

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Entrepreneurial Ventures in Education, doing business as the Phalen Leadership Academies, proposes to have 15 AmeriCorps members who will serve as full-time Teaching Fellows, providing small-group, guided, and intervention-based instruction to 360 children in elementary schools serving high-poverty neighborhoods in Indianapolis. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for helping children increase their math and reading proficiency, gain confidence and character; as well as engaging families and the community in our children's education. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 20-30 volunteers who will be engaged in serving as guest speakers, facilitating parent workshops, and supporting meaningful field trips and experiential learning opportunities for children.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of education. The CNCS investment of \$42,975 in Segal Education Awards will be leveraged with an investment by the Phalen Leadership Academies of \$395,082.

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

### B. PROGRAM DESIGN

#### 1. PROBLEM/NEED

Children who currently live in poverty in Indianapolis are at grave risk of academic failure, which will severely limit their future opportunities. The child poverty rate in Indianapolis is 32.3%, which is significantly higher than the state (22%) and national (23%) rates of child poverty (U.S. Census Bureau & U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2012). According to the U.S. Department of Education, over 80% of children living in poverty in Indianapolis will not achieve reading proficiency by third grade, and the achievement gap will only increase with time. A landmark study by Lisbeth Schorr demonstrates that poor third grade reading scores predicts with 68% accuracy children who will later experience negative outcomes such as delinquency, teen pregnancy and dropping out of school (Schorr, 1989). After third grade, children who do not read proficiently will struggle to comprehend written material used to teach other subjects, leading them to continue to fall further behind their peers. This year, Indianapolis Public School (IPS) third graders ranked last in the state in reading proficiency with an average passing rate of only 65.5%, and seven of the state's ten lowest-scoring schools were in IPS (Indiana Department of Education, 2014). Children who do not read proficiently by third grade are four times less likely to graduate high school (Hernandez, 2011). The need for

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intervention is even more critical for children living in poverty, who are thirteen times less likely to graduate high school compared to economically secure children who are proficient readers (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013). Nearly every Indianapolis public high school graduates fewer than 60% of students (Indiana Department of Education, 2014).

Corps Members will address the educational need of Indianapolis' most vulnerable children by providing small-group, intervention- and mastery-based instruction across two Phalen Leadership Academy (PLA) schools: one is Francis Scotty Key School #103, one of the worst performing schools in the state, having received an 'F' rating for the past five years, where 82% of our students live below the poverty line, and last year, prior to our management, only 15% passed the ISTEP. PLA was selected by Indianapolis Public Schools, under Public Law 1321, to lead Francis Scott Key to transform educational outcomes for children. The second service site is a public charter school (George and Veronica Phalen Leadership Academy) in which 87% of our students live below the poverty line, and less than 46% of our scholars started the school proficient in reading and math. Our Corps Members will support certified mentor teachers in providing individualized instruction throughout math and reading intervention blocks, leading small-group and one-on-one intervention in an evidence-based educational model that has demonstrated effectiveness in increasing the educational achievement of students living in high-poverty communities. Corps Members will help students who are currently significantly below grade level to increase their academic proficiency by at least 5% each year, with the long-term vision of over 80% passage rate on the state exam, compared to the district's 65%.

### 2. THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL

The Scholars Excel AmeriCorps Program will create a powerful service experience for Corps Members to make a positive and lasting impact on the lives of 360 children living in the city's most impoverished neighborhoods. In the first year, the program will have 15 Corps Members to serve as full-time Teaching Fellows at two high-poverty Indianapolis elementary schools for 8 hours per day, 5 days per week, for 215 days. The total service hours will be 1,880 (including 160 hours of training).

Through the Scholars Excel AmeriCorps program, Corps Members will serve as Teaching Fellows, a new position created to provide intensive and personalized learning support to children who are significantly below grade level. As Teaching Fellows, Corps Members will supplement, not supplant existing teaching staff. Corps Members will provide academic support to students during the entire

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core academic blocks for both literacy and math. During each two-hour block, students begin with 30 minutes of whole-group instruction. Corps Members support whole-group instruction by helping to prepare lesson plans, facilitate class discussion, and provide targeted instruction on key standards. After whole-group instruction, the class breaks out into 3 small groups of 8 and will rotate among 3 stations: 30 minutes of guided instruction with the certified lead teacher, 30 minutes of mastery-based intervention with the Teaching Fellow, and 30 minutes of self-paced learning using adaptive digital curricula in the Learning Lab. Corps Members will lead 90 minutes of small-group instruction in language arts and in mathematics, rotate through all 3 small groups, and see every student in the class. After lunch, Corps Members will co-lead enrichment classes and provide students who are far below basic level with small-group and one-on-one intervention in a similar fashion in the afternoon. During small group, Corps Members will use research-based curricula to provide targeted intervention to help students master key academic standards based on their current skill level.

At the heart of this model is a teaching team in every classroom, a master teacher that mentors and collaborates with a Teaching Fellow in small classes with a scholar-teacher ratio of 13 to 1. With one-time support, we piloted a limited version of the model, and as a result, 100% of our third grade scholars demonstrated reading proficiency on the state exam, compared to only 25% in Indianapolis Public Schools. It is the combination of multiple, personalized, and data-driven touch points embedded throughout the day that drives student gains; and this cannot be achieved to its full fidelity without the support of AmeriCorps talent. Therefore, your support is absolutely essential to the academic achievement of the children we serve.

Through their service, Fellows will gain key instructional skills, such as lesson planning, curriculum mapping, collaborative teaching, program assessment and evaluation, and data-driven instruction. Fellows will also plan and lead hands-on enrichment courses to supplement academic instruction, including STEM, character education, art, music, physical education, and health and wellness. Outside the classroom, Fellows will serve as role models and mentors to our scholars, guiding our scholars' social development through community service projects, guest speaker sessions, college campus visits, and educational field trips. Corps Members will also support scholar growth by engaging families through a scientifically validated process that includes extensive outreach, regular phone contact and face to face meetings, facilitating parent-teacher conferences, and communicating with parents at school events.

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The PLA educational model, which will only be successful with Teaching Fellows, will ensure the success of children through the following core elements:

a. Collaborative Teaching (8am-4pm daily): Each Corps Member will practice collaborative teaching under the guidance of a certified mentor teacher in order to maximize scholar learning and growth. Fellows will provide a range of benefits that will positively impact scholar achievement, including increased small group instruction, opportunities for one-on-one tutoring, individualized attention, and mentoring (Duke School Research Partnership, 2011).

b. Differentiated Learning (8am-4pm daily): Corps Members will play a key role in differentiating instruction by leading small groups, guiding scholar work in the online learning lab, and tutoring students one-on-one in intervention sessions. Fellows will learn the methods and strategies necessary to implement differentiated learning, including finding multiple ways to structure a lesson so that each student has an opportunity to work at a moderately challenging level and at his or her own pace (Tomlinson, 1999). In a study of third grade students receiving differentiated instruction, researchers found that these students increased their scores on the state exam (Parsons, 2004).

c. Blended Learning (8am-1230pm daily): Corps Members will ensure the success of PLA's blended learning model by providing additional instruction and guidance to scholars as they rotate through 30-minute blocks of online learning, small group instruction, and whole-group instruction. Fellows will work with high quality educational technology in a persistently online learning environment, using iPads, Chromebooks, adaptive learning software to help scholars master standards at their own pace, while supporting the technology literacy strand of STEM. Fellows will gain the ability to utilize student data from online and classroom instruction to customize instruction. PLA is one of the nation's very few public school networks that was designed from the ground up using a blended learning approach. As a result, our infrastructure is optimally built to drive performance and deliver outcomes.

d. Enrichment/STEM Experiences (1:15-4pm, daily): Corps Members will plan and co-lead daily, hands-on enrichment courses in the afternoon, including art, music, and STEM courses such as coding and engineering that reinforce the morning academic instruction. We have worked with

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Cummins, Eli Lilly and Company and IUPUI School of Medicine to provide highly customized STEM experiences for students. For example, Cummins engineers taught enrichment classes in which scholars build their own solar-powered cars and raced them on the Indianapolis Speedway! Research has shown that enrichment learning can result in increased positive attitudes toward school, student engagement in learning, and performance on district and state assessments (Beecher and Sweeny, 2008).

e. Extended Learning Opportunities (8:30am-3pm, daily, summer): We know from research the critical importance of extended learning time during the school year (The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2007). AmeriCorps Members will help deliver 20 additional learning days every year. The program will operate for four weeks, Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm in the summer. Like during the school year, Members will drive differentiated instruction throughout the day, from morning academics to afternoon STEM.

f. Parental Engagement (ongoing-at least 4 hours/week): Corps Members will have lead role in family engagement, and will receive specialized training (more in training section) in order to effectively partner with parents. Corps Members will build and sustain family partnerships through teacher-parent conferences, family events, parent orientations, field trips, and other community events. When parents are involved, students have higher test scores, increased motivation, and better attendance (PTA; Rose, Gallup, & Elam, 1997). In fact, family participation in education can be twice as predictive of academic success as socioeconomic status (Walberg, 1984).

If each research-based program component is delivered with fidelity, then children will increase their academic proficiency in reading and math; increase their skills and interest in STEM; improve their self-esteem and confidence; and aspire to become leaders in their community. Scholars Excel AmeriCorps will help ensure that over 80% of our scholars become proficient or advanced in reading and math as measured by ISTEP+ (Indiana state exam) and that over 90% of scholars will graduate from high school. Please see the attached Logic Model for more information.

### 3. EVIDENCE BASE

#### PRELIMINARY AND MODERATE EVIDENCE

This research-based program model was developed by PLA's Founder and CEO, Earl Martin Phalen,

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who has over two decades of experience in the education sector. A comparable version of this model (Building Educated Leaders for Life) was evaluated by the Urban Institute and Mathematica using a two-year random assignment study, "the gold standard of evaluation methods" (Chaplin & Capizzano, 2006). Scholars' decoding, vocabulary and passage comprehension skills were assessed using the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. Eligible scholars' Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) RIT scores were compared to over 2.8 million students in order to assess their academic growth in a national context. Parent and teacher surveys assessed perceptions of the program's content and efficacy, as well as levels of parental satisfaction. The study found that the model had a statistically significant positive impact on reading test scores and parent engagement. Please see attached for additional information.

This model, piloted year-round at PLA, has also seen positive outcomes. Despite starting school significantly below grade level, PLA scholars grew by 20 national percentile ranks in reading and 10 national percentile ranks in math based on the nationally-normed STAR pre- and post-tests.

PLA implements what the field calls a "blended learning" model, which enables small-group instruction and provides multiple learning modalities to target each student's zone of proximal development, combining research-based instruction with mastery-paced work on adaptive learning software. Within this model, students rotate through stations within core subject classes: teacher-led, specialist (Corps Member)-led, and online stations. This blended learning model has been evaluated in an independent, quasi-experimental study commissioned by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation. The study was conducted by SRI International and its results were published in May 2014 (please see attached). Not only do the program models studied share the same core elements as our blended learning model, they are also implemented in schools that share our organizational structure and demographics:

- \*The schools are part of a network run by a charter management organization (CMO) as is PLA;
- \*The schools serve a majority of students from low-income families (>85%) as does PLA;
- \*The schools serve a majority of students who are African American or Latino (>90%) as does PLA;
- \*The schools were in their initial years of implementing a rotational blended learning model, as is the case with PLA; and
- \*The schools used adaptive digital software as part of the learning model, as does PLA.

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Outcome measures for students in these schools were compared with achievement outcomes either from other schools in the CMO's network not implementing blended learning, or with a virtual comparison group created by the NWEA using scores from the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). The SRI study found the following results:

\*Students in grades 1-3 attending a blended learning school demonstrated a 4% average gain in math scores, or 22 scale points on the TerraNova standardized test, in comparison to students at other schools that did not implement blended learning;

\*Students from schools that implemented blended learning outperformed students in the virtual comparison group in math and language arts across all grade levels, K-5. Results of the analysis also showed that blended learning schools were significantly reducing the high- versus low-income achievement gap in grades 2 and 3.

### 4. MEMBER TRAINING

Corps Members, mentor teachers, AmeriCorps Program Supervisors, and other site-based management staff will receive 160 hours of intensive pre-service training during a four-week Training Institute, including an orientation day. Corps Members and Supervisors will proceed through in-person workshops and self-paced e-learning modules that provide a comprehensive overview of our educational model, curricula and assessments; while developing the skills needed to be highly effective educators and leaders. Corps Member workshops will be led by the Director of Operations, Director of Training, mentor teachers and instructional coaches. Members and Supervisors will learn AmeriCorps and PLA policies and procedures, schedule, and safety and systems, in addition to the history of national service, and Member rights, expectations, and benefits. During the Training Institute, Corps Members will meet key program staff, their Director, instructional coaches, and mentor teachers.

Corps Members will learn methods and strategies for effectively engaging scholars and teaching multiple learning styles and levels, as demonstrated by our experienced trainers. Members will gain skills from our in-person training modules, such as Testing and Data, Behavior and Classroom Management, Collaborative Teaching, and Scholar Engagement. The Training Institute will include in-person and online training modules for Corps Members and Supervisors that provide a thorough review of AmeriCorps rules, regulations, lingo, and prohibited activities to ensure the compliance of all Corps Members. Volunteers will undergo a specialized on-boarding process that includes an identical in-person training module focusing on PLA and AmeriCorps rules and regulations. Our e-learning

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platform, available to both Corps Members and Supervisors, will include a section detailing our discipline policy and AmeriCorps rules, as well as a webinar that provides specific examples of prohibited activities to give participants a frame of reference for gauging whether their actions or behavior violate any of the rules. The platform's assessment tool will ensure that participants have obtained the requisite level of understanding regarding the program and its prohibitions. Any participant who receives a failing score must repeat the training module. Additionally, we will create an AmeriCorps intranet page and post all information relevant to Corps Members and volunteers, including AmeriCorps rules and regulations, Corps Member rights and responsibilities, a detailed description of prohibited activities, our discipline policy, and frequently asked questions. Physical copies of the AmeriCorps handbook will be available at each site, and Corps Members and volunteers will have access to the handbook whenever needed. During on-site staff meetings, administrators will review AmeriCorps policies, procedures and prohibited activities, and Corps Members will be encouraged to ask questions regarding any of these regulations.

### **5. MEMBER SUPERVISION**

We have a multi-layered plan to ensure Corps Members receive exceptional support and guidance during their service at PLA. As described earlier, we provide ongoing, year-round training to all program staff to ensure they have a thorough understanding of regulations and supervisory responsibilities, which are also reviewed during regular staff meetings. Each Corps Member will be paired with a mentor teacher, who will be his/her immediate supervisor. Mentor teachers will help ensure program rules are being followed. At the next level, our principals will supervise instructional quality; while the Director of Operations will supervise compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations. Supervisors will proceed through in-person workshops and self-paced e-learning modules that provide a comprehensive overview of our educational model, curricula and assessments. Supervisors will also receive training on topics such as Effective Adult Management, Classroom Observation, AmeriCorps Best Practices and Regulations. Program Supervisors will be trained by the Director of Training and expert trainers. Our e-learning platform, available to both Corps Members and Supervisors, will include a section detailing our discipline policy and AmeriCorps rules, as well as a webinar that provides specific examples of prohibited activities to give participants a frame of reference for gauging whether their actions or behavior violate any of the rules.

Teaching Fellows will closely observe and receive mentoring and feedback from a certified mentor

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teacher every day. Fellows will also receive constructive feedback and guidance through bi-weekly formal classroom observations conducted by either the Principal or the instructional coach. Following the observation, Teaching Fellows will immediately have access to our electronic teaching development platform, where they will find comments, feedback, and ratings entered by the observer. Fellows will receive additional verbal feedback during a one-on-one debrief session with the observer within 24 hours of the observation. A formal evaluation of performance will take place after 90 days and at least two times per year thereafter. Evaluators will utilize standardized tools, such as rubrics and evaluation forms, in order to provide constructive feedback and to report on each Corps Member's strengths and areas for improvement.

PLA will offer ongoing career guidance and counseling for Corps Members, including quarterly events such as career networking fairs and skills workshops designed to support Corps Members throughout the year of service and beyond. We will invite our community partners, such as IU Health and Eli Lilly & Company, to participate in these events and provide career guidance and networking opportunities for Corps Members. We will also hold guest speaker sessions once per month featuring speakers who are tailored to share specialized experiences and advice with Corps Members. Members will gain professional skills through our specialized workshops that will provide support and guidance for each stage of the workforce transition, including career exploration, resume writing, and interviewing techniques.

At the end of the year of service, Corps Members will receive a 360-degree performance review. Each Member will meet with the Director of Operations and a panel of mentor teachers and administrators in order to receive a formal performance evaluation consisting of multi-layered feedback and personalized career guidance. The written evaluation report will indicate the Corps Member's successful completion of the required number of service hours. Following their service, Corps Members will have access to our multiple ventures, including a nationally recognized summer learning program, as well as our charter management organization that will open ten new PLA schools in Indiana over the next decade.

### **6. MEMBER EXPERIENCE**

As demonstrated by our track record and outcomes, Corps Members will be able to make a transformative, lasting effect on the lives of children. We will ensure their service is meaningful

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throughout the program. Serving at a nationally recognized organization will enable Corps Members to develop the ability to succeed in a performance-driven environment. Members will gain transportable skills such as data-driven decision-making, project management, conflict resolution, and community engagement, all of which are put to practice during their service.

We will connect Corps Members to the National Service Network in several ways. We will create a Corps Member intranet that includes a live list of resources, both online and events, reinforced during weekly meetings, that allow Members to participate in local, regional and national networks. As a national organization, we will also work with peer AmeriCorps programs around the country to provide networking opportunities, such as an AmeriCorps Buddies program in which interested PLA Corps Members are paired with Service Buddies at other AmeriCorps programs, allowing for mutual support, building friendships and commitment to service. We will also encourage and support Corps Members to attend National Service Events. Through weekly team meetings and ongoing training sessions, Corps Members have regular opportunities to support each other, discuss key education topics, resolve concerns, and reflect on and be recognized for their service. We regularly implement staff surveys in order to invite feedback and to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all of our staff members, in addition to holding on-site weekly HR office hours that will allow Corps Members to share challenges they are having in their service year, and work collectively to improve. Corps Members will be supported by our school culture, which promotes teamwork, leadership, citizenship; and our close-knit staff who are equally committed to our values. We hold several team-building activities for our staff throughout the year, including quarterly brown bag lunches, family outings such as a bowling party, and staff holiday parties. All of these events will provide opportunities for Corps Members to build camaraderie.

To recruit Corps Members, our Director of Recruitment and her team will implement a systematic campaign using the online AmeriCorps system, media spots, and our network of nonprofit and university partners. Within Indianapolis and Marion County, we will leverage our network including The Mind Trust, Teach for America, Marian University and Butler University to recruit potential Corps Members. We will recruit a geographically and racially diverse corps by working with our partner African American universities across the country that send talented young people to work in Indianapolis, including Tennessee State University, Fisk University and Florida A&M University. Locally, we recruit through the Amos Brown Show, IDOE, Black Expo, the Indianapolis Chapters of

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the Black MBA Association, the National Association of Black School Educators, and the National Council on Educating Black Children to build a diverse corps. True to our commitment to diversity, 58% of our staff are Black; 67% are people of color; and 83% are women. We are also diverse geographically: our staff have worked in urban and rural communities throughout Indiana; our leaders are recruited from across the nation.

### **7. COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION**

Teaching Fellows will wear AmeriCorps buttons during their time of service, and on casual dress days they will be encouraged to wear AmeriCorps T-shirts. They will be introduced to parents, teachers and community partners during our parent orientation, speaker series, and at family and community events. During all program events we will ensure that appropriate acknowledgement of AmeriCorps is given in program brochures and in visual and oral presentations. PLA schools will proudly display the AmeriCorps logo at their entrances in support of the AmeriCorps partnership and Members' service. The PLA web site will display the AmeriCorps logo and clearly indicate our partnership with AmeriCorps. Our social media outlets, post-program reports, and recruitment materials will also indicate our AmeriCorps partnership. Information about the Scholars Excel program and AmeriCorps will be distributed through our communications and social media, which currently reach 20,000 readers. PLA and our team have been featured in local and national media, including the IndyStar, and MSNBC. Our team contributes to the Huffington Post, and members of our leadership team have been invited to speak at prominent events throughout the state, including the Mitch Daniels Award reception and for The Mind Trust. We will use opportunities such as these to recognize Serve Indiana and our partnership.

### **Organizational Capability**

#### **1. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING**

PLA, a wholly owned subsidiary of Entrepreneurial Ventures in Education, is governed by a central office that has managed programs of comparable scope to AmeriCorps and has demonstrated the capacity to implement this program successfully. Since 2009, our team has served over 20,000 children cumulatively across five states (9,534 children in Indiana alone), expanding our service scope from 3 program sites to 15; from 1 district partner to 8; and from a start-up to \$7M in annual revenues, all while maintaining exceptional results year after year. Our recruitment and training teams have successfully recruited, screened, selected and trained over 400 staffers every year. We have managed and successfully administered over \$6M in Title I, 21st Century Community Learning

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Centers, Social Innovation Fund, School Improvement Grant, and state summer school reimbursement funding. Our team has worked with a wide range of agencies comparable to Serve Indiana, including Departments of Education, school districts, schools, housing agencies, faith-based institutions, CBOs and more. Because of our demonstrated results and collaborative structure, we have over 90% partner and staff retention and satisfaction. To maximize Corps Member impact and ensure a high quality service experience, we secured key community partners, who will provide a pipeline of services to the program: early childhood education (Day Nursery), literacy resources and curriculum-aligned book selection (Indianapolis Public Library), enrichment (Arts for Learning, AYS), health and wellness (IU Health), college readiness (Marian University, Butler University, and other local colleges), customized educational field trips (Conner Prairie, Indianapolis Children's Museum), funding support (The Mind Trust, CICF), and many others. This network will also provide Corps Members access to a diverse range of career and service opportunities. Add to this the already-secured approval of 10 charters, which will ultimately impact 10,000 children annually, the Scholars Excel AmeriCorps program will have deep and scalable impact.

As discussed in the Member Supervision section, PLA also has a strong staffing structure in place to effectively manage the AmeriCorps program. Each Corps Member works under a highly qualified and certified mentor teacher who will provide daily support and supervision. Because our schools require the principal to observe classrooms 50% of the time, Corps Members and their mentor teachers will receive daily, live-time feedback on their performance. We have a deep toolbox, including observation rubrics, a highly robust student information system, and a 360 degree performance review to evaluate performance and provide constructive feedback. Our AmeriCorps sites will be managed by the building leaders and the Director of Operations, who will be responsible for ensuring compliance to AmeriCorps regulations and providing Corps Members with a high quality service experience. For training, we have already built a strong, 160-hour professional development program, including in-person workshops and self-paced e-learning that we will fully customize for the AmeriCorps program. In addition to our training department at headquarters, we also have highly experienced staff to provide recruitment, finance and grant compliance to ensure that our AmeriCorps program is running smoothly on the back-end.

Below are some notable accomplishments that demonstrate the unique knowledge and experience of our team:

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- \*Recognized by TIME magazine, MSNBC, Black Entertainment Television (BET) and more as a national leader in education; and a recipient of the President's Service Award;
- \*Over 30 years of experience recruiting talent for the nation's top firms;
- \*Served as National Director of Recruitment for New Leaders for New Schools, one of the country's premier nonprofits that develop outstanding urban school principals;
- \*Over 20 years of experience in finance and accounting, including payroll and benefit management, internal and external reporting, annual budgeting, and audit management; and
- \*Raised over \$15M, including investments from the Social Innovation Fund, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Charter School Growth Fund, and more.

### 2. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

We will implement a multi-layered review process to prevent and detect compliance issues:

- \*Prior to the program start date, our national support team and PLA school leadership will work together to review and modify existing policies, procedures and systems as needed in order to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps regulations.
- \*The Director of Operations will serve as primary point of contact for Serve Indiana and will continuously inspect the program to ensure compliance. This includes a monthly review of progress reports, policies and procedures to ensure that Corps Members and volunteers are being utilized pursuant to the terms of their service commitment. The Director will also be responsible for obtaining adequate documentation demonstrating the eligibility of Corps Members, as well as reviewing participant policy infractions and/or violations.
- \*School Principals will regularly review the activities of Corps Members and volunteers to ensure that Members are meeting their service obligations. Our Principals will interact with the Corps Members on a daily basis to ensure proper implementation of the program and to address infractions or violations if they arise.
- \*The Grant Compliance Director will serve as secondary point of contact, and will conduct a multi-level quality review of the program. Our current attendance data system at PLA will track the service hours of Corps Members and volunteers. Corps Members must sign in and out of our online attendance tracker. The information from the tracker will be collected and monitored by the Director of Operations, who will then enter the data into our central portal, review the data and confirm its accuracy prior to submitting the data to Finance. The Grant Compliance Director will download and review the data before returning to each school's Principal for final review prior to allocation of the

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living allowance. Once confirmed, checks and direct deposit verifications will be reconciled to the approved time sheets.

Our discipline policy clearly identifies the level of discipline we will impose for a range of infractions or instances of noncompliance. The discipline ranges from a verbal counseling to removal from the program. Corps Members will be apprised of the consequences for noncompliance during training to ensure adherence to the rules and policies. We will also require participants to sign their service agreement with PLA prior to beginning service, so that Corps Members will be fully aware of their rights and responsibilities, and are therefore able to commit to adhere to our policies and procedures. We will inform Corps Members at the outset of their service agreement that their commitment can be terminated for cause or noncompliance with the rules. Additionally, all PLA staff members will be provided with a comprehensive overview of AmeriCorps rules and regulations in order to ensure compliance at every level. We will employ our review system to identify instances of risk or noncompliance, and if such instances occur, PLA will administer the appropriate disciplinary actions.

### **Budget/Cost Effectiveness**

Your investment of \$42,975 will enable us to leverage over \$395,000 in private funding to provide Corps Members with a high quality service experience that allows them to positively impact the lives of 360 children annually. We have budgeted sufficient funds to cover the cost of our AmeriCorps program: \$395,082. This includes: \$300,000 in living allowance for Corps Members (\$20,000 each); \$52,650 in member support costs, including FICA, Healthcare, and Worker's Compensation; low overhead of \$33,501 in personnel expenses (allocations of appropriate staff time from programs, recruitment, training, and grant compliance); \$4,215 in staff travel (for CNCS- and Serve Indiana sponsored meetings); \$1,050 in member travel (including mileage and meal reimbursement); \$975 in supplies (includes training supplies, and AmeriCorps branded tees and pins), \$276 in supervisor training; \$1,815 in Corps Member training (includes pre-service and ongoing PD); and \$600 for criminal history checks (\$40/member). Because of our demonstrated track record of impact, we have secured one-time pledges from the following foundations: The Mind Trust (\$150,000), Calder Foundation (\$100,000), Indianapolis Foundation (\$95,000) and Glick Philanthropies (\$50,082) providing \$395,082 in matching funds required to run the AmeriCorps program.

### **Evaluation Summary or Plan**

N/A

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## Amendment Justification

N/A

## Clarification Summary

Programmatic clarification items:

Please respond in the eGrants narrative field labeled 'Clarification Summary'.

1. Please identify the participating grade levels at each school.

At Francis Scott Key School #103, a SIG priority school, Corps Members will serve children grades K-6. At the George and Veronica Phalen Leadership Academy, Corps Members will serve children in grades K-4.

2. Please describe how members will be divided between the two schools.

We anticipate that 10 Corps Members will serve at Francis Scott Key School #103 and 5 Corps Members will serve at the George and Veronica Phalen Leadership Academy.

3. The applicant states that Teaching Fellows will lead 90 minutes of small group instruction in language arts and math. Please clarify whether 2 hours of instruction will be provided in both math and language arts or if the two hours is split between math and language arts.

Corps Members, working as Teaching Fellows, will help deliver 4 hours of academic instruction daily: that includes 2 hours of language arts instruction and 2 hours of math instruction each day. Each 2-hour (120-minute) block includes 30 minutes of whole-group instruction, and 90 minutes of small-group learning.

4. The applicant describes the provision of an extended learning opportunity through a summer session. Is the summer session a requirement for students? If not, how will students be selected for the extended summer program?

Student participation in the summer session is prioritized based on academic need first, economic need second. Those scholars who demonstrate the greatest academic need & scholars who are performing significantly below grade level at the end of the school year & will receive priority consideration for the summer program.

5. The applicant states that building leaders and the Director of Operations will manage AmeriCorps

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sites. Please explain the role of the building leaders as it pertains to the management of the PLA program.

Our building leaders will work with the Director of Operations and program staff to ensure that Corps Members have a high quality service experience. Below are some of the ways they will work to accomplish this goal:

- ¿ Facilitate and oversee pre-service and ongoing professional development;
- ¿ Provide coaching and constructive feedback to Corps Members;
- ¿ Manage lead teachers and ensure they are providing adequate support and guidance to Corps Members;
- ¿ Work with Director of Operations to ensure accurate and timely submission of timesheets;
- ¿ Manage and oversee volunteers;
- ¿ Assist with publicizing the impact of the AmeriCorps program;
- ¿ Support the Director of Operations in ensuring compliance with AmeriCorps rules, regulations and procedures.

6. Please provide additional information on how member supervisors, school principals and the Director of Operations will share information on the progress of members and the on-goings of the program.

During weekly professional development and staff meetings, our program staff will share and discuss the progress of Corps Members and ways to enhance their experience, or to provide additional coaching and support, where needed. Our school principals must spend over 50% of their time in the classroom. This allows our building leaders to monitor member progress on a daily basis, and provides Corps Members with the opportunity to receive live feedback both inside the classroom and through post-observation conferences. Additionally, building leaders meet with lead teachers, Corps Members, immediate supervisors, on a weekly basis, both formally and informally, to discuss and share member progress. We will administer surveys to collect feedback from Corps Members. At the end of the service year, we will continue to hold an all-day meet session to provide program staff with the opportunity to showcase the progress they have made and suggest areas where management can improve. The annual performance review provides a formal opportunity to share and discuss member progress.

Our Director of Operations will create a learning community within the cohort and provide regular

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opportunities for members to share their progress and work collaboratively to address challenges. The Director meets daily with building leaders to discuss the on-goings of the program, and work with cross-functional teams to address challenges that may arise and ensure the quality of the service experience. Our Director and school principals are also closely connected with the senior management team through weekly staff meetings, during which the AmeriCorps program will be a regular discussion and action item. Senior leaders working in Development and Communications will lead the effort to capture program stories in narrative form, and through pictures and videos that we will share through our various owned media platforms, including social media and our regular e-newsletter that reaches over 20,000 influencers, such as public officials, foundation directors, community leaders, and media professionals. With the Development team in place, we have the capacity to produce any required report, and we would be happy to share best practices and impact stories with both CNCS and Serve Indiana. We will work to publicize the positive impact of the AmeriCorps program through press releases and media platforms.

7. Per the Notice of Funding Opportunity, awards under this Notice will only include the provision of Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards to AmeriCorps members who successfully complete their terms of service with the supported program. No operational funding is being provided under this Notice. Please remove the operational funding (CNCS Share) amount included on the budget.

Yes, we can confirm that no operational funding is allocated to the CNCS share. Only the Education Awards, per NOFA instructions, are included in the budget and assigned to CNCS.

8. The applicant has leveraged \$276 for supervisory costs and \$1,815 in member training (both pre-training and in-service training). Please explain how these leveraged funds will adequately support the level of supervision and training needed to effectively implement and support program and member activities.

Overall, we allocate over \$35,000 towards training and management. Because our AmeriCorps program is school-based, we are able to leverage existing public funding to cover school-based positions that provide member supervision. Therefore, we can be very cost effective when we allocate expenses to AmeriCorps. The \$276 figure mentioned in the budget effectiveness section refers only to the training of supervisors; it is not the full cost of supervision. We estimated supervisor training based on \$69 per staff for 4 staffers. Because we develop and deliver the supervisor training in-house, and because we already have an e-learning platform in place, we are able to do the training in a very cost

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effective manner. We also budgeted an additional \$33,501 towards program management, based on staff time allocated to the AmeriCorps Program, including Director of Operations (15%), Grant Compliance Director (10%), Director of Recruitment (5%), and Director of Training (5%). Since lead teachers and building leaders are school-based positions, we were advised not to include them in this budget. The \$1,815 allocated to member training is sufficient because it is based on \$121 per member, which should adequately cover the cost of pre-service and ongoing training. Like member supervision, we are able to leverage significant school-based funding towards training, lessening the financial burden on our AmeriCorps program.

9. Because all of the Partnership Challenge applications are fixed amount grants and fixed amount grants do not have match, all Demographics Match should be listed in ¿Other Revenue¿. Please remove the funding amounts listed under Private Match/Local, State and Federal Government Match and enter this information under the "Other Revenue" field.

All Demographics Match are now listed under ¿Other Revenue¿.

### B. Budget Clarification

Please respond to the clarification items in the 'Budget Narrative' section of the application unless otherwise indicated.

1. Compliance ¿ As a potential new grantee to CNCS, you 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 your grant. The Office of Grants Management will send you a separate email regarding the completion and submission of the following documents: Financial Management Survey Form (FMS); and the certification you have taken the on-line courses 'Key Concepts of Financial Management for Federal Grantees' and 'National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) Course.' 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 you be selected for award.

We have read and understand these compliance requirements, and have the capacity to complete all of them in a timely fashion.

2. Source of Funds ¿ Provide the amount, the source, and type (cash or inkind) of match.

The sources of matching funds were entered and saved in the ¿source of matching funds¿ section of the budget in eGrants. For your convenience, they are listed below as well:

## Narratives

¿ The Mind Trust: \$150,000

¿ Calder Foundation: \$100,000

¿ Indianapolis Foundation: \$95,000

¿ Glick Philanthropies: \$50,082

C. Performance Measure Clarification ¿ please see updated performance measures in eGrants.

### Continuation Changes

N/A

### Grant Characteristics