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Executive Summary

Washington Service Corps (WSC), a multi-focus intermediary program overseeing a consortium of approximately 350 partner sites across the state, will have 567 AmeriCorps positions who will provide services at under-resourced partner sites that offer: (1). disaster-preparedness education; (2). financial literacy education and job development services; (3). tutoring and engaging enrichment activities; (4). education and training about environmentally-conscious practices and services to treat parkland; (5). information about health programs; health education for adults; nutrition education for children; outreach and direct supports for seniors; and (6). volunteer opportunities for veterans.

At the end of the first program year, the members will be responsible for the following outcomes: (1). 17,500 individuals will increase their knowledge of disaster preparedness; (2). 450 low-income individuals will have improved financial knowledge and 900 low-income individuals will improve their workplace readiness; (3). 2,400 students will increase proficiency in literacy and/or math; 1,050 students will demonstrate improved engagement attitudes; and 420 students will demonstrate improved engagement behaviors; (4). 9,000 individuals will have increased knowledge of environmentally-conscious practices; 3,000 will express intent to protect the environment or reduce energy consumption; and 900 acres of treated parkland or other public/tribal lands will be improved; (5). 4,900 individuals will increase their knowledge about health programs; 2,100 will increase their knowledge of community health status, health care needs and positive health behaviors; 1,800 students will increase their knowledge of healthy eating habits and resources; and 420 seniors will report having increased social connections and/or perceived social support; (6). 150 veterans will articulate at least one benefit they received as a result of volunteering and express their intent to volunteer in the future. In addition, through WSC's technical assistance, training, and support, 350 under-resourced organizations will expand their ability to address community needs.

The program will focus on the CNCS Focus Areas of Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, and Veterans and Military Families. In addition, locally-defined focus areas will also be addressed. AmeriCorps members will recruit and leverage the efforts of an additional 20,000 volunteers, who will extend and enhance AmeriCorps members' service, increasing members' capacity to provide the services listed above.

With the CNCS investment of $7,149,870, WSC will leverage $2,927,521 in member-placement fees from project sites.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

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1. Problem/Need

a. How Program Will Address Community Need

(i). WSC Helps Under-Resourced Organizations Meet Pressing Community Needs

The majority of the organizations WSC partners with lack the resources, organizational infrastructure, and supports necessary to effectively address many of the needs that exist in the communities they serve. To help sites address identified community needs, WSC: (a). places members in sites serving under-resourced communities, providing them with meaningful service experiences; (b). provides ongoing training and technical assistance to site staff and members to ensure effective implementation of services, positive member experiences, and adherence to CNCS rules and regulations; and (c). supports sites in providing training and ongoing support to members.

(ii). WSC Places Members to Serve Under-Resourced Communities

In the upcoming grant cycle that begins in 2015, WSC will place 630 Full Time AmeriCorps members annually in approximately 385 different sites across the state, addressing critical needs in both CNCS Focus Areas and locally-defined areas of need. Members' efforts will align with WSC and CNCS goals and with the goals of the state agencies responsible for each service area:

DISASTER SERVICES. 35 members placed in 20 different organizations will provide education and training about disaster preparedness focusing on low-income communities, which typically are at greater risk for, suffer more severe effects from, and take longer to recover from disasters than other communities. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY. 85 members placed in 50 different organizations will provide low-income individuals financial literacy education using curricula that includes pre-defined learning objectives and/or job development services that include training in soft skills for work readiness. EDUCATION. 305 members placed in 170 different organizations will provide low-income students with: (a). evidence-based tutoring and other academic supports in literacy and math at least 60 minutes weekly and/or (b). engaging enrichment activities aligned with school learning at least 60 minutes weekly. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP. 55 members placed in 40 different organizations will: (a). provide environmental education and training for individuals, with a focus on low-income households with children or (b). engage in ecosystem treatment activities such as removing invasive species, planting native plants, building riparian buffers, and clearing improperly disposed waste. HEALTHY FUTURES. 123 members placed in 70 different organizations will provide: (a). information about health insurance, health care access, and health benefits programs; (b). health education; (c). nutrition education activities to school-age children to reduce childhood obesity; and/or (d). food, transportation, or other services to help seniors remain in their homes independently.

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VETERANS. 27 members placed in 15 different organizations will: (a). recruit veterans and non-veterans as volunteers; and/or (b). provide services and referrals to veterans to address their financial, physical, emotional, or mental health needs. Some members will be veterans themselves.

b. Severity and Prevalence of Community Need

(i). Need for a Multi-Focus Intermediary to Coordinate and Support Members' Service

Many of WSC's consortium partners are either small organizations with severely limited budgets and staff capacity or larger organizations that lack the capacity to fully meet the intensive needs of the diverse communities in which they operate, leaving many community members underserved even in metropolitan areas that appear to have a wealth of community resources. Since the economic downturn of 2008, many of these organizations have experienced both significant reductions in funding at the federal, state, and local level and substantial increases in requests for service from community members. In education, these changes have been exacerbated by mandates for increased rigor and pressures to improve performance on standardized tests.

(ii). Needs in Communities Where Members Will Serve

Without CNCS-funded support from WSC, many partner organizations lack the ability to fully address the multiple community needs that research indicates exist across Washington. The state's needs in each CNCS Priority Areas are described below.

DISASTER SERVICES: The state is increasingly at risk of significant impacts from natural and human-caused hazards, such as floods, wildfires, and earthquakes. Despite these risks, many of the state's citizens, like other Americans, are unprepared for the impact of disasters. According to the Insurance Information Institute (2000), while just over half of all Americans have experienced at least one emergency situation, only 40% of households are prepared for a disaster (American Red Cross, 2009), and only one in 10 households has created a family emergency plan, gathered an emergency supply kit, or trained in First Aid and CPR. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY: (a). The official state unemployment of under 6% (Washington State Employment Security Department, 2014) hides significant disparities in unemployment and underemployment for people living in poverty. The American Community Survey indicates that while the 2013 state unemployment rate was 8%, the rate was almost 32% among individuals at or below the poverty line. (b). Analysis of a 2003 Washington state survey of financial literacy (Moore) showed that not only is overall financial literacy low (only 30% of those surveyed could correctly answer most financial questions asked), financial literacy among people who fell victim to predatory lenders was even lower (less than 22% could answer correctly). Predatory lending victims were even less likely than the general public to have basic money

management skills or to understand how to calculate interest rates and were more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as taking out credit card cash advances, using pay-day loans, and using mortgages to consolidate credit card debt. EDUCATION. (a). According to 2013-2014 state academic assessment data, 44% of 8th graders do not meet standards in math and 28% of 8th graders do not meet standards in reading, with similar achievement rates at all grade levels. For low-income students, those figures are even more alarming: 59% of low-income 8th graders do not meet standards in math and 40% of low-income 8th graders do not meet standards in reading, with similar disparities at all grade levels. (b). Disparities in engagement follow the same trends: in the 2012-2013 school year, Washington schools reported over 1.9 million unexcused absences, 73% of which were among low-income students. In the same school year, schools reported disciplinary incidents for almost 59,000 students, 72% of whom were low-income. And, among the more than 47,000 students suspended or expelled from school that year, 74% were low-income. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP. According to the state's Department of Ecology, rising sea levels threaten large urban centers and smaller communities along 2,300 miles of shoreline, and steady loss of wildlife habitat and alarming declines in fish and wildlife populations indicate a critical need to restore and protect the land and waters of the state, particularly the Puget Sound area. The Sound supports 71% of the jobs in the state and is home to a complex ecosystem dependent upon the health of the waterway (Puget Sound Partnership, 2014). The results of multiple studies reviewed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency indicate that "certain groups of people are particularly sensitive to climate change impacts, such as the elderly, the infirm, children, native and tribal groups, and low-income populations." A quantitative survey conducted in 2001 and 2002 (Martin, Williams, & Clark, 2006) found that low-income populations have less knowledge about the need for environmental stewardship and are less likely to engage in environmentally-conscious behaviors such as recycling. HEALTHY FUTURES. (a). The Health Resources & Services Administration and Public Health of Seattle and King County data shows that 90,000 low-income individuals in Seattle are not yet connected to one of the area's Community Health Centers, which provide healthcare regardless of ability to pay and over 50,000 King County residents do not have health insurance. (b). A survey conducted for the WA Health Benefits Exchange (GMMB, 2011), showed that 30% of respondents indicate they need an in-person navigator to help them access benefits. Those most in need are individuals in poverty, those age 40 to 64, those with a high school degree or less, and those who use the internet infrequently. (c). State Department of Health data (2012) shows that one quarter of all children and more than half of low-income children in the state are overweight or obese. (d).

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Research (Gibler, 2003; Redford & Cook, 2001) shows that low-income seniors are at greater risk for chronic illness and disabilities and have more difficulty carrying out the activities of daily living, making it hard for them to remain at home independently. VETERANS. According to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, many of the state's 600,000 veterans face significant challenges when returning from service, including loss of purpose and a sense of isolation; lack of access to healthcare and behavioral health services; post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and/or major depression; and joblessness. A 2009 survey (Civic Enterprises) found that while over 90% of veterans strongly desire to continue their service at home, almost 70% said they had not been contacted by community service institutions. This figure is particularly relevant given that Washington ranks 8th out of 50 states in the percentage of military veterans (American Community Survey, 2004).

2. Theory of Change and Logic Model

By placing AmeriCorps members and providing organizations with the training and systems they need to effectively support members' service, WSC not only extends organizations' ability to meet identified community needs but also increases opportunities for members to serve, develop a lifelong appreciation for civic engagement, and gain valuable employment-pathway experience. In the 2015-18 funding cycle, WSC members and the 20,000 community volunteers they recruit will:

* Provide education and training about disaster preparedness to help 28,000 individuals (70% of participants) increase their knowledge of disaster preparedness and will have the tools they need to understand their risk of disaster and know how to develop a plan for what to do if disaster strikes

* Provide financial literacy education and support and job development services to help 450 low-income individuals (75% of participants) have improved financial knowledge and 900 low-income individuals (60% of participants) improve their workplace readiness.

* Provide low-income students with: (a). tutoring and other academic supports to help 3,120 students (60% of those completing the program) increase proficiency in literacy and/or math and (b). engaging enrichment activities aligned with school learning to help 1,050 completing students (50%) show improved engagement attitudes and 420 completing students (20%) show improved behaviors.

* (a). Provide environmental education and training to citizens to help 9,000 individuals (60% of participants) have increased knowledge of environmentally-conscious practices and 3,000 individuals (20% of participants) express intent to protect the environment or reduce energy consumption and (b). engage in ecosystem treatment activities in parkland or other public/tribal lands to improve 900 acres of land (60% of the 1,500 acres treated).

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* (a). Provide information on health care access, health insurance and health benefit programs to help 4,900 individuals (70% of participants in information sessions) increase their knowledge about these topics; (b). provide information on positive health behaviors and lifestyle changes that are conducive to health in individuals and groups to help 2,100 (70% of participants in health education) increase their knowledge of these topics; (c). provide nutrition education or nutrition-related activities to help 1,800 low-income schoolchildren (60% of participants) increase their knowledge of healthy eating habits and resources; (d). provide food, transportation, or other services to help 420 seniors or disabled adults (60% of those served) have increased social ties and/or perceived social support.

* (a). Recruit veterans as members and volunteers on community service projects to help 150 veterans (50% of those engaged in community service) articulate benefits they received as a result of service and express their intent to engage in volunteer service in the future; and (b). provide services and resource referrals to help 300 veterans (60% of those who receive services) access at least one new or previously unused service.

In addition, through WSC's technical assistance, training, and support, at least 385 under-resourced organizations will expand their ability to address community needs.

WSC's Logic Model illustrates the way in which the proposed program activities will achieve the intended CNCS and applicant-defined output and outcome targets in each Focus Area. Sites will measure progress toward output and outcome targets with valid, reliable assessments. WSC will work with organizations, as needed, to identify valid assessments.

3. Evidence Basis

In September 2014, WSC awarded approximately 50% of anticipated service locations where it will place members in teams of five or more (Team Placement sites) during the grant cycle. Following is a sample of the studies that provide moderate evidence basis for selected service strategies.

Disaster Preparedness: A Citizen Preparedness Review, published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 2007, summarized research findings published about emergency preparedness and showed that barriers to citizen preparedness include a sense that threats are not urgent and the belief that they are already prepared, among other barriers. Member-provided disaster preparedness training will include curriculum that address the barriers identified in the study as well as basic first aid, gathering a preparedness kit, and planning for emergencies. Economic Opportunity: A survey of individuals who completed a financial literacy course (Danes, 2004) found that both financial knowledge and self-reported financial behaviors, such as comparison shopping and paying debts on time, improved immediately following course completion. Education: In 2009, a meta-

analysis study (Ritter, et al) provided evidence that programs did not have to be highly structured to have a positive effect, nor did they have to use a particular type of person to be a tutor. The study concluded that as educators across the country work to meet adequate yearly progress goals in state accountability systems, and as they seek affordable ways to offer additional service to students at risk of not meeting annual academic goals, it would be worthwhile to consider structured, volunteer tutoring programs to improve reading and language skills. In 2014, MDRC, a nonprofit nonpartisan education and social policy firm, released findings from a rigorous evaluation of a tutoring program involving AmeriCorps members and the volunteers they recruited. The study evaluated 19 schools in three states, involved more than 1,200 second- to fifth-graders, and showed that tutoring provided by trained volunteers had a positive and statistically significant impact on reading comprehension, reading fluency, and sight-word reading and was effective for students from different grades and different baseline reading levels. Environmental Stewardship: (a). a moderate-level evidence summary of research findings about effective ways to change human conservation behaviors published by Monroe (2011), which includes a research finding from Zint, et al (2002), identified strategies that nudge individuals and society toward more responsible environmental behaviors: targeting a specific behavior change and cultivating environmental literacy through educational programs. When trained service providers offered education using identified strategies, participants' knowledge increased and they were likely to express an intent to change practices to be more environmentally-conscious. (b). a review of strategies for restoration in the Pacific Northwest (Dunwiddie & Bakker, 2011) found that effective techniques not only include a focus on native species, systems resilience, and holistic interactions and but also take into consideration potential climate-based environmental changes in the future. Healthy Futures: According to a qualitative assessment study of health-exchange enrollment in 11 states (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2014), people who receive in-person assistance are more likely to sign up for health care benefits than those who attempt to complete applications on their own at home or get over-the-phone help and the top-performing states in enrollment used volunteers extensively to provide enrollment information. Veterans: A matched-cohort study of post-9/11 disabled veterans (Matthieu, et al, 2011) found that those serving as volunteers at not-for-profit organizations reported not only that the experience produced life-changing effects by reconnecting veterans to their communities and providing them a renewed sense of purpose in life and but also that a majority of veterans sustained their volunteer work into the future.

In February 2015, WSC will award the remaining service locations for placement of 123 members

individually or in teams of up to four people (Individual Placement sites). Priority for site selection will go to organizations that: (a) provide the strongest evidence for their proposed interventions, and (b) link their interventions to identified needs and proposed outcomes through a logic model that includes a well-articulated theory of change.

4. Notice Priority

As illustrated in the accompanying Logic Model, WSC is a multi-focus intermediary organization that provides a wide range of technical assistance and support to partner organizations in urban, suburban, and rural areas across the state. WSC chooses the Priority Performance Measures it will address based both on knowledge of the state's needs in each area and on past experience with partner organizations' capacity to provide services and meet targets in those measures. WSC uses an intensive Request for Applications (RFA) process to select partner organizations, many of which have limited financial and staff resources. WSC supports selected partners with targeted technical assistance and training to help ensure they are successful in their efforts. Measures to be addressed in the upcoming funding cycle include: (a). Measure D1, individuals that received CNCS-supported services in disaster preparedness (with an Applicant Determined Outcome, increased knowledge of disaster preparedness). (b). Measures ED1, low-income students who start in a CNCS-supported education program and ED2, number who complete the program (with outcome measures ED5, improved academic achievement; ED27A, improved engagement attitudes; and ED27B, improved engagement behaviors). (c). Measure EN3, individuals receiving education or training in environmentally-conscious practices (with outcome measures EN3.1, increased knowledge of those practices and EN3.2, intent to change behavior). (d). Measure EN4, acres of parkland or tribal lands treated (with outcome measure EN4.1, acres improved). (e). Measure V1, veterans receiving CNCS-supported assistance (with an Applicant Determine Outcome, accessing at least one new or previously unused service). (f). Measure V2, veterans engaged in service opportunities (with an Applicant Determined Outcome, articulate at least one benefit from service and express intent to engage in future volunteer service). In addition, partners will address Complementary Performance Measures in Economic Opportunity (O1 and O9) and Healthy Futures (H2, H4, H6, and H8).

WSC meets CNCS Funding Priority criteria in that 507 (80%) of the requested members will address CNCS national performance measures, as noted above. Of those, 40% will specifically address the Education Focus Area, with the outcome of improving academic performance.

5. Member Training

All AmeriCorps Members participate in:

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(a). An Orientation/Initial-Service webinar, during which WSC staff outline the roles, responsibilities, and key duties of both AmeriCorps members and the site supervisors responsible for managing them. The webinar topics also include CNCS rules and regulations, data tracking and reporting requirements, and prohibited activities. (b). The State Launch, hosted by Serve Washington (the Washington Commission for National and Community Service). This celebratory and inspiring event recognizes the commitment that members are making and builds community among individual members and teams. (c). Training in the core competencies WSC has developed to ensure effective and meaningful member service (competencies include: an understanding of what AmeriCorps affiliation means; cultural competency to serve diverse populations; the ability to participate as a team member and to develop team skills in others; performance measure management; leadership, presentation and facilitation skills; volunteer management; and life after AmeriCorps). (d). Training in effective data collection techniques to help ensure members and sites accurately monitor progress toward targets. For sites at which WSC places one to four members, training in the core WSC competencies is provided through WSC's annual three-day statewide SERVES Institute training conference that covers both required Americorps information and the WSC-defined core competencies members must achieve. For sites at which WSC places teams of five or more members, training in the core competencies as well as training for any project-specific knowledge or skills is provided by host sites (and funded by WSC). Each site submits a training plan for core competency and project-specific training and outlines activities that will ensure sustainable support for members. This plan must articulate the intended outcomes of all training activities.

Other training includes quarterly webinars and support by phone and email or during regularly-scheduled site visits. During these site visits, WSC staff ensure that site supervisors and members are fully aware of CNCS rules and regulations, including prohibited activities. In addition, site supervisors provide regular coaching and guidance for members, including site- and project-specific information and support in training volunteers.

6. Member Supervision

Sites must ensure that staff assigned oversight of members have the time, skills, and support necessary to provide adequate supervision, including supervision for members placed at other service sites or at off-site service locations, give supervisors the support necessary for them to effectively fulfill their supervisory function, and give members the resources they need to effectively carry out their service activities. Site-level supervisory expectations are outlined in a contract with WSC.

WSC Program Coordinators provide direct oversight of and guidance for site supervisors to ensure

supervisors are able to deliver effective support and supervision for members. Coordinators conduct intensive site risk assessments, which analyze each site's governance structure and financial strength and review the performance measures the site is addressing, then provide technical assistance and training based on the level of risk identified. Technical assistance includes best-practice strategies for member management and programmatic support; information regarding compliance with AmeriCorps rules, regulations, policies, and procedures; and monitoring of progress toward site performance measures, to ensure sites collect all performance measure data and stay on track to meet performance measure outcomes.

7. Member Experience

(a). Employment Skills and Experiences: By serving as part of a team within the agency where they are placed, members gain extensive experience and skills valued by future employers, including time management, project planning and project management skills, teamwork and problem-solving, effective data collection and analysis, working with diverse populations, and skills directly related to their service. Through a survey conducted in 2012 of 113 former WSC members, 86.7% of those who responded indicated they joined AmeriCorps for work experience; 77% indicated their experience in AmeriCorps influenced their career path; and 66% of the respondents were employed in less than six months after term of service, while another 10% were employed within the first year after their term. (b). Opportunities for Reflection: Members engage in monthly reflection on their service through stories they submit that articulate the impact their service has on them and on the people they serve. On a quarterly basis, members provide stories about particularly high-impact experiences. In addition, upon exiting the program, members submit a reflection about their experience, highlighting the skills and experiences they've gained, and what the impact on the community has been. (c). Access to Meaningful Experiences: All members provide critically-needed services that benefit individuals and families in under-resourced communities and have the opportunity to provide significant and measurable changes in the lives or environments of the people in those communities. (d). Networking: Larger teams make regional connections with other teams through formal training and networking sessions at least twice a year. The annual 3-day SERVES Institute training conference provides networking and connections for individual placement members. Regional service projects give members opportunities to participate and connect above and beyond their assigned projects. (e). Ongoing Service: Members see first-hand how their service directly impacts communities, leading to deep emotional connections for members with service and civic engagement. Typically, at least 90% of members indicate an intent to engage in public and community service after the end of their term. (f).

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Community Recruitment: Placement sites have partnership networks through which they recruit members. Local contacts within communities and connections with schools and other community-based organizations help ensure that many of the members come from the communities served.

8. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

WSC supports identification with AmeriCorps in several ways. First, the annual 3-day SERVES Institute training conference, described earlier, is focused intently on building members' AmeriCorps identity by connecting them to each other as a part of a national service community. The training features a curriculum that reinforces AmeriCorps affiliation, highlights National Days of Service, and encourages participation (opportunities are provided to members). Second, WSC helps partner sites make the connection with the national AmeriCorps organization clear, by promoting appropriate language and appropriate use of the AmeriCorps name and logo in all informational and promotional materials related to the specific projects on which members serve and by providing AmeriCorps service gear for members to wear during service and community events. This package of gear includes, at a minimum, an AmeriCorps t-shirt, jacket, and pin, with the expectation written in to their member service agreement that they wear gear daily and at events. Site Memorandum of Understanding includes specific language in which sites agree to prominently display AmeriCorps signage and monitor members' use of AmeriCorps service gear. During site visits, WSC staff review sites' signage, logo use, and service gear use and offer recommendations for increasing the visibility of AmeriCorps and the presence of National Service on site.

Organizational Capability

1. Organizational Background and Staffing

In 1983, the state legislature established the WSC to promote community service in the state. For the first decade, the WSC administered a statewide youth corps community service program and began its partnership with CNCS in 1993, the year AmeriCorps was born. Since that time, the WSC has remained a dedicated and effective partner in the national service movement and now oversees three major community service programs: WSC VISTA, focused on fighting poverty in local communities; WSC AmeriCorps, which places members at sites throughout the state to provide service on projects that address both CNCS Focus Areas and other locally-defined areas of need; and the Washington Reading Corps, dedicated to improving literacy in the state. The WSC has consistently demonstrated capacity to effectively manage and support large, high-quality multi-site national service programs - from fledgling non-profits and faith-based organizations to well-established, administratively-complex school districts.

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WSC is housed within the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD), which has substantial experience administering multi-million dollar awards from CNCS and multi-million dollar contracts with the US Department of Labor.

WSC Director Debbie Aoki provides administrative management and guidance for the program, helps ensure program alignment with WSC goals and strategic plans, and serves as liaison for the program within the ESD. Aoki has 30 years' experience in non-profit management in youth-serving agencies, including six years' experience in her current role. She supervises Director of Programs and Operations, Eric Kindvall, who has 20 years' experience in state government and human resources with the Washington State Department of Corrections and with ESD.

Program Coordinators manage the Request For Applications process through which WSC selects sites for member placement; provide program-specific training for site supervisors and coordinate with SERVES Institute training; offer technical assistance and support for sites and members; ensure site compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations; coordinate data collection and program evaluation; and ensure timely and comprehensive program reporting. They ensure that site supervisors are properly trained and work with members to ensure successful projects, review and finalize all member enrollment and exit paperwork, review member activities and address prohibited activities or misuse of member service/time, ensure reports are submitted, review and roll-up data for programmatic and financial review; and respond to requests, inquiries, and concerns. All Program Coordinators have experience with case management and compliance monitoring.

Engaging Partners in Program Planning: Ongoing relationships with an extensive network of consortium partners helps WSC engage community members and the partner organizations themselves in planning and implementing all proposed intervention projects. WSC issues a Request for Applications through which it identifies the particular partners that will receive member placements in each grant cycle. Through their applications, the individual organizations identify their local community needs, select and justify the evidence-based strategies and activities they plan to implement to address those needs, define the target populations for services and the outcomes they hope to achieve, and establish the tools they will use to measure success. WSC works in partnership with selected applicants to ensure alignment and effective implementation of strategies, outcome measures, and measurement tools. In addition, WSC regularly gathers input and feedback from partners about the program, the application process, and the way in which WSC works with partners to identify needs to be addressed, articulate impact goals and outcomes, and support partners in developing and implementing effective projects to make the best use of AmeriCorps members to meet

community needs, and to measure the impact of members' service on the communities in which they serve.

As documentation of community support and commitment to the program, WSC has secured and is submitting letters of support from twelve local organizations to its state commission office.

2. Compliance and Accountability

WSC has multiple systems in place to ensure program, partner, and member compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations, including regulations governing member eligibility, supervision, time requirements, and activities.

At the state level, ESD provides financial management of and administrative support for all federal funds received by the Washington Service Corps, including CNCS funds; and WSC's Compliance Coordinator reviews all AmeriCorps member and site paperwork to ensure compliance with rules and regulations.

At the site level, the WSC works with staff to ensure they follow specific processes, procedures, and strategies to ensure compliance and accountability, including accountability for monitoring prohibited activities and ensuring AmeriCorps visibility through members' language, site use of logos, and members' use of service gear. For all sites, program expectations are outlined through a contractual arrangement with WSC and include requirements for member and supervisor background checks, education, and experience. WSC staff conduct physical on-site monitoring for all new sites to ensure that appropriate implementation of fiscal oversight, performance management, member activity, site management, organizational structure, and regulatory and contractual requirements and to monitor for any prohibited activities. During these on-site visits, program staff review site documentation. In addition, staff review documentation for all awarded to confirm that assurances and compliance information documents have been signed and that contractual terms and conditions are both established and signed by authorizing staff. Staff also ensure that sites have conducted criminal history background checks for all members using local and out-of-state registries, the National Sex Offender Registry, and FBI fingerprint registries. WSC provides a criminal background check matrix and supplemental documentation to help sites access the appropriate information and to share "best practice" approaches to obtaining the required documentation from out-of-state registries. Completed certifications are sent to WSC Program Coordinators.

Each site's capacity for compliance is established in two ways: (a). the RFA process, which asks sites specific questions regarding their financial and infrastructure capacity to support the proposed project and the number of members requested, including their ability to complete criminal history

background checks for members; to recruit, select, and enroll members in a timely manner; provide high quality member training that fully addresses the competencies established by WSC; meet performance measure targets; and inform, train, and monitor members and volunteers regarding prohibited activities and to comply with rules, regulations, and requirements of CNCS and WSC. (b). The Memorandum of Understanding, which every site must sign, outlines site compliance requirements, providing another way for WSC to establish compliance expectations, assess compliance capacity, and hold sites accountable for compliance.

WSC's Compliance Coordinator and Director of Programs jointly monitor compliance, and WSC provides site staff with training on compliance issues, including group and regional trainings on compliance prior to the start of each program year. WSC Program Coordinators complete a risk assessment for each project site annually, which enables WSC to rate the level at which each site will need ongoing monitoring based on the length of time the site has been with WSC's program, the site's governance structure and financial strength, the performance measures the site is addressing, and a variety of other factors. WSC then monitors sites based on this assessment and each site's completed reports, with any recommendations and findings addressed formally, and results filed internally. In addition, WSC staff ensure member eligibility and evaluate member-applicant qualifications to successfully fulfill the expectations for the project on which they will serve. WSC also ensures site supervisors have had background checks and that they have the expertise, skills, and background to adequately support members in providing the proposed services. Sites submit quarterly progress reports, detailing program activities and progress toward performance measures and indicating any changes in member duties, activities, or responsibilities that may have occurred. WSC monitors sites' quarterly progress reports, responds to member issues that arise, and ensures that sites release members as necessary to attend required training and conferences.

The WSC Director of Programs and Operations is responsible for tracking the materials, systems, information and available resources and communicating with WSC Program Coordinators and project site supervisors to ensure all standards and compliance-related issues are addressed. WSC makes random site visits throughout the year to identify concerns, which may also come to staff attention through informal avenues or referrals. Issues of compliance, risk, or prohibited activities are addressed immediately with corrective action steps followed to final resolution.

Rigorous data collection enables WSC to demonstrate the effectiveness of its services and measure the extent to which sites -- individually and collectively -- are able to meet intended outcome indicators/performance measures identified for their Focus Area. Every year, WSC reviews its data

collection methods and rigorously analyzes these methods to ensure compliance with CNCS rules and regulations. As part of its ongoing commitment to accurately and comprehensively track results, WSC periodically seeks external critical analysis and evaluation. In addition, WSC works with an external evaluation consultant, the Bothell, Washington-based BERC Group, to help WSC measure and maintain program effectiveness.

3. Past Performance

During the 2012-2013 program year, WSC met or exceeded performance and outcomes measures established in the funding proposal submitted to CNCS for the 2012-2014 grant cycle in all but one of the Focus Areas addressed: (a). in Disaster Services (D1), WSC partners exceeded the Output Target by 10% and exceeded the Outcome Target by 17%; (b). in Education (ED2), WSC partners exceeded the Output Target by more than 200% and exceeded the Outcome Target by more than 275%; (c). in Education (ED21), WSC partners underperformed on both the Output Target and Outcome Target by about 15%; (d). in Environmental Stewardship (EN3), WSC partners exceeded the Output Target by 21% and exceeded the Outcome Target by 43%; (e). in Healthy Futures (H4), WSC partners exceeded the Output Target by over 575% and exceeded the Outcome Target by over 600%; and (f). in Veterans and Military Families (V2), WSC partners exceeded the Output Target by over 150% and exceeded the Outcome Target by over 190%. In addition, 96% of the 406 member-survey respondents reported they were satisfied with their service experience, 95% indicated that they increased their leadership skills, and 90% indicated they plan to continue to be engaged in civic engagement or community service. Based on WSC's success in the previous cycle, performance and outcome measure targets for this proposal have been adjusted accordingly and new targets have been developed.

Compliance: WSC has had no compliance findings or recommendations from any monitoring or audit processes that have been conducted. Criminal background history requirements have been consistently in place and meeting CNCS compliance requirements. In addition, all financial reports have been in compliance and results from the first two years of the current grant cycle indicate most performance measure targets and achievements have been met. In addition, WSC met CNCS's 30-day standard for enrollment (100% enrolled on time) and for exit (99.6% exited on time). Enrollment: During the last full year of program operation, WSC had an enrollment rate of 100% with no corrective action required. Retention: During the last full year of program operation, WSC had a retention rate of 90.5%, and has completed an internal improvement plan that has a goal of 100% retention. WSC works extensively with site supervisors to ensure that they not only recruit and select candidates who are likely to succeed as members, but also communicate fully and effectively so that

members understand their commitments and provide the day-to-day supervision and support that members need to carry out their responsibilities. WSC's technical assistance helps site staff support members, ensuring members have a complete understanding of their roles and responsibilities prior to placement, which promotes retention. However, changing circumstances occasionally keep members from completing their term of service. In the past three years, the biggest barrier to full retention has been the expanding number of job opportunities available as a result of an improving economy.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

1. Cost Effectiveness

For 2015-2016, WSC is applying for a fixed amount grant of $8,253,000, or $13,100 per member, which will be used for AmeriCorps member stipends, required payroll taxes, and a portion of members' health care insurance costs (approximately 20%). This amount will cover approximately 75% of the total projected expenditures of $11,308,500, or $17,943 per member for 630 AmeriCorps members who will provide services at 385 sites across the state of Washington.

During the 2013-14 program year, WSC made significant changes to program management that resulted in lower administration costs and increased the cost-effectiveness of the program. Program administration is supported through complementary sources of funding, which cover costs above and beyond the AmeriCorps member stipends funded through CNCS. These additional costs include staff time for WSC staff to oversee program activities and provide ongoing training and technical assistance, and travel for members to attend WSC-sponsored training.

The requested $13,100 per MSY awarded is $100 more than requested in the previous grant cycle but is $330 less than the maximum allowable amount. The two key reasons the requested amount is slightly higher are: (a). CNCS has required all grantees/subgrantees to increase the minimum level of stipend they must provide to each member. This increase is approximately $430 per member. WSC can absorb some of the increased cost of the member living allowance but not all. (b). Health care costs have increased significantly (by over 25%) over the past two years and, to ensure ACA compliance, WSC must provide adequate health insurance coverage to every member. Approximately 80% of members' health insurance costs will need to be covered by WSC, not through CNCS funding.

All expenses have been projected to support the members requested through adequate staffing, training, travel, evaluation, and other supports. WSC's program model is extremely cost-effective for partner organizations for two important reasons: First, the per-member placement fees are far less than the annual salary of comparably-qualified permanent employees who would otherwise be hired to provide the services described. Second, the value of the training and system supports WSC provides

far exceeds the actual amount of the placement fees.

Program administration is supported through complementary sources of funding, which cover costs above and beyond the AmeriCorps member stipends funded through CNCS. These additional costs include staff time for WSC staff to oversee program activities and provide ongoing training and technical assistance and travel for members to attend WSC-sponsored training.

2. Budget Adequacy

WSC funds ongoing program operations by leveraging cash and in-kind contributions from partner project sites to meet expenses. The source of organizational funding for the proposed grant project budget is the project sites, which will provide $3,055,500 in member-placement fees. The requested CNCS funding completes the total budget of $11,308,500. WSC has received funding from CNCS for 20 years and has consistently met all leverage requirements and cost-sharing commitments. WSC's share of leveraged costs will be 27% in funding cycle 2015-2016.

Because WSC's program model includes expenses beyond the stipends AmeriCorps members receive, WSC establishes an annual program budget that reflects the true expenses of program implementation in order to ensure that all costs are fully covered and that the program functions optimally.

In 2015-2016, these additional costs are projected to include: $780,746 in additional member payroll taxes, workers' compensation, and health benefit costs; $47,250 for criminal history checks for covered positions; $1,050,433 for WSC to support 12.85 FTE staff members who provide site monitoring and technical assistance (total includes staff travel, payroll taxes, and health benefits costs); $350,991 for additional costs related to in-person and webinar-based training, including the SERVES Institute; and $826,080 for miscellaneous expenses, including member travel, indirect costs, and other materials.

Member-placement fees are based on the number of members placed at the applicant's site: (a). one to four members, $6,400; (b). five to 11 members, $5,900; and (c). 12 or more members, $2,300. The fee structure reflects the substantially greater level of technical assistance and support WSC must provide to smaller organizations, which typically lack the infrastructure to provide adequate member guidance on their own. Sites with larger teams are required to provide members with full time supervision, saving WSC considerable amounts of money and staff time. They also are required to provide their own training.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

WSC Grant Evaluation Plan Draft

Narratives

Washington Service Corps Theory of Change: By placing AmeriCorps members and providing organizations with the training and systems they need to effectively support members' service, WSC not only extends organizations' ability to meet identified community needs in six CNCS focus areas but also increases opportunities for members to serve, develop a lifelong appreciation for civic engagement, and gain valuable employment-pathway experience.

WSC's logic model aligns with and supports WSC's theory of change, describes outputs and measurable outcomes in six CNCS focus areas and clearly indicates the corresponding CNCS priority and complementary performance measures for all listed activities, outputs, and outcomes. The logic model also describes the intermediary services WSC will provide to ensure partner sites implement core activities effectively and meet performance targets. The evaluation will analyze the extent to which WSC and its partner organizations meet proposed outputs and short- and medium-term outcome targets.

The BERC Group, an independent evaluation consulting firm selected following a competitive RFP process, will conduct a 3-year impact evaluation of WSC's proposed AmeriCorps program. The BERC Group's proposed evaluation is designed to answer the following questions:

1. Of the services members provided for their organizations, which ones would not have been possible without the Members? How many additional beneficiaries did organizations serve because they had AmeriCorps members?
2. To what extent have AmeriCorps members influenced volunteer recruitment? Are organizations served by WSC able to recruit more volunteers than other similar organizations?
3. To what extent do members provide a return on investment through lowered costs, increased efficiency, expanded resources, etc.
4. What is the value added of WSC intermediary services in ensuring that partner organizations: (a). provide intended services effectively, (b). meet their projected CNCS program implementation and project outputs, and (c). meet (or remain on track to meet) their short- and medium-term project outcomes? Is there a difference in value added by community and/or program characteristics? (e.g. small organizations, high need communities, etc.)
5. Of the services WSC provides in its role as intermediary, which have the greatest impact on partners' ability to effectively support members?
6. To what extent do WSC and its partner sites: (a). increase members' appreciation of and intent to engage in community service in the future and (b). help members gain employment experience?
7. What are the emerging best practices in each focus area?

Narratives

The proposed design for this evaluation is a quasi-experimental study that will assess the impact of two related sets of services:

- The services 630 AmeriCorps members provide at 385 partner sites to address identified needs in CNCS Focus Areas, and
- The intermediary supports WSC provides to enhance the effectiveness of members' services.

The impact evaluation is designed to determine what would have happened if AmeriCorps members did not provide the planned services. To make this determination, the program evaluators will identify both a "treatment" group consisting of current WSC program sites and a "comparison group" of sites that did not receive members.

The comparison group will be selected from among those organizations that recently applied for members through WSC's Request for Applications process, but were not awarded members. From the list of non-awarded applicant organizations, the evaluators will be able to create a comparison group of organizations that are, on average, similar in need, purpose, and structure to the organizations that received members. By comparing the outcomes of these two groups, evaluators will be able to estimate the impact WSC members have on organizations' ability to meet outcome targets, increase the cost-effectiveness of services, and leverage community volunteers.

The evaluators will also measure the financial health of both treatment and comparison groups to determine whether WSC members affect an organization's financial stability.

The following data points will be collected to assess service impact, financial health and return on investment, and volunteer recruitment:

- Number of WSC members received (for comparison group, number applied for);
- Performance measures addressed and output/outcome targets in each Focus Area (for comparison group, performance measures and targets proposed);
- Program services to be provided by Members in each Focus Area (for comparison group, services proposed);
- Net assets, annual revenue, annual expenses; and
- Number of paid employees and number of community volunteers.

Evaluators will also document the services WSC provides in its role as intermediary. This aspect of the evaluation will focus on the extent to which WSC (a). influences sites' ability to provide excellent guidance and support to members and (b). increases members' access to meaningful service, their employment-pathway skills and experience, and their desire to engage in future community service. Evaluators will seek to determine whether any correlation exists between the structural qualities of

partner organizations (e.g. size of budget, number of staff, geographical location, etc.) and the extent of value added by the services WSC provides in its intermediary role.

Evaluators will also use qualitative data to identify not only contextual factors that may help or hinder program effectiveness but also promising practices that will help WSC leaders engage partner organizations in continuous program improvement. Data will be collected from phone interviews with and surveys of WSC members and site supervisors. Program data logs will also be gathered bi-annually to record progress toward targets for program-wide inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes. The use of both qualitative and quantitative data will allow evaluators to provide a more robust analysis of impact.

To help isolate the influence of WSC members on specific outcomes, evaluators will analyze findings using statistical analysis methods to control for budget size, number of employees, service area (e.g., rural versus urban), number of volunteers recruited, and other factors that may influence outcomes. Evaluators will use a difference-in-difference analysis method, enabling evaluators to identify both annual differences between comparison and treatment organizations as well as differences over time for each organization.

Where appropriate, researchers will use additional analyses including chi-square analyses to compare frequency distributions and t-tests or analysis of variance to compare means. Correlations will measure the strength of relationship between implementation data and outcome data. Outcome variables will be used in statistical models (such as logistic regression and non-linear hierarchical modeling) to help identify whether specific program activities are associated with outcomes and/or if some level of implementation is related to outcomes. In all analyses, researchers will control for variables that may influence outcomes.

Findings will be summarized in preliminary report and a year-end impact evaluation report, provided in each program year, will include process and product outcomes associated with program goals and activities. Findings will help program administrators reflect on promising practices and implications.

The BERC Group's work over the last decade has provided a range of experience in program and grant evaluation. Since 2000, they have conducted formative and summative program-level evaluations for the Gates foundation, Kauffman Foundation, Broad Foundation, United States Department of Education, Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Hawaii Department of Education, Microsoft, and many other agencies. Initially focusing on educational programs and systems, the BERC Group has expanded into other program areas. Most recently, the BERC Group conducted the independent impact evaluation for the Washington Reading Corps

program, which significantly increased their familiarity of the Washington Service Corps program and the CNCS evaluation requirements.

For a decade, the BERC Group has conducted program, project, and site evaluations for foundations, states, school districts, and schools, ranging in scope from small, single-site local projects to national multi-year, multi-site studies. They also help organizations in developing their own internal evaluation capacity and focus on helping program leaders use evaluation data to drive ongoing program improvement.

The BERC Group has experience with both quasi-experimental and experimental evaluations and recently partnered with Arts Impact to conduct an evaluation of their US Department of Education-funded Arts Education Model Development and Dissemination (AEMDD) Project.

WSC estimates the cost of evaluation to be $50,000 per year. Covered activities include:

- Complete the preliminary evaluation report with data gathered from WSC data logs;
- Create a WSC data log comprised of common metrics across all six CNCS focus areas;
- Create AmeriCorps member/site supervisor perception survey;
- Administer perception survey each Fall and Spring;
- Conduct phone interviews with sample of WSC sites (approximately 50 annually);
- Analyze quantitative and qualitative data gathered from WSC data logs, perception surveys, interviews, and 990 tax forms;
- Complete annual evaluation report with recommendations for continued growth;
- Annual evaluation report debrief meeting with project leaders; and
- Attend periodic stakeholder meetings to review project progress.

Amendment Justification

NA

Clarification Summary

A. Programmatic Clarification Items

Please explain why the submitted evaluation report was not an impact study and why it doesn't cover at least 1 year of CNCS activity as required.

Washington Service Corps (WSC) did complete an impact evaluation that was submitted to the State Commission (Serve Washington) in March 2015; it is currently under review by their program staff and will be forwarded to CNCS. The evaluation was conducted by an external evaluator, the Baker

Narratives

Evaluation Research Consulting Group, and was completed based on the guidelines provided by CNCS on program evaluation. The evaluation period covered PY 2012-13 and 2013-14.

Funding is extremely competitive and limited this year. Having a low Cost Per Member Service year (MSY) is a competitive advantage. Applicants submitting with a low cost per MSY will receive higher priority for funding. Please consider decreasing the application's proposed cost per MSY by revising the CNCS share of the program budget, or provide a compelling explanation for why the cost/MSY cannot be decreased. CNCS will review both the individual program cost per MSY and the aggregate cost per MSY after the clarification period and may elect to make further decreases in cost per MSY and/or may be only able to partially fund applicants.

WSC will adjust the cost per MSY as directed in this clarification to $13,000/MSY. Adjustments will be made to budget line items that can be managed. WSC will adjust the budget to reflect the total for CNCS share to $7,371,000.00 at time of this clarification. We will clarify budget adjustments for a fixed amount grant as requested.

B. Budget Clarification

The application is being considered for less than the originally requested funds, MSY, slots and Cost Per MSY. Please adjust the Executive Summary, the budget, performance measures and MSY allocations accordingly.

Washington Service Corps (WSC) has adjusted the PY 2015-16 budget information based on the reduced cost per member of $13,000. Changes were made in the Executive Summary and the Budget, as requested. The CNCS portion under consideration is $7,371,000, and the adjusted WSC portion of the budget is $2,724,700. The total budget is $10,100,326.

C. Performance Measurement Clarification

Programs are required to have at minimum one aligned, performance measure for their primary intervention. It is not expected that outcomes for all member activities will be captured in performance measures. The number of performance measures in the application, the minimal description of instruments to be used, and the variety of instruments that may be used across service sites raise concerns about the capacity of the program to ensure that all instruments are valid, reliable,

and will yield high quality data. Please explain why the proposed performance measures are realistic, provide additional information about how the program will ensure that it is reporting high quality data for all performance measures, or consider removing some performance measures.

As an intermediary with a long history of success in managing large numbers of diverse service-organization sites across the state of Washington, WSC maintains a strong focus on alignment between community needs and program strategies, projected outcomes, and progress monitoring. WSC works diligently to ensure that site supervisors and AmeriCorps members collect and track high-quality data to demonstrate that project sites are meeting their goals and providing effective services to their beneficiaries. WSC has a track record of providing high-quality data on its project sites to its funders to demonstrate their effectiveness. WSC has provided the state Commission with all requested data collection tools and processes and has submitted reports on a timely basis. These reports have included valid, reliable data about performance in the previous grant cycle, with no issues identified in the monitoring or review of WSC program elements.

Five key elements of WSC's plan of operation will help ensure that WSC is able to report high-quality data for all performance measures addressed through the current grant application:

1. A rigorous Request for Applications (RFA) process. WSC is using an evidence-driven RFA process to identify and select AmeriCorps member placement sites. This process requires sites to demonstrate that they align community needs with their proposed interventions and selected performance measures and use valid, reliable assessment instruments to monitor progress and yield high-quality data. WSC's RFA requires applicants to provide a theory of change and related logic model that demonstrates a direct link between the community need(s) sites identify in their Focus Area, the measurable performance outcomes they seek to achieve, the primary intervention strategies they propose to achieve those outcomes, and the tools they will use to measure the effectiveness of their work. Applicants must not only cite research showing that their proposed strategies are likely to be effective in achieving their intended results but also demonstrate that their selected assessment tools are both reliable and valid for their intended purpose (i.e., linked directly to their specified outcome objectives), following evidence-based practices. Experienced WSC staff review and score each application, awarding member placement based on the strength of the applicants' project design and the alignment between needs, strategies, performance measures, and assessment tools. For sites that are awarded members, WSC program staff examine proposed assessment tools in greater depth, evaluating the extent to which the tools have been shown to be reliable and valid, and, when

necessary, guiding sites in selecting additional or alternative tools to measure progress. In its CNCS grant application, WSC provided a general description of the proposed assessment tools project sites will use for two reasons: first, WSC is still in the process of negotiating the specific outcome measures and measurement tools each individual site selected will use; second, approximately half of all site awards for member placement are made for the entire three-year grant cycle; the other half of awards are made on an annual basis and WSC places members at annually-awarded sites through the same RFA process used for three-year awards. Selection among these sites is not yet complete; specific instruments can be made available to CNCS once selection is finalized.

2. A well-structured staffing plan. WSC's staffing plan is structured to ensure that a sufficient number of Program staff with relevant knowledge and experience necessary are available to provide placement sites with the support they need to effectively implement their plans, including their plans to collect high-quality data and monitor progress toward goals. The proposed 12.85 program staff members include not only seven Program Coordinators who are Subject Matter Experts in the Focus Areas in which they work but also one full-time Performance Measurement Subject Matter Expert (SME). The Performance Measurement SME has strong knowledge and experience in data collection, analysis, and accountability, including knowledge and experience in identifying and implementing assessment tools that are both reliable and valid. With support from the Director of Programs and Operations, the Performance Measurement SME will work with WSC Program Coordinators in each Focus Area to review every site's proposed assessment tools and work with sites as needed to select additional or alternative tools.

3. Organizational support for progress monitoring and evaluation. WSC's full-time Performance Measurement SME will carry out his/her performance measurement duties with support from experienced evaluation professionals in the state Employment Security Department's research and evaluation division. ESD experts will be able to help the SME determine the reliability and validity of the assessment tools sites propose to use and to select additional or alternative tools if proposed tools are determined to be unreliable or not valid for the proposed purpose. Progress monitoring and evaluation, including the selection and implementation of reliable, valid data-collection tools, will be further supported by an external evaluation consultant, which WSC plans to hire.

4. Targeted professional development. WSC's professional development plan includes time specifically dedicated to performance measures and performance management. Both WSC program staff and site supervisors and Members will receive training about effective data collection processes and progress monitoring. WSC seeks technical assistance and guidance from the state Commission (Serve

Washington), and participates in all available Commission-sponsored training and support opportunities, which include training specifically focused on high-quality data collection processes. In addition, WSC has funds projected in the PY 15-16 budget (part of a CNCS grant) targeted to support additional learning and support opportunities regarding performance measurement. Upon request, WSC recently supported two training sessions at the CNCS Salt Lake City Pacific Region National Service Conference in Effective Multi-Site Management as a subject matter specialist.
5. Regular site monitoring. WSC's site-monitoring process includes an assessment through which WSC evaluates the level of monitoring intensity each site will need. The evaluation scoring rubric enables WSC to determine the appropriate intensity of monitoring based on a site's governance structure, financial strength and solvency, past success in project implementation, member recruitment and development experience, site staff support for WSC AmeriCorps members, past report completion record, and organization management capacity and infrastructure. Site monitoring focuses on multiple aspects of project implementation and is structured to ensure that data collection and analysis are key topics covered. Monitoring may include on-site visits from WSC staff, including the Program Director, relevant Program Coordinator, and the Performance Measurement SME. All new sites receive at least one initial on-site visit. Ongoing site monitoring may occur in person or through phone and email contact, based on WSC's assessment of the site's monitoring needs.

For outcomes O9, 17536, EN3.1, 17543, 17544, H9 and 18701 revise the Instrument Description to include the following: a description of the instrument, what it measures, how much gain from pre-test to post-test is necessary to be counted as improved, and for all instruments measuring gains in knowledge, how the instrument is connected to the learning objectives of the training. If not all instruments are known, please explain the process by which these requirements will be verified for each instrument used.

The relevant WSC Program Coordinator and the dedicated Performance Measurement Subject Matter Expert (SME) will work with each site to ensure that the sites administer pre- and post-program assessments that are linked directly to each site's learning objective(s) to measure the gains in participants' knowledge that can be attributed to the training services the site provides. Each placement site will use a survey instrument that will include a minimum of three questions designed to assess the extent to which participants have acquired new knowledge or understanding of the specific content for which they are receiving training. The Program Coordinator and SME will review

each site's proposed curricula and learning objectives to ensure that the curriculum and learning objectives align and that survey questions address learning objectives. Survey responses will be captured using Likert-type scale, typically from one to five. For example, on a question measuring participant awareness of an issue, responses may range from 1 (not at all aware) to 5 (extremely aware). WSC defines "improvement" as an increase of at least one scale level on at least three survey items directly linked to the learning objectives defined by the site prior to implementation of the training.

The general improvements anticipated are indicated below:

09: Financial literacy training will result in improved financial knowledge

17536: Job skills training will result in improved workplace readiness

EN3.1: Environmental education and training will result in increased knowledge of environmental stewardship

17543: Health education and training will result in knowledge of improved positive health behaviors and nutrition

17544: Nutrition education and nutrition-related activities for children and youth will result in an increase in healthy eating habits and access to nutrition resources

H9: Food, transportation, or other services to seniors or disabled adults will result in an increased number of individuals with increased access to social supports and decreased feelings of social isolation

18701: Education and training about disasters and steps to prepare for them will results in increased knowledge of disaster preparedness resources and disaster planning

The specific knowledge measured by pre- and post-program tools, and consequently, the specific questions asked, will vary both according to the performance measure area in which training is provided and according to the training curriculum and learning objectives at each site.

All other clarification items relating to performance measurement have been addressed in the Performance Measure screens in eGrants, with the exception of those below, which require further explanation.

For measure ED5, please define improved academic performance as is stated in the national performance measure instructions. The amount of progress required to count as "improved academic performance" must be specified in the approved grant application.

Narratives

WSC's RFA requires applicants to provide a theory of change and related logic model that demonstrates a direct link between the community need(s) sites identify in their Focus Area, the measurable performance outcomes they seek to achieve, the primary intervention strategies they propose to achieve those outcomes, and the tools they will to use to measure the effectiveness of their work. For interventions in the Education Focus Area, this process includes defining a specific, ambitious, yet achievable level of academic gain in math and/or literacy based on existing student performance levels in those two subject areas. To be counted as having "improved academic performance," each participating student must meet predefined math or literacy benchmark or grade level scores. Each site will measure the extent to which students demonstrate improved academic performance using evidence-based assessment instruments, which, in some cases will include a curriculum-based measure directly associated with a specific tutoring curriculum. In their applications, sites are required not only to cite research showing that their proposed strategies are likely to be effective in achieving their intended results but also demonstrate that their selected assessment tools are both reliable and valid, and are directly related to their academic outcome objectives.

For measure ED5, please confirm the MOU that the host sites will need to be able to access the student data, as required in the national performance measure instructions: For projects not themselves administering the test, the project will need to have some form of agreement, such as an MOU (memorandum of understanding) with the school or LEA (local education agency), to ensure that data for the needed children can be secured.

WSC has a long established procedure of completing a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) or Contract with every project site, requiring the ability to access confidential student data required by the national performance measure instructions. Additionally, we will secure from our sub-grantees working with in and out-of-school projects the data sharing agreements those organizations have in place to validate that data is accessible for reporting purposes. WSC does complete all contractual MOU agreements or Contracts and ensures at the time they are fully executed, then they are forwarded to the state of Washington contracts electronic filing system and maintained by state retention schedules that currently are for a six-year period.

Narratives

For ED27A, please specify which of the attitudes specified in the performance measure instructions will be measured. Describe the instrument and how it will measure the attitude(s) specified. Explain how much improvement from pre-test to post-test is necessary to be counted as improved.

Attitudes:

* Interest in school
* Attachment to school
* Educational aspirations

Instrument:

* Student Engagement Instrument (SEI): Student Engagement Instrument (SEI) was developed to measure effective (formerly psychological) and cognitive engagement and to expand on the behavioral and academic indicators that were collected as part of Check & Connect, an intervention model designed to improve student engagement at school, reduce dropouts, and increase school completion (Anderson, Christenson, Sinclair, & Lehr, 2004).

Measures:

* Future aspirations and goals (educational aspirations)
* Awareness of the value of education (interest)
* Commitment to school (attachment)

Scoring:

* Four-point response scale ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Scale scores are calculated by summing or averaging individual items. A 1-10% or greater increase from pre-test to post-test is necessary to be counted as improved. A student should only be counted as demonstrating improved academic engagement if at least one of the elements shows improvement without any of the other elements worsening.

For ED27B, please specify which of the behaviors specified in the performance measure instructions will be measured. Describe the instrument and how it will measure the attitude(s) specified. Explain how much improvement from pre-test to post-test is necessary to be counted as improved.

Narratives

Behaviors:

*Attendance

Instrument:

* On-Track-System - The instrument tracks three key metrics according: Attendance, Behavior and Course failure. A warning flag is triggered when a student receives a sixth absence, a first suspension and a first core-course failure. Attendance is the primary indicator.

Scoring: The instrument counts the three metrics over-time on a month-to-month basis. Students will receive a pre-post survey which will drive the intervention focusing on attendance, behavior, and course completion. The intervention is following a research supported Check and Connect model. Americorps members are assigned to students at risk as identified within the On-Track-System. Students who reach a 90% attendance rate over the year will be counted as improved. Dosage: Duration - 12-26 weeks, Frequency: twice per week, Intensity: 60 minutes per week.

For outcome 18701, please indicate whether the 40,000 individuals completing the survey represents the response rate for all 50,000 individuals receiving the survey, or if the program is sampling. If the survey will not be provided to all participants, the program must propose a sampling plan that meets the requirements outlined in the NOFO FAQs for approval by CNCS.

WSC is decreasing the target number of individuals to be trained and surveyed to 25,000. Lowering the target number will enable sites to better ensure that site staff will be able to administer pre- and post-program assessments to all individuals participating in training sessions in order to measure improvement in disaster-planning knowledge and ensure that training is having its intended affect. WSC will work with each site implementing disaster preparedness education and training to ensure that program staff understand that all participants will need to complete both a pre- and post-program assessment and that sites are responsible for confirming survey administrations. During its compliance monitoring of disaster-preparedness training sites, WSC will review survey documentation to ensure that surveys are being administered.

Narratives

D. Strategic Engagement Slots

N/A

E. MSY with No Program Funds Attached Clarification

N/A

Continuation Changes

NA

Grant Characteristics