

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The Massachusetts YouthBuild Coalition (MYBC) is pleased to submit this proposal to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) for the 2015 September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance Grants. The MYBC utilizes the Old Colony Y (OCY), one of its member organizations as the fiscal agent for this grant. All fiscal aspects of this proposal will be based on OCY experience. MYBC has developed a plan to specifically address Veterans and Military Families funding priority, through the work of YouthBuild students, most of whom are AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps VISTA members who are eligible to provide direct service on a short term project. MYBC proposes to construct two tiny houses which will be built so they are transportable, allowing us to have construction projects all across the state before transporting them to establish our first tiny house community.

The MYBC views tiny houses as a simple, effective solution to eliminating veteran homelessness by creating an environmentally friendly community. The tiny house movement is a growing reality throughout the country. Simply put, it is a social movement where people are downsizing the space in which they live. The typical American home is around 2,600 square feet, while the typical small or tiny house is around 100-400 square feet. Tiny houses come in all shapes, sizes and forms but they focus on smaller spaces and simplified living. This type of housing is helping previously homeless veterans because they will not be burdened with issues that face homeowners in full size houses. Nevertheless, they will enjoy all of the comforts of home.

## Program Design

The Massachusetts YouthBuild Coalition (MYBC) is pleased to submit this proposal to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) for the 2015 September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance Grants. The MYBC utilizes the Old Colony Y (OCY), one of its member organizations as the fiscal agent for this grant. All fiscal aspects of this proposal will be based on OCY experience. MYBC has developed a plan to specifically address Veterans and Military Families funding priority, through the work of YouthBuild students, most of whom are AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps VISTA members who are eligible to provide direct service on a short term project. MYBC proposes to construct two tiny houses which will be built so they are transportable. The two homes will be constructed at the YouthBuild locations in Springfield and Brockton, MA and moved to their permanent location upon completion. Permanent sites for these houses will be at two of three

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potential locations:

- The Old Soldiers Home, Holyoke MA
- The Soldiers Home, Chelsea, MA
- Veterans Administration Hospital, Brockton, MA

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The timeline for this project is as follows:

There are two main aspects of this project: education of students regarding September 11th, and the construction of individual tiny houses.

Education and construction training will commence in July and continue through September 11, 2015.

In terms of education, students will be immersed in a curriculum focused on the events of September 11th and its impact not only on the victims of the attack, but society as a whole.

The students, many of whom were young children during the events of September 11th, will gain an appreciation of how the attacks affected the international landscape. Furthermore, students will learn about the various deployments of our armed forces, their purpose overseas, and the lasting ramifications of time at war for our veterans.

Most importantly, students will learn about and understand the importance of their project and how the houses they are building will have a positive impact on countless lives in our community.

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Simultaneous with their education, students and volunteers will be taught the basic construction skills required to build the tiny homes. This will include basic carpentry and framing techniques, worksite safety, and workshops on the importance of sustainable materials.

The main service event and celebration will occur on September 11th.

We will invite community members, veterans, local companies and organizations, public officials, and local media to attend and volunteer together with the students on construction of the tiny homes.

YouthBuild staff, students, and community volunteers from across the state will perform projects on both tiny homes, including construction, landscaping, and appliance installation.

The follow up phase will run from September 11, 2015 through the end of the grant period. During that time, we will continue to work with veterans occupying the homes to connect them with community resources and volunteer opportunities, specifically with the YouthBuild programs. We will work with the Veterans Administration to coordinate comprehensive wraparound services for all participants.

The education piece will continue throughout the grant period and culminate in student projects that will become part of their graduation portfolio.

### **Organizational Capacity**

Ability to Provide Program Oversight

Organizational Structure - The Massachusetts YouthBuild Coalition was founded in 1996 in an effort to organize the then six YouthBuild programs within the Commonwealth. Over the years, the MYBC has grown to its current level of 11 programs and increased its geographic footprint cover all of the major urban areas in Massachusetts. The first YouthBuild program in the state was YouthBuild Boston which was founded in 1990 and is celebrating its 25th year of operation this year. In all, 11 YouthBuild programs have provided a combined 183 program years of service to opportunity youth between the ages of 16 and 24. The nine organizations that sponsor a YouthBuild program has one voting member who sits on the Board. Since 2003, the Coalition has also employed a full-time director

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to oversee the operations of the programs and develop key activities that serve to move the group forward in achieving its goals. To assist the Director in building the capacity of the organization, AmeriCorps VISTAs have proven to be a valuable asset. The MYBC has been certified by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a Qualified Association, one of the official designations within the state as a recognized organization.

**Key Positions** - The MYBC Director will serve as the point person throughout the project. Each program will also identify the primary contact to organize the event at their local YouthBuild AmeriCorps program. A curriculum team, comprised of some of the academic staff at MYBC YouthBuild AmeriCorps programs will develop the curriculum and materials that will be utilized at the local programs. This educational component will be implemented by the academic staff at all of the programs. Assisting with this aspect of the project will be the case management teams, who provide support services to the members, at each of the programs. A group of construction managers from some of the programs will fully develop the actual tiny houses that will be built. They will be responsible for developing a materials list for each site where the individual units will be constructed. The construction materials for both the rough and the finished build which will include water systems and composting toilets. In addition, they are already working on securing in-kind solar panels for each house. Although there may be some individual differences in design for the units, the basic structure will be the same and cohesive community.

**Relevant Background and Experience** - The MYBC director offers some unique experience and credentialing that will prove effective for this project. He has more than 20 years of experience in YouthBuild including: program startup and management (two separate programs); experience on the national level developing and working with coalitions across the country; serving as a YouthBuild coach to programs across the country; and, directing the Massachusetts YouthBuild coalition of which he was one of the two founding directors. Prior to YouthBuild, he worked in the public school system as a teacher and administrator and also worked in the construction industry. He has been licensed in Massachusetts both as a Superintendent of Schools and a Construction Supervisor. Each program employs a licensed construction manager who will be responsible for the oversight of the construction of the tiny houses. The academic staff at each YouthBuild AmeriCorps program are responsible for the academic instruction that leads the attainment of a high school diploma/high school equivalency. The MYBC offers a valuable team of experts in their fields which will facilitate the

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attainment of all of the goals of this project.

Partner Engagement Plan - Partnership is a strength of the MYBC. Many of the programs are AmeriCorps programs, some dating back to the mid to late 1990s. As such, service is ingrained into the fabric of their mission. Often, the types of service projects in which individual programs or the Coalition as a whole undertake involve the use of partner volunteers. Every YouthBuild program has an active relationship with at least 15 other community organizations and businesses. The size of the network is immediately visible.

Oversight at Multiple Locations - The academic curriculum and the construction plans will both be prepared and ready for dissemination prior to commencement of work. The appropriate staff at each program will be assigned for their particular component. They are directly supervised by their Program Director and the MYBC Director will be visiting and working with each site to ensure that all aspects of this project will be thoroughly implemented. A workshop for staff will be conducted at each program outlining all aspects of this project. In addition, the MYBC will prepare materials that outline the entire scope of this project for all volunteers and will provide them with training the day of the project.

Data Collection - Reporting tools will be developed that are specific to the performance measures. The Coalition, in conjunction with the Veterans Administration will maintain records on the residents who inhabit the tiny houses. A record of service opportunities offered to veterans and their participation in such opportunities will also be recorded. Although the education of youth is not specifically mentioned performance measures, the MYBC understands that this is a critical component for the overall impact of the entire project. Therefore, it also measured to ensure that all of the members have a clear understanding of the importance of this work. The academic component will have an evaluation process that will collect data at each program reflecting the proficiency of the youth in the knowledge of this project. Portfolio requirements will also be reviewed and samples of student projects regarding September 11th remembrance will be kept not only in the students' portfolios, but the information will be maintained by the MYBC.

Ability to Provide Fiscal Oversight

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As was stated in the introduction, the Old Colony Y, as one of the members of the MYBC, is the fiscal agent for the organization and the information that follows pertains to the YMCA.

**Experience and Infrastructure** - With a total operating budget of nearly \$58M, Old Colony Y has a long history contracting with state, federal, and local entities, and have successfully managed federal contracts from OJJDP, HUD, DOL and more. Some of the state contracts include the Office of Early Education and Care, DCF, DYS, DPH, DMH, and DOESE. OCY has never had an instance of material weaknesses or reportable condition of internal control, never lost a contract due to any programmatic or fiscal issue, and never been disciplined or received sanctions for any discretions or misuse of funds. The OCY is well financed with substantial cash reserves and can manage the additional cash flow that this program presents.

**Key Personnel** - Our Executive Vice President/Chief Financial Officer, Keenyn McFarlane, has more than 20 years of finance, accounting, operational management, and teaching experience. He attended Brown University and later earned a BA in Economics from the University of Massachusetts at Boston, and an MBA from Bentley College. Prior to joining OCY, McFarlane was a Vice President with Brandeis University and held the position of Deputy Chief Financial Officer for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). McFarlane oversees a fully automated financial department of seven full-time staff (a Controller, Sr. Accountant; Payroll Coordinator; 2 Bookkeepers; and payroll staff member) capable of generating monthly operating statements of revenue and expense compared to annual budget.

Audited financial statements independently confirm OCY's sound finances and are prepared with the purpose of meeting the more stringent Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards and compliance with OMB Circular A-133. Old Colony YMCA has never had an instance of material weaknesses or reportable condition of internal control.

**Financial Management Systems** - An accrual system meets all necessary requirements for both state and federal government. OCY's annual audit is conducted by Alexander, Aronson, Finning & Co., PC, as required by state/federal guidelines. OCY operates a fully automated and computerized financial system which produces monthly reports of income/expense by line item and source.

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Management of Project Resources - Since 1972, OCY has managed numerous seven-figure plus contracts for federal departments including HUD and DOL, and MA state departments including DYS, DCF, EEC, and have never lost a contract relating to performance or outcomes. We take pride in our ability to deliver high quality programs and services within budget parameters. Our successful contracting history and ability to manage multiple grants and responsibilities ensures our ability to deliver services as outlined in this grant.

Grant Implications - This grant application proposes a total budget of \$156,550. Although this is a significant sum of money, it does not have tremendous implications on the current organizational budget for an organization of our size. With an overall operating budget of over \$58 million, this proposal would account for approximately 0.11% of the annual budget.

### Clarification Summary

1. Where exactly will the homes be constructed?

The five homes will be constructed throughout the state and moved to their permanent location in Brockton, Massachusetts on September 11th. Initial construction will take place at participating YouthBuild program sites located in:

- Lawrence, MA
- Springfield, MA
- Boston, MA
- New Bedford, MA
- Brockton, MA

2. Please specify more clearly range of dates during which you will require events to occur. Please explain how your ongoing year-round project continues to connect to September 11th. All activities must connect to September 11th. You may consider revising the project timeframe.

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Most importantly, students will learn about and understand the importance of their project and how the houses they are building will have a positive impact on countless lives in our community.

Simultaneous with their education, students and volunteers will be taught the basic construction skills required to build the tiny homes. This will include basic carpentry and framing techniques, worksite safety, and workshops on the importance of sustainable materials.

The main event will occur on September 11th. The tiny homes that were constructed throughout the state will be brought together in Brockton, Massachusetts for a ribbon cutting ceremony.

We will invite community members, veterans, local companies and organizations, public officials, and local media to attend and volunteer together with the students.

On that day, the service project will be completed. YouthBuild staff, students, and community volunteers from across the state will perform final aesthetic projects on all the homes, including landscaping, touch ups, and appliance installation.

The follow up phase will run from September 11, 2015 through the end of the grant period. During that time, we will continue to work with veterans occupying the homes to connect them with community resources and volunteer opportunities, specifically with the YouthBuild programs. We will work with the Veterans Administration to coordinate comprehensive wraparound services for all

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participants.

3. Thank you for your resubmission of your budget. My only follow up question is whether you anticipate purchasing or renting the trailers. If it's a purchase, please provide a rationale for purchasing equipment for a one-time usage. In either case please provide assurance that any procurement will follow established agency policy.

The trailers will be utilized multiple times, as it is important that the tiny houses remain portable since their location may vary in future years. Since we are in contact with a number of veterans' groups, it will be possible to move them to different facilities based on the need at a given location. This would maximize the effectiveness of each tiny house, making it available to meet the needs of homeless veterans. It would allow us the flexibility of bringing the home to the veteran so that they could remain in their familiar community - one in which they may be receiving additional services. There would be no disruption of services at any time.

We will follow all of the procurement policies of the Old Colony Y as outlined in their procedures manual.

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

#### Budget and Program Design

Adequate and Reasonable Budget - The budget that we have developed for this project will allow us to complete all aspects of the project at a reasonable cost. The construction of the tiny houses will be one of the major costs. We have researched the materials that will be needed and want to make sure that we utilize quality materials that will be both environmentally friendly as well as durable. All construction material costs will be subsidized by the MYBC. For the academic program, the main cost will be for the development and purchase of instructional materials. There will also be some costs included for the oversight that will be required by the Director of the Massachusetts YouthBuild Coalition.

Non-Federal Funds Budgeted - Much of the staff time that will be budgeted to this project will come

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from non-federal sources. Much of this will come from personnel line items which are funded through a state line item in Massachusetts budget. This represents a total of \$32,000

Areas Philanthropically Underserved - The most philanthropically served area in Massachusetts is the greater Boston area. This has an impact on only three of the 11 programs who will be involved in the service day. Other areas where our programs exist and where much of the service will take place and also where the community will be established lie in areas that historically have been underserved philanthropically.