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Executive Summary

The Pawtucket School Department will support 32 AmeriCorps members who will be assigned to 1,050 students in grades 11 and 12 to provide in school, out-of-school and summer individual and group services to connect graduating seniors to one of five post secondary career paths: 1) college/post secondary technical schools; 2) military service; 3) AmeriCorps/national service; 4) employment or paid internships; 5) apprenticeships or job training programs. At the end of the two-year project period, this Connecting Futures Operation AmeriCorps program will be responsible for connecting 88% (920 over two years) of graduating seniors to one of these five post secondary career tracks. Specifically, 16 AmeriCorps State members will be assigned annually, from September 2015 through August 2016, to be school-based, 9 at Tolman and 7 at Shea high schools and will be assigned to each high school junior and senior at a ratio of one AmeriCorps member per 65 students. The members work with students in grades 11 and 12 will involve seven program components: career awareness and exploration, work and service project experience, academic support and remediation, financial literacy, wrap-around services, higher education access services and ongoing mentoring and follow-through support. Six (6) AmeriCorps VISTA members will be assigned annually, from August 2015 through July 2016, as follows: 2 VISTAs for School-Based Program Development: Academic Support, Post Secondary School Access and Financial Literacy, coordinating with the Superintendent, School Principals, AmeriCorps College Guides and Guidance Staff teams; 2 VISTAs for Career Awareness and Exploration, Work Experience (after school, weekends, summer), Summer Jobs and Service Projects, coordinating with the Pawtucket Foundation, Youth Center; and, 2 VISTAs for Industry Partnership Outreach, Job Development and Career Center, coordinating with the Mayors Office Industry Leadership for Youth, North RI Chamber of Commerce and Pawtucket Boys and Girls Clubs. Ten (10) AmeriCorps NCCC will be assigned for an 8-week period in July and August 2016 to manage work on several Pawtucket service projects involving hundreds of high school juniors and seniors, coordinated by the Pawtucket Foundation and the Mayors Office. We have not at this point in time included Senior Corps programs.

This program will focus on Priority 1 of the Operation AmeriCorps program. The CNCS investment of \$219,680 will be matched with \$225,006.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

A. The Need for Connecting Pawtucket Youth to their Futures

With a total population of 71,163, the city of Pawtucket has an urban school department comprised of

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17 schools. There are two comprehensive high schools, Tolman and Shea high schools currently in their third year of transformation as a result of high dropout rates and low performance on standardized testing. The projected enrollment for September 2015 will be approximately 520 students in the 12th grade and 530 in the 11th grade, for a total of 1,050 students. These students will be the target cohorts of the Connecting Futures Operation AmeriCorps program. Economic and social indicators for Pawtucket indicate the need and appropriateness of a transformational Operation AmeriCorps program over the next several years.

DISCONNECTED YOUTH: Rhode Island is one of the states that have lost the most ground in youth opportunity, according to the Opportunity Index (Opportunity Nation and Measure of America). The states disconnected youth rate is 10.8%, or 16,150 young adults between the ages of 16-24 not in school and not employed. An estimated 1,100 disconnected youth reside in Pawtucket.

POVERTY: Nearly one-third (29.4% or 4,790) of children in Pawtucket live in poverty. Of these 1,881 children live in extreme poverty. Another indication of poverty, at Pawtucket high schools, 78% of the students are eligible for subsidized meals, accounting for 1,615 students.

JOB MARKET SHIFTS: Changes in the states economy over the past decade have resulted net job losses for the state as well as the city of Pawtucket. Total employment in Pawtucket declined 21% accounting for a total loss of 4,793 jobs from 2004 to 2014, with manufacturing jobs accounting for almost half of all job losses. In terms of the industry shifts in employment, the Health Care and Social Assistance industry sector has grown from 18% to 21% of all jobs, while Manufacturing has declined from 24% to 17%. These industry trends indicate the increasingly difficult youth labor market for graduating high school seniors. Disconnected dropouts are among the most disadvantaged in the labor market. Overall there are fewer job opportunities for workers with only a high school diploma or less. According to the RI Department of Labor and Training, among the occupations projected to have the most job growth from 2012 to 2022, the top 10 include: Health/Nursing/Personal Aide services, Retail and Customer service, Carpenters, Bookkeeping and Accounting clerks and Food Preparation and Service Workers. These growth jobs range in academic and training requirements spanning the spectrum from apprenticeships, CTE secondary, technical post secondary and 2 and 4-year college programs.

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ACADEMIC NEEDS, ABSENTEEISM, GRADUATION RATES, DROPOUT RATES: Academically, both Tolman and Shea High Schools have considerable numbers of students in need of math and literacy remediation. According to the 2013-2014 New England Comprehensive Assessment Program test scores, only 17% of Tolman and 15% of Shea 11th graders were proficient in math. Grade level reading scores were higher at 75% and 61% proficiency levels for Tolman and Shea, respectively. These data indicate that remedial in and after school tutorial support will be needed to build academic proficiency for approximately 200 students for math, 75 for reading and 100 for the projected 12th graders during the 2015-2016 school year. SAT scores are another indicator of the need for improving academic proficiency for college access. Aggregate SAT scores for Tolman and Shea high schools are 72 points below the RI state average scores and 92 points below National average SAT scores. Chronic absenteeism is 33% at Tolman and 42% at Shea, compared to the RI state average of 24%. The 4-year graduation rate for Tolman and Shea are 71.0% and 83.3%, respectively, compared to the RI state average graduation rate of 79.7%. Dropout rates for Tolman and Shea are 15.0% and 8.6%, respectively, compared to the RI state average of 9.1%.

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS: Data from the National Clearinghouse indicate that of the 454 graduates of the Pawtucket high schools class of 2011, 56.6% (257 graduates) were enrolled in two or four-year schools six months after graduating compared to the state average of 79%. A year after graduating the college enrollment percentage had dropped to 45.8. Pawtucket ranks 30th out of the states 32 town/city school districts in the percentage of high school graduates enrolled in college/higher education after six months. The drop off from graduation day to actual enrollment in higher education is significant: the percentage of Pawtucket high school seniors anticipating a post secondary education upon graduating ranges 70%, yet only 56.6% enroll, a drop off of 15 percentage points. Over the course of two months, many high school graduates fall off track of their post secondary goals.

B. Utilizing AmeriCorps Members to Achieve a Transformational and Measurable Change through Direct Service

The goal of Connecting Futures, Operation AmeriCorps Pawtucket program, is to connect all 500-plus high school seniors with one of five options upon graduation: 1) Post secondary college or technical schools; 2) Military service; 3) National service in AmeriCorps; 4) Employment; or, 5) Paid

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internship, apprenticeship or job training program.

Connecting Futures will be transformational for the community of Pawtucket, and will be a new model for connecting high schools students with career paths and motivation for gainful and successful occupational futures. The resulting benefits will be many: 1) high school students will be connected to their career paths upon graduation; 2) employers will have workers with greater motivation, skill and training; 3) fewer youth will become disconnected and youth crime, delinquency and gang activity will be reduced; 4) Pawtucket parks, cityscapes and school facilities will be aesthetically and cosmetically improved thereby creating a healthier and more positive environment for all; and, 5) Rhode Islands urban high school systems will have a new model for an intensive 11th and 12th grade intervention to improve high school academic outcomes and graduation rates while engaging students on paths for gainful post secondary placements and lifelong achievement.

Connecting Futures, will involve a team of 32 AmeriCorps members working full time and assigned to 11th and 12th graders to provide in and out-of-school individual and group services to connect graduating seniors to gainful post secondary career paths. The AmeriCorps members from the three streams of service will be assigned as follows:

Sixteen (16) AmeriCorps State members will be school-based, 9 at Tolman and 7 at Shea high schools. They will be assigned to each high school junior and senior at a ratio of one AmeriCorps member per 65 students. The members work with students in grades 11 and 12 will involve career awareness and exploration, work and service project experience, academic support and remediation, financial literacy, wrap-around services, higher education access services and ongoing mentoring and follow-through support. The AmeriCorps service members will be working with students based on a tiered system of assessed need and risk of each student. The tiers would be determined by the amount of college preparatory classes the student has completed, the preparation for a trade or employment academy, and then risk factors such as being behind in graduation credits or other factors that prove a challenge for a successful college or career path after graduation.

Six (6) AmeriCorps VISTA members who will be assigned as follows: 2 VISTAs for School-Based Program Development: Academic Support, Post Secondary School Access and Financial Literacy, coordinating with the Superintendent, School Principals, AmeriCorps College Advising Corps and

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Guidance Staff teams; 2 VISTAs for Career Awareness and Exploration, Work Experience (after school, weekends, summer), Summer Jobs and Service Projects, coordinating with the Pawtucket Foundation, Youth Center; and, 2 VISTAs for Industry Partnership Outreach, Job Development and Career Center, coordinating with the Mayors Office Industry Leadership for Youth, Northern RI Chamber of Commerce and Pawtucket Boys and Girls Clubs.

Ten (10) AmeriCorps NCCC members for 8 weeks in June and July in 2016 and again in 2017 to manage work on several Pawtucket service projects involving hundreds of high school juniors and seniors, coordinated by the Pawtucket Foundation and the Mayors Office.

Connecting Futures will involve in-school, out-of-school, weekend and summer activities and programming for every high school junior and senior by year two of the program:

1. **CAREER AWARENESS AND EXPLORATION:** AmeriCorps members will develop and support several elements of career exploration during the school year, including, a) effective in- and out-of-school collaborations with high school teachers to assess career interests and integrate career awareness into appropriate course curriculums, utilizing guest speakers from industry and organizing field trips to major employers; b) after-school use of the Pawtucket Boys and Girls Club newly formed Career Center where students will have online access to career exploration tools and supportive programming from the Club; and, c) facilitated visits and job shadowing with employers within walking distance or public transportation access.

Both Tolman and Shea high schools have advisory programs that meet once every three days. AmeriCorps members will utilize this time with students to work with and develop the strategies and curriculum within Way To Go RI, a college and career planning service of the Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority. This time will also be utilized to work with our other college network programs and to set and attain college and career goals. Every student has an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP). Way To Go RI supports these learning plans and AmeriCorps members will have access to this information in order to support students with their career planning.

2. **WORK AND SERVICE PROJECT EXPERIENCE:** AmeriCorps members will assist junior and seniors in finding paid part-time employment during the school year and full-time summer

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employment between junior and senior years and after graduation. Summer youth employment through the states Job Development Fund and federal Workforce Investment Act funding will be provided for 200-250 youth, including high school juniors and seniors. These 6-week jobs include three components: week one - work readiness/soft skills and financial literacy training, weeks two through six - interviews with prospective job site supervisors and employers depending on career interests, 15 hours paid work per week, 10 hours of continued training and reinforcement of week one. (See evidence base section.)

Community service group volunteer projects will also be developed for juniors and seniors for learning teamwork and gaining hands-on skills in painting, carpentry, landscaping and environmental/parks improvements. The Pawtucket Foundation will provide several community design-build projects and summer work experience opportunities for the Connecting Futures student participants. This Summer Bridge support will help keep students on track with their plans.

3. **REMEDIAL ACADEMIC SUPPORT:** Students with articulated career interests will learn the basic academic skills needed for their future work and will be assessed for levels of proficiency. Skill work will prioritize literacy through the reading and analysis of informational text, communication through Writing and Speaking and Listening, and Mathematics skills including Algebra and Geometry. In collaboration with teaching staff, academic support will be provided in and after school by the AmeriCorps members to approximately 270 economically disadvantaged juniors and seniors focused on reading, writing and math skills while having students create, design, and apply their knowledge in ways that will support technical and career fields. There are several opportunities to work with students during school hours as the high schools offer a credit recovery program for students who have not met all graduation requirements to graduate in four years, and an intervention block that includes math labs and reading intervention. AmeriCorps members will be assigned to these classrooms to work with students on the curriculum already in place.

4. **FINANCIAL LITERACY:** All students will participate in a multi-week training module offered during free in-school class periods and/or after school to develop financial literacy skills, with a special focus on post secondary educational financing. High school teachers in partnership with local financial institutions, augmented with the AmeriCorps members, will continue to provide financial education, support, and mentoring during their last two years of high school and their first year after

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college. Financial literacy is considered to be a key intervention for this program.

Pawtucket high schools current curricula and programs provide three courses in Financial Literacy: Basic Financial Literacy, Banking and Credit and Financial Planning. With Basic Financial Literacy, students use knowledge and skills to manage ones financial resources effectively for lifetime financial security. The student finds, evaluates, and applies financial information; sets and achieves financial goals; develops income earning and saving potential; uses financial services; meets financial obligations; and builds and protects wealth. In Banking and Credit, students learn about the major functions of banks and other depository institutions and an overview of credit functions and operations, including credit risk evaluation, loan creation and debt collection. In Financial Planning, students prepare a financial plan that includes saving, investing, borrowing, risk management (insurance), and retirement and estate planning. Each of these three courses is one-half credit, or 30 hours each. Students can elect to complete one or all of the courses, providing from 30 to 90 hours of instruction, beginning with Basic Financial Literacy. (See evidence base section.)

5. WRAP-AROUND SOCIAL SERVICES: Given high levels of poverty in Pawtucket, many juniors and seniors will need individual and family social service support. Pawtucket Schools presently assist students and families through nonprofit service agencies in Pawtucket. See collaborating partners section below.

6. HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS SERVICES: Supporting post secondary college career aspirations over the past 8 years has been the presence the AmeriCorps College Advising Corps of the Brown University Swearer Center. The Corps has set up offices in 12 high schools, including Tolman and Shea, to assist with college exploration, financial aid, and the application process. Connecting Futures will add AmeriCorps support to augment the services of these two offices to include non-college post secondary career development options: technical schools, workforce development training opportunities, military service and national service options. (See evidence base section).

7. ONGOING CONNECTING, SUMMER BRIDGE and FOLLOW-THROUGH SUPPORT: An important component of Connecting Futures will be the follow-through support upon graduation. Summer Bridge services for graduating seniors (employment services, financial planning, continued academic remediation and mentoring) during the critical summer period before the start of post-

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secondary education and training programs will increase college and post secondary enrollment rates. The first semester of post secondary matriculation is also a time of transition during which mentoring and ongoing support will be instrumental in assisting students stay on track with their post secondary programs. AmeriCorps members will recruit Volunteer Mentors to be assigned to each graduating senior to provide 12 months of follow-through support with a minimum of four contacts throughout the year. Volunteer Mentors will communicate through mail, phone and social media to continue to foster communication and relationships as needed to support the students in their post secondary goals.

C. Community Partnerships to Leverage and Coordinate Resources for Connecting Futures

Connecting Futures will involve many partners: the Governors Workforce Board, Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island, RI Department of Labor and Training, Youth Center of Pawtucket, Boys & Girls Club of Pawtucket, Blackstone Valley Community Action Program, the Pawtucket Foundation, many RI institutions of higher education, the RI Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals, The Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce and local businesses. In support of this program, Mayor of Pawtucket, Donald Grebien, will be issuing a challenge to all Pawtucket businesses to support youth career exploration, work experience and summer employment and in 2015 will form the Mayors Industry Advisory Group for Youth Workforce Development. The Group will include lead companies currently collaborating with Pawtucket high schools Career Academies to create career exploration and work experience opportunities for every high school junior and senior.

For the provision of wrap-around supportive student social services, Pawtucket schools will continue to partner with Blackstone Valley Community Action Program and Gateway Healthcare, a nonprofit behavioral health care organization that provides a wide array of services to adults, children and families in Rhode Island. These agencies provide services for our students and their families, through support with follow-through and identification for new referrals are needed. The RI Department of Children and Families will also provide services for youth in foster care. A new partner, the RI Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals will be developing a Community Schools program in Pawtucket and will be assisting teachers with referrals for students in need to supportive social and health services.

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D. Two-year timeline and plan to achieve outcomes:

The two-year timeline for this Connecting Futures Operation AmeriCorps program begins in full in September 2015 and continues through August 2017 involves two cohorts of students: Cohort 1 will be 520 students who will be starting grade 12 in October 2015 and completing in August 2016 (11 months) and Cohort 2 will be 530 in grade 11 beginning in January 2016 and completing in August 2017 (20 months). The optimal design of Connecting Futures begins with high school juniors half way through their junior year (January) and continues for a 20-month period covering two Summer Bridge programs and pacing program components over more time for effectiveness. Since the program services will start in October 2015 with seniors, Cohort 1 will have a compressed 11-month intervention timeframe. All future cohorts will have 20 months of intervention. The monthly timeline will be as follows:

Aug. 2015: Connecting Futures Operation AmeriCorps Pawtucket Begins

- 6 AmeriCorps* VISTAs recruited and begin orientation and training

- 16 AmeriCorps SN recruited

- Pawtucket School Dept. Connecting Futures Program Director in place

Sept. 2015: 16 AmeriCorps SN begin and complete pre-service training

Oct. 2015: Connecting Futures program begins for 520 seniors, Cohort 1:

- Career Exploration: 2 months (Oct& Nov15)

- Work and Service Project Experience: 11 months (Oct15-Aug16)

- Academic Assessment and Remediation: 8 months (Oct15-May16)

- College/Post Secondary Access Services: 5 months (Oct15-Feb15)

Nov. 2015: Support Services: 8 months (Nov15-Jun16)

Jan. 2016: Connecting Futures program begins for 530 juniors, Cohort 2:

- Career Exploration: 2 months (Jan16& Feb16)

- Academic Assessment and Remediation: 12 months (Jan16-May17)

Feb. 2016: Financial Literacy: 2 months (Feb16-Mar16) for both Cohorts 1 & 2

June 2016: Cohort 1 Graduation & Summer Bridge: 3 months (Jun16-Aug16)

Sept. 2016: Volunteer Mentoring starts, 4 calls/visits (Sept/Dec/May/Aug)

Nov. 2016: Continued services for Cohort 2

- Support Services for Cohort 2: (Nov16-Jun17) and College/Post

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- Secondary Access Services for Cohort 2: (Nov16-Mar17)

June 2017: Cohort 2 Graduation & Summer Bridge: 3 months (Jun16-Aug16)

Sept. 2017: Volunteer Mentoring starts, 4 calls/visits (Sept/Dec/May/Aug)

E. Evidence Base for Connecting Futures, Proposed Operation AmeriCorps Program for Pawtucket

Evidence for the design components is comprised of a combination of research and experience. Research on Career Awareness and Exploration, Work and Service Project Experience, Financial Literacy and Higher Education Access Services indicates that there exists moderate and strong evidence that the proposed program design components will yield positive results.

CAREER AWARENESS and EXPLORATION (strong):

Currently, in Pawtucket High Schools, guidance counselors work with students across grade levels. They begin work in advisory in grade nine and the focus becomes more specific on career intervention as students enter the eleventh and twelfth grade. There are many national models of career education, financial literacy, and post secondary mentoring and support used in other schools and districts. Americas Career Resource Network Association (ACRNA) has issued a Research-based Policy Guidance regarding working with high school students to increase their post secondary success.

Career interventions mediated by counselors have substantially stronger effects (Oliver and Spokane, 1983) than unmediated career interventions. Whiston, Sexton, and Lasoff (1998) and Whiston, Brecheisen, and Stephens (2003) offer strong support for career interventions that are delivered by counselors. Particularly related to these smaller group settings and ratios: Ogle (2001) found that lower student-counselor ratios resulted in increased college going rates for high school graduates, an effect that persists when taking into account socio-economic and demographic differences.

The U.S. Department of Education (1997) reported that Zapata (Texas) High Schools exemplary comprehensive and developmental career guidance and counseling program reduced the dropout rate to 0.9% and improved attendance rate to 93.6%. This program also reported increased career awareness related to academic content. Hughes et al. (2001) found that well-implemented career

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academies led to improved attendance and graduation rates, as well as higher GPAs, and may also improve postsecondary efficiency and success.

WORK AND SERVICE PROJECT EXPERIENCE (moderate):

Summer youth employment programs can have a positive impact on school attendance and academic achievement, which in turn, increases the likelihood of graduation and successful career development. A recent evaluation of summer youth employment programs for high schoolers in New York City concluded that the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) created small increases in attendance in the following school year and increases the likelihood of attempting and passing statewide high school math and English examinations (Leos-Urbel 2014).

FINANCIAL LITERACY INSTRUCTION (strong):

There is strong evidence that high school financial literacy coursework in the range of 20 to 50 hours have a positive impact on financial knowledge. Financial literacy programs targeting youth improve financial knowledge (Harter & Harter, 2009; Asarta, Hill, & Meszaros, 2012) and confidence and saving behavior (Danes & Brewton, 2012), which could increase confidence during the college application process and provide further funds to make college more accessible. These programs generally have 20 to 30 hours of instruction. (Asarta, Hill, & Meszaros, 2014) focus on a successful high school personal finance curriculum, Keys to Financial Success. Pre- and posttest results from 967 high school students who participated in a one-semester Keys course significantly improve the average personal finance knowledge of students in each of the standards and concept areas. The curriculum is 52 lessons. (Harter & Harter, 2009) look at the affect of the Financial Fitness for Life curriculum and observe that personal financial knowledge improves in 11th graders using pre- and post-test. The curriculum is 22 lessons.

HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS SERVICES (strong):

Serve Rhode Island AmeriCorps sub-grantee, College Advising Corps at Brown University, has been highly effective. In 2009, Stanford University researchers initiated a comprehensive evaluation of direct outcomes for the National College Advising Corps (NCAC) across the US. Initial evaluation

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results found that, nationally, schools served by the CAC see an 8-12 percentage point increase in college-going rates versus control schools in the area. In Providence, Rhode Island, students in schools with a CAC member are 14.4 percentage points more likely to attend college and persist than students in schools without a CAC member, the highest in the NCAC network. Before the CAC arrived in the RI schools served, the baseline higher education enrollment rate was 38% (including two and four year institutions). After a CAC member was placed in the schools, total enrollment jumped to 43%--a five percentage point increase, and once again the highest percentage point increase among active CAC programs in the nation.

Through student surveys conducted in 2012, the Stanford University evaluation team measured the impacts for high school students who meet with a CAC adviser. More than 30,000 students were surveyed across 168 CAC partner schools in 14 states. Students who work with a CAC adviser are: 42% more likely to apply to a college/university; 73% more likely to apply to a four-year institution of higher education; 67% more likely to be accepted to a college/university; 84% more likely to be accepted to a four-year institution of higher education; and 31% more likely to be committed to attending college in the fall (as indicated by having submitted a deposit to a college/university).

The Stanford researchers also found that, upon the introduction of an adviser, partner high schools see an average increase of one million dollars in additional scholarship funds per school for their college-going students. Surveys of partner high schools demonstrated an overall increase in the number of college visits per student, attendance at college fairs, FAFSA completion, SAT/ACT registration and overall school morale. The Advising Corps provides a unique, much-needed and highly beneficial service to schools that lack the counseling resources and time to thoroughly promote college and work with students to gain admission.

F. Outcomes, measures, and data collection:

Prior to graduation, all seniors will complete a Career Action Plan, which will identify their specific post secondary aspirations for college or technical school, job training/apprenticeship, employment, military or national service. The six AmeriCorps*VISTA members working with the Pawtucket Schools Administration will set up a new comprehensive data collection database and system to capture the data for the outputs and outcomes of Connecting Futures at each of the completion of

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each program component and following up with graduating seniors.

As presented in the logic model, the long term outcome is that by September 2016, 85% (442 total) of the 2016 graduating class will be matriculated into one of the five career track outcomes of Operation AmeriCorps: 1) college/post secondary technical schools; 2) military service; 3) AmeriCorps/national service; 4) employment or paid internships; 5) apprenticeships or job training programs. By September 2017, 90% (478 total) of the 2017 graduating class will be enrolled into one of the five career track outcomes. In total for both 2016 and 2017 graduating classes, at the end of the two-year project period, this Connecting Futures Operation AmeriCorps program will be responsible for connecting 88% (920 over two years) of graduating seniors to one of these five post secondary career tracks. Within this overall outcome is the specific outcome to increase 12-month enrollment in higher education (after graduating from high school) from 46% currently to 60% by September 2017 and 65% by September 2018.

A collaborative effort between the Pawtucket School System administration and the AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers will develop a structure for data collection and evaluation efforts that builds on existing administrative capacity. Academic outcomes including proficiency in math and reading as well as graduation rates are already collected administratively. It is possible to incorporate behavioral levels of school engagement including attendance records and disciplinary records.

Increased capacity is necessary to track post-secondary outcomes over time. The primary outcome regarding meaningful engagement in post-graduation activity in one of the five pathways will be monitored by AmeriCorps members and volunteer mentors from the community. College matriculation data is already available from the National Clearinghouse and progress along other pathways will be tracked through a variety of methods including an online survey with telephone follow-up as needed. The surveys will occur at four time points in the post-graduation year. The development of Career Action Plans for each student will provide a baseline of career orientation and enable schools to monitor the alignment of aspiration and actual outcomes.

Organizational Capability

During fiscal year 2015 the Pawtucket School Department is managing 45 grants ranging in value from \$1,060 to \$4,094,714 with a total value of approximately \$16 million. While the majority are federal grants awarded through the Department of Education, there is also a directly awarded federal

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grant, the Carol White Fund for the Improvement of Education, as well as many state, local, and foundation awards. All require applications, budgeting, and reporting and the reports vary depending on the source of funds. The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) is adhered to for all federal grants. In past years, the Pawtucket School Department has managed a similar number of grants with values in the same range. Other past federal grants include a Department of Homeland Security grant as well as a Congressional (John F. Kennedy) grant.

The Pawtucket School District has four Career Academies: Marketing and Management, Law and Public Safety, Information Technology, and Early Childhood Education. These academies have been developed over the past twelve years for college-bound students and have been successful in linking high school course work with internships with area employers.

With the ongoing support and technical assistance provided by Serve Rhode Island, the state commission, the Pawtucket School Department is confident that it understands the three streams of AmeriCorps National Service. With a daily program management support provided by nearby Blackstone Valley Community Action (BVCAP), it will have the capacity to manage the Connecting Futures Operation AmeriCorps program and its AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA and AmeriCorps NCCC components. In addition the Program Director, each school an Assistant Principal and guidance team will provide site level support and guidance to each AmeriCorps team.

MEMBER SUPERVISION

The Pawtucket School Department, with support from collaborating partners and sub-contract with BVCAP, will: Recruit, interview and select the AmeriCorps State and National and AmeriCorps; Develop an AmeriCorps VISTA project with the participation / input from the low income beneficiary community; Provide supervision for the AmeriCorps State and National and AmeriCorps VISTA members.

The Department will attend the VISTA supervisor orientation and ensure training of sub-site supervisors. The AmeriCorps NCCC projects will be planned and managed by the Department, in conjunction with local agencies, including the Pawtucket Foundation, and with technical support from Serve Rhode Island. The NCCC teams will be provided housing during their spikes within the high school facilities.

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The Department will provide on-site orientations and trainings for the AmeriCorps VISTA members, to prepare them for the capacity-building work associated with the project. For AmeriCorps VISTA members, The Department and its collaborating community partners will provide resources such that AmeriCorps VISTA members can perform their tasks, i.e., work space, consumable supplies, telephone, on-the-job transportation reimbursement; and will provide emergency cash advances to AmeriCorps VISTAs when needed. The Department has available space in both Tolman and Shea high schools for a home base for the AmeriCorps members.

A key responsibility of the Department will be to work with the administrators to develop and monitor progress of the Connecting Futures project, collect data for measuring program outputs, outcomes and progress toward the performance measures set forth in the program design.

The Pawtucket School Department will complete and submit programmatic and financial reports as required. For the AmeriCorps VISTAs the Department will involve the beneficiary community to achieve project sustainability once AmeriCorps VISTA resources are gone. Working with Serve Rhode Island and collaborating community agencies, the Department will assist as needed, with helping AmeriCorps members find safe, affordable housing. The Department will monitor attendance and leave for AmeriCorps State & National and AmeriCorps VISTA members.

MEMBER EXPERIENCE: TRAINING AND BRANDING

To ensure that AmeriCorps members understand and carry out the program's and AmeriCorps' missions, there will be a comprehensive plan for development, training and supervision. A two-week intensive pre-service training will include AmeriCorps rules, regulations and prohibited activities, Pawtucket school data and information, and teambuilding. From their first weeks and throughout their service year, Members are equipped to speak confidently and appropriately about their AmeriCorps experience to the community.

Beginning with Pre-Service Training, members will be trained on how to talk about the program and construct "elevator speeches." Building their identity as AmeriCorps members will be part of the yearlong training offerings as well. Members will be provided with AmeriCorps t-shirts, and lanyards and badges, with the expectation that gear with the AmeriCorps logo is worn on a daily-basis. The

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members will need to be recognized within the school so that it is clear they have a distinct role from other staff and teachers. Each school and community partner will post required AmeriCorps signage in prominent entrances.

It is expected that the Program Director will facilitate weekly team meetings throughout the year. Members. The weekly meeting time will be an important tool to provide supervision, ongoing training, mentoring and support to the members. The weekly meeting time will be used to bring in outside experts and school department staff for trainings, such as behavior management, learning theories, conflict resolution, Life After AmeriCorps. A specific meeting day and time will be determined with the key school department staff. Equally important will be the time for reflection during weekly meetings so that members can process their service. The program expects to work very closely with the state commission, Serve Rhode Island, to ensure that members receive the required AmeriCorps training and reflection opportunities. Members will have every opportunity to be involved in statewide training and events so they understand that they are part of a bigger national service network in the state.

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Staff members will have a strong understanding of AmeriCorps regulations and the attention to detail necessary to ensure full compliance. The state commission is responsive and helpful when we have questions. Program staff will attend all state commission network meetings, trainings, and retreats to stay current on changing regulations. Program staff will closely monitor member time sheets and activities and will provide trainings for all members and staff on AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities.

We will ensure compliance at our partner sites through the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which clearly spells out AmeriCorps prohibited activities as well as the respective goals, roles and contributions of the partner site. At the beginning of each service year, program staff will meet with site supervisors and school leadership to review and execute MOUs. Regular monitoring visits to sites (announced and unannounced) and frequent communication allow us to maintain compliance as well.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

The Pawtucket School Department has designed a budget of \$444,686, including a CNCS Operation

Narratives

AmeriCorps grant of \$219,680 (49%) and \$225,006 (51%) in cash and in-kind matching funds. Cash matching funds are \$99,753, or 22% of the total. The CNCS Cost per Member Service (MSY) is this budget is \$13,730. The budget includes a one FTE experienced professional staff to serve as the Operation AmeriCorps Connecting Futures Program Director.

It is anticipated that Connecting Futures will be highly leveraged with a combination of in-kind donations and cash contributions. While no cash matching funds have been secured as of March 9, 2015, there are several prospective sources: City of Pawtucket (CDBG funds), United Way of Rhode Island, local corporate donations prospects (Hasbro, Collette, Teknor Apex, etc.) and possibly state funds. The Mayor of Pawtucket is committed to the success of this program and has pledged his leadership in assembling an Industry Advisory Group for Youth Workforce Development. Members of this Advisory Group will generate in-kind and cash contributions to this Operation AmeriCorps program.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

na

Amendment Justification

na

Clarification Summary

na

Continuation Changes

na