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Executive Summary

The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) proposes to have 14 AmeriCorps members serve as Volunteer Coordinators at 14 partner and field office sites. These sites are the following: (1) the International Institute of Akron (IIA) in Akron, Ohio; (2) Western Kentucky Refugee Mutual Assistance Association (WKRMAA) in Bowling Green, Kentucky; (3) the International Institute of Connecticut (IICONN) in Bridgeport, Connecticut; (4) the International Institute of Erie (IIE) in Erie, Pennsylvania; (5) USCRI North Carolina (USCRI NC) in Raleigh, North Carolina; (6) the International Institute of Buffalo (IIB) in Buffalo, New York; (7) Heartland Alliance (HA) in Chicago, Illinois; (8) the International Services Center (ISC) in Cleveland, Ohio; (9) Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) in Kansas City, Missouri; (10) the International Institute of New Hampshire (IINH) in Manchester, New Hampshire; (11) Nationalities Service Center (NSC) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; (12) Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island (DIIRI) in Providence, Rhode Island; (13) the International Institute of Minnesota (IIM) in St. Paul, Minnesota; and (14) the College of Southern Idaho Refugee Service Programs (CSIRSP) in Twin Falls, Idaho. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for developing and managing effective volunteer programs that result in the provision of volunteer services to an estimated 5,200 refugee clients and the implementation of at least three new and effective volunteer management practices at each of the 14 sites. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will recruit, train, and manage an estimated 1,300 volunteers who will provide refugee clients with English as a Second Language instruction; cultural orientation; mentoring; and assistance with housing, job development, health care, school enrollment, and financial literacy; as well as other services.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Capacity Building. The CNCS investment of \$80,220 in Segal Education Award funds will be leveraged with an investment by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) of \$350,000. This ORR contribution is part of the Refugee AmeriCorps program, which aims to "assist with the integration and community engagement of refugees and other ORR-eligible populations nationwide."

[NOTE: FROM HERE ON, THE USE OF THE TERM "REFUGEE(S)" WILL BE USED WITH REGARDS TO ALL ORR-SUPPORTED POPULATIONS, WHICH INCLUDE REFUGEES, ASYLEES, CUBAN AND HAITIAN ENTRANTS, AMERASIANS, VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING, AND UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN.]

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Rationale and Approach/Program Design

1. PROBLEM/NEED: A refugee is someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality..." (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). Each year, the United States welcomes around 77,000 refugees to provide them with opportunities to rebuild their lives without fear of persecution (White House, 2014; U.S. Department of State, 2014). The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) is one of nine national agencies tasked with resettling refugees into communities around the country. USCRI does this through its network of six field offices and 21 affiliate agencies; in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, USCRI was approved to resettle 9,226 refugees, representing 12% of all refugee arrivals to the United States. Refugees arriving to the U.S. need culturally and linguistically appropriate services including immediate safe housing, orientation to their new communities, short- and long-term job placement, English language training, financial literacy training, assistance enrolling in health and other benefits, interpretation, and other services. The overarching goal of all USCRI programs and services is to assist all refugees in achieving community integration, long-term self-sufficiency, stability, and well-being.

Various factors impede refugees from achieving these aims in the short-term. In the majority of cases, resettlement agencies are refugees' only connection to their communities during refugees' first few weeks in the country. Agencies continue to be their primary source of support throughout the first several months of the resettlement process. Approximately 70% of the refugees that USCRI and its affiliates serve do not speak English, have low levels of literacy in their own language, hold low-income jobs, and are unable to navigate the complex network of service providers on their own. For example, among refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, one of the largest populations resettled in the U.S., 89% speak no English or have limited English proficiency when they arrive and nearly 20% are illiterate in their native languages. Moreover, over 55% of those who arrived in FY 2014, had spent years in refugee camps where inadequate nutrition, minimal medical care, and limited access to educational and employment opportunities compounded physical and psychological ailments that often resulted from the experience of seeking refuge. After arrival in the U.S., close to 90% of refugee families live at or below the Federal Poverty Level (\$23,850 for a family of four) and survive on extremely limited means. Some groups within this population are particularly vulnerable; these groups include refugee youth; single mothers; elderly refugees; refugees experiencing trauma resulting from war or sexual and gender-based violence; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender

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refugees; refugees who have a history of suicide risk factors; refugees with physical disabilities or medical conditions; and secondary migrants (those who have moved from the area in which they were initially resettled). USCRI serves these particularly vulnerable refugees through its Preferred Communities program, which provides intensive case management. The AmeriCorps members will recruit volunteers to support these efforts.

USCRI's network of affiliate resettlement agencies provides a host of services to orient clients to their new lives, but these agencies do not have sufficient resources to fully address the ongoing needs of this vulnerable population. Due to limited funding, the agencies' staff members are frequently overworked and often rely on the assistance of volunteers, faith-based organizations, interns, and other community members to enhance service provision. Volunteers have proved to be invaluable to resettlement agencies, yet agencies typically do not have the resources to implement formalized volunteer programs. In most cases, case managers and resettlement directors take on volunteer coordination duties on an ad hoc basis and are unable to build robust volunteer programs based on best practices in volunteer management. Without formalized volunteer programs, it is difficult for agencies to recruit large numbers of volunteers and to ensure that volunteers are well-trained, well-matched, and incentivized to stay with the agency long-term.

The 14 proposed sites are poised to resettle a total of 8,820 refugees in FY 2015 and 2016. A USCRI survey of these agencies collected information on their current use or lack thereof of nine effective volunteer management strategies. These strategies include the following: regular supervision and communication with volunteers; liability coverage or insurance protection for volunteers; regular collection of information on volunteer outputs; screening procedures to identify suitable volunteers; written policies and job descriptions for volunteer involvement; recognition activities; annual measurement of volunteer impact; training and professional development opportunities for volunteers; and training for paid staff in working with volunteers (Urban Institute, 2004). Survey results indicated that the proposed sites face several challenges to managing volunteers. Some of the survey findings were as follows: (1) None of the 14 agencies have Volunteer Coordinators; (2) None of the agencies are currently implementing all nine strategies, and all agencies need improvement in at least one strategy; (3) Four agencies (29%) do not carry out regular supervision and communication with volunteers; (4) Thirteen agencies (93%) do not conduct annual measurements of volunteer impact; (5) Nine agencies (64%) do not provide training and professional development opportunities

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for volunteers; (6) Five agencies (36%) do not conduct volunteer recognition activities; and (7) Ten agencies (71%) do not provide trainings for paid staff working with volunteers.

Newly-arrived refugees hope to build new lives in peace and security. For those agencies that resettle refugees, a wide variety of services are needed to help refugees along the path to self-sufficiency and well-being. Volunteers are critical to the provision of these services. The 14 agencies referenced in this proposal struggle to recruit, train, manage, and retain volunteers in a consistent and holistic manner since none of them have staff specifically devoted to volunteer management.

2. THEORY OF CHANGE TO CORRESPOND WITH THE LOGIC MODEL: By developing and implementing volunteer management programs at each site, AmeriCorps members will enhance the capacity of each agency to serve vulnerable refugee clients. The USCRI AmeriCorps program is built upon the understanding that volunteers enhance agency capacity and volunteer coordination will create and maintain a thriving group of volunteers. The skills, knowledge, enthusiasm, and passion that volunteers bring to their work has been proven to positively impact nonprofit agencies in a number of ways. A 2010 analysis conducted by Deloitte Consulting revealed the importance of volunteer programs. From an analysis of qualitative data, the study concludes that "volunteers enable organizations to accomplish their missions and strategic objectives, [and that] effective use of volunteers allows [organizations] to provide significantly more services with fewer paid resources" (Deloitte, 2010). These findings are corroborated by CNCS's 2007 report *Volunteering Reinvented*, which confirmed the impact of volunteers on nonprofit organizations' capacities. Effectively managed volunteers can save money, increase agency visibility, improve employee satisfaction, and bring skills and knowledge to service delivery thereby increasing the organization's efficacy. A case study of the HandsOn Network's Citizen Action AmeriCorps program confirmed that AmeriCorps members were able to expand the output of the nonprofits at which they worked by 30%. Increasing agencies' capacity for volunteer management requires both staff support and the adoption of administrative practices that nurture volunteers (Urban Institute, 2004). The proposed AmeriCorps sites currently provided inconsistent resources and supervision for community members who wish to volunteer. The Urban Institute asserts, "The percentage of time a paid staff volunteer coordinator devotes to volunteer management is positively related to the capacity of organizations to take on additional volunteers. The best prepared and most effective volunteer programs are those with paid staff members who dedicate a substantial portion of their time to management of volunteers" (2004). The

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USCRI AmeriCorps Program will provide much-need, structured volunteer coordination by tasking AmeriCorps members with formalizing volunteer management programs.

Fourteen AmeriCorps members will serve at 14 refugee resettlement sites as full-time (40 hours per week) Volunteer Coordinators. These members will implement volunteer management practices that increase the ability of agencies to recruit, train, and retain volunteers and to identify their volunteers' contributions. The USCRI AmeriCorps program will utilize the effective volunteer management strategies that the Urban Institute recognized. Members will also be responsible for undertaking the following activities: complete AmeriCorps, local agency, and USCRI trainings on the AmeriCorps role and Volunteer Coordinator position; conduct needs assessments of the sites and the communities to gauge the most pressing volunteer needs, determine agencies' strengths and weaknesses as related to volunteer coordination and resources; develop volunteer management plans to include best practices in volunteer management and to develop/update volunteer manuals, procedures, and policies; develop volunteer job descriptions and implement recruitment strategies; develop and implement volunteer trainings; conduct volunteer management activities including matching volunteers with clients, communicating with volunteers regularly and implementing volunteer retention activities; and utilize a volunteer management database to collect, evaluate, and report on data. AmeriCorps activities during the first two months of the program will focus on recruitment and training of the AmeriCorps members, after which members will conduct the activities listed above.

AmeriCorps members, members' supervisors, and a part-time USCRI Program Officer will collectively monitor program activities. AmeriCorps members will collect and track volunteer data (hours, activities, clients served, etc.) through a volunteer management data system and will submit quarterly performance reports to their supervisors and to the USCRI Program Officer. Supervisors will ensure quarterly reports are submitted and will also conduct quarterly performance reviews of the members. Members will conduct organizational assessments based on an assessment template provided in the UPS Foundation's Guide to Investing in Volunteer Resources Management. At the start of the program, members will use the assessment to analyze the agencies' capacities, strengths, and challenges regarding volunteer management (www.energizeinc.com). Members will also use pre- and post-assessments, adapted from California Serves (CaSERVES) AmeriCorps program's Volunteer Capacity Assessment, which measures volunteer impact (www.nationalservice.gov).

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By instituting formalized volunteer management systems and implementing best practices in volunteer management at their agencies, AmeriCorps members will contribute to the following outputs: a total of 14 agencies will implement at least three new and effective volunteer management practices and will receive customized volunteer management plans, an estimated 1,300 volunteers will be recruited and managed (including those community members who have informally provided episodic assistance to the agencies), approximately 1,328 volunteers and staff will receive training, and about 63,400 hours of volunteer time will be donated across all 14 sites. Additionally, volunteers will receive more attentive and consistent communication, sites will experience increased volunteer retention, and more detailed tracking and reporting of volunteer activities and outcomes will provide the data needed to enhance outreach and fundraising. Through these activities, more volunteers will be tasked in more effective ways to meet the needs of an estimated 5,200 refugee clients. On average, each volunteer will assist four refugee clients. Refugee clients eligible for assistance from volunteers will include those who are within 3 years of arrival to the U.S.; around 50% of all refugee arrivals to the proposed 14 sites in fiscal years 2014, 2015, and 2016 will receive this support.

Volunteers recruited and managed by AmeriCorps members will perform a wide variety of duties depending on the needs of the agencies and clientele. The needs assessments conducted at the beginning of the AmeriCorps program will guide members when tasking volunteers to ensure that volunteer activities align with agency and client needs. A USCRI survey of participating affiliate sites collected data indicating what types of volunteer support are most needed and how much time should be devoted to each. English as a Second Language (ESL) activities (assisting clients in accessing ESL education) and Cultural Orientation activities (teaching clients about the American education, social services, transportation, health care systems, etc.) will comprise around 40% (20% each) of all volunteer hours across the agencies. Housing activities (assisting clients in finding and securing housing, setting up housing pre-arrival, and helping clients to obtain household goods) will comprise around 11% of all volunteer hours. Job development (assisting with job readiness classes, resume writing, and job applications and providing transportation to/from job interviews) and medical assistance activities (assisting clients to set up appointments, providing transportation to/from appointments, and enrolling clients in medical insurance) will each comprise 10% of all volunteer hours. Remaining activities include youth activities (assisting with school enrollment/orientation for families and tutoring) at 8%; financial literacy activities (assisting clients with classes regarding finances and budgeting and assisting in navigating the banking system) at 6%; language assistance

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(providing interpretation/translation services) at 3% and other activities (mentoring programs, garden and arts clubs, providing transportation, and helping with cultural events) will comprise 12% of all volunteer hours.

AmeriCorps members' work in combination with the work of the volunteers they recruit, train, and manage will ultimately lead to positive long-term outcomes for both the participating agencies and their refugee clients. Furthermore, formalized volunteer programs will help to increase the agencies' efficiency and effectiveness in serving clients. In addition to providing an estimated 63,400 hours of service to 5,200 refugees, volunteers managed by the AmeriCorps members will help to increase the agencies' visibility throughout the community, improve staff effectiveness and morale, and bring new skills and expertise to agencies and their clients. Refugee clients will also benefit from a larger network of support during their adjustment period. By receiving assistance from community volunteers, refugees will be better connected to the community as a whole. Refugees' capacity to become self-sufficient will increase as they will more easily learn and adapt to their new communities with holistic support from both agency staff and community volunteers.

3. EVIDENCE BASE: The use of AmeriCorps members as Volunteer Coordinators proved effective in a 2012 study of the CalSERVES AmeriCorps VIP Program. In this study, a total of 133 partner sites with AmeriCorps members serving as Volunteer Coordinators were compared to similar sites without members using the Volunteer Capacity Assessment (VCA). The researchers controlled for differences between the two groups of sites so that differentiating characteristics other than the presence or absence of AmeriCorps members would not affect the results. These researchers found that the AmeriCorps program positively affected partner sites' capacity to host volunteers. The AmeriCorps sites' overall average scores on the mid-program VCA were about 28% higher, and their post-program VCA scores were about 40% higher than the scores for comparison group sites (www.nationalservice.gov). Members also effectively integrate volunteers by engaging staff through strategic thinking about volunteer programming and through the creation of written philosophy statements about volunteer incorporation. "The CalSERVES VIP program has a measurable impact on capacity related to the organizations' abilities to prepare for volunteers, to recruit volunteers, to train volunteers, and to establish positive on-going relationships with volunteers. The evaluation further demonstrates that these impacts are likely caused by the program [AmeriCorps] as shown through the comparison of program participating partner sites with non- participating comparison

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sites matched by propensity score" (JBS International, Inc., 2012). USCRI AmeriCorps members will fill much-needed roles by building on evidence-based best practices.

4. MEMBER TRAINING: USCRI is committed to providing quality training to AmeriCorps members and volunteers to ensure that they provide effective and timely services. In accordance with this commitment, USCRI will offer ongoing training to AmeriCorps members through in-person training and online tools. A USCRI headquarters-based AmeriCorps Program Officer will manage the program at the national level. This individual will also be responsible for providing training to the supervisors at the 14 affiliate sites, and he or she will produce and disseminate training resources for members throughout their service. As references for developing the training resources, USCRI and site-based staff will utilize USCRI's "Volunteer Management Handbook;" "Take Root," the HandsOn Connect/CNCS volunteer management guidebook; the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's "Successful Strategies for Recruiting, Training, and Utilizing Volunteers;" and the New England Network for Children, Youth, and Family Services' guidebook titled "The Hidden Workforce." Trainings will utilize a combination of online self-guided modules, live webinars, and printed study materials and will focus heavily on training within the first few months of the service year. The online self-guided modules will be easy to access through Moodle and designed using Articulate, two award-winning software programs. Through these software programs, AmeriCorps members will be able to share content and collaborate, and the Program Officer and on-site supervisors will be able to monitor members' progress with the training and review materials with members. Live webinars will be executed through the GoToWebinar platform. GoToWebinar allows staff to track the number of webinar participants as well as extract reports on the participants' levels of engagement throughout the webinar. Live webinars will also be an opportunity for USCRI to gain informal feedback on program implementation from AmeriCorps members. GoToWebinar allows staff to record live webinars and share them in the future. Staff will gather feedback from participants through surveys following the live webinars and will make changes to the presentations based on this feedback.

Each member will receive a personalized training plan to track and document completion of trainings. These plans will include all national trainings and will be customized by supervisors to include site-specific material. The national training plan will include an online, multimedia workshop (via Moodle and GoToMeeting software platforms) at the beginning of the service period to train members on

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AmeriCorps program guidelines, regulations, prohibited activities, and benefits. The following sample topics will be covered across the program year with the first five topics completed within the first two months of member recruitment: (1) Introduction to AmeriCorps Program (program goals, regulations, prohibited activities, benefits, branding); (2) Introduction to Refugee Resettlement/USCRI (organizational history, overview of the resettlement process, overview of refugee populations); (3) Introduction to Volunteer Management: Creating a Volunteer Program (organizational and community needs assessments, writing policies and manuals, overview of best practices); (4) Volunteer Management: Best Practices (detailed training on best practices); (5) Program Outcomes (databases, tracking, evaluating, and reporting on data; using data to promote the organization); (6) Cultural Competency & Working with Diverse Clients (details on cultural norms and practices of various refugee populations); (7) Conflict Resolution (guidelines for working with staff, volunteers, and refugees); (8) Leadership and Project Management (volunteer supervision, communications, professionalizing of volunteer coordination); (9) Program Sustainability (creating sustainability plans); and (10) Professional Development and Nonprofit Organizations (applying skills and accomplishments from service year to future employment and service opportunities).

AmeriCorps members will also receive training from their supervisors and other on-site staff. Trainings will include an introduction to the resettlement agency, an introduction to local needs, and members' duties and responsibilities. As part of their on-site training, members will shadow other staff members carrying out client-based activities to understand the refugee resettlement process, client and agency needs, and the activities that the volunteers they recruit will be performing.

5. MEMBER SUPERVISION: Each AmeriCorps member will receive on-site supervision and support from an affiliate staff member. At the start of the program year, supervisors will receive web-based training from the USCRI Program Officer that will include an overview of AmeriCorps goals, responsibilities, policies and prohibited activities, and branding as well as instructions for using the CNCS AmeriCorps VISTA Supervisor's Manual and other CNCS-provided resources. Supervisors will be trained on all program requirements including supervision of members and program reporting. The USCRI Program Officer will have quarterly progress calls with the supervisors to discuss members' adjustment and performance and to provide technical assistance as needed.

The supervisors will hold weekly check-in meetings with members to provide guidance and oversee

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that activities are being carried out as outlined in the AmeriCorps grant award. Meetings will provide members with opportunities to discuss their activities, challenges, successes, needs, and connections to the broader agency and community. More frequent check-ins may take place during the first month of service as members acclimate to their new roles, ensuring that members are adhering to the training schedules and have the resources and support needed to begin their work. Supervisors will also provide members with quarterly performance reviews for members to reflect upon their experiences and to provide a forum for professional development. All supervisors will be experienced nonprofit professionals with supervisory experience and will be able to provide a wealth of knowledge and guidance to members throughout their service. For a detailed list of members' supervisors and their qualifications see the Members' Supervisors Qualifications document sent to americorpsgrants@cns.gov.

6. MEMBER EXPERIENCE: AmeriCorps members will gain valuable, transferable jobs skills and experience during their service year. Serving as Volunteer Coordinators, AmeriCorps members will learn and perform a variety of tasks relevant to nonprofit and community-based work including conducting community and organizational needs assessments, writing agency policies and job descriptions, recruiting volunteers and conducting community outreach, designing and delivering trainings, managing and communicating with volunteers, collecting and evaluating data, and writing reports. In addition to gaining these easily transferrable skills, members will be immersed in the refugee resettlement community - a group of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals who are passionate about human rights and social justice. Members will be both challenged and inspired by refugees and by the staff and volunteers who commit to helping them. As members' work progresses, they will be able to witness the deep connections made between the volunteers they manage and the refugee clients those volunteers serve. By collecting and evaluating data and anecdotes about the work of the volunteers, AmeriCorps members will be able to understand and convey the impact of their own work. Members will share their successes as well as their challenges with their peers at other participating sites through quarterly member-led conference calls organized by the USCRI Program Officer. Members will also be invited to virtually attend USCRI headquarters' frequent workshops covering resettlement and professional development topics.

Site-based staff will recruit members; USCRI headquarters will provide guidance as needed. USCRI will provide a job description template for sites to customize and will advertise member positions for

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those at participating field offices (in Erie and Raleigh) on USCRI's website. Sites will be advised to adapt CNCS guidelines for recruitment including the sample recruitment timeline, protocol, and checklist on the CNCS website. Sites will recruit locally, reaching out to potential AmeriCorps members online (e.g.volunteermatch.org); via newspaper; and in meetings with stakeholders.

7. COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION: The USCRI AmeriCorps program will widely incorporate AmeriCorps branding materials into the members' recruitment, orientation, training, and management experiences. During orientations and trainings, members will understand that their service year is a unique and new opportunity facilitated by a partnership with CNCS and ORR. Existing staff members at service site locations will receive an announcement of the program and subsequent member onboarding after the grant is awarded. Externally, USCRI will make announcements and build awareness of the program in the following ways: 1) a press release; 2) a program announcement and updates on USCRI's website; 3) social media outreach and campaigns; and, 4) regular email blasts on the impact of the program to stakeholders. Site locations will be trained on the importance of AmeriCorps brand identification and will receive assistance from USCRI with maintaining the branding standards. This will be incorporated into Memorandums of Agreement signed by service site locations. All AmeriCorps members will receive two AmeriCorps-branded lapel pins and two polo shirts, which they will wear daily. Members' workspaces will display AmeriCorps signage to reiterate the affiliation to all stakeholders and clients.

Organizational Capability

1. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING: Since 1911, USCRI has provided opportunities for self-sufficiency to refugees and immigrants through its nationwide network. Over the past thirty years, USCRI has managed grants from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security/USCIS, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and others, while sub-granting more than 80% of grant funds to field-based non-profit partners. USCRI manages federal grant programs including Reception and Placement, Matching Grant, Post Release Services for Unaccompanied Minors, National Human Trafficking Victims Assistance Program, Home-based Child Care Microenterprise Development, the Individual Development Accounts Program, Wilson Fish, Legal Services, and the Preferred Communities program. Since 1922, USCRI has provided training and technical assistance to other refugee organizations. As USCRI has grown, it has maintained thorough records and conducted strategic analysis, resulting in time-tested and finely-tuned models for efficacious service provision. Today, USCRI oversees and provides technical

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assistance to 21 refugee resettlement agencies with 32 offices nationwide, 8 ORR-funded legal service subcontractors, and 131 sites in its National Human Trafficking Victim Assistance Program. In providing training and technical assistance to these offices, USCRI has developed learning materials in collaboration with experienced educators and subject matter experts. Many of these learning materials cover volunteer management practices. USCRI will utilize this experience and these materials to train and provide technical assistance to AmeriCorps members.

Megan Bracy, the Associate Director of USCRI's Community Integration Programs, will incorporate, train, and oversee the USCRI AmeriCorps Program Officer and ensure that the Program Officer is effectively overseeing members' supervisors. Ms. Bracy has worked in refugee resettlement and case management for over ten years, six at USCRI. She has a strong educational background in training design for experiential learning and intercultural communication through the School for International Training. She currently supervises three national, federally-funded programs at USCRI: the Matching Grant program, the Preferred Communities program, and the Iranian Refugee Parolee program. Ms. Bracy will meet with the Program Officer at least weekly to monitor her/his activities.

USCRI has consulted with all 14 proposed AmeriCorps sites and obtained Letters of Support from each, outlining its interest, need, and capacity for hosting an AmeriCorps member. In the planning phase for the proposed project, USCRI collected preliminary data from each agency regarding its volunteer management practices and needs. Additionally, USCRI headquarters staff has ongoing communication with affiliate sites' staff; the Program Officer will continue these communications. Furthermore, ORR has opened a line of communication between the AmeriCorps State Commissions and resettlement agencies, including the agencies referenced in this proposal, that comprise the proposed Refugee AmeriCorps partnership. The agencies will sustain this communication.

2. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Under leadership of the Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, USCRI's Finance Department regularly manages and tracks the agency's \$57 million budget to ensure spending is appropriate, manageable, and reported on a semi-annual basis. Every year, USCRI conducts an independent, single and A-133 audit and implements any suggested accounting adjustments or material findings. The Better Business Bureau and GuideStar have certified USCRI as demonstrating fiscal responsibility; GuideStar granted USCRI the highest performance ranking. On a biennial basis, USCRI conducts an organizational effectiveness assessment to collect

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information from executive, field office, and network affiliate staff as well as clients and interns. The assessment also measures satisfaction with USCRI programming and oversight procedures. USCRI implements the recommendations of the assessment. USCRI has the solid fiscal controls, information technology management systems, and human resource management necessary to successfully implement this program.

The USCRI AmeriCorps Program Officer will attend required CNCS trainings (Annual Grantee meeting) on the AmeriCorps program and will be trained on all grant requirements, rules, and regulations by the Director for Community Integration. The Program Officer will provide supervisors with training on all program rules, regulations, and prohibited activities. Members will be trained on the same information through both nationally-provided training for all members and on-site trainings provided by supervisors. CNCS handbooks, manuals, and other resources on program regulations will be readily available to program staff, supervisors, and members at all times.

USCRI implements thorough monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure compliance and performance in accordance with grant stipulations across all of its programs. The Program Officer will track and assess the progress of the AmeriCorps members. The Program Officer will do this, in part, by monitoring members' hours and activities through ADP, a human resources management database into which members will enter hours worked. ADP will also confirm eligibility requirements for AmeriCorps members in accordance with National and Community Service Act. The hours worked will be reviewed and approved by the supervisor on a bi-weekly basis. Additionally, supervisors will update the Program Officer regarding members' activities on a quarterly basis and will submit quarterly progress reports to the Program Officer. The Program Officer will track outcomes through a quarterly reporting system through which members will share program data with supervisors and with the Program Officer. In the case that a member is not effectively or efficiently performing his/her duties or that a site's performance is below average, Megan Bracy, the Program Officer, and the member's supervisor will create and implement an intervention plan. In addition, USCRI will conduct on-site monitoring visits to at least three AmeriCorps sites in conjunction with the ORR-funded Preferred Communities program visits.

AmeriCorps members' work will be substantially different from that of the agencies' employees.

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[NOTE: FOR REFERENCES, PLEASE SEE "WORKS CITED," WHICH WAS EMAILED TO americorpsgrants@cns.gov FROM asiegel@uscridc.org.]

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

USCRI's capacity to effectively use funds is demonstrated by the fact that the organization relies on just 1.7% of its budget to cover administrative activities and uses the other 98.3% of its budget towards direct service provision and programming. The funds received from ORR will be sufficient to fully carry out the program. The funds will cover members' stipends in the amount of \$23,500 per AmeriCorps member (totaling \$329,000) and will include expenditures for required member supports such as FICA, Worker's Compensation, and Health and Unemployment Insurance. The members' stipends will also cover operating costs including the salaries and fringe benefits of personnel required to recruit, train, and supervise members and to manage the project. These funds will also be spent on the costs associated with staff attending CNCS-sponsored technical assistance meetings in Washington, D.C. Additionally, the \$21,000 not used for stipends out of the \$350,000 total contributed by ORR will cover the criminal history background checks of applicants and supplies including member service gear. The funds will ensure that AmeriCorps branding standards are maintained. USCRI has the income necessary to properly evaluate the effectiveness of the program and plans to conduct at least three monitoring site visits during the program year. During these visits, USCRI staff members will check that AmeriCorps members have adequate work space, telephone service, and internet.

Through this programs, 14 full-time AmeriCorps members will receive a \$13,777.90 as a living allowance after funds are expended on FICA, Workers Compensation, and Health and Unemployment Insurance, all of which represent about 12.86% of the total stipend. Additionally, USCRI will purchase health insurance for AmeriCorps members at the negotiated cost of \$350 per month per member. An additional \$2,500 will be allocated to the sites for supervision and training.

\$23,500: TOTAL STIPEND PER MEMBER | \$3,022: FICA, Workers Compensation, Unemployment Insurance (calculated at 12.86% of the stipend) | \$4,200: Health Insurance (\$350/month) | \$2,500: Supervision and Training | \$13,778: Living Allowance

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

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Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

N/A

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics