of the site expectations, an opportunity to review host site procedures and manuals, and meet with other staff. This required training will take place within the first three months of members' service. Program training for members will be in-depth, covering AmeriCorps information, team building, and preparation for direct service provision. During the first three days of service, members will attend an orientation that will cover: AmeriCorps 101 (focusing on the history of AmeriCorps and the CTEH AmeriCorps Program, Prohibited Member Activities (including interactive components such as role playing), Campaign to End Homelessness AmeriCorps Program Policies and Procedures, Volunteer Management Strategies, Engaging Clients in Crisis, Professionalism and Boundaries, Utilizing MSHMIS, and Structured Team Building Activities. The program will be led by the program director and will utilize staff from the Commission, social workers, other AmeriCorps program directors, MCAH staff. During the remainder of the year, members will have monthly training webinars and monthly conference calls. Webinar topics will

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include: Training Your Volunteers, Quarterly Reporting, Fundraising as an AmeriCorps Member, Recruiting Your Volunteers, Volunteer Motivations, Planning a Service Project, Utilizing Social Media, Using Your Ed Award, and End of Year Resources. The conference calls, led by the program director, will update members on important events and program information. Each call will include in-service training time for information to be shared with the team regarding a topic relevant to service. Other trainings will include the member mid-year (a one- to two-day training midway through the service year), one or more regional training, and an end-of-year session. Mid-year training topics have varied based on member input, but usually include a career counselor to help prepare members for Life After AmeriCorps. Members will be provided training on job search strategies, resume building, interview preparation. As members are spread throughout the state, members will be assembled into four to five regional groups. This will foster greater member interaction and further team building among members. Regional trainings will help members better understand and utilize the resources in their communities/regions and to reach out to other members in that region for assistance with service project planning, volunteer recruitment, etc. Topics will vary depending on region and member needs; however, the program will bring in specialists from those regions to educate members about their communities and available housing resources. The last in-person training is the End-of-Year Training. This will provide an opportunity for reflection on the growth that members have experienced during their service year, incorporate member recognition with a graduation ceremony, and provide final end-of-year information. All host sites will be instructed to provide training to volunteers cultivated by members, appropriate to the activities being performed by each.

### f. Member Supervision

Site supervisors and the program director will play distinct roles in member supervision. The program director will seek to develop an authoritative yet supportive relationship with members and encourage open, two-way lines of communication. The program director is responsible for training members, preparing them for their service year, ensuring their full familiarity with AmeriCorps (including prohibited activities), providing an understanding of the site supervisor's role, updating members on upcoming trainings, events, and other relevant information, assessing the needs of the members, liaising between the host site and the member if necessary, mediating situations as warranted, and helping to ensure the members' overall success during the year. There are formal mid- and end-of-year evaluations, as well as an in-person site visit evaluation conducted by the program director. These evaluations provide an opportunity for review, communication, check-ins, ongoing coaching, and standards compliance. They also allow for member feedback regarding the performance of the

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site supervisor and the program director. Site supervisors are responsible for assisting in the development of the member position description, acclimating the member to the host site, ensuring the member is a part of the site team, training the member on/assisting the member with/connecting the member to necessary resources for service needs, assigning daily responsibilities, developing and reviewing annual goals, meeting with the member on a regular basis (at least weekly) to assess their progress and needs and provide necessary instructions and guidance, and reviewing and approving member timesheets. Host site selection is competitive and based on applications that request prospective host site to describe their ability to host a member, how their goals align with the program, their sustainability plan, and other relevant information such as host site supervisor experience. Once selected, each site supervisor will attend a mandated daylong in-person supervisor training. The program director will train the supervisors on AmeriCorps and our program policies and procedures by helping "walk" them through the program developed handbook. The supervisors will receive real-life member challenge scenarios that they are able to discuss in groups. The role of a site supervisor is specifically discussed and how to best adapt to that role. The director provides continued support for the supervisors through various email check-ins and required quarterly conference calls.

### g. Member Experience

The Campaign to End Homelessness AmeriCorps Program provides valuable skills and real-life experiences that AmeriCorps members can use in future careers. At orientation, the program director walks members through a basic goal setting and career exploration activity for the human services sector. Members reflect on what brought them to service, what they want to get out of their service year, and where they see themselves after service. Once completed, they will receive information regarding relatable skills and careers. Members will receive ongoing career skill training via webinar as well as information on other available training throughout the year. Many of these trainings are conducted through other local non-profits, at conferences, and in their communities. Starting on Day 1 of service, members are introduced to AmeriCorps Alums and what it offers. Members are encouraged to join and connect with their local alum chapter to learn more about life after AmeriCorps. During the trainings, the program director strives to incorporate a component applicable to life after AmeriCorps. Members are required to participate in at least three National Days of Service and plan a service project, related to homelessness, for one of the days. After the service, members are provided with reflection exercises to see the greater impact service has on the larger community. Throughout the year, members will be provided with multiple opportunities to connect with each other and other programs. The program currently plans at least one training per region with another

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AmeriCorps program (e.g., Michigan Foreclosure Prevention Corps), which allows members in both corps to interact, see the overlap between foreclosure and homelessness, and collaborate. Members are required to attend Michigan Community Service Commission-sponsored statewide conference and regional service day projects where they are able to network with members in the state and gain knowledge about AmeriCorps and see service through the eyes of another corps member in a different program and to possibly collaborate and learn from them. During the service year, members are required to be civically engaged in their communities as well as engage their community in service. This is especially helpful as it works to create partnerships with organizations that may not know that the host site agency and/or AmeriCorps exist. During civic engagement, members are required to present themselves as an AmeriCorps member and provide a brief description of their role as a member. Members are encouraged to reach out to local clubs (Kiwanis, Boys and Girls, etc.) and schools to offer to speak about opportunities for service with AmeriCorps. The AmeriCorps program utilizes a tandem recruitment effort in conjunction with the host sites. As each community need and resources for recruitment in those communities can vary, even from year to year, the host sites are more familiar with their information. The program director works with the site supervisors, beginning at the host site application process, to develop a recruitment plan and timeline. This plan includes the following information: where the position will be posted, how long it will be posted, what is required in the posting, what the interview timeline is, who all is included in the interview, deadlines for final information. Members are largely recruited from host site communities and diversity recruitment is stressed. All recruitment plans are reviewed and approved by the program director before a recruitment process can begin.

### h. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

Beginning with the initial interview, it is important that members realize that they are an AmeriCorps member and are fully able to identify with that before the service year even begins. This helps weed out any candidates who may not be fit for an AmeriCorps service year. Members are provided with the information at orientation, from there they are given updates during conference calls and webinars; there will also be postings on the program Facebook page to help increase member awareness and understanding of AmeriCorps. At orientation, members will also have the opportunity to "win" AmeriCorps logo prizes by correctly answering questions that are related to AmeriCorps, CNCS, prohibited activities, and their role as a member. This activity is beneficial in ensuring that the members know the history of not only AmeriCorps, but also the program, their role, and are able to provide correct information. These prizes include AmeriCorps: state pins, mouse pads, t-shirts,

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mirrors, hats, notebooks, business card holders, mugs, waters bottles, and more. Members are provided with AmeriCorps gear at the beginning of their service year, as well as throughout the year, to ensure that they are wearing the logo. This requirement is built into the program through the agreements and handbooks that are provided to both the sites and members. At the beginning of the year, members receive an AmeriCorps lanyard with a name badge, a t-shirt, a backpack/bag, a button, stickers, and a pen. Members also receive a Certificate of Appointment, which they are encouraged to display at their office space. At regional or mid-year training, the program strives to provide the members with an additional form of "wearable" gear (sweatshirt or polo). At end of year, the program provides members with AmeriCorps alum gear such as an alum pin, bag, stickers, as well as a Certificate of Completion. During supervisor orientation, the gear requirement is discussed with the site supervisors to ensure the members are wearing the logo daily. It is also discussed at member orientation when the policies and procedures are reviewed. During site evaluations, the program director does check to make sure the member is in compliance with this requirement and speaks with other staff at the site to make sure it has been followed. As a program, community awareness of the members is built through our Campaign Facebook page and blog. These pages provide insight into what AmeriCorps is, what the members are doing, events that might be coming up, and more. Members also must present to the staff and/or board of their host site on their AmeriCorps role during their first three months of service. This requirement has been built in to ensure that members are prepared to speak to the community.

### **Organizational Capability**

#### **a. Organizational Background and Staffing**

The Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH), founded in 1990, as a non-profit membership association of service providers, emergency shelters, and housing programs throughout the state. The mission of the coalition is to create a sustainable statewide voice and the infrastructure and systemic change needed to empower communities to end homelessness. The Campaign to End Homelessness AmeriCorps program began in 2008 and has been successfully administered by MCAH since its inception. It's important to note that the Michigan Foreclosure Prevention Corps AmeriCorps program was also created and administered by MCAH for two years. In addition to the AmeriCorps grants, additional federal funding is provided through the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the administration of the Michigan Statewide Homeless Management Information System (MSHMIS). MCAH has been operating this statewide database system since 2004. MCAH has recently re-filled the program director position with Kelli Beavers, who has completed successful terms of

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service with two separate AmeriCorps programs, holding leadership positions in both. Previously, she was employed in a position that focused heavily on volunteer recruitment and management. We are confident in her relationship building and communication skills and her ability to effectively manage the programmatic aspects of the program and grant. Christine Corbett handles finances and grant management for MCAH. Ms. Corbett, a MSHMIS Trainer and Project Assistant, will continue to handle the financial aspects of the program as she has done since its inception in 2008, and will conduct the member MSHMIS training. Eric Hufnagel, MCAH's executive director, has supervised the program director since 2011 and has also directly supervised AmeriCorps members both with MCAH and a previous employer (Michigan State University Extension). Together, they have the abilities, skills, and knowledge regarding AmeriCorps to ensure successful implementation and follow-through.

### b. Compliance and Accountability

The program takes many steps to help secure compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations, and ensure that prohibited activities are not being undertaken. Prior to the official start of the program year, host sites must review and sign-off on a site agreement, which explains the agency's role, the expectations of the site supervisor, and processes relating compliance issues. It is important for host sites to be aware of related obligations and risks so host site executive directors and site supervisors must both review and sign the agreement. In the next step, all site supervisors are required to attend day-long orientation/training. Topics covered in the past include: AmeriCorps MSHMIS Workflow, CTEH AmeriCorps Program Policies and Procedures, Prohibited Member Activities, Recruiting for Retention, AmeriCorps 101, and Member Supervision. At orientation, members have a full interactive session reviewing prohibited activities and associated risks to the program. Throughout the service year, the program director completes at least one site visit to each host site. These have proven helpful in uncovering non-compliance issues. Any host site that is found in non-compliance with AmeriCorps program rules and regulations will be notified of the issue and provided a corrective action plan. If necessary, the program director will also notify the site of when the follow-up site visit(s) will to ensure completion. Lastly, the site will be notified that if corrective action is not taken and/or any other issues occur, they may lose their right to reapply as a host site in future program years. The program has policies and procedures that must be followed, as well as the procedures established by the national and state service commissions. If the program is found out of compliance, it will work to immediately resolve the compliance issue. If formal follow-up is needed to confirm the completion of the corrective action, the program officer will be promptly notified.

### c. Past Performance for Current Grantees and Former Grantees

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During the previous grant cycle, the applicant has had no issues in surpassing the initial performance measure targets. When looking at the number of clients the AmeriCorps members have served over the past three years of program operations, as well as the number of volunteers recruited, it is clear that they are making an impact in helping clients attain self-sufficiency and end homelessness. The program director is not aware of any past compliance issues. A member handbook and a site supervisor handbook have been developed to help ensure programmatic consistency and accountability. Members and supervisor both receive in-depth training on the materials in the handbook and are required to sign-off that they have read, understand, and will abide by the handbook. This was created as another guide for policies and procedures as it gives further detail to the members and supervisors about how to handle certain situations, if they were to arise, what the expectations are for each role, how corrective action would be handled, and more. In the last full program year completed, 2013-2014, the program was awarded 20 slots. Using the calculation provided for enrollment rate, program enrollment stood at over 100%. The program filled 23 slots and was awarded 20 ( $23/20 = 1.15$ ), achieving 115% enrollment rate. Several members chose to exit early, however, to pursue employment elsewhere, largely for financial reasons and not related to dissatisfaction or host site issues. During 2013-2014, 18 members were exited with a full or partial award ( $17/25 = .72$ ), leaving the program with a 72% retention rate. Based on information found in current member files, it was found that there were two who were active in service for the full twelve month period but did not reach their minimum required hours. There were also two who left service to pursue employment. However, with program improvements and in-person site supervisor training, the importance of retention among the members has been further emphasized. To combat this problem, host agencies are discouraged from posting AmeriCorps positions on websites typically used by "job" seekers. Questions regarding retention have been added to the host site application process and host sites are advised to stress the service nature of the position and the expectation of successful completion of the term of service. As a last step in the recruitment process, a phone interview is conducted by the program director with all final candidates.

### d. Continuous Improvement

Continued program improvement has been a top priority over the past year and will continue to be in the future. As part of this effort, feedback is sought on a regular basis from members and site supervisors to ensure their input in program enhancements. An effective way to gather the feedback is through online surveys developed by the program director, featuring questions targeting specific areas of concern and/or interest. This method has proven successful throughout the 2013-2014 program

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year, especially in generating data to determine future trainings needs. At a minimum, the program director will solicit feedback on a quarterly basis from stakeholders to assess program needs and determine possible adjustments based on the resulting data. Also on a quarterly basis, the program director gathers the data for all of the performance measures and creates an infographic. External partners can review it and are able to provide feedback regarding additional outputs or pieces of information they may feel are missing.

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

#### **a. Cost Effectiveness**

The budget is sufficient to effectively carry out the program as it is based largely on the budget from previous program years. It aligns with the activities as presented in this narrative and includes minor adjustments for program enhancements. When comparing the current cost per MSY to the cost per MSY in the previous grant, the program has been able to keep the cost per MSY the same while adding enhancements such as new trainings. This has been done, in part, by pursuing more cost-effective approaches (e.g., a retreat center vs. hotel for orientation) and the shifting of some training travel costs to host sites (which also increases host site expectations of attending members). The cost per MSY for this budget is \$13,300, the same as the program is currently operating at and is significantly lower than the \$13,736 that the program was operating at during the 2012-2013 year. The overall program budget has been reduced from nearly \$520,000 in 2012-2013, to roughly 450,000 in the current budget. This is important to note that the program has been able to maintain required programmatic activities and improve training opportunities for more members, while reducing overall costs, and developing additional local match funding.

### **Evaluation Summary or Plan**

The intervention of linking homeless persons to appropriate housing services will lead to safe, affordable housing (short-term goal) which will help the homeless individuals increase their income and maintain housing (mid-term goal). These ultimately help lead to a reduction in homelessness in the long-term. A process evaluation design will assess whether the program implementation corresponds with established programmatic elements, activities, and timelines. Questions will include, but not be limited to: What do members do each day? Is it consistent with their position(s)? Are members collecting outcome data on their activities? If so, what data and how is it collected? Are members receiving adequate supervision from site supervisors? Are members receiving adequate training to perform the activities in line with their position(s)? Do stakeholders know the major goals

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and outcomes of the program? Qualitative data will be collected from surveys and structured interviews with current members and site-supervisors. The surveys will be varied depending on the population as they are administered to both members and supervisors. The structured interviews will be different for the two parties targeted for evaluation. As the research questions being answered are the same in each procedure, the evaluator will be able to combine the results to provide the key findings. A summative evaluation will also be conducted to assess outcomes, with the evaluator reviewing quantitative data from MSHMIS, including aggregate data and sampling. The measured outcomes will include: 1) homeless persons moved into safe, affordable housing; and 2) homeless persons increasing their self-sufficiency in life-skills and income. Evaluation results will be reviewed and analyzed by the program director and the executive director, with related programmatic adjustments being made.

### Amendment Justification

N/A

### Clarification Summary

#### A. Programmatic Clarification

##### 1. Regions and Potential Service Sites:

- 1) Upper Peninsula: Chippewa-Luce-Mackinac Community Action Agency, Alger-Marquette Community Action Board
- 2) Northwest Michigan: Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Goodwill Industries of Northern Michigan
- 3) Northeast Michigan: Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency
- 4) West Michigan: The Salvation Army Social Services, Community enCompass, Every Woman's Place
- 5) East Central Michigan: Mid Michigan Community Action Agency, United Way of Saginaw County, Listening Ears Crisis Center
- 6) East Michigan: Capital Area Community Services, Blue Water Safe Horizons, My Brother's Keeper
- 7) South Central Michigan: Housing Services Mid Michigan, Volunteers of America, Advent House Ministries
- 8) Southwest Michigan: Housing Resources Inc, Emergency Shelter Services, KeyStone Place

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9) Southeast Michigan: Community Action Agency, Monroe County Opportunity Program, Family Counseling and Children's Services of Lenawee County

10) Detroit Metro: Community Housing Network, Neighborhood Service Organization, South Oakland Shelter

2. Overview of how the program will choose host sites and how the program will ensure that the member(s) will have meaningful service at those sites.

Interested service sites must complete and submit the Request for Proposal, which includes a detailed application. A panel consisting of our program director, executive director, and a program director of an economic opportunity AmeriCorps program will be reviewing and selecting service sites. This will be done with the use of a detailed scoring rubric evaluating the answers provided on the application. The applications will be thoroughly reviewed, scored, and discussed in an effort to select the most viable service sites and create a successful program year. We will also be selecting service sites with the intent to offer placements across the entire state as opposed to having a majority of service provided in one region. Through this application, potential service sites will be prompted to describe their need for an AmeriCorps member as well as information about how the member would be utilized and their capacity to train and host the member. Applicants will also elaborate on their agency's mission and how it fits with our program. They will also be required to provide a draft of the member position description in which they will detail the daily activities and responsibilities of the member. Through this application and any necessary follow-up, we will be able to ensure that the service site is the best fit for our program and will provide a meaningful service opportunity for the member.

### B. Budget Narrative

1. Source of Funds:

The match funds for our program will be provided by host sites and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority.

2. Provide a compelling explanation for why the cost/MSY cannot be decreased.

Since we operate a statewide program, we have taken a cautious approach in our budgeting to ensure adequate resources were available to cover costs relating to the proximity of potential host sites (i.e.,

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Michigan is a large state, with a distance of 540 miles between Lansing and the westernmost community in the Upper Peninsula).

Our program seeks to provide service to a wide range of locations, serving various populations. With members being placed across the entire state, we have the expectation of statewide travel for both the program director and members. Our requested cost/MSY allows us to consider service sites that will reach across the entire state, including the Upper Peninsula. In addition to the need for statewide travel, our cost/MSY allows us to offer training and service opportunities that enhance the AmeriCorps member experience.

We have consistently developed a budget that maintained a cost/MSY below the allowed maximum despite the potential proximal challenges.

The cost/MSY also allows us to ensure adequate funding for member insurance. Historically, though, a percentage of our members have opted out of insurance coverage. But we budget the full amount to ensure all members can partake in insurance if they choose to.

Additionally, we are good stewards of the funds. We have pursued cost effective practices and carefully monitor our spending.

Finally, and most importantly, our requested cost/MSY is the same amount as previous years and our actual year-end cost/MSY have historically come in under budget (approximately \$11,000/MSY).

### C. Performance Measure Clarification

1. The applicant's statement that not all members will be involved in housing clients is inconsistent with the submitted application and the 100% allocation of MSYs to performance measure O5 and O11. It is also inconsistent with the only described intervention of linking homeless persons to appropriate services that will lead to homeless persons moving into safe affordable housing. Based on these factors and past performance, the proposed target of 1000 economically disadvantaged individuals to receive housing placement services (Output O5) is still not rigorous. Please increase these targets to a level that is more consistent with the past performance and programmatic experience. Please note that consistently exceeding performance measure targets by several hundred percent is not considered a desirable outcome for CNCS and should be avoided. Applicants should do their best to set targets that are reasonable and rigorous. (submitted 4/20/2015)

For the 2015 - 2016 program year, we have increased our target for performance measure O5 from

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1000 economically disadvantaged individuals to 2400 economically disadvantaged individuals. We have designated O11 to be 10%, or 240 individuals.

2. Outcome O11 must be measured by an inspection report and certificate of occupancy, proof of residency, or other verification from an external agency. Please revise the instrument description for O11 to meet this requirement.

Often, this documentation can be found in a client's case files with proper case management. We will create a designated space for verification of this documentation in the members' HMIS reporting.

3. Describe the HMIS tracking system and explain how the program will ensure that individuals are counted only once.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Standards, "The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other planners and policymakers use aggregate HMIS data to better inform homeless policy and decision making at the federal, state, and local levels. HMIS enables HUD to collect national-level data on the extent and nature of homelessness over time. Specifically, an HMIS can be used to produce an unduplicated count of homeless persons, understand patterns of service use, and measure the effectiveness of homeless programs. Data on homeless persons is collected and maintained at the local level. HMIS implementations can encompass geographic areas ranging from a single county to an entire state.

The HEARTH Act, enacted into law on May 20, 2009, requires that all communities have an HMIS with the capacity to collect unduplicated counts of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Through their HMIS, a community should be able to collect information from projects serving homeless families and individuals to use as part of their needs analyses and to establish funding priorities. The Act also codifies into law certain data collection requirements integral to HMIS. With enactment of the HEARTH Act, HMIS participation became a statutory requirement for recipients and subrecipients of CoC Program and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds."

Within this system, each client is provided a Personal Identification Number (PIN). When agency staff or AmeriCorps members enter personal identifying information (Name, SSN, Date of Birth, and

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Gender) into the HMIS application, the application then searches a Continuum of Care's centralized database for matching records. Multiple potential matches will be returned. The user can then decide which, if any, of the returned records is a match to their client. If a match is found, the user will be able to give their new record the same PIN as an existing record. If a match is not found, the user will be able to generate a new PIN for the client. Each method will rely on the decision-making of the user as well as the existing algorithm to ensure that duplication is not occurring.

### D. Strategic Engagement Slots

1. What percentage of your slots will be targeted to recruiting members with disabilities? What is your program's plan, if any, for outreach and recruitment of members of the disability community?

We are not designating any percentage of our slots to be targeted toward the recruiting of members with disabilities. As the recruitment for this program is completed by each individual host site, there is no plan for outreach and recruitment of members of the disability community. While there is no plan in place, host sites are encouraged to recruit from a diverse selection of people and must provide their own individualized recruitment plan with their application.

### Continuation Changes

N/A

### Grant Characteristics