

Narratives

Executive Summary

Equal Heart proposes to have 58 AmeriCorps members, including 38 Disconnected Youth members, who will provide year round food supplies to low-income children and families in Dallas County, Texas. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for increasing food security for 1,500 families through a mobile food pantry and 3,000 children via a summer only food program. And increase economic opportunity for 38 Disconnected Youth. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 150 volunteers who will be engaged in helping coordinate feeding locations. This Youth Opportunity AmeriCorps program will focus on the CNCS focus areas of Healthy Futures and Economic Opportunity. The CNCS investment of \$385,700 will be matched with \$583,685; \$467,076 in public funding and \$116,608 in private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

PROBLEM/NEED

Texas children account for 1 of every 11 children in the United States. These youth represent a significant portion of America's future citizens, teachers, doctors and entrepreneurs. They also potentially represent a significant portion of the future prison population because, unfortunately, growing up in Texas for many of these future leaders is difficult. Since 2012, the child poverty rate has grown by 47% statewide (Center for Public Policy Priorities, 2013) and currently 27% of children live below the poverty threshold - a rate that puts Texas among the worse nine states (Kids Counts Data Center, 2013).

The City of Dallas, with the second largest concentration of poverty in Texas, has an estimated 750,000 residents classified as low-income and over 200,000 living in extreme poverty (American Communities Survey, 2009). The latest poverty estimates released in 2013 (U.S. Census Bureau) show that the areas in the urbanized core of Dallas have rates of poverty ranging from 16 to 55 percent and for single-parent households those rates increase to 75%. Coupled with these high poverty rates are high rates of criminal activity, labor force detachment and an unemployment rate double that of the rest of the city: 16.3% vs. 7.9% (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). Surviving on less than \$20,000 per year, many of these families simply do not have the money to get by.

Economically poor students are twice as likely to perform below grade level (CPPP, 2013) and are five times less likely to graduate high school than more affluent students (Johnson, 2013). And while not proven to be a cause of criminal behavior, several studies have linked poverty to crime rates among children in the US (Heller, 2011). In a research study conducted by Cambridge University,

Narratives

children coming from poor families were two and half times more likely to fall into crime as compared to kids from a rich or well-to-do background (Farrington, 1989). Youth living in poverty who remain attached to the schooling system have a greater chance at lifetime success including a lower incidence of involvement in the criminal justice system (Center for Public Education, 2007). A basic step to increase schooling success is to increase the health of youth through adequate nutrition as food insecure children and teenagers miss more days of school, have lower test scores, and are more than twice as likely to repeat a grade (Alaimo et al., 2011).

Nationally hunger is a grave issue, resulting in an additional \$1 billion per year appropriation for child nutrition reauthorization towards the goal of eliminating childhood hunger by the year 2015. In Texas more than one in three households with children did not have enough money to buy food at some point in the previous 12 months (Food Action Research Council, 2010). Acquiring adequate food resources has a positive correlation on health and academic achievement of youth (Journal of School Health, 2008) and receiving food assistance stabilizes the entire family as it allows scarce resources to be used to pay for housing and other basic needs.

Hunger is further heightened during the summer months because millions of low-income children lose access to subsidized meals they receive during the school year. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funds local organizations to provide food during the summer break for these children, but there is a lack of committed community organizations prepared to translate these dollars into meals delivered to children. For example, in the City of Dallas over 80% of kids qualify for summer food programs, however, less than 12% of eligible children currently participate - far below the national average of 18% (TDA, 2014).

Hunger is but a symptom of a community living in poverty and we strive to do more than treat the symptoms. One of the key pathways out of poverty is acquiring and maintaining permanent employment. For this project we are focused on working with Disconnected Youth (DY) to help them remain out of the criminal justice system through a pathway of increased skills and employment. In 2011 there were 61,423 juveniles offenders held in juvenile facilities across the U.S. at a rate of 196 per 100,000 population. Of these, Texas accounted for the second highest group (4,671) despite a detention rate below the national average (OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book, 2014). Within Texas, Dallas County has the second highest level of juvenile court cases in the state and as of March 31, 2015 there were 9,255 offenders aged 17-25 on probation. A number that is greater than the entirety of many states. Adjudicated youth face a broad range of reentry barriers - most living in poverty, disconnected from the community, disenfranchised, with low education and skill levels and now an

Narratives

even smaller chance of obtaining employment.

Equal Heart's Relief and Opportunity Corps will undertake a program to simultaneously decrease the high levels of food insecurity in the Dallas metropolitan area and provide Disconnected Youth with access to those services research has shown to be critical to successful reentry: skills training, character development, mentoring, GED classes when needed, and job experience. These components by design are outcomes of their participation as AmeriCorps members. And through their participation these members will impact their community by providing food supplies to children and families living in poverty.

THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL

Equal Heart (EH) is requesting \$498,739 per year to support 75 half-time AmeriCorps members from January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016 to undertake two core activities: increase food security for children and increase economic opportunity for Disconnected Youth. Program outputs and outcomes include providing emergency food to 2,000 families/4,000 children (H10) to increase food security (H12); and increase educational opportunities (O13) and positive engagement for 50 DY members resulting in 100% successfully completing their term of service and 45 avoiding any further involvement with the criminal justice system.

Our first focus is increasing food security.

There is a huge push within Texas and nationally to expand access to Summer Meals. Organizations like Texas Hunger Initiative and Share Our Strength do an exemplary job of increasing information related to summer food and working with large organizations such as school districts to increase participation rates. This project is complementary to these efforts but fills a current void: the existence of actual sponsors who provide the meals to children. Because a lack of transportation is a strong impediment to participation (UEPI, 2002), this project is focused on putting in place programs that reverse the flow of services: instead of expecting families to travel to central distribution centers, we create a system that brings food to the families where they live. In addition, it takes the efforts around summer meals and expands it to a new area which is providing year round food access. The proposed project will serve children and families across the Dallas/Ft. Worth area, an area ranked 7th highest in the United States with regard to the number of people who are food insecure (FRAC, 2013).

Narratives

The primary program goal is the creation and maintenance of a Food Access Network that provides regular access to food for children and families year round through a network of mobile food pantries and summer meals. Food programs reach the greatest number of neediest children by focusing on areas of entrenched poverty, which in urban communities is typically centered on multi-unit housing: apartment communities and mobile homes. The goal of providing year round food access begins with building a strong summer foods model. There are sufficient public funds available to work with children during the summer through USDA's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The needed relationship with community members is built during the summer and those relationships form the basis to expand year round. Private funds allow us to purchase vans to transport food year round and that food is procured from area food banks with little to no cost. Overlaid on this framework is a model whereby we provide higher value food on the vans that families can purchase with their SNAP benefits. The outcome of this effort is that children receive continuous access to healthy food and we use this access point into communities as a potential expansion point to offer additional services when needed.

The first outcome is to provide 250,000 summer meals to 4,000 children across 50 apartment communities in Dallas-Ft. Worth. The second outcome is to provide 2,000 families with bi-monthly access to food packs at 30 apartment communities year round. Each food pack is 40 pounds and consists of fresh produce and dry good staples such as rice and beans. All apartment communities participating in the year round program will also participate during the summer. As a result of this intervention 4,000 children and 2,000 families will reduce their level of food insecurity and thus increase their ability to do well in school and weather financial hardships. To measure the increase in food security (H12) we use a Six-Item Food Security survey developed by the USDA.

Our second focus is increasing economic opportunity for Disconnected Youth.

Disconnected Youth (DY) have multiple barriers preventing them from successfully re-integrating into the community and maintaining permanent employment including low skill and educational levels, unstable family environments, unreliable transportation and a lack of previous employment experience (LaDonna A. et al, Mathematica Policy Research, 2006). With this AmeriCorps grant we have the opportunity to recruit and train 50 DY AmeriCorps members to serve in hunger relief programs. Their service allows them an opportunity to realize their own potential by undertaking community service and help them along a path of self-sufficiency. National service is a

Narratives

powerful force to change the trajectory of member's lives, but it alone is not sufficient to move people out of poverty.

Prior to program entry, the needs of the Disconnected Youth are assessed utilizing:

- * The Texas Risk Assessment System (TRAS) to identify the client's risk for reoffending (high, medium or low) and criminogenic need factors;
- * The Behaviors and Experiences Inventory (BEI) to measure past and present behavior;
- * The Benefits Self-Sufficiency Calculator to identify financial eligibility and resources for needed assistance within the Dallas community; and
- * The Career Key to gauge individual job readiness and inform an action plan to move people towards long term employment.

Upon program entry a dedicated case worker creates a targeted custom action plan based on the above assessments and referrals to local expert service providers (nonprofits, vendors, and partners) that assist our members in meeting their goals. Throughout their term the DY members receive ongoing guidance and monitoring from their case manager with adjustments made to the plan as deemed necessary and appropriate in order to achieve goals and secure a future of self-sufficiency that is crime-free.

First and foremost participants are orientated and treated as AmeriCorps members - community participants who are serving to bring change to their community. This focus on community service is a key component as participants learn to move their focus past themselves and out into the larger community. Around this base model, we layer on intensive case management, mentoring, job readiness training (i.e., resume writing, mock interviews, and dress/appearance assistance) and employment advocacy to ensure that at the end of the six month AmeriCorps term, participants move into permanent employment or are on the road via an educational vehicle such as vocational training or other short term educational activities that lead to certification in job related skills. The goal is to return fully employed individuals to the community with the hard and soft skills necessary to maintain employment and remain in their community.

EVIDENCE BASE: PRELIMINARY

The evidence base for the proposed healthy future outcomes is preliminary, given the definitional categories. This is due to the complete lack of a research base with match comparison groups concerning the best way to reduce hunger. Many papers have been written that defend the need to provide free food to low-income individuals through food banks and a few, those referenced

Narratives

below, take into account the best distribution method. Generally hunger organizations and the USDA believe that transporting food to individuals is the best way to increase utilization.

A 2004 evaluation by USDA (Evaluation of the 14 State Summer Food Service Program Pilot Project) found a lack of transportation to be the number one reason for low rates of SFSP participation. A 2013 survey by Center for Best Practices, No Kid Hungry found that one in three low-income parents were confident that a mobile meal truck would make their children more likely to participate than the traditional static site program model. The USDA first provided guidance in 1999 on operating 'mobile feeding sites' in rural areas. A 2006 study by the Food Research and Action Center of a USDA Rural Transportation Grant to five States found that providing transportation services increased the number of summer meals served by 37%. However, it was not until 2009 that the first large scale implementation of mobile meals in an Urban area was undertaken. Food on the Move, a mobile meals model developed by Dr. Keven Vicknair while at CitySquare, utilized 50 summer VISTA associates and 80 AmeriCorps State*National members to implement a mobile meals program across 100 low-income apartment communities in Dallas, Texas. Over 80% of the children living in these complexes were economically disadvantaged and 85% were Hispanic and 10% African-American. The result of this effort was a doubling in the number of children reached that resulted in an additional 5,000 children receiving food. In addition, the AmeriCorps members stayed onsite for 60 minutes each day to engage the children which increased their access to positive role models. This program was immediately recognized by USDA as a 'model for the rest of the nation' and featured as the seminal mobile meal model by organizations as diverse as Share Our Strength (2013) and America's Service Commissions (2014). Since the Food on the Move model proved the efficiency and efficacy of the mobile meal programs, their use has grown exponentially throughout the United States.

The proposed AmeriCorps program intends to expand the innovation introduced by Food on the Move around summer meals to a year round model for families. The same transportation barriers that prevent children from traveling to static summer food sites also prevents poor families from traveling to static food pantry sites. Mobile Food Pantries are used infrequently by Food Banks throughout the country although their use is increasing as one way to get more food into communities. A 2010 systems analysis of two food banks in North Carolina concluded that the use of mobile food pantries is an effective way to increase distribution (NSF, 2014). However, no program of scale has been implemented that provides ongoing food supplies to a target group of people in an effort to reduce their food insecurity to manageable levels. And while this project will be the first community

Narratives

wide mobile food pantry program of its kind, it is built on a proven mobile meal program developed for summer meals.

MEMBER TRAINING

High quality programming is predicated upon a strong training foundation that is able to prepare both types of members (DY and Mentors) for their service assignments and creates a strong working relationship between the two groups. There are two cohorts of members: those who serve from January to August and a second cohort from May to December. This allows for an overlap of members during the hungriest part of the year - summer.

Team Lead Training

Mentor members function as Team Leads. Two weeks prior to Kick-Off training week, the Team Lead (mentor) members attend 2 weeks of Leadership/mentorship training. This training includes (a) general AmeriCorps related topics such as expectations and prohibited activities; (b) program specific functions such as mobile meals logistics and operations, leadership styles, managing volunteers, and working with and among diverse populations; and (c) training specific to forming and maintaining a mentoring relationship with the DY members. Mentor training is conducted by personnel from Trinity Restoration which has ten years' experience matching and maintaining mentor relationships for adult males exiting the prison system. At a minimum this training will consist of the following proven effective elements: goals and expectations for the mentor/mentee relationship; mentors' obligations and appropriate roles; relationship development and maintenance; and ethical issues that may arise related to the mentoring relationship.

All Member Training

Member training consists of the initial AmeriCorps kick-off training, ongoing training and development throughout the term and the Life After AmeriCorps training. In addition, DY members are provided on-going case management.

*Kick-off Training. All Kick-Off trainings are conducted the week before service begins. Initial training consists of two days of instruction with EH staff and contains the following: history of AmeriCorps, interactive instruction on prohibited activities and AmeriCorps specific terms; organizational and community information; instruction by professionals to develop skills necessary to carry out service; skills necessary for serving diverse populations; and professionalism. The next two

Narratives

days of training are specific to the service assignment. For the January cohort this training is focused on operating the mobile meals food pantries and for the May cohort this training is focused on operating the summer mobile meals programs. Also joining the May training on the third day is the first member cohort. Thus both groups finish out the week training together. The final day of training is a service project and a civic reflection discussion related to their potential to make long-range impact through their service. The day concludes with the official AmeriCorps "swearing in" ceremony. In unison, members recite the AmeriCorps pledge and affirm their commitment to "get things done" in their community. The AmeriCorps identity is a unifying element for our Corps so members are issued five AmeriCorps shirts and asked to wear them daily.

*Prohibited Activity Training: EH carefully structures service assignments to reduce the potential for conflict and provides strong guidance and training to members, volunteers and new staff. In addition to direct language on this topic within the Member Service Agreement, examples of such activities are incorporated throughout the Kick-Off training: two hour role playing session conducted in conjunction with AmeriCorps specific responsibilities; game-show style formatting of question and answers; and round table scenario discussions and skits. Volunteers and new staff are trained on prohibited activities during an hour-long orientation led by senior staff members with the same format and it is included in the volunteer handbook.

*Ongoing Training: Throughout the year, members participate in ongoing skill-based trainings. These additional training days are offered throughout the year as a way to engage members on a regular basis and encourage skills development and personal improvement. Ongoing training sessions range from two to six hours and include the following topics: (a) professionalism, (b) time management, (c) conflict resolution, (d) ethics in public service, and (e) job readiness. Furthermore, members working with a case manager will be afforded some time to pursue their individualized training plan. However, we are aware of the 20% aggregate limit on training time and have structured the program accordingly.

*Life After AmeriCorps: Throughout the last month of service, DY members work with their case manager to identify potential job and/or education opportunities. The Life After AmeriCorps training is a daylong training that provides general guidance for all members as they transition out of service. Members receive in-depth information on how to use their Segal Education Award and how to access the My AmeriCorps portal. Professionals host round table discussions related to different career trajectories, as well as the best way to navigate the job environment. AmeriCorps specific guest speakers host discussions on how to translate national service into a career, as well as information on

Narratives

the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps Alums of North Texas.

MEMBER SUPERVISION

For this project all member activities are supervised by EH staff, almost all who have prior AmeriCorps supervisory experience. Any new staff joining the team will be trained individually by existing staff members and will attend new staff orientation hosted by the state commission. Furthermore, all staff are trained annually on (a) AmeriCorps rules and regulations including prohibited activities, (b) data collection and timekeeping policies, and (c) information specifically related to member coaching and development for both at-risk populations and mentors.

The Relief and Opportunity Corps consists of two community outreach components: mobile food pantries for families and a summer mobile meals programs for youth under 18 years of age. We will operate a fleet of ten trucks that delivers food into the community. Trucks delivering food to families are loaded with 40 lb food boxes that are then delivered and distributed at apartment communities. Trucks delivering summer meals are loaded with unitized breakfast and lunch meals that are then delivered and distributed to children at apartment communities. All apartment communities that participate in the food pantry component also receive summer meals. A team of three members (one Team Lead and two DY members) operate each truck and are responsible for a set case load of apartment sites. During the summer the additional cohort of members also form three person teams and these teams meet the trucks at apartment communities to feed and engage the children.

Supervising this structure is the Director of Food Programs and two Program Managers. One Program Manager is responsible for community outreach and the other is responsible for food distribution. This team of three provides daily supervision to all AmeriCorps members. The supervisory team works with the case managers to address any member concerns and meets regularly to tailor program activities to ensure the highest level of success for struggling members. The model guarantees that all members and supervisors are together each day for concentrated times in the morning and afternoon which allows regular opportunities for team meetings and across team bonding.

Over the supervisory staff is the AmeriCorps Director, assisted by the AmeriCorps Program Coordinator. These two positions ensure continuity between daily community operations, training, and case management. They also arrange specific trainings for the Team Leads to ensure that the mentoring component remains fully supported.

Narratives

MEMBER EXPERIENCE

Each day of their term, members will see first-hand the meaning of their service as they hand a meal to a hungry child or a box of food to a struggling family. They will do this as part of a group of members who operate the program and without whom the program would cease to function. The meaningfulness of their service is built strategically into the design of the service vehicle - as is the chance for reflection. Two staff members are trained in civic reflection and we do have formal sessions scheduled as part of the training components. But what has been found to be more powerful are the informal sessions - times when members are able to reflect among themselves; therefore service is structured so that members spend the day together in groups. To promote connections with the broader National Service network, we will participate in the North Texas AmeriCorps Alliance (NTXAA) to attend co-hosted national service days and trainings.

Effective member recruitment is accomplished by utilizing a web of community centered nonprofits that work with at-risk youth and young adults. These include, among others, Unlocking DOORS, Cornerstone Baptist Church, Jubilee Center, Services of Hope and Youth with Faces. Once recruited, training is informed by CNCS requirements and by Unlocking DOORS which is an expert in offender reentry. And while some program elements will apply to all members, it is the intensive case management that will be able to address many of the challenges posed by offender reentry and recidivism.

COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION

The principal staff members of EH have been part of AmeriCorps for upwards of twenty years and know first-hand the value of the brand and the power of National Service to affect change, both in communities and within the members who serve those communities. All participants will know they are members and they will know what it means to be a member. That they are participants in a larger movement that extends beyond them and encompasses much more than what they do locally. We start this education/identity during member recruitment and strengthen it during kick-off training. During service, members and staff wear clothing that prominently bears the AmeriCorps logo; we give each member five shirts during kick-off training in addition to a lanyard with their picture and the AmeriCorps logo. All service vehicles will bear the AmeriCorps logo and any written communication about the program identifies it as an AmeriCorps program.

Principal staff members have worked closely with state commission staff over the years to

Narratives

promote the AmeriCorps brand and we will continue to do so: via traditional and social media outlets.

Organizational Capability

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

Equal Heart's mission is to support people in times of adversity. We do this through a system of shared response that honors the inherent strength in the people currently facing challenges and brings together a web of small non-profits that are able to amplify their community strengths through collaboration. Started as a hunger relief organization, EH currently serves summer meals at 120 sites throughout Texas and Colorado. These operations are funded through USDA and continue the innovative program, Food on the Move, started six years ago at another nonprofit. Built upon this core infrastructure is a mobile food pantry model that extends the impact year round.

EH is led by Dr. Keven Vicknair who has 20 years prior experience directing AmeriCorps programs: eleven years at The University of Texas at Dallas and nine years at CitySquare. Each grant had in excess of 75 MSY's and both were considered exemplary programs within the state and were innovative models copied elsewhere. Her work with the Reading One-to-One program at UT-Dallas formed the evidentiary basis for the use of AmeriCorps members as part of America Reads in the 1990s and the research conducted on this AmeriCorps program is still referenced in academic papers. Dr. Vicknair developed Food on the Move while directing the AmeriCorps program at CitySquare and its success was spotlighted as an exemplary program by Americas Service Commissions and influenced the national dialogue around the best way to address childhood hunger during the summer.

Dr. Vicknair, in consultation with offender re-entry experts, has proposed a model for the current AmeriCorps program that also has the potential to be a national model. Due to her extensive experience with National Service, Organizational Systems and Program Design and Evaluation EH has the ability to implement a strong program that has clear community impact, a structure that is replicable, and data outcomes that allow it to be used as a national model if needed.

EH has three other key staff members, each of whom have at least four years prior experience with AmeriCorps. Michelle Kopel, a former AmeriCorps and VISTA member, is the Director of Operations and oversees program implementation across both summer meals and mobile food pantry operations. Renee Caldwell has four years prior AmeriCorps experience and 12 years of community development experience. She will coordinate all partner agency services and work to ensure seamless program integration across the varied organizations. Teresa Castaneda, Director of Food Programs, oversaw the expansion of food programs at CitySquare for 10 years prior to joining EH and is

Narratives

currently focused on implementing the mobile food pantry model. She has nine years' experience supervising and mentoring AmeriCorps members.

Leading the programming focused on case management /mentor training is the Unlocking Doors Texas Reentry Network (Unlocking DOORS), a comprehensive statewide diversion, reentry and integration organization. Unlocking DOORS is led by Christina Melton Crain, Esq., a Dallas attorney who served as the first and only female Chairman of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice (the State Board that oversees and manages TDCJ). Her role there motivated her to form an organization committed to reducing initial and repeat crimes (recidivism) through a system of collaboration, partnership, education, training, public awareness and reporting of evidence-based data. Unlocking DOORS holds an MOU with Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and serves offenders both pre- and post- release from the system. Currently Unlocking DOORS has more than 80 established partners statewide and through its many points of access and referral, annually serves over 6,000 individuals with criminal backgrounds. The inclusion of Unlocking Doors insures strong case management integration and allows the project to coordinate services with all government and community organizations engaged in reentry services, including judges, probation and parole officers.

Trinity Restoration, a prison aftercare ministry that provides housing and support services for men who are reentering society from prison has ten years' experience training and supervising mentors and will coordinate the recruitment and training for the AmeriCorps member mentors and also work with volunteer mentors to strengthen this component.

Youth with Faces, formerly Youth Village Resources, is a nonprofit organized to meet the needs of youth involved with the Juvenile Justice Department. They provide character development and job skills training to youth while still incarcerated and then provide job opportunities upon release through an innovative partnership with Café Momentum. Youth with Faces staff contributes expertise on this project to identify potential AmeriCorps members and work with these members once placed to ensure their success.

Currently EH receives \$1.1 million across two streams of federal funding (Child and Adult Care Program and Summer Food Service Program) from three state agencies: Texas Department of Agriculture, Colorado Department of Education and Colorado Department of Health and Environment. All funds originate with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). EH is an approved USDA 'sponsor' and is authorized to provide summer and after-school meals in Texas and Colorado. The majority of our operations are in Texas and for the purposes of the current grant proposal we are focused on operations in that state although after the first two years we anticipate

Narratives

that we will expand this program to additional states. Expansion of the Child Nutrition programs is not limited by USDA funding and therefore, the availability of AmeriCorps members guarantees an immediate impact on Childhood Hunger.

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

EH has put in place procedures to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations both within EH and within our partner agencies. All AmeriCorps grant functions and decisions are centralized within EH and financial and programmatic components are structured so that we are in full compliance from the beginning. Our financial management system was designed specifically to provide accurate, current, and complete disclosure of financial results of program activities as our core funding comes from USDA.

While EH as an organization is new to AmeriCorps, all key staff members have extensive experience operating AmeriCorps programs and are thus well versed in the rules and regulations related to prohibited and unallowable activities and are adept at the implementation of systems to ensure all program activities are in compliance. Federal rules and regulations, including prohibited activities, are an integral part of the MOU that partner agencies sign and are a highlighted component of all training documents for members, staff and volunteers. Internal compliance oversight is shared among all EH staff and overseen by the Executive Director.

In regard to member functions as related to prohibited activities, EH first provides relevant training to members, partner agency staff and volunteers. During training sessions, AmeriCorps rules and regulations are discussed, with a focus on prohibited activities and best practices. Core community activities undertaken by the AmeriCorps members is under the direct supervision of EH staff and all existing staff have a minimum of four prior years' experience implementing AmeriCorps programming. Any new or part-time staff will be trained on prohibited and unallowable activities. Furthermore, the Texas state commission, The OneStar Foundation, provides bi-annual new staff orientation training which staff will attend. Principal EH staff members have a close working relationship with both the Texas CNCS office and The OneStar Foundation and the strength of this relationship will support the implementation of accountability systems for the proposed program.

Should any non-compliance or risk thereof come to the attention of EH staff, a meeting with the relevant parties will be immediately scheduled to implement necessary changes. This non-compliance will also be recorded internally and communicated to a Program Officer at The OneStar

Narratives

Foundation for possible help in rectifying the situation.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

COST EFFECTIVENESS

With its broad reach throughout the community EH will impact a tremendous number of lives over the two years of this project. Furthermore, since our proposal builds on existing programs, this project leverages existing infrastructure to support an immediate and dramatic expansion of services to our community. We expect a significantly short start-up period, and therefore decreased costs, as a result of our program design. The local cash match for this project is \$767,511, which represents 61% of the program costs.

Of that amount, USDA funds for the summer food service program will contribute \$565,232; and \$90,000 in foundation funding for the mobile food pantry model is already secured. Our partner agencies will contribute significant in-kind matches in the form of personnel, materials and space that we have not quantified with a dollar amount and thus are not formally part of the calculated 61% local match, but are essential to the success of the project.

The proposed \$13,300 CNCS cost per MSY is cost-effective given that our program includes primarily small organizations serving difficult-to-reach populations utilizing disconnected youth. Furthermore, Dallas is a high-cost community and thus any service delivered in this area will trend above the state average. Considering the level of service we will provide, and the communities we are targeting, we believe our project represents a sound investment for the AmeriCorps' program.

BUDGET ADEQUACY

The budget includes all costs related to direct AmeriCorps member support ranging from stipend amounts, travel costs, and senior staff. The budget includes costs to support central AmeriCorps staff needed to ensure smooth and efficient operations across all programming functions. Not all costs are included in the attached budget due to the inability to regularly and properly document staff time and/or material costs spent exclusively on AmeriCorps programming. This is true both for EH and for partner agencies. For example, Unlocking DOORS has agreed to provide extensive case management and assessment for all 50 DY members at a flat cost of \$40,000. They expect their costs to easily be double this figure but due to their belief for the need of the project they have pledged to raise the necessary funds to supplement services. Food costs for the summer programs are also included at a conservative estimate, based on past usage. Transportation costs include delivery of summer meals and also the operation of the mobile food pantry.

Narratives

Evaluation Summary or Plan

NA

Amendment Justification

NA

Clarification Summary

Standard clarification:

We collect various member measures that include (1) drug test results, (2) completion of probation requirements and (3) participation and completion of skill classes. We keep all information in confidential member folders and then collate information quarterly for reporting purposes.

Budget Clarification:

1. We are now registered with CCR
2. Awaiting email from OGM to complete other listed items.

Programmatic Clarification:

No fee is charged for children receiving meals during the summer. Families who receive meal packs are charged a nominal \$5 monthly fee which is used to pay for the gas for vans. This fee is in place to (1) provide an opportunity for families to feel they are part of the solution and (2) to ensure people show up for scheduled food deliveries. The fee is waived if families indicate an inability to pay. The mobile grocery store that will visit sites to allow better utilization of SNAP benefits is not part of the AmeriCorps project but simply an add on service we coordinate with to provide families with more fresh food access.

Grant Start Date

We desire our grant start date to be January 1, 2016 and end date to be December 31, 2016. Although we have flexibility on when to start we want to be consistent with historical start dates in Texas which are Aug 1, Sept 1 or Jan 1.

Performance Measure

1. H10 has been replaced with H11.

Narratives

2. We put within the performance language that the measure is 4,000 children and 2,000 parents (families). It is possible that some of the children receiving summer food will reside in families receiving food pantry supplies but since we are counting individuals there will be no double counting as we don't count the children in the food pantry program. This is because we are restricted by USDA on what information we can collect about the children participating in the summer program.
3. MSY information related to Find Opportunity PMs has been changed to zero.

Continuation Changes

NA

Grant Characteristics