

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Goodwill Industries of Northern New England's Take2 initiative proposes to have 76 AmeriCorps members (five 1700 hour and forty-one 450 hour stipended members, and thirty 300 hour Education Award Only members), including 41 Disconnected Youth members, who will engage in housing rehabilitation activities as Mentors and Mentees in Lewiston, Maine. At the end of the first program year the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for playing a key role in increasing the supply of safe, healthy, affordable housing in an effort to impact the well-being of youth in Lewiston. The program will support Disconnected Youth as they receive mentoring, as well as construction and digital industry recognized credentials, in order to reconnect them to pathways to employment and economic self-sustainability, thus decreasing the risk of offense/recidivism. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 25 volunteers who will be engaged in affordable housing projects.

This Youth Opportunity AmeriCorps program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Economic Opportunity. The CNCS investment of \$298,000 will be matched with \$145,391 (\$96,800 in public funding and \$46,591 in private funding).

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

### PROBLEM/NEED

A former mill town whose economy has declined steadily since World War II, the city of Lewiston, Maine is characterized by the poorest census tracts in Maine, low education levels, outdated housing stock and a surge of recent Somali immigrants. This has brought about a deficiency of safe, quality affordable housing. Goodwill Industries of Northern New England's Take2 program will engage adjudicated youth to provide rehabilitation to affordable housing in an effort to improve the well-being of children and adolescents in Lewiston. As a result of serving in AmeriCorps, the Disconnected Youth will develop job skills through mentoring, training, and construction projects to help them break the cycle of poverty and recidivism.

Lewiston was once a leading textile producing center in Northern New England, but post-World War II the city has been struggling to keep its population employed and healthy as production moved south, then abroad. According to the American Community Survey, 16-24 year olds in Lewiston have an unemployment rate of 19%. The high school graduation rate is only 65.8%. Adults with a college degree make up only 14.6% of the population. The two largest demographic groups in Lewiston are former mill working families and Somali immigrants. Both groups struggle to see the importance of

## Narratives

education, thereby keeping the possibilities for economic recovery stagnant.

With low education attainment and high unemployment, poverty is prevalent in Lewiston. Statewide Maine schools have an average free and reduced lunch rate of 46%, while schools in Lewiston range from 56% to 100%. Poverty has a large impact on youth in Lewiston. Where Maine has a 21.4% child poverty rate, Lewiston has a child poverty rate of 43.4% (US Census and Kids Count Studies). These circumstances don't just mean that youth suffer without many of the things they need, it also means they face increased risks of living in unhealthy, unsafe living conditions, and their emotional, physical and behavioral well-being is jeopardized because of it.

Most of the housing in Lewiston was built to house the booming population growth in the 1800's. These buildings were built quickly to meet housing needs at the time and have experienced considerable decay. This has resulted in issues such as a lead poisoning rate in Lewiston that is 3 times that of the state of Maine (Maine Tracking Network, 2013), and asthma and other housing related medical conditions on the rise. Unhealthy housing is a major contributor to repeated hospital stays, school absenteeism and other issues (Center for Housing policy, 2011). These in turn contribute to behavioral and performance issues in school, leading to high dropout rates in Lewiston.

These issues are at the forefront of community concern. In June of 2014 more than 14 agencies, including the cities of Lewiston and Auburn, signed an agreement to help boost efforts to get residents out of unsafe and unhealthy housing. By signing the "Green and Healthy Homes Initiative Compact" the partners formalized the cities' joint commitment to work toward getting families, youth and seniors out of unsafe, unhealthy and energy inefficient housing. Take2 participants will be constructing/rehabbing three units of affordable housing in support of this effort.

Take2 mentees will be youth from Lewiston who have either been adjudicated or have been identified as being at risk of offending (low income, drop out, and another risk factors). Androscoggin County (Lewiston) youth offenders account for more than 25% of the violent crimes committed by youth in Maine, even though only 8% of the total youth population in Maine lives in Androscoggin County. Take2 will be a partnership between Goodwill and Tree Street Youth, the leading agency working with refugee and immigrant (primarily Somali) youth in Lewiston. These youth are being arrested or detained by police in disproportionate numbers. In the recent study "Disproportionate Contact: Youth of Color in Maine's Juvenile Justice System" (Dumont, King & Shaler 2015), it noted the following: 1. The arrest rate for black youth in Androscoggin County (Lewiston) is three times that of white youth and 2. The rate of diversion (the decision of a Juvenile Corrections Officer to resolve an issue informally rather than to incarcerate) was twice as likely for white youth than youth of color. As

## Narratives

quoted in the Lewiston Sun Journal on Friday May 15, 2015, Angela King, of the University of Maine's, Muskie School of Public Service states, "There are proven risks of detaining youth and we must continue to invest in community-based alternatives, especially for young people who end up there because no one is willing and able to supervise, not because they are dangerous. They might have made some poor decisions, but they would be safe with support and accountability in the community with a reinvestment of resources." Take2 will provide just such a diversion opportunity to youth in Lewiston and has a commitment of significant financial assistance from the Maine Department of Corrections if Take2 is funded by CNCS.

Besides providing a diversion from incarceration/parole, Take2 will specifically focus on adjudicated youth living in poverty by engaging them in rehabilitating unsafe/unhealthy housing in order to improve outcomes of child well-being and education; an issue that could have made a significant contribution to their current situation. Through meaningful service, Disconnected Youth will gain job skills, employment certifications (during a time which there is a shortage of skilled workforce in the construction industry), and a new view of themselves as a contributor to their community.

### THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL

To meet the needs of the community with regard to affordable housing, Take2 Youth Opportunity Corps is utilizing AmeriCorps members and existing staff to implement the YouthBuild model. YouthBuild is a nationally recognized, evidence based program model designed to engage disconnected youth in an education and job training program in which they alternate between a service learning based construction setting and a highly individualized classroom setting. In this way, youth re-engage with their communities as they help construct and rehabilitate affordable housing for the community while earning their high school equivalency credential (HiSET). In addition, they earn other industry recognized credentials, such as the National Center for Construction Education and Research Core Curriculum (NCCER) and IC3, a nationally recognized digital literacy credential offered by CertiPort as a precursor to Microsoft Office Professional Certification. The Disconnected Youth (Mentee members) will receive job search and employability training which will be woven into both components of the program, with the outcome of placement in employment, further education and/or job training leading to employment post program.

Thirty five AmeriCorps Mentor members (Five 1700 hour stipended and thirty 300 hour education award only) will have the mentoring and life experience necessary to provide mentoring and support

## **Narratives**

to the Disconnected Youth Members (Mentee members). They will serve alongside the Mentee members at housing sites and serve as mentors in the classroom environment. These Mentor members will serve in conjunction with the partnership between Goodwill's Take2 and Tree Street Youth Center in Lewiston. Mentor Members will be cross-trained to provide instruction and support both on the construction site (which will include the primary housing sites as well as similar community service projects when the housing sites are unavailable due to sub-contractor scheduling), as well as in the classroom. In addition to serving as a Mentor to Take2 participants, 5 stipended members will provide significant leadership, support, and guidance to participants and education award only Mentor members throughout the term.

The remaining Mentor Members (thirty 300 hour education award only members) will be recruited from local community partners like Tree Street Youth, the University of Maine at Lewiston Auburn College, Kaplan University and Bates College. Past Goodwill programs serving a similar population have had a high rate of success working with students of these institutions as interns and volunteers. In addition to mentoring Disconnected Youth, these members will serve as community ambassadors in classroom and service activities with Disconnected Youth.

Founded in 2011, Tree Street Youth is a 501(c)3 whose mission is "uniting diverse youth through programs rooted in academics, art and athletics". Tree Street Youth has an extensive history of working with the community, including the school system, the juvenile justice community and the business community. They engage Lewiston's immigrant and refugee population in a variety of ways, including a college preparatory program which last year had a 93% college acceptance rate. The placement of Mentor members at Tree Street will allow Take2 to build relationships within the immigrant and refugee population to increase recruitment of those individuals as both Mentor and Disconnected Youth AmeriCorps participants.

The second group of members (forty one 450 hour stipended members), will consist of Disconnected Youth Mentees: 17 - 24 year olds who are not enrolled in an education setting, are economically disadvantaged, are either unemployed or underemployed, and have either a history of adult or juvenile adjudication or are at risk of it. They will be recruited through outreach to juvenile and adult justice officials, community organizations focused on youth, the adult education systems and other governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Disconnected Youth will be enrolled in batches of twelve to fifteen, dividing the year into three trimesters, or three cohorts. Their term of service will be divided between education and service learning components, primarily rehabilitating low-income housing. Education and hands-on projects

## Narratives

will be alternating on a weekly basis to allow for youth to practice skills learned in the classroom. The first 3 weeks of the Disconnected Youth member's term will focus on aspects of certifications. They will be mentored both by Take2 staff and by the Mentor members who will serve across multiple cohorts of Disconnected Youth members. 25 additional community volunteers will provide added on-site support with construction and community engagement projects.

As a result of this intensive service experience, Mentee youth will reconnect with their communities, receive the skills and support they need to transition post-program into self-sustaining employment, and thereby significantly reduce the risk of engaging in new or repeated criminal activities. In addition, exposure to and inclusion in the AmeriCorps experience and its implied values of citizenship and civic responsibility will provide a truly unique experience in social and civic engagement. The Mentor AmeriCorps members, through teaching, tutoring and simply serving alongside the youth for a common goal, will teach and model the soft and hard skills necessary for the Mentee's transition into post-program success.

National Performance Measure targets include: enroll at least 26 economically disadvantaged youth who have not obtained their high school diploma or equivalent (O13). 18 of these members will obtain their GED/diploma while serving in the program or within 30 days after finishing the program (O16). 21 Disconnected Youth will successfully complete the program, with 21 Disconnected Youth members avoiding court or criminal involvement and 21 Disconnected Youth demonstrating resiliency, attitudinal and/or belief-system changes. AmeriCorps members will contribute to rehabilitation projects for 3 affordable housing units in Lewiston (O5), supporting 3 economically disadvantaged individuals/families transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing (O11).

At the same time that Disconnected Youth are benefiting from the program, these youth are providing a significant and unique contribution to their local community through constructing quality affordable housing for low-income individuals/families in Lewiston, ME. While impacting the Disconnected Youth's own commitment and trust in the community, they are impacting the well-being of children in Lewiston through the construction of quality affordable housing for others.

### EVIDENCE BASE

Goodwill's Take2/YouthBuild model has been operational since 2001. To strengthen and expand Take2 services to include immigrant and refugee youth, Goodwill is proposing to replicate, with fidelity, the strong evidence-based YouthBuild model in order to increase quality affordable housing in Lewiston, ME. In addition to transforming the lives of adjudicated youth participating in Take2, the

## Narratives

program focus on quality affordable housing to impact families and create a vibrant community, is backed by moderate evidence-based research on the effects of housing on emotional and behavioral problems of children.

Rebekah Levine Coley conducted two evidence-based research studies: "Relations Between Housing Characteristics and the Well-Being of Low-Income Children and Adolescents" (2013) and "Profiles of housing and Neighborhood Contexts Among Low-Income Families: Links With Children's Well-Being" (2014). Both of these studies conducted analysis on data drawn from the main survey component of the Three-City Study, a longitudinal, multi-method study which began in 1999 with a stratified, randomly selected sample of over 2,400 low-income households (with youth aged 2-21) drawn from moderate- and high-poverty neighborhoods in Boston, Chicago, and San Antonio. The sample was interviewed 3 times over a 6 year period with 80-90% participation rate (Coley, et al, 2014). The results of these studies are descriptive, derived from correlational data, and hence do not necessarily reflect causal relationships.

The 2013 study analysis focused on three core areas of children's development: Central academic skills in reading and math; Emotional problems, such as symptoms associated with depression and anxiety; and Behavioral problems, such as stealing, lying, and being aggressive (Coley, et al, 2013). A key finding in this study is that poor housing quality is the most consistent and strongest predictor of emotional and behavioral problems in low-income children and youth among the five housing characteristics studied (quality, stability, affordability, ownership, and receiving a housing subsidy). The results show that children living in homes with issues such as leaking roofs, broken windows, rodents, non-functioning heaters or stoves, peeling paint, exposed wiring, or unsafe or unclean environments were more likely than children living in higher quality homes to have emotional and behavioral problems. Poor housing quality also led older children to receive lower reading and math scores on standardized achievement tests. The association between poor quality and unstable housing and problems among children is primarily due to the depression and anxiety these issues caused for the parents (Coley, et al, 2013). Children who experienced greater average housing problems exhibited lower average functioning, with a one standard deviation (SD) difference in housing problems predicting .18 SD greater internalizing and .24 SD greater externalizing problems, as well as a small trend-level effect of .07 SD lower reading skills. The study also reveals that increases in psychological distress and parenting stress were associated with increased in children's internalizing and externalizing problems were all significant, ranging from 1.82 ( $p < .05$ ) to 2.48 ( $p < .01$ ) (Coley, et al, 2013). A follow-up study compared various housing profiles and found that the housing profile

## Narratives

exhibited low housing problems and neighborhood disorder consistently predicted children's enhanced cognitive and socioemotional functioning (Coley, 2014).

"Youth Development Through Service: A Quality Assessment of the YouthBuild AmeriCorps Program" concludes that Disconnected Youth members became more connected with their communities, deepened their personal commitments to service, began to develop a sense of personal worth and reliability, and started to develop more trust in larger social institutions (Tomberg, 2013). This study calculated a series of group means in order to conduct comparative analyses. In regard to community orientation, these group means were able to compare those who were and were not AmeriCorps members. The research found that students who weren't AmeriCorps members expressed positive change at a non-significant level. Student scores for reduced half-time and quarter-time AmeriCorps slots increased significantly (3.53 to 4.27 and 3.67 to 4.58, respectively) (Tomberg, 2013). Overall, there was significant, positive change from pre and post test scores. Mean scores on the Commitment to Service factor increased by .2 (from 5.5 to 5.7 on a 7 point scale), and mean scores on the Community Orientation factor increased by .87 (from 3.65 to 4.52) (Tomberg, 2013).

### NOTICE PRIORITY

Take2 addresses the CNCS Focus area of Economic Opportunity. Take2 is aimed at helping Disconnected Youth gain job and employability skills that will prevent them from returning to or entering the court system by giving them solid options for gainful employment. Although Take2 does not operate in a location where any of the listed/priority OJJDP grant programs operate, Take2 does operate in a community that has been identified as having Disproportionate Minority Contact with the justice system. Reversing this problem is a priority of the Justice Department and the Lewiston community.

### MEMBER TRAINING

Disconnected Youth AmeriCorps members and Mentor AmeriCorps members will receive high quality training to provide effective service to the community. All members will receive instruction in the NCCER (National Centers for Construction Education and Research) Core Curriculum, including the following eight modules: Safety, Materials Handling, Hand Tools, Power Tools, Construction Drawings, Construction Math, and Employability and Communications. AmeriCorps staff members are NCCER Certified Instructors, and all members will have the opportunity to perform written and performance tests for each module, thereby earning their NCCER Core Curriculum, an industry

## **Narratives**

recognized credential. Partner Agency, Tree Street Youth Center, will provide Cultural Competency Training, including the history of and challenges facing the refugee and immigrant community in Lewiston, ME. The Directors of Community Development of both the Cities of Lewiston and Auburn will provide an overview of the housing stock procured by them for rehabilitation and sale to low-income families. Members will also participate in state-wide AmeriCorps networking events (Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism and Maine Member Conference).

All members will be oriented on their first day of service and include the following: Prohibited Activities, Goodwill 101, AmeriCorps History, and Reporting Requirements. Mentor members will be oriented as a group at the beginning of their term, with a powerpoint presentation prepared in the instance that a member is onboarded after the start of the program. Disconnected Youth members (Mentees) and Education Award Only Mentor positions will be oriented as a group at the start of each of the three program sessions throughout the year. Mentor members will receive training during their initial orientation in Mentoring At Risk Youth. This training will integrate restorative practices into the mentor training. Training support will be received by The Restorative Justice Institute of Maine, allowing for opportunities for support and collaboration by Mentor members. Mentor members will receive additional support and training in this area of service through monthly meetings with staff.

### **MEMBER SUPERVISION**

All AmeriCorps members will be supervised by Goodwill AmeriCorps staff, working closely as a team each day. The AmeriCorps mentor members will serve alongside Take2 AmeriCorps staff daily, and will participate in morning and afternoon meetings as appropriate. Disconnected Youth Mentee members will serve weekly, and often daily, with program staff in both the classroom and on the community service sites. AmeriCorps staff serving as supervisors of members have extensive training and experience working with adjudicated youth.

AmeriCorps supervisors/program staff will be extensively trained in AmeriCorps prohibited activities, AmeriCorps history, supporting AmeriCorps members, program goals, reporting requirements, and program expectations. This training and continued support to program staff/supervisors will be provided by seasoned Goodwill AmeriCorps staff with over 20 years of AmeriCorps program management experience.

The AmeriCorps supervisory structure will provide the necessary oversight and support for both Disconnected Youth and Mentor members. This will be assured through daily meetings with mentor members and staff to confirm program activities and discuss emergent issues. Take2 staff will conduct

## **Narratives**

daily morning meetings with Disconnected Youth Mentees and Mentor AmeriCorps members to review scheduled activities. Member performance and success will be monitored through program reports, weekly timesheets, daily staff meetings, and mid and end of term evaluations.

### **MEMBER EXPERIENCE**

The majority of member service projects will involve the rehabilitation of three properties purchased by the Cities of Lewiston and Auburn. Members will participate in a training provided by Take2 staff and City officials explaining the pressing need for affordable housing. In addition to this training, Take2 will utilize a Service Learning Curriculum which will guide the AmeriCorps members through weekly and/or monthly reflection activities as project milestones are attained.

Take2 members will work closely with a strong Take2/Goodwill AmeriCorps staff, which have fostered close working relationships with ample opportunities for staff reflection and growth. Goodwill AmeriCorps staff work closely with other Maine programs, integrating member training and networking opportunities into programming whenever applicable. Take2 members will participate in statewide networking events (Member Service Conference, Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism, MLK Day of Service, 9/11 Day of Remembrance) with other Maine AmeriCorps members. All members will wear uniform shirts with AmeriCorps and Goodwill identifying logos while serving on site with the program.

### **COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION**

AmeriCorps identification begins with the interview and screening process and continues throughout the term. Most Goodwill AmeriCorps staff is AmeriCorps alumni and this fact is highlighted during the interview/eligibility review process. Once selected, Take2 AmeriCorps members receive a multi-day orientation and Initial Training that goes over "AmeriCorps 101" and the history of National Service. During this training members also receive AmeriCorps t-shirts, pins and pens. AmeriCorps members are required to wear the AmeriCorps logo each day of their service. Additionally, Take2 will display "AmeriCorps Serving Here" signs at the service site and at community service and construction sites to ensure the community will know AmeriCorps in Lewiston.

### **Organizational Capability**

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING**

Goodwill Industries of Northern New England (Goodwill) has been operating AmeriCorps programs for ten years, and a program serving youth offenders in Lewiston for 8 years. Take2 will be

## Narratives

a partnership with Tree Street Youth, a recognized and innovative leader in engaging disengaged youth from the refugee and immigrant community in Lewiston and Auburn. Goodwill staff are leaders in the field, having served as peer mentors to National Direct and State Formula grantees, conference planners, and trainers. Goodwill staff provides significant assistance to fellow AmeriCorps programs in best management practices, including budgeting, compliance, file maintenance, policies, performance measurement, and member management. All of these systems have been time tested and utilize best practices in the field.

Take2's management structure includes: a Program Manager that addresses budgetary concerns, member safety/risk management, and communications with funders, Goodwill leadership and partner sites; a Learning Center Coordinator that manages the Mentee learning goals, including ensuring that Mentees earn their GED or High School Equivalency before they leave the program; A Service Learning Coordinator that oversees planning for member construction projects and other volunteer opportunities during the year; and a Case Manager who consults with mentees and members weekly to ensure he/she doesn't fall behind in meeting progress goals. Additionally the Executive Director of Tree Street Youth has agreed to support Take2 by providing weekly career guidance and service components. Tree Street will also be meeting weekly with Take2 staff to help recruit immigrant and refugee youth for the program.

The Goodwill Take2 positions will be filled with staff who has been managing AmeriCorps/Youth Build programming for the past 5-10 years. Goodwill has an excellent track record of meeting its objectives, successfully recruiting and retaining members and has significant experience operating federal grants. Goodwill's current portfolio of federal grants includes funding through the Departments of Labor and Justice, along with CNCS funding. This federal funding is approximately \$12 million dollars per year and Goodwill always has excellent audits and reviews by funders.

Take2 and Tree Street staff worked hard to fully engage refugee and immigrant communities in the original planning for the program and in the redesign of the program for the next two years. The Program Manager facilitated in-depth discussions with Tree Street Youth Staff, staff at the Maine Department of Corrections, Maine Juvenile Justice Advisory Group, and The Restorative Justice Institute of Maine. After thorough discussions focused on the persistent needs of adjudicated youth (Refugee/immigrant and local population) students, staff and community partners agreed on the benefits of incorporating the Goodwill's AmeriCorps/youth programs with Tree Street resources to maximize impact.

## Narratives

### COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Goodwill ensures compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations and the prohibited activities through a rigorous system designed to closely connect program staff with members and site staff. This system ensures significant support throughout the program year while also providing for frequent opportunities to monitor sites and members for compliance issues.

This system includes requiring potential AmeriCorps work sites to sign a Cooperative Agreement before they are approved to receive services from the AmeriCorps program. These highlight AmeriCorps Rules, Regulations, and Prohibited Activities. The Cooperative Agreement also emphasizes that AmeriCorps members can and will be removed from a work site immediately if monitoring activities discover any type of non-compliance. Although the Cooperative Agreement has a significant deterrent effect on non-compliant behavior, it also allows for great communication and connections being made between AmeriCorps staff and work site staff. This is critical to ensuring smooth program operation and the capability to provide immediate corrective action in cases where a member or work site is contemplating a course of action that might put them in non-compliance.

Next, this system requires both AmeriCorps staff and AmeriCorps members to submit to the required AmeriCorps Criminal History Checks. Any results returned on these checks requires a thorough investigation of the incident identified, and a determination of whether it is an offense that requires disqualification from service, a modification of the service activities and/or supervision, or if the offense is non-substantial and the individual should be allowed to serve or supervise.

The additional pieces of Goodwill's system to ensure compliance include: Signed Member Agreements stating the prohibited activities and the consequence of termination for breaking them; an Orientation and Initial Training in the first few days of service; weekly timesheets reviewed by AmeriCorps staff; and site visits performed as necessary. The Orientation, Trainings, and the Site Visits all include a refresher on AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities and opportunities where members and/or site supervisors may share concerns about non-compliant behavior or significant program issues in confidence, without fear of retribution.

Goodwill staff and the Take2 program are held accountable by both a Corporate Compliance department and a Risk Management department. Both of these departments regularly monitor and evaluate Goodwill's programs looking for issues of non-compliance and risk that need to be investigated and/or eliminated. The Corporate Compliance department has a strong relationship with local law enforcement and prosecutes staff who is caught breaking the law. Goodwill also has a yearly A-133 audit of its financial management systems and records. This helps ensure legal handling of

## Narratives

federal funds and all funds handled by Goodwill.

### PAST PERFORMANCE FOR FORMER RECIPIENTS

Goodwill has received State Formula funds through the Maine Commission for Community Service in support of the Multilingual Leadership Corps (MLC) to serve Lewiston, ME for the past three years. Past performance of this program is elaborated below:

The Multilingual Leadership Corps has consistently met or exceeded performance and program targets over the past 3 years of the grant. The MLC tracks performance in 3 areas: 1) Member Development, 2) Strengthening Communities through volunteer management, and 3) Student Engagement.

1) Member Development: Member created professional development plans (2012-2013: 17 out of 17 completed, 2013-2014: 39 out of 37 completed). Members showed improved skills, knowledge, and abilities through the completion of 2 professional goals (2012-2013: 15 of 13 targeted members, 2013-2014: 35 out of 25 targeted members).

2) Strengthening Communities: Host sites submit a plan to increase the use of Essential Practices of Volunteer Management (2012-2013: 11 out of 11 sites create a plan, 2013-2014: 7 out of 7 sites create a plan). Volunteer Management Essential Practices implemented at the host site [2012-2013: 75 (25 target) essential practices implemented, 2013-2014: 35 (25 target) essential practices implemented].

3) Student Engagement: ELL students complete participation in the program, participating in at least 26 hours of AmeriCorps programming [2012-2013: 327 (250 target) completed, 2013-2014: 414 (275 target) completed]. ELL students who completed the program showed increased student engagement [2012-2013: 197 (188 target) improved; 2013-2014: 317 (target 205) improved]. 2014-2015 performance measures are on target for successful completion with 6 sites implementing a targeted 35 essential practices and 392 ELL students currently being served by the program (target 275).

Goodwill AmeriCorps has attained 100% enrollment rates in all programs since 2007. The Multilingual Leadership Corps enrolled 39 of 37 granted slots in 2013-2014 with a 105.4% enrollment rate (in 2012-2013 enrolled 40 of 39 slots with a 102.6% rate). Goodwill's successful enrollment is due to strategic management of the program.

The Multilingual Leadership Corps has only exited a total of 3 members without an award in the past 3 years of grant funding. In 2013-2014 two members (1 Full Time and 1 Minimum Time) of 39

## Narratives

total members were exited without an award (94.9% retention rate). Both of these members left the program due to finding another job before their term of service was completed. Both instances were due to a need to have a higher source of income to meet needs when their personal situations changed. In 2012-2013, 1 of 40 members was exited without an award (97.5% retention rate). Please note that Take2 will have a much lower retention rate. Take2 is specifically targeting the hardest to serve/most disconnected youth in Lewiston. Take2 expects to have a 50% retention rate with its 41 Mentee members. Take2's staffing structure works to support these Disconnected Youth as much as possible but the nature of the client means Take2 will have a low retention rate typical to YouthBuild Programs.

The Multilingual Leadership Corps has had no compliance issues in the past 3 years of the grant. The MLC staff has served as peer mentors to newer programs serving in Maine, assisting them with compliance issues and providing significant technical assistance to develop best practices in program management.

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

#### COST EFFECTIVENESS

As proposed Take2 will be extremely cost-effective. Since the program is targeting youth and communities with the least financial resources, match dollars are much harder to come by. Yet even in these circumstances, Take2 is proposing to keep its per member cost to \$13,423/MSY. With more than forty years of collective experience operating AmeriCorps programs, the staff has developed time tested systems for operating extremely efficient programs. For example, Goodwill AmeriCorps staff created a custom web-based management system that greatly reduces staff time required to manage member timesheets, in-kind contributions, and member paperwork. In addition, Goodwill programs are cost-effective through collaborations with other AmeriCorps programs and through Goodwill's training department that provide low-cost training and professional development.

The benefits to the community and the participants more than outweigh the cost. For less than \$300,000 in federal funds/year Take2 will provide the following benefits to the struggling community of Lewiston/Auburn, ME:

- \*Provide 16 weeks of education, training and work experience to 41 disconnected youth
- \*Construct or Rehabilitate at least 3 quality affordable housing units
- \*Strengthen the community of people working to engage adjudicated/disconnected youth in positive endeavors and bridge the divide in the community between refugee and immigrant families and longtime residents.

## Narratives

\*Assist 18 of the disconnected youth in receiving their High School Equivalency. The study, "The Consequences of Dropping Out of High School, Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, 2009" found that compared to the typical high school graduate a dropout will end up costing taxpayers an average of \$292,000 over a lifetime due to the price tag associated with incarceration and other factors. So therefore if Take2 helps 18 dropouts get their high school equivalency,  $18 \times \$292,000 = \$5,256,000$ .

### BUDGET ADEQUACY

The budget accurately identifies the expenses required to operate the Take2 AmeriCorps Program. Creation of the budget has been shaped by a decade of AmeriCorps program operations at Goodwill, and staff leadership with AmeriCorps program operation since 1994. This historical perspective, combined with a full service professional finance department, gives us confidence in building a realistic budget plan.

As stated above, Goodwill's many years of experience gives staff a keen understanding of what it takes to operate Take2 effectively. Nonetheless, staff members have not taken the design of the program or budget lightly, and preparation of the program design involved many discussions among staff, leadership, and partners. These discussions led to the current proposed program design and budget. The staffing, training, monitoring, member support plans, and budget are thoroughly considered, and based on prior years' experience to meet desired program outcomes.

The included Grant Narrative provides significant detail into the budget planning process. Though the staffing needs are more fully described in the Organizational Background and Staffing section, the Budget Narrative shows detailed planning on the cost of key elements to successful member and staff training, member and staff travel, AmeriCorps uniform/logo item purchasing, etc.

To date all cash resources needed to operate the program have been committed. This is in the form of conditional commitments from Maine Department of Corrections (\$96,000), and Goodwill Industries of Northern New England (~\$50,000). Receipt of these cash match funds is conditional upon Take2 receiving a Grant Award from CNCS. The cash match alone will meet CNCS match requirements. Additional in-kind match has been committed by the cities of Lewiston and Auburn in the form of supplies and materials to construct or rehabilitate the publicly owned affordable housing units.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

# Narratives

## Amendment Justification

N/A

## Clarification Summary

Clarification responses:

1. Please indicate how the program will collect and report on the required performance indicators (outlined on page 7 of the Notice) for clear drug testing record; sanctions or diversion program completion; and number of national service participants that complete job readiness training and other skill development services.

a. To report on how many of the Mentee members maintained a drug free status the program will do the following:

Our drug testing system will start with receiving drug test results from referring juvenile community corrections officers when the AmeriCorps disconnected youth mentees (mentees) are under active supervision and drug testing is a condition of their supervision. With Take2 mentees for whom drug testing is not a condition of supervision and for mentees who are not actively under supervision by the department of corrections, Take2 will test mentees 30 days after entry and 30 days before exit from the 16 week program. For mentees who test positive we will provide a substance abuse education program and make referrals to partner agencies for more intensive treatment options which may include one on one counseling, intensive outpatient therapy and/or inpatient treatment.

b. To report on the number of mentee members that had a positive substance abuse test and participated in community supervision sanctions or diversions:

Take2 will keep in close contact with the mentees Juvenile Community Correction Officer and document each member that has met this criteria. As is described in response number 4 below Take2 has an existing agreement (and an excellent relationship) with Maine Department of Corrections Juvenile Services Region 2 which allows sharing of this information.

c. To report on the number of national service participants that complete job readiness training and skill development services:

## Narratives

Take2 will document whether the mentee members complete the Take2 program. Program completion will consist of completing the required number of hours in the program (which consists of significant job readiness, construction skills, and pursuit of a high school equivalent), and then either completing the HiSET (high school equivalency), NCCER (National Center for Construction Education and Research core curriculum) , IC3 (Digital Literacy Certification) and/or had an increase in a grade level in math or reading.

2. In the Clarification narrative field, please enter a statement confirming the desired grant award start and member enrollment period start. In the Clarification narrative field, please also confirm your desired grant award start date and member enrollment period start date.

We confirm our desired grant award start date of 10/1/2015 and confirm a member enrollment period start date of 10/1/2015.

3. Please describe how your program will use best practices to train and prepare mentors to effectively guide disconnected youth in their member experience.

Goodwill Industries of Northern New England has a long history of operating mentoring programs serving individuals either coming out of incarceration or involved in the corrections system. These past programs include the GoodGuides program and the GoodBridges program. The mentoring training we developed for these programs is based on best practices from Goodwill Industries International and the Department of Justice (including the National Mentoring Resource Center). Mentor training for Take2 will include a pre-match training, periodic training components and on-going support and supervision by Take2 staff. Pre match training will include: Cultural Competency in regards to Mentees, Boundaries, Problem Resolution, Program Policies and Procedures, Corrections and the Justice System in Lewiston and Confidentiality. Periodic Training will consist of 1 or 2 hour workshops based on current needs.

4. Please describe the specific ways in which your organization will engage and collaborate with probation and parole offices, courts, and other entities that specifically support youth in re-entry

## Narratives

related activities.

We have an existing contract with the Maine Department of Corrections Juvenile Services Region 2 which outlines our relationship in which agents of the juvenile justice system refer clients currently in community supervision for participation in the Take2 program. That relationship includes regular meetings between DOC juvenile services staff and Take2 staff and the release of all pertinent information in relation to the youth. Additionally the Take2 program manager sits on the Androscoggin County Juvenile Justice Collaborative (ACJJC). This allows Take2 leadership to have developed a strong collaboration with referring agencies for the target population. A key collaborator in this project as described in the proposal is Tree Street Youth. Tree Street Executive Director, Julia Sleeper, also sits on the ACJJC and has a JJAG grant that further supports these efforts.

### Continuation Changes

N/A

### Grant Characteristics