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Executive Summary

HIAS, a national refugee resettlement agency, proposes to place a full-time AmeriCorps member in ten of its affiliate organizations. These ten Refugee AmeriCorps members will provide support to and facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of vulnerable refugees in the following communities: San Diego, California; Clearwater, Florida; Springfield, Massachusetts; Buffalo, New York; Charlotte, North Carolina; Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio; Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Seattle, Washington. At the end of the program year, these Refugee AmeriCorps members will have directly contributed to the successful resettlement of an estimated 500 vulnerable refugees from many countries. The Refugee AmeriCorps members will acquire skills, training, and direct professional experience for their advancement, both professionally and educationally. Throughout this program, Refugee AmeriCorps members will receive experience managing community volunteers engaged in assisting refugees' secure economic and educational opportunities. Each Refugee AmeriCorps member will be responsible for identifying and recruiting 12 new and ongoing volunteers during the year while incorporating at least three effective volunteer management strategies into their organization's program. The members will also manage the volunteers to supplement community programs designed to engage diverse communities in enhanced orientation by providing job skills training, job placement services and financial literacy classes to an estimated 220 adult refugees to help them gain skills for economic success. Finally, the members will enhance case management services provided to 500 refugees by performing assessments of individuals' progress in navigating daily tasks, including shopping for basic goods, taking public transportation, doing housework, and tracking expenses.

The proposed project time-period is from October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016. The program will address the CNCS focus areas of economic opportunity and volunteer capacity building. HIAS is not requesting funding from CNCS. A new partnership between CNCS and the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) has established the Refugee AmeriCorps program. ORR has requested that the national resettlement agencies leverage funding from an existing case management program known as Preferred Communities (PC) funding to cover a portion of national administrative costs, including national office staffing and staff/member training. Our budget of \$320,900 includes basic support for management and supervision of the program at the national office and local site levels, while providing a living allowance and other support to Refugee AmeriCorps members.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

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Problem/Need: HIAS is one of nine national resettlement agencies which contracts with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) to receive and resettle refugees in the United States. According to the State Department, nearly 70,000 refugees fleeing persecution arrived in the U.S. in FY 2014 from 66 countries. Most of these refugees need supportive services from organizations such as HIAS and its affiliate agencies to become integrated into American society. All of these newly arriving refugees enter our communities with the aspiration to become independent and active citizens. Unfortunately, many have significant barriers to achieving rapid self-sufficiency during the initial resettlement period, facing difficulties, such as limited educational or professional training, poor health, and demanding childcare/family responsibilities. Refugee families arriving in the U.S. also face extraordinary challenges in achieving immediate self-sufficiency -- both in terms of economic independence and general life-skills -- due to cultural and linguistic barriers. HIAS programs such as Preferred Communities, funded by ORR, provide these vulnerable refugees with intensive case management to overcome these barriers to self-sufficiency.

Over the past five years, refugees arriving in the U.S. have come overwhelmingly from four countries -- Burma, Bhutan, Iraq and Somalia. According to recent information provided by PRM, these populations will continue to arrive in large numbers for the next few years. Since 2011, over 225,000 refugees from these four countries have arrived in the US, representing 78% of the nearly 290,000 total refugee arrivals during this period. While they are dispersed throughout the country, a high concentration arrived in the communities where HIAS affiliates work; refugees from these countries represent 67% of the 1,800 refugees resettled in the last five years by the ten agencies where we propose to place Refugee AmeriCorps members. Many of the refugees from these countries will need services provided through Preferred Communities with assistance from the Refugee AmeriCorps members.

Refugees originating from these countries arrive facing many challenges as a result of their limited exposure to Western society. The least educated of resettled refugees in the last decade have come from Burma, Bhutan, Somalia and Iraq. More than half of refugees from Burma aged 25 and older did not have a high-school diploma upon arrival; 42% of the Bhutanese did not arrive with a high-school degree; and, similarly, 27% of the Somalis and Iraqis came with minimal formal education. Most arrived speaking little or no English; as many as 86% of the Burmese were considered Limited English Proficient upon arrival, compared to 64% of the Iraqis, 56% of the Somalis, and 43% of the Bhutanese refugees. The difficulties continue after refugees arrive to the United States. One study found that, compared to other immigrants, the lowest household incomes were found among Somali,

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Iraqi, and Bhutanese households. (Source: Migration Policy Institute, "Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees")

Because of these circumstances, resettled refugees often become stuck in America's poverty class. Overall, refugees are more likely to receive food stamps, cash welfare, or public health insurance benefits than either non-refugee immigrants or the U.S. born population. Between 2009 and 2011, refugees were more than twice as likely as the U.S. born to live in households receiving food stamps (24% versus 11%). Refugees were also about twice as likely as the U.S. born to live in households receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (3.1% vs. 1.6%). Among both adults and children, refugees are more likely than either non-refugee immigrants or the U.S. born to have health insurance coverage through Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), or similar public programs. (Source: Migration Policy Institute, "Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees")

In the current federal fiscal year, which began October 1, 2014, HIAS Refugee AmeriCorps sites resettled 427 refugees from Iraq, 282 Burmese refugees, 266 from Somalia, and 230 from Bhutan, representing two-thirds of all the refugees resettled by these agencies. In addition to complex medical and mental health problems, challenges as single-parent households or being sexual or gender minorities, these refugees need long-term educational and economic support to foster sustainable economic stability. HIAS addresses refugee needs through its Preferred Communities (PC) program funded by ORR, providing intensive case management to refugees most in need of special support. Enrollees in extended case management programs are more likely to achieve basic self-sufficiency than non-participants, as our outcomes reports have shown (study discussed in Evidence Base section).

As outlined in a memorandum of understanding between ORR and CNCS, this program will place AmeriCorps members with HIAS affiliates where the Preferred Communities program operates to supplement and expand services (MOU included with Additional Documents). The Refugee AmeriCorps members will help our ten affiliates in the PC program address severe economic challenges through intensive case management. Smaller caseloads are correlated to improved client outcomes and human resource constraints are a key issue, particularly at sites supported by a single Preferred Communities caseworker. Participating affiliates have volunteer programs which engage local students and community members in donations drives and English teaching. However, there is not sufficient professional coordination of skilled volunteers with economic expertise assisting new refugee arrivals. The Refugee AmeriCorps members will help address these challenges, significantly increasing HIAS' organizational capacity to serve refugees in these communities.

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HIAS surveyed the ten affiliate agencies included in this application to identify local challenges that refugees face in the resettlement process, which can limit their economic success and stability. Some of these findings include:

* Inexperience and fear cause some refugees to avoid using conventional banking services, instead relying upon alternative multibillion dollar financial institutions such as check-cashing outlets, money transfer firms, payday lenders, and pawnshops. HIAS affiliate US Together (UST) of Ohio reports several instances when their clients refused to open checking accounts out of fear that their money would be taken by the Government. In Columbus, the majority of Somalis prefer to use check-cashing outlets, money transfer firms, and payday lenders, instead of the conventional American banking system. In order to address this challenge UST plans to utilize a member to offer a family-focused financial literacy education and support program, which is integrated with intensive employment services.

* Resettled refugees often arrive with little knowledge of nutrition and/or available food choices. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provide essential food and nutrition resources, but without the tools to utilize them, they are ineffective. One qualitative study from Philadelphia demonstrated the challenges that arriving refugees face when shopping and using entitled food benefits. Hnem is a Burmese refugee who arrived in Philadelphia with her husband and two young children (ages 11 and 4). While her husband works two (at times three) jobs, Hnem makes sure that bills are paid and the children have their needs met, including nutrition. With no formal education, Hnem struggles to purchase food within the requirements of the WIC and SNAP programs. This has a direct impact on her family's ability to find economic and food security and fully integrate. HIAS' affiliate in Philadelphia plans to utilize a Refugee AmeriCorps member to provide supplemental orientation sessions to enhance the economic competency of refugee families, including how to effectively access nutritious and affordable food.

* In San Diego, where 90% of refugees live below 200% of the federal poverty level due to unemployment or minimum wage employment (Source: San Diego Refugee Forum), the Refugee AmeriCorps member will manage volunteers to mentor and train refugees in areas leading toward job development and education.

Theory of change/logic model: The collaborative initiative between CNCS and ORR in establishing a Refugee Service Corp is mutually beneficial, promoting national service, developing capacity for

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AmeriCorps members, providing increased refugee integration, and enhancing the economic well-being of vulnerable populations in U.S. communities. By addressing refugee barriers to integration with Refugee AmeriCorps members, HIAS can promote long-term economic and social stability in the refugee communities and strengthen U.S. communities.

As noted by ORR in its proposal to CNCS, Refugee AmeriCorps members will ideally be recruited from among the local former refugee community, utilizing "a pipeline of former refugees ["New Americans"] ready to apply their energy and talents to public service while expanding socioeconomic, health and educational opportunities for the recently resettled refugees." Participating HIAS affiliates will recruit members via community outreach, job fairs, and agency websites. The program will help Refugee AmeriCorps members work in their own communities and empower them to advocate for communal interests. The program will train and supervise Refugee AmeriCorps members to help vulnerable refugees increase financially literacy, connect with employers, provide referrals to public benefits programs, liaise with community support groups to support integration, and connect with local volunteers who can provide mentoring:

1. Refugee AmeriCorps members will be charged with recruiting, placing, and supporting volunteers to facilitate integration into US society. What makes this volunteer program unique is that it will also focus on engaging former refugees and partnering with ethnic community based organizations. In order to do this, Refugee AmeriCorps members will develop new, as well as update, existing volunteer program materials to fit the demographics of this program. The Refugee AmeriCorps members will receive training in identifying, recruiting and managing volunteers, thereby developing skills in management and supervision that will be useful in their professional careers.

2. Our participating affiliates have highlighted eight main ways in which volunteers can provide assistance, including: job development, education, donations coordinator, administrative support, interpretation and translation services, legal counseling, community support, and staff development. Community orientation will include an emphasis on financial literacy.

3. Refugee AmeriCorps members will contribute to the quarterly assessments given to PC clients and will monitor client self-sufficiency throughout the program period. Long-term outcomes will include the establishment of an enhanced referral and support network for PC clients in the ten locations; improved access among clients with special needs to the tools and resources that will increase their capacity to become self-sufficient and integrate into their new communities; and improved case management and social service skills among the corps members.

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Notice Priority: This program will primarily address two CNCS focus areas: (a) Economic opportunity and volunteer involvement and (b) capacity building for Refugee AmeriCorps members. The underlying premise will be to serve the needs of vulnerable refugees, supporting integration through special support and case management, and through active engagement of community volunteers.

A. Economic Opportunity and Volunteer Involvement for Clients and the Local Communities: The focus of the program will be to assist economically disadvantaged refugees access services and benefits to contribute to their financial literacy and economic security in ten communities where HIAS affiliates work, while deepening the refugee community's commitment to service and volunteerism. The program will work on two complementary levels:

* Support the successful resettlement of vulnerable refugees: The cornerstone of our services is founded upon a strengths-based approach, beginning with an assessment of the client's strengths and how to build upon them, rather than focusing on their difficulties and how to resolve them. In this way, HIAS affiliates focus on helping refugees recognize their resiliency and capabilities. Supporting and leveraging those skills and abilities leads to a successful resettlement experience with increased economic opportunities. Additionally, HIAS affiliates direct their support in a manner which exposes the refugee communities to the value of civic engagement to better themselves, empower them to be active stakeholders, and encourage them to volunteer in their adopted communities. Refugee AmeriCorps members will disseminate financial education resources, provide consumer counseling, conduct job training sessions, refer refugee clients to public benefits, and connect these clients to community resources.

* Leverage additional volunteers to increase community service and volunteerism: The Refugee AmeriCorps members will support affiliate efforts to expand community volunteerism and will recruit at least one volunteer per month and coordinate at least one volunteer event every quarter. Volunteers will be paired with a refugee family, supporting their English language acquisition and comfort with navigating their local community. Volunteers will also assist with job development, helping refugees write resumes, practice interviewing, assist research recertification resources, and stress the importance of job retention and development.

B. Capacity building for the Refugee AmeriCorps Members through National Service: The HIAS network of Refugee AmeriCorps members will create a cohort for their individual and collective advancement. HIAS will create and foster a unique Refugee AmeriCorps identity by holding Refugee AmeriCorps monthly member meetings and trainings across our network. These in-person and virtual gatherings will build member morale by creating a network for support during the programmatic

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year, and provide a shared framework for articulating the shared goals of their mission. HIAS intends to conduct quarterly Refugee AmeriCorps member consultations and one annual in-person training. Finally, HIAS' standing monthly affiliate trainings will integrate capacity building concepts for Refugee AmeriCorps members and enhance their skills in volunteer coordination and economic development activities.

Each HIAS affiliate will solicit and screen applications, interview finalists and match selected Refugee AmeriCorps members' skills and language abilities with their local community. The affiliates will also assign, supervise and evaluate the tasks assigned to their respective Refugee AmeriCorps member. HIAS will require the affiliates to submit finalists' resumes and will work with the affiliate to ensure the most viable candidate is selected. HIAS will ensure that activities of the HIAS Refugee AmeriCorps members will be directed to:

- * Build a culture of civic engagement that helps a generation of New Americans "give back" and create tangible bridges and connections between newly arrived ethnic communities with local host communities in the US, where refugees are resettled;
- * Provide New Americans with work experience and leadership skills by addressing key integration and economic challenges faced by ethnic/refugee communities;
- * Create educational opportunities, leadership advancement, skills building and new competencies for Refugee AmeriCorps members through close work with HIAS partner affiliates and local organizations, to help achieve educational and career goals;
- * Assist New Americans on their way to economic self-reliance and ability to navigate a host of cultural, socio-economic and political expectations in the US;
- * Allow New Americans to work closely with host communities as ambassadors to solve community needs, including "welcoming the stranger" and refugee self-sufficiency and independence; and
- * Build the capacity of New Americans to work closely with their local community to address integration issues related to accessing and navigating the health, education, housing, public and social service, and employment systems in the US.

Evidence Base: HIAS' interventions are evidence-informed and based on data collected national analyses of the economic status of refugees, including studies conducted by ORR. In November 2008, ORR published an exploratory study "to learn what factors and approaches contributed to refugee economic self-sufficiency and to ORR's success in getting refugees employed." The research used

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qualitative methods including a literature review, discussion with a sample of ORR federal staff and resettlement service providers, attendance at ORR workshops and site visits. One of the main findings from the study is that employment-related strategies, such as collaborations among stakeholders and proactive post-placement intervention to resolve cultural differences between refugees and employers contribute to attaining and retaining employment. ORR's annual refugee surveys demonstrate that refugees' economic adjustment to the U.S. has generally been quick and successful. ORR employment outcomes data from FY 2006 indicate that from 54 -- 83 percent of refugees enter employment. (Source: Halpern, Peggy. "Refugee Economic Self-Sufficiency: An Exploratory Study of Approaches Used in Office of Refugee Resettlement Programs").

Each of HIAS' programs require regular measuring, tracking, evaluating, and reporting of outcomes related to capacity building by its affiliates and technical assistance activities. Statistical records are maintained through computer databases and/or written records which may be converted into periodic reports. HIAS' on-site monitoring to evaluate affiliates' activities include but are not limited to: questionnaires, meetings with local program staff and stakeholders, observation of program activities, and review of selected case/program files. A report evaluating the program and outlining recommendations for improvement is shared with local staff. Additionally, reports of program activities and outcomes are drafted for internal evaluation and funders, including statistics tracked, narratives on methodology and qualitative goals achieved, case studies, needs assessments, feasibility studies and others.

Data has demonstrated that our front-loaded services have produced positive outcomes. For example, HIAS conducted a three-year Preferred Communities (PC) project during the period September, 2010 through September, 2013, involving three of HIAS' affiliates. The goal of the program was to strengthen the long-term capacity of the participating HIAS affiliates to provide intensive case management and supportive services to vulnerable single female heads of households and their minor children and dependents. HIAS completed a report on the entire three-year project period based on information collected from monitoring and evaluation throughout the grant period. HIAS used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including analysis of enrollment/intake forms, quarterly client progress/outcome reports, discharge forms, monthly program reports, semi-annual reports, site visits, group teleconferences and regular communication (emails and phone calls) with individual sites. As a result of program activities, clients demonstrated increased understanding of U.S. culture, improvement in English, and knowledge of the school and hospital systems; and developed their ability to manage daily tasks (financial management and

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budgeting, transportation, shopping, housework, etc.). Their progress in these competencies helped to establish a stable environment for themselves and their dependents. Of the 38 single heads of households discharged from the program, 37 achieved overall self-sufficiency, meeting basic household expenses, navigating systems, and managing daily tasks.

HIAS' engagement of Refugee AmeriCorps members as volunteer coordinators is also supported by research. New York Cares developed a Volunteer Management System guide which illustrates best practices effectively engaging volunteers. Some of their practices which Refugee AmeriCorps members will be trained to utilize include: asking volunteers to step into leadership roles rather than assume they will naturally be drawn to the role; using lead volunteers to help manage the volunteer process including recruitment, intake, training, project management, and feedback; developing a system of awards and rewards; enlisting volunteer leaders in helping to collect and track data (Source: New York Cares, Great Volunteer Management System).

Refugee AmeriCorps Members -- Training, Supervision and Experience: The purpose of this program is to develop a cadre of New Americans ready and able to apply their energy and talents to public service while expanding socioeconomic, health and educational opportunities for the recently resettled refugees being served in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. This program will not only benefit the local community -- through support to refugees and promoting volunteerism and service - - but also provide the participating members with an opportunity to serve in their respective communities; receive a monthly stipend; and have access to financial support to pay for college or graduate school. HIAS affiliates will recruit individuals who are the best fit for this program, demonstrating leadership skills, knowledge of best practices in self-sufficiency and serving as dynamic team-players. HIAS will approve the final selection of members, supervise and advise the affiliates on training provided to the members, and directly provide training via conferences and conference calls. Through HIAS training, Refugee AmeriCorps members will have an opportunity to build career pathways, give back to the community and become empowered to build a legacy of service.

Training: Each affiliate organization will provide training during an orientation period, offering background on the organization's goals and objectives, strategies for change and values around service provision and community participation. Information and background on the refugee communities will also be shared to ensure that members have a greater understanding of the different refugee communities' history and needs. Each affiliate will outline their organizational rules and regulations

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with regards to approved and prohibited activities. HIAS will support affiliate organizations, providing oversight and information when encountering areas of common interest between the participating organizations. Trainings will also be provided on topics specific to our goals for the Refugee AmeriCorps program, including economic development amongst refugee populations and effective community support systems. Trainings will orient members to their communities, the economic need of resettled refugees, and the volunteer base they can tap into. Refugee AmeriCorps members will also be educated on the AmeriCorps program and its regulations. In addition, members will be provided specific skills to achieve desired program outcomes, such as leadership, program management, job training and development. HIAS will use funds provided by ORR through the Preferred Communities program to pay for travel by each of the ten members to the HIAS affiliates' national conference held in the spring of 2016 (location to be determined) and to two regional conferences specific to the HIAS Refugee AmeriCorps program during the program year.

Supervision: All affiliate organizations have extensive knowledge and experience providing guidance, support and supervision to staff, including short term staff members, such as interns and volunteers. Internal guidelines for training and supervision include: * Supervisors will receive additional training to support Refugee AmeriCorps members, understand the goals and scope of the CNCS AmeriCorps National EAP program. Specific emphasis will be placed on developing techniques to empower and train members for increased skill development and professional knowledge which will support their future economic and educational opportunities. * Supervisors will work with Refugee AmeriCorps members to ensure that they receive ongoing feedback on the effectiveness of their service provision and performance, with opportunities to evaluate their efforts and explore options for improved performance. * Supervisors will meet with Refugee AmeriCorps members on a regular basis, through both a formal weekly supervision session and through informal interactions as needed. Refugee AmeriCorps members will be integrated into regularly-held Resettlement Department meetings at their agency. Supervisors and other program staff will also spend time with the Refugee AmeriCorps as they work with refugees in the office and in the field, so that they can provide real-time guidance and feedback on an ongoing basis.

Supervisors from the participating HIAS affiliates will meet periodically by conference call, as well as at HIAS' annual affiliate conference, to discuss their experiences with the Refugee AmeriCorps program, share best practices and develop new activities and processes. These supervisors will also be trained on how to create an effective individual development plan for Refugee AmeriCorps members

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for their service period. These development plans will be created with Refugee AmeriCorps members and will outline their project goals and skills they intend to gain. Refugee Corps members will participate in HIAS conference calls and monthly affiliate trainings. HIAS staff will convene quarterly discussions with local supervisors and staff, and with Refugee AmeriCorps members, to facilitate this learning process and to develop centralized procedures for training and supervision. HIAS staff will also visit each of the ten participating affiliates during the program year to provide on-site training and technical assistance and review the operations of the program.

Experience: HIAS Refugee AmeriCorps members will gain skills and knowledge through their training, supervision and hands-on experience. Previous affiliate experiences with interns/volunteers inform our organizational approach to accepting and integrating these members into our team. Special emphasis will be placed on creating opportunities which are aligned with the individual member's interests, passion and ability so they are set up for success. Tasks will be consistent with affiliate organizational objectives and offer meaningful service experiences that are authentic and address real needs. HIAS will provide support and facilitate opportunities for connections between our Refugee AmeriCorps members in the ten sites, and work with our affiliates to promote opportunities for networking with other AmeriCorps members on local, regional and national levels. HIAS will foster a distinct Refugee AmeriCorps identity by conducting Refugee AmeriCorps-specific monthly conference calls and regular trainings, including the two regional conferences discussed above. These sessions will bring all ten members together and create networking opportunities. HIAS will also assist participating affiliates in developing team-bonding activities and codes of ethos. Our Refugee AmeriCorps members will develop an ethic of and skills for active and productive citizenship through intentional programming and tasks that highlight the value of community service. Our affiliates will make every effort to recruit Refugee AmeriCorps members through the local refugee communities where we work and have a long standing relationship.

Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification: HIAS and the ten affiliates will take steps to acknowledge our support and participation in the AmeriCorps program, including: * HIAS and HIAS affiliates will provide items of apparel with identifying information for our Refugee AmeriCorps members. * HIAS, HIAS affiliates, and Refugee AmeriCorps members will be trained on AmeriCorps' mission, values, and policies. * HIAS will convene virtual meetings of the Refugee AmeriCorps members throughout the network on a regular basis to provide opportunities to share their experience and provide peer

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support. * HIAS will fund member travel to our national affiliates' training conference in 2016 to attend sessions such as community leadership and development and will fund members' travel to two regional meetings during the year specifically related to this project.

Organizational Capability

HIAS and affiliate organizational background and staffing: HIAS is the global Jewish nonprofit organization working in 14 countries across five continents to ensure that refugees and displaced persons are protected. Together with our affiliates, HIAS resettles some 3,300 refugees from 30+ countries annually. Resettlement represents a commitment to public and private partnership. Local resettlement agencies help refugees start new lives in the U.S. by securing housing, basic furnishings, appliances and food; helping them apply for Social Security cards and registering their children in school; arranging medical appointments; teaching them to navigate social services, ESL classes, employment opportunities, and integration in the community; and by engaging community support and volunteerism. Beyond the immediate role of the resettlement agencies under contract with State Department, the Department of Health and Human Services, under the auspices of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, HIAS provides support to the States (school and health systems, cash assistance, etc.) and to social service providers including the national resettlement agency affiliates or local partners to provide assistance toward refugee integration and self-sufficiency.

HIAS is proposing to operate this program at ten of our largest resettlement affiliates in locations throughout the U.S. These sites have extensive experience resettling refugee populations. All of our affiliates proactively requested a Refugee AmeriCorps member and embrace the value of volunteer support to help with integration of refugees into their communities. In addition, five affiliates have prior experience hosting and training AmeriCorps/VISTA members, who have provided services and gained professional competency in essential areas such as employment services, cultural orientation, medical and benefits case work, client advocacy, financial literacy training, and health training, and have established orientation and supervision for volunteers. These members, however, are not currently being utilized by the agencies' refugee programs. The other sites have experience managing interns, volunteers and temporary employees. All ten sites have been approved for case resettlement by the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), have coordinated with and received written support from their respective State Refugee Coordinators and have favorable characteristics for refugee resettlement.

In FY 2015, we project that these affiliates will resettle approximately 2,700 out of HIAS' 3,600 refugees -- ranging from 130 in Clearwater, Florida to 550 in Columbus, Ohio. Each affiliate is

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projected to serve an average of 50 vulnerable refugee clients through this program, though the exact number will vary depending on the severity of the cases enrolled and the site-specific program design. This service number is calculated based on the service of one full-time Refugee AmeriCorps member at each of ten locations. Thus, this program will provide services to a minimum of 500 Preferred Communities clients in the program year.

A new partnership between CNCS and the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) established the Refugee AmeriCorps program. ORR has requested that the national resettlement agencies leverage Preferred Communities (PC) funding to cover a portion of national administrative costs, including national office staffing and staff/member training. Our budget includes basic support for management and supervision of the program at the national office and local site levels, while providing support to Refugee AmeriCorps members. All Refugee AmeriCorps members ("Refugee AmeriCorps members") will be fully funded by ORR to engage in capacity building and direct service activities. ORR has indicated that \$25,000 per Refugee AmeriCorps member is available in the ORR budget for HIAS to support ten members operating with a total budget of \$250,000. The budget utilizes the majority of ORR funds for Refugee AmeriCorps member support - \$200,000 (80% of the total) - with \$50,000 (20%) for administrative support costs for the ten operating sites participating in the program. The budget will fund a fair member living allowance in the middle of the allowable range determined by CNCS guidelines. As shown in the budget, HIAS will use additional ORR funds to pay for headquarters administrative expenses, including AmeriCorps identification materials and member travel to CNCS training meetings, as required in the program design. HIAS will be devoting .25 FTE of a staff member to oversee the Refugee AmeriCorps program.

Organizational commitment: At the onset of implementing the Refugee AmeriCorps program, HIAS will develop tools to assist participating affiliate organizations, which will include: program enrollment forms, objectives and indicators for performance measurement, and quarterly outcomes forms. Training on these tools will be provided. Further, affiliate staff and Refugee AmeriCorps members will be trained on how to collect data regularly and accurately. HIAS will analyze the data collected and use it to inform future project development. HIAS will provide oversight to its affiliates participating in the Refugee AmeriCorps program. HIAS plans to conduct a monitoring and training visit to each of the participating affiliates during the program year. HIAS monitors will meet with the Refugee AmeriCorps member, review the services being provided by the Member by observing classes and/or member interaction with volunteers and refugees, and assess Refugee AmeriCorps member

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activities and review their case files to ensure program objectives are being met.

Compliance and Accountability: HIAS has had contracts with departments of the United States Government to administer services to refugees for over thirty years. We administer the Reception and Placement Cooperative Agreement through the State Department's Bureau of Refugees, Population, and Migration. We also administer the Matching Grant and Preferred Communities Programs through the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, a division of the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

HIAS has two separate units devoted to compliance and oversight. The HIAS Grants Management team provides financial compliance and accountability oversight for all federally administered grants. The U.S. Programs team provides technical assistance and training, including orientation for all new affiliate staff, along with programmatic oversight. This unit also conducts regular on-site monitoring visits of our affiliates for the various grants to ensure compliance with grant requirements. We will include reviews of the Refugee AmeriCorps programs as part of these monitoring visits. When instances of risk or noncompliance are identified, HIAS will require corrective actions and conduct follow-up to ensure these corrective actions are implemented. Similarly, we will review program activities to ensure that prohibited or unallowable activities are not carried out by the members.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

We are not requesting any CNCS funds, as per an agreement between CNCS and the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), a division of the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The \$320,000 in the Grantee Share will be provided by ORR as a supplement to an existing grant, Preferred Communities Intensive Case Management Program. We plan to spend \$25,000 per full-time member for a total of \$250,000 for 10 full-time members. This consists of \$20,000 per member for living allowance, FICA and health insurance, as well as \$5,000 per member for administrative support to the affiliate agencies where we will place the members. That support will cover the cost of background checks, orientation, training, supervision, and other administrative expenses. In addition, HIAS will use \$70,900 in Preferred Communities funds to cover .25 FTE staff at headquarters (salary and fringes), travel costs for each of the 10 Refugee AmeriCorps members to the annual HIAS national affiliates conference and to two regional conferences during the year, and HIAS headquarters travel for one visit to each site during the year and to the national and regional conferences.

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We understand that as a potential new grantee to CNCS, we are required to complete one (1) pre-award document and an on-line financial certification and National Service Criminal History check course prior to the award of our grant. We understand the Office of Grants Management will send us a separate email regarding the completion and submission of the following documents: Financial Management Survey Form (FMS); and the certification we have taken the on-line courses 'Key Concepts of Financial Management for Federal Grantees' and 'National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) Course.' We understand that these documents must be completed and returned to the Office of Grants Management as quickly as possible to ensure a timely Notice of Grant Award should we be selected for award.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

1. The application outlines a variety of different member interventions which include both direct service as well as volunteer recruitment and management. Please further clarify and describe each proposed member intervention to include the member responsibilities under each, the proposed estimated time and intensity the members will spend on each, and the specific outcomes the program plans to achieve under each of the proposed interventions.

Proposed member interventions will include both direct service and volunteer recruitment and management. We estimate that the ten Refugee AmeriCorps members will dedicate 50% of their time to case management liaising with community resources that foster self-sufficiency such as employers and public benefits offices. Concurrently, they will dedicate 25% of their time to recruiting and training volunteers, and 25% to volunteer coordination.

A. Direct services, specifically pertaining to economic self-sufficiency

Through its Preferred Communities (PC) program funded by ORR, HIAS affiliates provide intensive case management to refugees most in need of special support. These vulnerable clients include single mothers, victims of torture, LGBTI populations, and refugees suffering from complex medical issues. PC Case Managers assist our clients in navigating the healthcare system, medical

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appointment scheduling, obtaining mental health care, facilitating moves to subsidized housing, and financial budgeting. Refugee AmeriCorps members will enhance case management services provided to 500 refugees by supporting the case work provided to PC clients. Specifically, they will support case management services directly tied to economic self-sufficiency. Refugee AmeriCorps members will be participating in employment-related service delivery such as orienting clients on financial literacy, helping clients create budgets, and applying for appropriate jobs. Additional activities may include helping clients discover options for higher education. Other case management activities members will perform include: conducting assessments of individuals' progress in navigating daily tasks, such as shopping for basic goods, taking public transportation, doing housework, and tracking expenses. Finally, they will recruit volunteers who can provide additional capacity in meeting program goals for client self-sufficiency. Our outcomes reports have demonstrated that enrollees in extended case management programs are more likely to achieve basic self-sufficiency.

Measuring performance in direct service provisions:

- ¿ Activity: Provide at least 220 clients with financial literacy education

- o Outcome 1: At least 220 economically disadvantaged individuals participate in financial literacy education

- o Outcome 2: At least 175 participants demonstrate facility with basic financial concepts

- ¿ Activity: Provide at least 220 clients with job training and skills (ESL, workplace behavior, etc.)

- o Outcome 1: At least 175 participate in job training and other pre-employment services

- ¿ Activity: Support job placements for at least 220 clients within 6 months of arrival

- o Outcome 1: 175 economically disadvantaged individuals placed in jobs

B. Volunteer recruitment and management

Each Refugee AmeriCorps member will be responsible for identifying and recruiting 12 new and active volunteers during the year. Members will also incorporate at least three effective volunteer management strategies into their organization's program. These strategies will include: integrating volunteers into organizational staff chart, orienting volunteers on organization's mission and values, developing strategic plans alongside volunteers to achieve programmatic goals, and identifying strong volunteers to be group leaders.

Refugee AmeriCorps members will also manage the volunteers to supplement community programs. These community programs will be designed to engage refugees in enhanced orientation on

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job skills training, job placement services and financial literacy classes. Volunteers can provide assistance, including: job development, education, coordination of donations, administrative support, interpretation and translation, legal counseling, community support, and staff development. An estimated 220 adult refugees will be served in total with the outcome of gaining skills for economic success.

Measuring performance in volunteer recruitment, training, and management:

* Activity: Provide at least 120 volunteers with orientation on the local refugee community

Outcome 1: At least 110 volunteers understand the contextual background of the local refugee community

Outcome 2: At least 100 volunteers demonstrate basic understanding of social and economic needs of the local refugee community

* Activity: Provide at least 120 volunteers with skills training on mentorship and basic case management practices focused on achieving economic self-sufficiency

Outcome 1: At least 110 volunteers become proficient in mentoring

Outcome 2: At least 100 volunteers are capable of leading financial literacy and other pre-employment services training for refugee clients

Outcome 3: At least 100 volunteers effectively support case work of affiliate case managers

* Activity: Support at least 120 volunteers with providing financial literacy and basic case management to refugee clients

Outcome 1: Refugee AmeriCorps members supervise, support, and offer professional development to 120 volunteers

2. Please further clarify the members' roles related to volunteer recruitment and management, and the process for which members will recruit, train, and manage the volunteers at each site.

Refugee AmeriCorps members will be charged with recruiting, training, and managing volunteers who will help foster the integration of our most vulnerable refugees.

Recruitment: The Refugee AmeriCorps members will support affiliate efforts to expand community volunteerism. Members will recruit at least one volunteer per month and coordinate at least one volunteer event every quarter. Utilizing the affiliates' current volunteer base, the Refugee AmeriCorps member will liaise with active volunteers, engage inactive volunteers, and perform outreach to recruit new volunteers. New volunteers will be recruited from local colleges, religious institutions, and

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businesses seeking to bolster their corporate responsibility activities. Specific recruitment strategies will include attending career fairs at local colleges and speaking to religious leaders about the needs of their organizations and those of refugees. As a coordinator of volunteers engaged in economic development activities, the Refugee AmeriCorps member will engage these volunteers, foster a cohesive identity of advocates for economic self-sufficiency in resettled refugees, and manage volunteer tasks.

Training: All Refugee AmeriCorps members will orient the volunteers in either a classroom setting or one-on-one sessions, depending on the affiliates' standard training model and volunteer schedules. Orientations will offer strategies for service provision and community participation. Information and background on the refugee communities will also be shared to ensure that volunteers have a greater understanding of the different refugee communities' history and needs. Because volunteers will focus on economic self-sufficiency activities for refugees, Refugee AmeriCorps members will be actors in educating the volunteers on effective financial practices, local banking protocol, and other tools that will be taught to the refugee clients.

Management: Refugee AmeriCorps members will develop new, as well as update existing, volunteer program materials to fit this program. Refugee AmeriCorps members will be trained to keep track of volunteers and their activities by keeping updated volunteer contact sheets, developing a volunteer schedule, holding bi-weekly volunteer meetings, creating a cohesive volunteer team identity, and rewarding volunteers for their contributions to the affiliate's mission. For issues with volunteers that may arise, affiliate staff will work with the members to rectify problems appropriately.

3. Please provide further detail outlining the specific added value of the proposed AmeriCorps members when incorporated into the current program.

All our participating affiliates proactively requested a Refugee AmeriCorps member and embrace the value of volunteer support to help with integration of refugees into their communities. Refugee AmeriCorps will place members with HIAS affiliates where the Preferred Communities (PC) program operates to supplement and expand intensive case management services. The Refugee AmeriCorps members will help our ten affiliates in the PC program address the economic challenges faced by PC enrollees. As previously mentioned, PC enrollees require intensive case management services of up to a year due to their vulnerable status (i.e. single parenthood, complex medical conditions, and sexual/gender minority). Such refugee families face extraordinary challenges in achieving the economic and social self-sufficiency, the primary goal of the U.S. refugee admissions program. They also face challenges in adapting to a society and culture where the role, view, and expectations of

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medical professionals, mental health care professionals, social service providers, and family members are far different from those in their own culture. Specifically, navigating the U.S. healthcare system, a lack of access to linguistically-appropriate services, transportation difficulties, culture shock, and the pressure to quickly become self-sufficient creates a significant challenge to our most vulnerable clients from successfully integrating into American society.

Unfortunately, the needs of our clientele outweighs our current staff's capacity. Most of our PC sites are supported by a single Case Manager. In Charlotte, for instance, the Case Manager's case load includes over 40 active clients which include HIV+ status persons, domestic violence victims, widows, and disabled children. Participating affiliates have volunteer programs which engage local students and community members in donations drives and English teaching. However, there is not sufficient professional coordination of skilled volunteers with economic expertise to supplement case management services. The Refugee AmeriCorps members will help address these challenges, significantly increasing our affiliates' organizational capacity to serve refugees in these communities. Refugee AmeriCorps members will engage in activities which add value to and support existing case management services. As a leader of economic development activities, the Refugee AmeriCorps member can expand donation programs; establish a culturally appropriate food pantry; develop peer mentoring and support programs; provide training on public transportation navigation; perform outreach to local employers; and develop job training curricula. Further, the members will bolster volunteer bases which can support PC case management work. This added capacity will lessen the load of our case managers, which will lead to improved service delivery and client outcomes.

4. Please further describe the national organization's plan for staffing and oversight of the proposed program, including number of staff and related roles at the national level, as well as the plan for ensuring sites have consistent training and supervision.

The HIAS Refugee AmeriCorps Program will be integrated within an existing national program, the Preferred Communities Program for Intensive Case Management, which all the local agencies which will receive a Refugee AmeriCorps Member to participate in. In our application to the Office of Refugee Resettlement for FY 2016, we included additional staffing at the HIAS Headquarters level for training, monitoring and oversight of this AmeriCorps program. We will devote .40 FTE specifically to this management, consisting of .05 FTE of the Project Director, .30 of a Program Manager, and .05 of an Administrative Assistant. The Program Manager will be responsible for developing materials and trainings for the affiliated agencies, and he/she and the Project Director will conduct a training and/or

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monitoring visit to each agency during the program year. The Administrative Assistant will provide administrative support.

HIAS HQ will begin working with the affiliates as soon as we are notified of the Notice of Grant Award. We will convene a training to discuss Member responsibilities, strategies for identifying and recruiting candidates for Member positions, and requirements of the AmeriCorps program.

Once Members have been selected, we will convene periodic meetings of the affiliate supervisors by conference call to discuss their experiences with the program, share best practices, and develop new activities and processes. We will similarly conduct regular calls with the AmeriCorps members.

We will bring together supervisors and Members during our annual affiliates' conference, which is planned to be held in the spring of 2016, and will subsidize their travel and lodging. We will also convene two regional trainings during the year and again subsidize the attendees' costs.

Finally, we requested funding from ORR to pay for the training and/or monitoring visit to each affiliate. During these visits, the monitor will meet with the AmeriCorps member one-on-one as well as with his/her supervisor, meet with volunteers and clients, provide training as necessary. Monitors will ensure compliance with Refugee AmeriCorps program requirements and identify additional training opportunities when gaps in service are noted.

5. Discuss how, in their roles, members will not displace, duplicate or supplant staff.

The participating affiliates expressed a desire for added support in their intensive case management program. In a survey we posed to them, they described specific ways in which Refugee AmeriCorps members will augment their services, including: job development, coordinating donations, administrative support, interpretation and translation services, volunteer-base development, and cultural orienting. Cultural orientation will include an emphasis on financial literacy and will be enhanced by having a member of the refugee community serving as a resource to staff and clients.

The existing limited funding only allows for direct service delivery within our affiliates. However, the services the Refugee AmeriCorps members will provide, particularly involving volunteers, are currently not funded. For instance, our affiliate in Ohio, US Together, offers a family-focused financial literacy education and support program, which is integrated with intensive employment services. Unfortunately, their capacity is limited to a maximum of 70 refugees a year. With the addition of a Refugee AmeriCorps member, they will be able to provide more educational sessions in this program, thus serving more clients in Columbus and expand the program to their site in Cleveland. HIAS' affiliate in Philadelphia provides orientation sessions on achieving economic self-

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sufficiency. Refugee AmeriCorps members will contribute to these sessions by orienting clients on how to effectively access affordable, yet nutritious, food in the Philadelphia area.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics