

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The City of Flint will support a Community Schools Corps made up of 30 AmeriCorps members and 2 NCCC teams who will provide before/during/after-school and summer learning activities for K-6 grade students and build capacity for community education in 3 Flint Community Schools elementary schools. At the end of the project period, the members will be responsible for providing wrap-around services to students and families that address the root problems of underachievement; services include tutoring, health education, conflict resolution, service-learning, and access to social services, all of which impact student attendance and performance. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 150 local volunteers to provide learning activities in the schools and to build ownership among the community.

Specifically, 21 AmeriCorps state members will provide to K-6 students nutrition education, conflict resolution, physical education utilizing a sports-based youth development curriculum, tutoring and service-learning activities, as well as programming for new students and families to help with their transition from grade level to grade level and from school to school during both the school year and summer from August 2015 to August 2017. 9 AmeriCorps VISTA members will create systems to connect the school administration, parents, social service supports and community members in ways that improve academic outcomes, and recruit and manage a core pool of parent and community volunteers to help deliver before/during/after-school and summer programs from August 2015 to August 2017. Two AmeriCorps NCCC teams will serve during the summer months with the AmeriCorps state and VISTA members to deliver a STEAM day camp teaching science, technology, engineering, art and math, as well as to improve school playground equipment and help build safe routes to school. One team will serve from June 2 August 2016, and another one will serve from June 2 August 2017. We have not included Senior Corps programs as partners.

This program will focus on education. The CNCS investment of \$288,338 will be matched with \$182,897.

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

### The Problem

Flint, Michigan is a city in transition, with a proud heritage and a bright future. With the shift from an industrial base to a more diverse 21st Century economy, Flint has endured a great deal of

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dislocation resulting in dramatically fewer jobs and a steady loss of population, down from its height in 1960 of almost 200,000 people to just under 100,000 today (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26/2629000.html>). Of those, more than one-third (39.7%) live below the poverty level compared to 15% nationwide. At the beginning of 2014, the unemployment rate in Flint was 9.7%, higher than the Michigan statewide rate (7.8%) and the national rate (6.6%) ([http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.mi\\_flint\\_msa.htm](http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.mi_flint_msa.htm)). These realities have left neighborhoods in the wake of abandonment and blight with roughly 22,000 vacant properties, representing more than one-third of all property in the city.

The loss of the city's tax base has brought drastic cuts in public funding for all city services. This, coupled with high poverty and rampant blight, has led to an alarmingly high crime rate. For three consecutive years from 2010-2012, Flint had the highest per capita rate of violent crimes in the country. According to a report published by the Washington D.C.-based organization, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids (1998), the peak hours for violent juvenile crime and victimization are between 3pm and 6pm, when most parents are at work and children are out of school. Youth in Flint are exposed to acts of violence, and this exposure is impacting their school behavior.

At its peak in 1968, Flint Community Schools (FCS) student enrollment reached over 46,000 students and the community education model was flourishing. Activities were held before, during and after school to keep kids engaged, safe and connected. The shrinking population of Flint has meant a dramatic decrease in enrollment in FCS. Population decline, coupled with school of choice legislation, charter schools and high rates of truancy have resulted in a dramatic school population drop. Between 2002 and 2014 alone, the student population dropped from 21,100 to 7,207.

With public funding tied to enrollment, FCS has faced declining revenues and a \$21.9 million budget shortfall. New FCS leadership is tackling this challenge head-on, and FCS submitted a deficit elimination plan, by 2021, to the state of Michigan which was approved in December 2014. At one time operating some 50 elementary, middle and high schools, the district now has 12 elementary schools that serve grades Pre-K-6 and 3 high schools for students in grades 7-12. Currently, more than 80% of FCS students qualify for free and reduced price breakfast and lunch programs.

FCS academic performance is far below the national average. The contrast between Flint and nearby

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Grand Blanc, a suburb of Flint within Genesee County, is even starker. In 2013-2014, the Mean Composite ACT score for Flint was 15.3, compared with 19.8 nationally and 21.1 in Grand Blanc. The high school graduation rate for Flint in 2013 was 51.6%, compared with 76.96% statewide in Michigan and 91.05% in Grand Blanc. The most startling figures may be in proficient reading scores for 3rd graders. For Flint 3rd graders, just 35.7% of students were reading proficient in 2013-2014, compared with 61.3% statewide and 77.1% in Grand Blanc (mischooldata.org).

Further, chronic absenteeism, defined as percent of class absent for 5+ days, is high for FCS elementary schools, around 38.7% compared to 25.5% statewide (mischooldata.org). Much of the absenteeism is due to suspensions for fighting and other disciplinary incidents.

As noted, Flint students are facing a variety of challenges, from a school district that is struggling financially, to families and neighborhoods that are still trying to recover from job loss and population loss. FCS students bring their challenges at home, including poverty, hunger or malnutrition, violence, health issues, homelessness, and a lack of utilities and basic needs with them into the classroom. With these monumental issues, it is little wonder that FCS students perform below average academically.

Community education was pioneered in Flint in the 1930s by a physical education teacher and funded by the CS Mott Foundation to open schools to the community for expanded learning opportunities, sports and enrichment activities for entire families. For decades, Flint's model for community education was replicated around the country, establishing schools as social and civic anchors of the neighborhoods they serve. Unfortunately, beginning in the late 1970s with the collapse of Flint's automotive economy, population loss and financial struggles disrupted the community education model and made it impossible to continue the program in the current configuration.

But, a new commitment to education in a community that is starting to rebound aims to reverse the trends of underachievement and absenteeism. New leadership at FCS is paving a brighter and smarter path for the struggling district. Community partners are pitching in to support students and families in a holistic way, addressing needs in and out of the classroom. Now is the time to give FCS students a boost so that the next generation of Flint residents is poised to bring the city into its new future.

Activities

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A successful community education model has been a point of pride for Flint, and community members are committed to re-instituting a new community education program that will work for Flint moving forward. During the development of the Flint Master Plan from 2011-2013, re-energizing community education was identified as a priority by the more than 5,000 community citizens and stakeholders who participated in the community planning process.

Answering this call to action, and sparked by City and FCS leadership, a group of community partners began to meet as a workgroup to re-institute community education. The initial planning group included the Mayor, FCS Interim Superintendent Watkins and FCS Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Testing, several representatives from the CS Mott Foundation, including its President William White, and key leaders from the United Way of Genesee County, Michigan State Department of Human Services, Genesee County Department of Human Services, Mott Children's Health Center, and the Crim Fitness Foundation. Jane Quinn, Vice President at the Children's Aid Society and Director of National Center for Community Schools, has served as facilitator and ongoing adviser for this workgroup, and she will continue to provide support as Flint's Community Education Initiative moves forward.

The work of that group led to a Town Hall workshop in June 2014, "Imagining Community Schools," where nearly 300 residents and community members crafted a new vision for a sustainable model of community education for FCS. This model focuses on positively impacting student academic engagement and engaging community resources in robust and purposeful ways.

The Crim Fitness Foundation was identified by the workgroup as the organization to manage the Community Education Initiative, and they, in turn, hired a full-time Community Schools Coordinator. This led to the launch of the community education pilot program in the fall of 2014 at the Brownell/Holmes STEM Academy - an elementary school serving K-6 students. Launching a pilot at this location provided the opportunity to reach the greatest number of students of all FCS buildings, with the Academy serving nearly 800 K-6 students.

The new model of the Community Education Initiative in Flint has the following goals:

- 1) Increased Attendance: Students arrive to school on time, stay all day, and are prepared to learn;

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- 2) Improved 3rd Grade Literacy Levels: Students are reading at their grade level and meeting their college and career readiness benchmarks;
- 3) Increased Graduation Rates: Students are successfully graduating from 12th grade on-time and are prepared to attend a 2-4 year college, complete an apprenticeship, or perform year of national service - this includes graduation succession from each grade K-12;
- 4) School Becomes a Resource to the Community: The school provides opportunities for programming and services such as basic needs, health, technology, etc. for community members to use.

Currently, 2 AmeriCorps VISTA members have helped with developing systems and infrastructure for the pilot at Brownell/Holmes STEM Academy, and several AmeriCorps members serving in the school through other programs, like Coach Across America, Food Corps and Literacy Corps, have helped identify programs and curriculum that are impacting the lives of elementary students. During the pilot, an advisory committee structure was set up in each school to advise and give direction to community education implementation, help inform national service member activities and provide guidance on, for example, using existing curricula or developing new curricula. The advisory committee includes administration, teachers, parents, Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS), and community partners to help guide the work and be ambassadors within the school and community to share the community education model and resources available. During the first six months of the pilot, there has been an increase in the number of community partners now engaged in bringing programs to the school that would not have been there otherwise. There has been an increase in physical activity opportunities through before-school and lunch programs to help supplement the only 40 minutes of school-sponsored physical education that students currently receive per week. The VISTA members have helped improve internal communication and collaboration within the school. Though still in its initial year, the pilot has been a success, and many lessons have been learned that will be incorporated across schools as the community education model is scaled up.

The Community Schools Corps will engage AmeriCorps state members, VISTA members and NCCC teams to create transformational and measurable educational change for K-6 students at 3 FCS elementary schools by expanding the Flint Community Education Initiative.

For the 2015-2016 school year, the community education model is being replicated in 3 Flint

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elementary schools based on the vision of the community schools workgroup, community input, and an analysis of where the next most significant impact can be obtained. The national service members that will make up the Community Schools Corps will be integral to expanding this community education model and helping to reach as many students as possible with wrap-around services that will address some of the root causes of their academic underachievement.

The Community Schools Corps AmeriCorps state members will replicate and expand on the programming utilized by members at Brownell/Holmes STEM Academy. This programming includes: nutrition and gardening education based on the Food Corps curriculum to address issues of health and diet; anger management and conflict resolution based on the Ripple Effects curriculum to reduce incidents that lead to suspensions and thus absenteeism; and, sports-based youth development based on the Coach Across America curriculum to provide physical activity and engage students in brain breaks that can increase focus in the classroom. The AmeriCorps members will deliver these activities before, during school and after school. Some of the activities will be infused with a service-learning component so that students learn about their community and help to make a difference in their school and community while connecting to core content or intentional learning objectives. Additionally, the AmeriCorps state members will assist students academically through one-on-one and small group tutoring to directly address the academic challenges of struggling students.

In FCS, families are often in transition, meaning that students often move between schools in the district, which can be disruptive to students academically and emotionally. AmeriCorps members, acting as school navigators, will work with transitioning students to ensure a smooth transition into their new school environment and mitigate learning loss. Other programs and activities that can be incorporated into community education will be explored as new partnerships are formed and new possibilities are presented for inclusion in the community education model.

With the AmeriCorps state members providing direct programming services, the AmeriCorps VISTA members will build capacity for the Community Education Initiative that supports academic outcomes in these same three elementary schools. Specifically, VISTA members will create systems in each school that track attendance, currently tracked inconsistently in FCS, student participation in school and CNCS-sponsored activities, liaise with school administration and the DHS to ensure students and their families are receiving support for basic needs, and develop partnerships with

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community organizations to offer their programs at the schools. Additionally, VISTA members will increase sustainability and expand community involvement by creating and implementing programs for recruiting local volunteers, including parents, to engage with students, facilitating school advisory groups in each school, and facilitating parent groups to participate in community education in each school.

By providing wrap-around services to students and families that address, not only academic engagement, but also the root causes of academic underperformance, the AmeriCorps state and VISTA members will be able to make transformational and lasting change in FCS. Without programs that address their physical and emotional needs, students cannot be expected to perform well academically. Without supports for families, students may not receive the basic needs and home environment to enable them to complete their studies successfully. Without the involvement of parents and community volunteers, the community education model cannot become sustainable. Members will create transformational change by implementing community education that creates expanded opportunities designed to enrich the learning environment for students and their families and a full range of health, mental health and social services designed to promote children's well-being and remove barriers to learning.

The infusion of national service members to create the Community Schools Corps provides needed passion and energy to shift the culture and environment of FCS schools and move community schools and the FCS students towards a new future.

At the same time, all of the positive gains made during the school year will be for naught if there are no activities during the summer to prevent summer learning loss. In an effort to prevent this loss during the summer months, the AmeriCorps state members will support the NCCC teams in providing a 3-4 week STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) day camp for K-6 grade FCS students. VISTA members will help design the camp, build partnerships with community organizations that can provide programming, and recruit volunteers to help facilitate the camp. The NCCC team, together with the AmeriCorps state members, will be trained in the camp curriculum and given the tools necessary to facilitate the camp for students. In line with the NCCC focus areas, part of the camp curriculum will focus on clean energy, conservation and sustainability.

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To further position FCS students to be able to achieve as much as possible academically, the NCCC teams will also embark on activities that provide a safe, positive learning environment. The teams will clean up 5 blocks around 3 FCS schools to create safe routes to school. Through this effort, more students will be encouraged to walk to school, potentially increasing their physical activity levels and decreasing school absenteeism since students will be able to get to school on their own. This will complement the Safe Routes to School planning process that will be taking place as part of the Community Education Initiative. The NCCC teams will also help improve and increase the safety of 3 FCS playgrounds, again encouraging students to get outside and maintain healthy behaviors. The infusion of NCCC teams during the summer months will pave the way for successful school years, and the services provided by the teams will enhance the wrap-around services provided to students, families, and the neighborhood to address root causes of student underachievement and help set the students on a new path to success.

### **Partnerships**

Because of the many services that are being offered to students and families through the Community Education Initiative, partnerships are vital. This project leverages partnerships among multiple community stakeholders that have been collaborating together for several years on the Flint Master Plan, the Community Education Initiative and national service and volunteerism. The high level of collaboration and broad base of support that has already been established creates a firm foundation to successfully engage national service members in these initiatives to achieve the desired outcomes.

In addition to the core partners which include the City of Flint, FCS, the Crim Fitness Foundation, the CS Mott Foundation and the United Way of Genesee County, community partners include organizations that provide academic and recreational after-school activities such as YouthQuest which is sponsored by the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce, local churches, and the Boys & Girls Club; organizations that provide direct services to elementary school children and their families including Mott Children's Health, DHS, and the Flint Police Department; and organizations that are focused on mentoring, literacy and education such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Flint and Genesee Literacy Network, the White House Initiative My Brother's Keeper and local colleges and universities.

The Flint National Service Accelerator Initiative (Accelerator), headed up by the City of Flint's Chief Service Officer, seeks to build relationships among various national service programs and members in

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the city of Flint. The purpose of the Accelerator is to bring more national service resources to Genesee County by providing national service technical assistance to area nonprofits, supporting and training members throughout their service year, and recommending funds from the Community Foundation of Greater Flint to leverage federal investments at area nonprofits.

Thus, the Accelerator will provide training, programming and connections for national service members and community partner organizations to increase the intensity and scope of the impact of the Community Schools Corps. To date, there are approximately 25 members serving in Flint. While some of them, like 4 Coach Across America members and 2 Food Corps members, are hosted by the Crim and serving directly with FCS, many others provide services that could support the efforts of the Community Schools Corps. For example, 2 members serving at the Red Cross of Genesee & Lapeer Counties could provide programming to FCS students and families on disaster preparedness and fire prevention. Members serving with the Mentoring to Access Corps and the University of Michigan College Advising Corps can bring in programming related to college access and success.

The Chief Service Officer will work closely with Crim staff implementing the community education model to find ways for other national service members in Flint to partner with the Community Schools Corps.

### **Two-Year Plan**

While partnerships are vital to the success of the Community Education Initiative, they also enable the Community Schools Corps to come in and make an impact right away because many pieces of the community education puzzle are already in place. When the members come on board in August 2015, they will be trained by the Community Schools Coordinator, who is already in place, the Chief Service Officer, who is already in place, and Community Schools Directors who will be assigned to each school to provide direct oversight of the project and members. The new members will receive curriculum training from the national service members who are currently implementing programming at Brownell/Holmes STEM Academy and will be completing their service terms when Community Schools Corps members start. They will be in a position to share lessons learned about the pilot program. Flint is ready for members to hit the ground running. The foundation that has already been built will mean that the Community Schools Corps will be able to make an enormous impact and achieve the program objectives in two years.

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### Evidence

Community education is a key driver in making students, parents and neighborhoods successful. Research conducted over 40 years substantiates that family engagement improves students' educational outcomes. Recommended by the Harvard Family Research Project as a reform strategy, family engagement in schools should be systemic, integrated and sustained. A leading urban school superintendent described community schools as "a strategy for organizing the resources of the community around student success." Through extended hours, services and relationships, community schools re-conceive education as a coordinated, child-centered effort in which schools, families and communities work together to support students' educational success, build stronger families and improve communities.

Researcher Reginald Clark (1988) documented the outcomes of children who participate in constructive learning activities during the non-school hours. He found that economically disadvantaged children who spend 20-35 hours of their free time each week engaged in learning activities such as sports, community service and the arts earn better grades in school than their more passive peers. Joy Dryfoos (1994) synthesized a complex body of research on reducing risk and promoting resilience among children and adolescents. She concluded that the single most effective intervention was the development and implementation of schools that integrate the delivery of quality education with provision of health and social services. Community education places children at the center, surrounded by families and communities.

Because students' educational success, health and well-being are the focus of every community school, three interconnected support systems build the model: strong core instruction designed for all students to meet high academic standards; expanded learning opportunities designed to enrich the learning environment for students and their families; and a full range of health, mental health and social services designed to promote children's well-being and remove barriers to learning ([https://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/foundation/NCCS\\_BuildingCommunitySchools.pdf](https://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/foundation/NCCS_BuildingCommunitySchools.pdf)). Thus, there is a robust body of research that supports community education and community schools as an effective strategy for improving student outcomes because of the extended learning environment, the wrap-around services provided, and the integration of families and the community into the school. The activities proposed are supported by moderate evidence.

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### Outcomes

Through the direct services provided by the AmeriCorps state members in the initial year of the Community Schools Corps, the nearly 500 students starting in a CNCS-supported education program (including the 390 students who complete a CNCS-supported education program) will receive 450 minutes per week in each of the following areas: conflict resolution and anger management, gardens and nutrition education, and sports-based youth development and physical education. The students will also participate in 5,000 tutoring sessions and 30 service-learning activities, and 60 students and families will be served by school navigators.

As a result, 345 students will demonstrate increased knowledge of and exhibit healthier behaviors in areas of diet and nutrition, physical activity, conflict resolution and anger management, and civic engagement. The three targeted FCS elementary schools will see 75 fewer suspensions, and 45 students and families who are new to an FCS school (including moving between FCS schools) will successfully integrate into the school environment.

As a result of the VISTA members' activities, systems will be created to track attendance and student participation, 6 new programs offered by organizations around the community will be brought into the schools, 150 volunteers will be engaged in school activities, and 27 monthly meetings will be held of each of the school advisory councils and the parent groups. These activities will result in community organizations, volunteers, parents, and advisory councils demonstrating increased engagement with community schools, and 500 fewer unexcused absences by students.

2 NCCC teams we will each complete 1 camp per summer for 100-130 K-6 students, improve physical conditions on 5-15 city blocks where children walk to 3 FCS schools, and improve up to 3 playgrounds and make them safer for children. As a result, 80 students will have reduced summer learning loss upon returning to school each fall, 45 students will walk to school in the fall who wouldn't have otherwise, and 30 neighborhood families will take advantage of playground facilities that wouldn't have otherwise.

Several measurement tools, including surveys and questionnaires, will be developed to assess impact. These will be developed by the AmeriCorps Program Director, with direct involvement from the Crim

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Active Living Director, Community Schools Coordinator, Crim CEO, school advisory groups, City of Flint personnel, and FCS administration. These same groups will help analyze the data once it has been collected. AmeriCorps state members will partner with community volunteers to administer the data collection tools both to students and neighborhood families. In addition, a school connectedness survey will be administered based on the successful survey tool utilized in Wayne Westland Schools. Results will be shared with school staff and administration, parent groups, advisory groups, district officials and the school board, and the community schools workgroup. The City of Flint will be able to distribute results to citizens who participated in the Community Schools Town Hall and Master Planning process, and the data will be reported to the Michigan Community Service Commission in quarterly reports.

In addition to using CNCS education performance measures around participation and academic engagement behaviors, the Community Schools Corps will measure academic performance using the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) which is administered by the Michigan Department of Education. The MAP assessment measures academic skills in language arts and math for 2nd - 8th graders and is administered 3 times during the school year. MAP scores from the fall of 2015 will be used as a baseline, and test scores will be reviewed at each round to evaluate students' progress. Summer learning loss will be assessed by comparing the spring 2016 and 2017 scores to those in the fall of 2016 and 2017 when the students return to school.

By testing a cohort and non-cohort, growth will be measured over time. Also, because not all schools in the FCS district have community education staff and programs, it will be possible to compare academic performance between participating and non-participating schools. Under the direction of the Crim Fitness Foundation and community schools workgroup, an external evaluation is planned for the Community Education Initiative that will be able to gather and analyze this data to determine effectiveness.

### **Organizational Capability**

#### Structure and Experience

The Operation AmeriCorps opportunity is timely for Flint, as the city is at the convergence of 3 significant initiatives: beginning the implementation of the City Master Plan, reinstating community education, and accelerating national service and volunteerism.

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Current development in Flint is guided by the City Master Plan, which was adopted in 2013 and promotes equity, livability, economic vitality, and sustainable development. With a \$1.57 million Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant from HUD and leadership from the Mayor and the City Planning Department, the master planning process had widespread support from community stakeholder organizations that provided matching funds of \$1.3 million in cash and in-kind support, and engaged over 5,000 community members. As the city had not had an approved Master Plan in place since 1960, the momentum of the planning process has evolved into dedicated commitment to the implementation currently underway.

During the master planning process, 500 people participated in a Vision and Goals Workshop where a clear priority emerged, to re-establish community education in the Flint Community Schools (FCS). As the Master Plan was developed, the first implementation strategy of the first objective in the Economic Development & Education section became to "Re-institute a sustainable form of Community Education through K-12 schools, community centers and early learning sites."

Simultaneously, the impacts of severely reduced financial resources present an opportunity to call Flint citizens to action through national service and volunteerism. Since taking office in 2009, Mayor Dayne Walling has championed service as a strategy to reinvent the city. He was an early signer of the Declaration of Service through the Cities of Service coalition.

Aligned with this strategy, leaders from the CS Mott Foundation, the Community Foundation of Greater Flint, and the Boys & Girls Club established the Flint National Service Accelerator in 2011 which supports local organizations to secure members from all of the available national and state service streams and provides funding to aid or assist with the match requirements. To date, the National Service Fund has provided more than \$382,000 in matching grants to public charities, non-profits and educational institutions to support national service members. Flint has had an average of 25 full-time national service members per year (ranging between 17-30 members) with further support of up to 125 part-time members during the summer months. Additionally, more than 500 SeniorCorps members have provided a variety of services to at-risk youth such as mentoring and tutoring.

Further, as a result of the Mayor's participation in the Aspen Institute Franklin Project Gettysburg

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Summit, Flint is now a demonstration site for scaling up national service from 25 members in 2014-2015 to 250 members by 2019. To realize this vision, a service champions workgroup began convening in 2014 to develop a 5-Year Service Plan for expanding national service and volunteerism in Flint, with education being identified as the priority for the first year.

Out of this work, Mayor Walling convened a meeting of local, state and national leaders in the fields of national service and volunteerism to explore various ways service could act as an effective strategy to revitalize the city and increase the educational and economic success of its low- and moderate-income youth. The "Imagine Flint - Imagine America" meeting engaged over 80 participants representing a wide range of organizations including nonprofits, government and businesses to identify barriers and opportunities that national service, service-learning, and volunteering initiatives can address. Some of the participants included:

- Bill Basl and Cathy Sharp, Corporation for National and Community Service
- Facilitators Deb Jospin and Shirley Sagawa
- Ginna Holmes, Michigan Community Service Commission
- Paula Kaiser VanDam, Michigan Department of Human Services and America's Service Commission
- Myung Lee, Cities of Service
- Kelita Bak, National Youth Leadership Council
- Vivian Pickard, General Motors Foundation
- AnnMaura Connolly, City Year
- Mackenzie Moritz, Franklin Project
- Delores Morton, Points of Light
- Dorothy Stoneman, YouthBuild
- Mary Ellen Ardouny, Corps Network
- Representatives from higher education institutions

Bringing the momentum from this gathering into 2015, Flint has had the conversations, the commitments, and the vision to expand the use of national service members and volunteers to make a measurable impact in the city. Now is the time for implementation. The structure that is in place in Flint is one in which key stakeholders know and understand national service, and all parties are

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committed to ensuring positive member experiences and amplifying member effectiveness. The organizational capacity of the major players in Community Education is outlined below:

The City of Flint -

Mayor Dayne Walling has been at the forefront of the Master Planning process, re-instituting community education and advancing national service and volunteerism in Flint. As a champion for service, as a strategy for revitalization, he has been instrumental in developing this proposal for Operation AmeriCorps. A national service alumnus, the Mayor now serves as a Commissioner on the Michigan Community Service Commission.

In addition to the Mayor's leadership, the City of Flint has a demonstrated track record of recruiting, managing and supervising service members, including an AmeriCorps grant (valued at \$140,000) for eight VISTA members serving with the city who are currently focused on neighborhood revitalization and economic opportunity. The city has also managed summer and full-time LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation) AmeriCorps national members for several years at a value of approximately \$45,000. These members are supervised by the Department of Planning and Development, which is led by Megan Hunter, a VISTA alum who has worked previously for the Corporation for National and Community Service. Ms. Hunter will partner with the Crim Fitness Foundation to oversee the Operation AmeriCorps grant.

As an Entitlement Community, the City of Flint manages federal funding received under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program including the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) with an allocation of \$4.6 million this year. Beginning in 2009, the City also managed \$22 million received through three rounds of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP 1, NSP 2, NSP 3) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and \$1.57 million in Community Challenge Grant funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 2010-2013.

Further, in 2014, Flint was chosen as a Strong Cities Strong Communities (SC2) recipient, and Paul Joice, a HUD employee, is working at City Hall with the Mayor and the Megan Hunter while coordinating a technical assistance team from a cross section of federal agencies to coordinate federal funding that supports public safety, brownfields, and blight elimination efforts in Flint. Mr. Joice is

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also spearheading local initiatives around My Brother's Keeper.

One of the keys to bringing Operation AmeriCorps to Flint is the recent addition of the Chief Service Officer, Jennifer McArdle, an Executive on Loan to the City of Flint through a partnership with the United Way of Genesee County. Previously, Ms. McArdle served as both a VISTA member and a VISTA Leader, and she has managed a state-wide 37-member operational grant (VISTA). In these roles, she has trained members and supervisors, set up systems for member support, retention, and recruitment and managed a large national service grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Ms. McArdle's experience, coupled with her expertise in partnership development and relationship building, amplifies Flint's capacity for advancing both national service and community education.

Ms. McArdle is also the director of the Flint National Service Accelerator Initiative which provides technical assistance and funding for organization seeking national service members. Through the Accelerator, she will provide training to Community Schools Corps members and technical assistance to the Crim and FCS staff. Because Ms. McArdle is responsible for engaging and coordinating all service members in Flint, she will strive to ensure a positive experience for Community Schools Corps members by connecting them with other service members, providing professional development, and hosting events including opportunities with the Mayor, lunch & learn speakers, and site visits throughout the city.

In addition to the Chief Service Officer who will serve this project as the City's representative, and the ongoing support of Ms. Hunter, members of the City's Planning and Development Department will participate as part of the implementation of the Master Plan, around blight elimination efforts near FCS schools and as part of the Community Education Initiative.

The Crim Fitness Foundation -

Started in 1977 with one 10-mile running race sponsored by Michigan Speaker of the House Bobby Crim, the Crim Fitness Foundation cultivates accessible, vibrant communities in Flint and Genesee County that encourage people to lead healthy lifestyles by integrating physical activity, healthy eating, and mindfulness into their daily lives and mentoring other communities to do the same. The Crim Fitness Foundation utilizes events, programs, policy and environmental changes to accomplish this

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goal.

The Crim Fitness Foundation (Crim) will act as the fiduciary for this grant and Lead Partner agency working closely with the city, schools and other partners to lead the development and sustainability of the Community Education Initiative. The Lead Partner brings a core set of competencies that enhance and complement those of the schools. The Crim is a trusted, stable nonprofit organization with a history of working with FCS in recent years. The Crim has partnered with FCS for more than 10 years to bring physical fitness and nutritional programming into the schools at a time when virtually no other organization was able to develop that relationship with FCS administration. In 2009, the Crim entered into a partnership with the FCS in order to ensure that Flint students did not lose out on federal funding available from the USDA for nutrition education in the schools. The Crim serves as the fiduciary for this \$350,000 PE-Nut grant on behalf of the schools. The Crim also has written and received more than \$1.5 million in Safe Routes funding in Flint which, along with the PE-Nut funding, comes through the Michigan Fitness Foundation.

The City of Flint is sub-granting to the Crim to be the fiscal agent for the Operation AmeriCorps grant. Given its long, established history in the Flint community and the wide-range of skills of its staff, the Crim has the capacity to manage and implement the Community Education Initiative and the Community School Corps. The Crim leadership team responsible for oversight of Operation AmeriCorps grant implementation will include the Crim CEO, Crim Active Living Director, and Crim Community School Coordinator. The Crim CEO and Community Schools Coordinator's time is being provided in-kind in support of this grant. The Crim CEO has led the organization for 10 years and has extensive experience in managing nonprofits and grant oversight, leading an organization with a general operating budget of over \$2.5 million. The Crim Active Living Director has 6 years of experience with the Crim in grant and budget management, policy and systems change strategies, and serves on Mayor Walling's service champions workgroup that is developing the 5-year strategic plan for service. The Community School Coordinator has an educational background in the community education model and has worked in various schools across the country to help implement the model and currently works at the Community Education Initiative's pilot site, Brownell/Holmes STEM Academy supervising 2 VISTA service members. Also contributing to this grant will be the Crim Executive Assistant to provide human resources support throughout the term of the grant to assist with recruitment and ensuring members have a positive experience.

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### Flint Community Schools -

The visionary leadership of Interim Superintendent Larry Watkins and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Testing, Dr. Jessie Kilgore, has brought hope and inspiration to the Flint community and school district in the midst of hardship. While his title is "Interim Superintendent", Mr. Watkins is a fully empowered superintendent, making day-to-day decisions for FCS, who has operated as a transparent and responsive leader in a district that was previously challenged by superintendents who were resistant to working with community partners. Both Mr. Watkins and Dr. Kilgore have played key roles in the implementation of the Master Plan, the advancement of both community education and national service and volunteerism in Flint, and the development of this proposal.

For the past few years, FCS has been welcoming to AmeriCorps members and provided them a positive experience. While no members are currently hosted directly by FCS, many national service members are providing service to the schools. In addition to the VISTAs, Food Corps, and Coach Across America members already mentioned serving in Brownell/Holmes STEM Academy, FCS also welcomes 4 Michigan Literacy Corps members, a YouthQuest member, a Mentoring to Access Corps member, a College Advising Corps member, and Senior Corps members.

### CS Mott Foundation -

With an 89-year history of serving the Flint Community and a leading role in the development of community education, the CS Mott Foundation has been a critical partner in the Master Plan, the initiative to re-institute community education and the drive for national service. The foundation is the primary funder for the Accelerator and also supported the "Imagine Flint - Imagine America" convening designed to gain insights on how service and volunteerism can serve as community problem-solving strategies.

### United Way of Genesee County -

The United Way plays a critical role in the community of connecting local businesses and their employees to support nonprofit efforts that advance the common good. CEO Jamie Gaskin, a VISTA Alum, helped pioneer the Accelerator and has been instrumental in advancing national service and volunteerism in Flint. United Way manages the Accelerator and employs Jennifer McArdle, the Chief

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Service Officer, who is an Executive on Loan with the City of Flint to support all national service members serving in the City. The United Way is also committing financial and human resources to advancing this Community Schools Corps project, especially recruiting volunteers from its partner corporations.

### Staffing Plan

As many partners are supporting this Community Schools Corps project, a staffing plan has been developed that will maximize support for members. The Crim Fitness Foundation, as the Lead Partner agency for the Community Education Initiative, hired a Community Schools Coordinator who works at the Brownell/Holmes STEM Academy pilot site, manages the Community Education Initiative, and reports to the Crim's CEO. Next, the Crim will hire one Community Education Director for each of the three schools, and all directors will be supervised by the Community Education Coordinator. The Crim will select and host the AmeriCorps Program Director who will be hired to manage the Community Schools Corps. In hiring for the AmeriCorps Program Director, Crim staff, with support from the Chief Service Officer and other partners, will utilize a selection criteria that takes into account familiarity and experience with national service, experience with grants administration, particularly federal grants, management experience, including recruitment and training, knowledge of schools and the education field, and communication skills. While the search for a qualified candidate will be extended nationally through partner networks and job sites, preference will be given to a Michigan-native, and a Flint-native if possible.

### Mayor Involvement

Mayor Walling has been integral to the Flint Community Education Initiative throughout the development and implementation, beginning with the Master Plan process that identified it as a priority. The Mayor has convened and contributed to the community education workgroup, the service champions workgroup and the "Imagine Flint - Imagine America convening." Mayor Walling is the visionary behind Flint's expansion of national service through the Franklin Project and is responsible for Flint signing the Declaration of Service with Cities of Service. The Mayor has also been a driving force behind this Operation AmeriCorps application. Moving forward, Mayor Walling will work closely with the Chief Service Officer to provide City support for the Community Schools Corps and Crim staff, and he will continue to play a leading role in groups that will provide oversight and direction for the project, like the workgroups. Through his role as a Commissioner on the Michigan

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Community Service Commission, Mayor Walling provides leadership to state-wide national service and volunteerism efforts, and he will continue to identify ways that national service resources can best be implemented in Flint.

### **Supervision**

The Program Director, the Community Schools Coordinator, the Community Schools Directors, and the Chief Service Office will all participate in helping to ensure positive member experiences and proper supervision for the AmeriCorps state, VISTA and NCCC members. This proposal has outlined in the Activities section as well as the logic model, well-planned tasks and objectives that will engage members in meaningful service throughout the project. All activities are based on the delivery of successful strategies. Member tasks will be clearly outlined in their member description and in the site agreements with the schools. In addition, prohibited activities will be outlined in the member service agreement, as well as position description, and in the volunteer application and position description.

Members will be supervised directly in each building by the Community Schools Director, who will meet with the member at least bi-weekly. Members will also be given supervision by the AmeriCorps Program Director, who will meet with the members at least as regularly. The identified Program Director will be responsible for ensuring that applicable site staff and members are fully educated in the AmeriCorps rules and regulations. The program model has provided for a high level of in-person communication with sites and members. Weekly team meetings, quarterly all-team meetings, and frequent site visits, paired with frequent reflections, will allow staff to observe and rectify problems as they occur.

### **Training**

A positive member experience begins at orientation, and components will be in place to adequately train the members in their new roles and orient them to Flint and FCS. A 4 day orientation will occur in August and will focus on what it means to be an AmeriCorps member, an introduction to Flint, and an overview of working in schools, in general, and Flint Community Schools, in particular. All members will also be expected to familiarize themselves with the Flint Master Plan and the community education model. Experienced members who have been serving for the last several months in the Brownell/Holmes STEM Academy pilot program and who are at or nearing the end of their service term will help train new members in the specific curriculum they will be using, including

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Coach Across America's sports-based youth-development and Food Corps curriculum related to gardens and nutrition. Funds have also been allocated in the budget to allow content experts to train the AmeriCorps state and VISTA members, when appropriate, such as in the Ripple Effect conflict resolution curriculum.

Every other month throughout the year, the Program Director, Community Schools Coordinator and Community Schools Directors will provide on-going support and training, as it relates to community education. Bi-monthly training topics will include, in addition to specific community education topics, like grade-level requirements and the Common Core Standards, topics like AmeriCorps elevator speeches, grant writing, diversity, project management, managing volunteers, and leadership. These trainings will be provided in conjunction with other AmeriCorps supervisors in Flint and throughout the state of Michigan when appropriate to maximize resources and connect national service members.

In addition, through the National Service Accelerator, the Chief Service Officer will provide monthly member gatherings and professional development trainings on topics like networking, using the Segal Education Award, Life After AmeriCorps, and nonprofits and resources in Flint. These gatherings will be for Community Schools Corps members, as well as all of the other national service members in Flint. Members will be encouraged to be involved in the community and attend events like school board meetings, Master Plan working group meetings, and gatherings of neighborhood associations. Through Mayor's Day of Recognition, AmeriCorps Week, and other moments of service like MLK Day and Global Youth Service Day, the Community Schools Corps members will have ample opportunity to talk about their AmeriCorps experience to members of the community, and the widespread community support for national service, led by the Mayor, will mean that members get adequate recognition and opportunity to tell their AmeriCorps stories.

### Branding

Members will be provided with AmeriCorps gear and they must wear the AmeriCorps logo at all times while serving. This will identify them as national service members. All member sites will have signage indicating that AmeriCorps members are serving there. Information about AmeriCorps will be available on the City and Crim websites.

### Compliance and Accountability

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The identified Program Director will be responsible for ensuring that applicable site staff and members are fully educated in the applicable AmeriCorps rules and regulations. The program model has provided for a high level of in-person communication with sites and members. Weekly team meetings, quarterly all-team meetings, and frequent site visits, paired with frequent reflections will allow staff to observe and rectify problems as they occur. The Program Director will use a formal assessment tool at in-person site visits with members and site supervisors individually to monitor compliance with grant provisions and AmeriCorps requirements.

The City of Flint and the Crim will provide a strong infrastructure for member placement and support, as well as accountability and compliance. At least one compliance-focused site visit will be conducted at each school site within the first 6 months of each program year by the Program Director. A formal assessment tool will be used in interviews with site supervisors and members. The Program Director will review each member's position description to monitor member activities, which will include a review of each prohibited activity. This structure and timeline for monitoring will allow the program to be very proactive in detection, especially in the early months of each program year. Formal tools for monitoring will be submitted to the Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC) for review and approval before they are used on site visits. If compliance issues are discovered, the Program Director will work directly with the MCSC AmeriCorps program officer to resolve them. Program staff have already developed strong working relationships with commission staff. For member accountability, a formal plan will be laid out in the member agreement. For site accountability, a formal site agreement/MOU will be developed and implemented; MCSC program officers will review site and member agreements to ensure compliance. If a compliance issue is detected, the Program Director will report to the immediate supervisor as well as the MCSC program officer immediately.

Per the site agreement, sites will be made aware that compliance issues can result in the suspension and/or termination of placement. Per the member agreement, members will be made aware of prohibited activities and will be informed that engaging in them can result in suspension and/or termination of placement. Program staff will audit member files within the first 30 days of member service to ensure compliance, utilizing the member file checklist. This will include a review of the My AmeriCorps Portal to ensure enrollments are complete within the 30-day compliance window. Additionally, a formal structure that will allow members to report any compliance issues or concerns will be built into the program's member reporting and reflection logs which will provide a safe place

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for members to engage program staff. At the program level, program staff will cooperate fully with MCSC monitoring activities, as well as any and all recommendations for continuous improvement and/or corrective action that may be required.

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

Flint has been a community in distress, and thus, a significant push is needed to get the city back on track. One critical component to this is providing the resources and environment to enable Flint students to be successful in their education and prepared to become productive, contributing citizens after they graduate. Given this major challenge, the Operation AmeriCorps budget is a cost effective approach because of the ground work that has already been laid and the partnerships that have already been established.

The total costs to implement the Community Education Initiative are much more significant than what is represented with the Operation AmeriCorps budget. The City of Flint has leveraged the Crim Fitness Foundation, as the Lead Partner in community education, to contribute resources to employ and support the full-time Community Schools Coordinator and the Community Schools Director in each school. Crim has also established strong relationships with Food Corps and Coach Across America to facilitate the use of the curriculum and strategies employed by these members into the new community education expansion.

Another City partner, Flint Community Schools, is contributing space in the three schools, as well as equipment like desks and chairs for the members. FCS has, and will continue to, donate the time of its administration, teachers, and staff to ensure successful community education implementation. Additionally, the schools are donating their facilities for use by the AmeriCorps members and the community. For example, FCS is donating the use of the Brownell/Holmes STEM Academy STEM pods to be used during the STEAM camp that will be put on by the NCCC team and the AmeriCorps state members. Without these facilities and in-kind donations, the true costs of the Community Education Initiative would be much higher.

The benefits, on the other hand, are greater than can be outlined here. Flint is a city that has lost a lot, and it means a great deal to the city to see it turnaround. Seeing the success of its students and its educational system is important to a town that is looking towards its future. The community residents have already dedicated time and energy towards community schools. They identified the resurrection

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of community education as a priority in the Master Plan, and hundreds of residents have participated in envisioning the new model of community education. Seeing their dreams realized and their voices heard will be an immeasurable step forward for Flint citizens.

Unemployment is still high in Flint, but AmeriCorps gives young people and transitioning professionals the opportunity to participate in meaningful service while bettering themselves and their career prospects. The Community Schools Corps will look to recruit locally as much as possible to engage talented Flint residents in shaping the city's future and provide a way for young people to stay in Flint and use their education award at one of Flint's higher education institutions. In other words, Operation AmeriCorps in Flint isn't about bringing in 60 members and 2 NCCC teams over the course of 2 years. It's about engaging Flint residents, and interested outsiders who can help infuse new energy, in shaping a better future for the city, providing paths to employment, and serving as role models for Flint's elementary school students and families. These benefits cannot be captured in a budget.

The costs included in the Operation AmeriCorps grant are important to cover costs of the Community Schools Corps, including living allowances and benefits, member travel, and member FBI checks. These costs, while vital to the success of the implementation of community education in Flint, are beyond the ability of our local partners. However, to demonstrate their commitment to this cause, the Flint funding community has stepped up to provide the necessary match requirements for Operation AmeriCorps. Arrangements are also being finalized for the housing of the NCCC team, with a community partner, the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Flint, which hosted an NCCC team last year and is familiar with the needs and requirements. A grant has been submitted for \$100,000 to support the Community Schools Corps to the CS Mott Foundation which has been supportive of the City of Flint, the Crim Fitness Foundation, FCS and national service in the past. The Crim Fitness Foundation has pledged \$30,000, and the remainder of the funds will come from the National Service Fund at the Community Foundation of Greater Flint.

Since the revitalization of community education is still in the pilot phase, AmeriCorps state and national members are needed to help show what can happen as a result of investment in wrap-around services for students. Teachers in the district are already stretched thin and need assistance to help provide services and programs throughout the day that will show improvement in both academic engagement and behavior in the classroom. The increase in activities that the AmeriCorps state

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members and the NCCC teams will help facilitate will give a much-needed boost to the schools and the students that will help to set the Community Education Initiative on a new trajectory. These activities complemented by the pieces that have already been put in place, like the Community Schools Coordinator, Community Schools Directors, and school Advisory Committees, will enable the core group of volunteers recruited and trained by the VISTA members to be able to sustain many of the efforts of the national service members after the federal support ends.

On-going commitments by the funding community, the local nonprofits, and the City of Flint mean that support will continue to be provided to ensure a long life for the newly re-imagined Community Education Initiative.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

Because of the community's and partner's commitment to the success of the Community Education Initiative, an external evaluation of the initiative is planned. Under the direction of the Crim Fitness Foundation and the community schools workgroup, a thorough evaluation will be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the Community Education Initiative, including the use of national service members, on student and family achievement. Local funders are working on securing resources for this endeavor, so no funds are requested for evaluation in the Operation AmeriCorps budget.

Additionally, the Flint Operation AmeriCorps project, the Community Schools Corps, agrees to cooperate in the national assessment of Operation AmeriCorps projects.

### Amendment Justification

N/A

### Clarification Summary

The performance measures for the Community Schools Corps VISTA members are:

Focus Area: Education

Objective: K-12 Success

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Title: Community Schools Corps VISTAs

Problem: The challenges of poverty that affect Flint's families are reflected in the schools where 80% of FCS students qualify for free or reduced lunches. A variety of factors have contributed to a significant drop in FCS student enrollment, and the resulting drop in federal funds have left the district struggling financially. VISTA members will provide capacity building services to assist the district maximize use of existing resources, as well as connect families, school administration and other service providers to help students and families access resources they need to provide students with a home environment that contributes to academic success.

Interventions: Community School Partnership, Family Involvement, Out-of-School Time, Summer Learning

Total VISTA MSYs: 9

Outputs: Number of students who start in a CNCS-supported education program (495 students according to attendance log); Number of students completing a CNCS-supported education program (390 students according to attendance log)

Outcomes: Number of students with improved academic engagement (behaviors) (345 students according to teacher observation log)

Description of Interventions: Create systems that track attendance & student participation; Develop partnerships with community organizations to offer programs at the school before/after school hours, during lunch & in summer; Create systems for & recruit local volunteers to participate in before/after school & summer programs; Facilitate school advisory groups in each school; Facilitate parent groups to participate in community education in each school

### Continuation Changes

N/A