

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Boys Hope Girls Hope proposes to have 31 AmeriCorps members who will support Boys Hope Girls Hope's efforts to reach 800 young people, ages 10-18 who have barriers to school success and college matriculation related to poverty, providing the support necessary to progress to self-sufficiency through educational success and opportunity. Members will serve in Arizona, California, Missouri, Ohio, Louisiana, Texas, Illinois, New York, Maryland, Colorado and Michigan. They will work as teams at each project site, and focus their efforts so that each of the participating students is accruing the necessary skills, confidence and aspirations necessary to college enrollment. Their activities will focus on academic preparation, college counseling, facilitating participation in co-curricular learning and, developing opportunities for scholars to acquire cultural wealth through service-learning, parental involvement, and community education that creates collaboration across the community. In addition, AmeriCorps members will leverage 1200 volunteers who will serve as tutors and mentors. This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education. The CNCS investment of \$ 325,228.39 will be matched with \$579,479 in private funding.

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

"Earning a post-secondary degree or credential is no longer just a pathway to opportunity for a talented few; rather, it is a prerequisite for the growing jobs of the new economy. Over this decade, employment in jobs requiring education beyond a high school diploma will grow more rapidly than employment in jobs that do not; of the 30 fastest growing occupations, more than half require postsecondary education. (White House, January 2015) In early 2012, The Annie E. Casey Foundation predicted that "by 2020, the United States is expected to face a shortage of 1.5 million workers with college degrees and a surplus of 67 million unemployed people without a high school diploma."

Growing up in poverty obscures the pathways into the "new economy" and jobs that provide sufficiency and stability by significantly impacting educational attainment, the very requisite to that opportunity. At each stage of their educational lives, students growing up in poverty fall behind their peers. Today, children raised in the bottom fifth of family incomes nationally, have a 70 percent chance of remaining below the middle income level as adults. High school graduates from the wealthiest families in our nation are almost certain to continue on to higher education, while just 9% of students from the lowest income quartile complete college. (US Dept of Education) And while more than half of students matriculating into college graduate within six years, the completion rate

## Narratives

for low-income students is around 25 percent. (White House, January, 2015)

Childhood poverty results in staggering costs to the nation each year by reducing productivity and economic output by about 1.3 percent of GDP, raising the costs of crime by 1.3 percent of GDP; and increasing health expenditures by 1.2 percent of GDP. (Task Force on Poverty of the Center for American Progress)

The need for the Go! Team project is documented in Columbia University's National Center for Children in Poverty estimates that 16 million children (22%) in the United States live in families below the federal poverty line, and that 45% of children in this country can be considered as living in low-income families. There is consistent need in the cities in which we intend to operate our AmeriCorps program, as defined by the poverty statistics provided in the Kids Count report of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Arizona : Phoenix-Maricopa County (22.7%). California: San Francisco (12%), Los Angeles (34%). Colorado: Aurora (22%), Denver (30%). Ohio: the greater Cleveland area including Cleveland (54%) Cuyahoga (28.1%) and Hamilton counties (25.8%). Louisiana: Baton Rouge (29%) and New Orleans (41%). Maryland: Baltimore (32.6%). Michigan: Detroit- Wayne County (37.9%). New York: Bronx (39.4%), Kings City (31.2%), Queens (16.7%) Boroughs. Pennsylvania: Pittsburgh (15.2%). Illinois: Chicago -- Cook county (24.2%). Missouri: Kansas City (27%), St. Louis (16.9%). Nebraska: Lancaster (17%) and Rural Jefferson (18%) counties. Texas: San Antonio -- Bexar County (23.9%).

Notice Priority:"Poverty and education are inextricably linked where education is a primary means of social mobility, enabling those born into poverty to rise in society. Powerful evidence of the link includes the fact that 46 percent of Americans who grew up in low-income families but failed to earn college degrees stayed in the lowest income quintile, compared to 16 percent for those who earned a college degree." (Friedman, 2012 Measure of a Nation)

The importance of this work rests in its intention to increase the number of children who succeed educationally by moving from grade to grade towards graduation from high school, and matriculation into college, countering the deep and far-reaching negative impact felt in communities where they are underserved. This project is congruent with the CNCS Education focus area as it facilitates services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children and supports economically disadvantaged students for success in post-secondary educational institutions.

In the face of this compelling need, the Go! Team AmeriCorps program will support Boys Hope Girls Hope's efforts to reach 800 young people, ages 10-18 who have barriers to school success and

## Narratives

college matriculation including poverty, and precipitating conditions such as absence of parents due to death, incarceration or abandonment, abuse or neglect, neighborhood violence, substance abuse in the home, homelessness, and domestic violence and other risk factors for dropping out as defined by the National Center for Dropout Prevention. Additionally, AmeriCorps members' efforts will ensure that volunteers, and a variety of community entities, are also engaged in the important work of moving children in their communities from poverty to self-sufficiency through educational success and opportunity. The Go! Team program is significant in that it expands the number of children Boys Hope Girls Hope can serve by 25 %. The program will also leverage 1200 volunteers.

The Boys Hope Girls Hope Go! Team AmeriCorps program supports a well-developed college-bound curriculum, The College Road, Boys Hope Girls Hope's comprehensive framework for preparing students grades 6-12 to enter into higher education and complete a Bachelor's degree. The College Road was validated in 2012 in an independent evaluation by the Educational Policy Institute, which named it one of the top ten college support programs for disadvantaged youth in the United States (Swail et al., 2012).

The College Road is consistent with the decade of qualitative research examining geographically and programmatically diverse college preparation programs by the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis (CHEPA), detailed in their monograph *Preparing for College* (Tierney, et al., 2003). This strong, externally affirmed approach is underpinned by 38 years of success in moving students in poverty and distress into college and through to their college degrees.

For Middle School Students, the College Road includes these age-appropriate baseline services: 1. Academic Support including Supplemental Tutoring and Student skills development. 2. Service-Learning and early career awareness. 3. Cultural Enrichment. 4. College-Bound Literacy through an organized out-of-school reading program and other literacy based activities. 5. Early College Awareness and planning. 6. Collegian pen-pal program, college campus-based experiences. 7) Mentors. At the middle school level, The College Road also provides three extended learning opportunities including Campus Camp (summer prior to 8th grade) Nailing Ninth (summer prior to 9th grade) and GPS -- Not Your Ordinary Career Fair & Dream Job Competition.

For High School Students, the College Road includes these baseline services: 1. Academic Support (on-going, tailored to each scholar's needs including tutoring, skills workshops and coaching. 2. Mentors. 3) Career Exploration through shadowing, interest assessments, and informational interviews. 4) College Process - on-going through the Jr and Sr. Years. 5. ACT and SAT courses. 6. College visits. 7. College application and decision-making support. 8. Life skills Workshops. 9. College-

## Narratives

bound literacy through an organized out-of-school reading program. 10. Internships and Employment Experience (Juniors and Seniors). 11. Civic engagement. High School students on The College Road also participate in The Great American College Road Trip and the Collegiate Preparation Seminar (summer after Junior Year, summer after Senior Year) which are organized nationally.

A strong parent component includes workshops and experiences that empower parents to help their children become college-ready. To create an intentional support system, parents will move along the program in "cohorts" as their students do.

The College Road will be "open" 4 school days per week for 11 months, with special activities such as service-learning, college visits and community experiences planned for two Saturdays per month. Services will be provided at Boys Hope Girls Hope residential sites, school-based sites and at two college campus-based sites.

Well-trained AmeriCorps Members will work as teams at each project site, and focus their efforts so that each of the participating students is accruing the necessary skills, confidence and aspirations necessary to college enrollment. Their activities will focus on academic preparation, college counseling, facilitating participation in co-curricular learning and, developing opportunities for scholars to acquire cultural wealth through service-learning, leveraging and supporting volunteers, tutors and mentors, parental involvement, and community education that creates collaboration across the community for the success of all.

Primary responsibilities of members will include: 1) Recruit, train and support concerned adults to be matched with students as mentors for the period of a year. 2) Recruit, train and lead tutoring teams focused on building literacy skills (out of school time reading) and math competency. 3) Establish relationships with students' classroom teachers and coordinate their efforts closely to ensure consistency towards shared goals and student outcomes. 4) Create community connections through which students can explore career possibilities, engage in service-learning and access the community as a "living textbook" where they use and enhance what they are learning in the classroom in places such as museums, concert halls and other cultural outlets, intentional cross-generational interactions or historical events. 5) Facilitate parental involvement in the educational and college preparatory process by providing workshops and coaching and ensuring strong communication and support so that parents can participate fully in their child's education. 6) Engage and collaborate with peer providers -- sharing resources and expertise in ways that enhances the efficacy of the Go! Team as well as its peers.

The strategies and activities AmeriCorps members will carry out represent best practices correlated

## Narratives

to two evidence-based theories: Asset theory and Social Capital theory. Both theories are well-established, and extensive studies and examinations of each theory provide solid assurance that the proposed intervention is effective for moving poverty youth towards educational success.

Social capital as defined by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, is "the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (as cited in Field, 2009, p. 17).

The core hypothesis in Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory is that cultural capital is a resource which equips individuals with knowledge, practical skills, and a sense of "the rules of the game" in the educational system. The paper, *Analyzing Social Capital in Context: A Guide to Using Qualitative Methods and Data* describes six dimensions of social capital: Groups and networks, Trust and solidarity, collective action and cooperation, information and communication, social cohesion and inclusion and empowerment and action. Dudwick et al. 2006.

Many empirical studies have tested the core hypothesis in cultural reproduction theory that cultural capital has a positive, direct effect on educational success. Beginning with DiMaggio (1982), a long series of quantitative papers have found that different measures of cultural capital are positively correlated with academic achievement and with educational attainment (e.g., Cheadle 2008; Crook 1997; De Graaf, de Graaf, and Kraaykamp 2000; DiMaggio and Mohr 1985; Dumais 2002; Farkas, Grobe, Sheehan, and Shuan 1990; Kalmijn and Kraaykamp 1996; Katsillis and Rubinson 1990; Robinson and Garnier 1985; Roscigno and Ainsworth.)

Developmental Assets represent a theoretical construct that weaves together a set of developmental experiences, resources, and opportunities that enhance outcomes for children and adolescents. (Benson & Leffert, 2002.) The Search Institute has identified forty assets that are positive factors in young people, families, communities, schools and other settings that have been found to be important in promoting young people's healthy development.

In *Boosting Student Achievement: New research on the power of development assets*, researchers report that "the strength of the statistical relationships between developmental assets and academic achievement is similar to--or better than--the research findings on other educational practices and reform efforts. Further, "The Search Institute's latest research on developmental assets, including the first longitudinal studies--adds to the growing evidence that comprehensive, asset-based approaches have tremendous potential to contribute to the academic success of students from all backgrounds and in a wide range of communities." Scales & Roehlkepartain (2003).

This proposal, and the new AmeriCorps program we are describing, builds upon 38 years of

## Narratives

successes helping children-in-need reach their potential. Ten years of experience as an AmeriCorps grantee provides authentic knowledge of the most effective ways AmeriCorps members can help address the needs of children-in-need. We are proud of our record of achieving planned outcomes, continuous improvement, identification and support of outstanding members and member retention.

In our previous AmeriCorps work, we have learned that a highly impactful member experience relies upon these ingredients: truly meaningful work, the tools to be effective (training and support) and fully integrated opportunities for the Member to reflect upon challenges, rewards and their impact.

### Member Recruitment, Training and Supervision

Boys Hope Girls Hope uses a multi-faceted approach to member recruitment that includes the internet, print media, campus visits, volunteer fairs, conferences and word-of-mouth. We post openings to the AmeriCorps website, as well as to websites featuring volunteer opportunities (like Idealist.org, Servenet.org, and VolunteerMatch), and to college campus career centers. We send representatives to college volunteer fairs, and nonprofit job fairs and utilize a well-developed network of higher education contacts to reach prospective members as they prepare for graduation. In order to ensure that we are reaching prospective applicants from the communities we serve, we work closely with community leaders (heads of faith communities, local leadership organizations, city-sponsored opportunity forums, campus ministers, and others working with young adults) as well as current and past volunteers, employees, and our alumni.

Boys Hope Girls Hope works with an extremely vulnerable population and in order to serve them with the utmost integrity and safety, we maintain some of the most stringent standards in the nation for personnel screening and selection. Our policies require that the persons who work with our students, whom we refer to as scholars, have earned a Bachelor's degree and the Member job description calls for a high level of skills and competencies necessary to our challenging mission.

Members seeking a place to build their skills and develop professionally will find ample opportunities during their service year with Boys Hope Girls Hope. To ensure that each member has a service experience in which they feel well-prepared and effective, a large percentage of this project's budget and effort of its leadership focuses on training.

The member training year:

1. Pre-service (July 2015) Pre-service member training kicks off the program year. The five-day training is delivered as members are beginning their work at their program service sites and is divided into three sections: foundations, member service skills training, and operations.

## Narratives

The foundations section includes an introduction to the Boys Hope Girls Hope mission and culture, program design and practices as well as an orientation to AmeriCorps. Beginning with the foundation section of training, members begin to build their "Corps spirit" and have the opportunity to meet their site supervisors and acquainted with the senior staff.

During the second section of training, members receive training specific to the tasks they will carry out over the course of the year. Training is provided by senior staff of Boys Hope Girls Hope as well as external subject matter experts and field-based professionals. Topics include: a) recruiting mentors, volunteers and tutors b) identifying and developing contacts in the community c) training and matching mentors and supporting mentor-protégé pairs d) planning and implementing service learning e) training and supporting tutors f) adolescent development and child management g) using/completing the evaluation and data management tools h) working as a team. In addition to presentations, group activities, role playing and discussion that comprise this training, each Member will have an opportunity to shadow and have supervised practice with senior College Road staff and the college preparatory adjunct faculty during their work with approximately 100 high school juniors and seniors.

Within this program design, the Members may provide direct service as tutors in tandem with their efforts to recruit tutors from the community and assist in their training and support. All tutors assigned to Boys Hope Girls Hope scholars are given comprehensive training by qualified staff members that encompasses the body of research on effective instruction. The training includes the following framework: 1) overview of child development, 2) reading development (including all five National Reading Panel literacy keys 3) strategies for responding to correct and incorrect responses 4) strategies for guiding children's behavior and 5) strategies for building positive trusting relationships as defined by the Center for Prevention Research and Development, University of Illinois, 2009 6) content specific instructional strategies. Tutor impact is measured with validated and reliable instruments, including the MAZE and Content Reading Inventory and STAR MATH and are administered and interpreted by fully trained staff members. Both MAZE and CRI are research-based assessment systems, endorsed by the Consortium on Reading Excellence. The use of MAZE as a part of a literacy intervention program is identified by the Department of Education as an "Idea that Works." CRI was developed by Robert Cooter, a professor of Urban Literacy Research at the University of Memphis. It has been found to be one of the most reliable and valid reading tests of its kind. CRI offers a simple and straightforward method for assessing students' level of competency in reading comprehension and fluency.

## Narratives

The final area of pre-service training focuses on operational information including: a review of AmeriCorps member benefits and responsibilities, training in prohibited activities, reporting of time and effort and the use of My Service Log, member portfolios and professional goals, and accessing agency specific resources such as the web-based management systems, agency email and intranet etc.

2. Service Site Orientation (August 2015 -- within the first 30 days of the member's arrival) This stage of training includes introductions to the other staff members, partner schools, the scholars and the local board of directors. The Executive and Program Director at the site will introduce the member to key community partners and work with the member to develop site-specific plans that correlate to the program's objectives.

3. In-Service. (Ongoing) Several platforms will be provided to meet the on-going training and technical assistance needs of the members. Conference calls will be convened bi-monthly to address challenges or to explore topics identified by the members, who will take leadership for these conferences by acting as a facilitator on a rotating basis. A special web site for the Members is maintained for the exchange of ideas, dissemination of information and to support a sense of community. Members are encouraged to take advantage of the AmeriCorps on-line resource center and courses will be highlighted during the monthly conferences.

4. Mid-year Renewal (January, 2016) Member teams will gather regionally to explore pre-planned topics relative to preparing the members for the second half of their service year. In addition, the members will generate areas they wish to explore. The training concludes with structured reflection on their service experience to date.

5. Year-End Succession (June 2016) Succession is the last stage of formalized training. Through conference calls and site visits, Members will be lead through such topics as how to make a successful transition from their AmeriCorps year, how to access and utilize their AmeriCorps benefits, healthy ways to say goodbye to scholars and volunteers and how to summarize and organize their hard work in a way that can be easily continued by their successors. Each Member will have a succession meeting at the end of the term during which the Member's completed portfolio will be presented, term-end evaluations and exit paperwork are completed and the site supervisor will have the opportunity to share their affirmation and reflection on the Member's accomplishments.

Supervision. Boys Hope Girls Hope Program Directors at each affiliate service site will provide direct supervision of members. Program Directors will attend a pre-placement training and will also be required to complete a web-based training module to ensure that they fully understand the members'

## Narratives

roles, responsibilities and the applicable AmeriCorps provisions. The training module is supplemented by a comprehensive written guide to the rules, procedures, forms, timelines and requirements of all Boys Hope Girls Hope AmeriCorps programs. Members and their supervisors will meet, at minimum, bi-weekly to discuss the member team's progress, provide feedback and coaching. Quarterly mandatory AmeriCorps supervisor conference calls will address topics and concerns that develop as the program year progresses.

A Risk Based Monitoring Tool is used for formal oversight of sites and site supervisors. The tool consists of a site visit and audit processes consisting of standard monitoring tools, technical assistance, and written feedback. A scorecard evaluates the site's adherence to AmeriCorps provisions, site supervision of its member(s), member development, reporting and assesses the presence of evidentiary documentation in these areas. The monitoring process is supplemented by structured interviews with each of the site supervisor(s) and members from each program which allows for further program assessment in the areas described above as well as individual and/or site specific and program specific training and technical assistance needed.

Member Experience: The Bridgespan Group's publication "The Nonprofit Sector's Leadership Deficit" analysis estimates that by 2016, the nonprofit sector will need more than half a million new senior managers as the sector continues to expand and as baby-boom leaders retire. With the investment of AmeriCorps, Boys Hope Girls Hope can contribute in meaningful ways to this critical community challenge. An internal human capital management initiative has improved and expanded our efforts to support our members and provide professional development in the areas of formative mentorship, stretch experiences and ultimately allowing members with potential for assuming greater responsibility to do so. In this way, AmeriCorps increases Boys Hope Girls Hope's community impact through the development of the next generation of nonprofit and public sector leaders.

Through a partnership with Webster University, members are chronicling their experiences and acquired competencies and skills using technology and social media platforms, which has allowed them to utilize their creativity while adding to the personal brand that will set them apart when they embark on life after AmeriCorps.

The primary tool Members will use for reflection is the Member portfolio. Utilizing a framework of literary or documentary prompts, they will chronicle their experiences and reflect on the impact serving as an AmeriCorps Member has had on them personally, the scholars and their service site. Prompts including poetry, prose and excerpts from America's founding documents will also lead Members through an exploration of their desire to continue to serve beyond their AmeriCorps year,

## Narratives

and the role service plays in solving critical problems facing the world today and tomorrow.

Although our service sites are spread across the country, several tools will ensure that Members are informed, connected and feel that they are a part of a team. Conference calls will be convened bi-monthly to address challenges or to explore topics identified by the Members, who will take leadership for these conferences by acting as a facilitator on a rotating basis. In our previous AmeriCorps experience, we created special web site which functions as the resource library and "staff lounge" for Members, who have reported that it was invaluable in building connections and providing guidance. Through the site, Members can exchange ideas, discuss their challenges and share their successes. It also serves as a repository for a large collection of informational articles, artifacts and samples they can adapt to their own circumstances.

We have a strong track record of encouraging collaboration between the Members serving at our sites with other national service participants in their communities. This is achieved by facilitating connections, providing contact information and supporting their efforts in this area. We also require that each member plan and organize activities related to at least two national days of service. This requirement often leads to collaborative efforts with Members serving in other capacities in the community.

AmeriCorps Identification. The relationship between Boys Hope Girls Hope and AmeriCorps is of great value to Boys Hope Girls Hope and we actively promote identity with the AmeriCorps brand. All Members and sites receive AmeriCorps identification products and identify themselves as AmeriCorps programs in their written communications and presentations. Each year, we recognize AmeriCorps week and regularly feature Member accomplishments and contributions in reports and other publications.

### Organizational Capability

#### Organization Background and Staffing

Boys Hope Girls Hope (BHGH) helps academically capable and motivated children-in-need to meet their full potential and become men and women for others by providing value-centered, family-like homes, opportunities and education through college. Father Paul Sheridan, SJ, an educator in St. Louis, decided that he'd seen the promise of too many young lives extinguished by poverty, abuse, divorce, death, and communities shattered by drugs and violence. He envisioned a program where the full-range of a child's needs were addressed in settings where they could remain long-term, escaping the cycle of crisis and focusing fully on pursuing their potential. In 1977 he founded Boys Hope Girls Hope and the program's success led to its rapid replication across the country. Boys Hope Girls Hope

## Narratives

currently has Affiliates in 15 metropolitan areas. In June, 2016, we will commence affiliates in two additional states and significantly multiply our reach in our existing sites through the expansion of non-residential, school/community-based programming.

As an organization, our ultimate measure of success is our scholars' attainment of a college degree. The most meaningful outcome toward this goal is the rate of their college persistence, or the degree to which our scholars remain engaged in a course of study. Since 1991, nearly 100% of Boys Hope Girls Hope graduates have gone on to college. 90% of the students who matriculate into higher education are persisting to college degrees.

The Boys Hope Girls Hope college preparation program, The College Road, has been recognized as an innovative, model program for helping children from disadvantaged backgrounds overcome those disadvantages through long-term educational support. In 2012, the Educational Policy Institute named the program one of the ten best precollege educational programs in the country. (Swail et al., 2012).

Julie Allen, Vice President for Scholar Success and Chief Academic Officer will serve as the Principal Investigator for the AmeriCorps grant. Ms. Allen brings 30 years of experience as an educator and 20 years as an administrator to the project's leadership. Since 2002, Ms. Allen has served as Principal Investigator for innovative education projects totaling nearly \$4 million including projects funded by the Department of Justice, Department of Education and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Organizationally we have strong experience with multi-site management and as a previous recipient of AmeriCorps National planning and operating grants, are well-versed in the systems and support necessary to successfully operate this proposed AmeriCorps program. Our senior leadership is stable and highly experienced, each Director having over 20 years of experience in the child services and education fields. The current team has been working together for over 12 years.

Over the last six years we have expended considerable effort to fully integrate AmeriCorps into the structure, operations and culture of our organization. The results of these efforts were acknowledged positively during our July 2010 site visit. "The AmeriCorps program is thoroughly integrated into the Boys Hope Girls Hope organization. It is clear that the organization is dedicated to the AmeriCorps program and provides it with strong support. The organization leadership, including the CEO and board of directors are engaged in the program and are invested in its outcomes."

Boys Hope Girls Hope manages most of its major initiatives with cross-functional teams which allow us to bring expertise and skills across departments for program success.

## Narratives

VP Scholar Success and Chief Academic Officer Julie Allen will serve as Principal Investigator. Ms. Allen will oversee the AmeriCorps program and initiate strategic thinking for program growth and sustainability.

VP Affiliate Success Thomas Casey will oversee compliance of the AmeriCorps members' on-boarding with internal personnel and state and federal requirements. Mr. Casey will monitor staff levels and patterns at each site to ensure that the placement of members does not violate displacement provisions and, with his staff, manage member health insurance. Mr. Casey has over 25 years of experience in non-profit management.

Manager of Outreach and Engagement for Scholar Success Caitlin Thompson will serve as the Program Coordinator for the Go! Team AmeriCorps program. She will attend to day-to-day Member communications, management of My Service Log, member documentation and other logistical/organizational tasks. Ms. Thompson has two years of experience as an AmeriCorps project manager.

National Program Specialists Faith Hansen and Whitney Douglas are Education PhD's who will serve as a content specialists and member resource/coaches.

Boys Hope Girls Hope consistently engages its partners and community peers in program design, implementation and evaluation. Supporting the work of our professional staff, we have formed standing committees in each of our affiliate cities comprised of community members, peer and partner agencies, parents, and program alumni that provide regular feedback and participate in planning of new initiatives, including this proposed AmeriCorps program.

Compliance: Regular and well-organized training of members, site supervisors and staff assisting with the our AmeriCorps programs is the foremost strategy Boys Hope Girls Hope employs for ensuring that our organization is compliant with AmeriCorps rules and regulations. Site supervisors providing direct supervision of members are required to complete a web-based training module to ensure that they fully understand the members' roles, responsibilities and the applicable AmeriCorps provisions. Completion of the module is supplemented by a comprehensive written guide that describes the rules, procedures, forms, timelines and requirements of all Boys Hope Girls Hope AmeriCorps programs. Members and their supervisors meet, at minimum, bi-weekly to discuss the member's progress, provide feedback and coaching and to ensure that the member's activities are appropriate and compliant. Quarterly mandatory AmeriCorps supervisor conference calls address topics and concerns that develop as the program year progresses.

Boys Hope Girls Hope conducts annual assessments of all of its affiliates, known internally as the

## **Narratives**

Quality Performance Assessment Review or QPAR. QPAR assesses affiliate capacity in a variety of areas such as administrative systems, child care practices, board strength and functioning and academic progress of scholars and collegians. QPAR informs and supports the more targeted Risk Based Monitoring Assessment that is used to further evaluate the functioning of each AmeriCorps site within the Boys Hope Girls Hope affiliate system.

The Risk Based Monitoring Assessment has been in practice for over 6 years and includes both site visits and desk auditing, as appropriate. The findings form the basis of our risk assessment and subsequent decisions regarding training and technical assistance, level of monitoring, and future placements of members and qualification as an AmeriCorps site.

The site visit and audit processes consist of standard monitoring tools, technical assistance, and written feedback. A scorecard evaluates the site's adherence to AmeriCorps provisions, site supervision of its member(s), member development, reporting and assesses the presence of evidentiary documentation in these areas. Each site is then rated Commendable/Low Risk, Standard/Medium Risk or Substandard/High Risk. The Risk Based Monitoring Assessment Ratings are each assigned a required monitoring strategy. The monitoring process is supplemented by structured interviews with each of the site supervisor(s) and members from each program which allows for further program assessment in the areas described above as well as individual and/or site specific and program specific training and technical assistance needed. To ensure that the sites have sufficient capacity and commitment to successfully manage an AmeriCorps program, only those sites that are rated Standard or higher on the QPAR and receive a Standard or Commendable Risk Based Monitoring Assessment rating will be eligible sites for the Go! Team AmeriCorps program.

**Accountability:** For the past four program years we have enrolled members for 100% of our awarded member slots and averaged 91% retention of Members for the last four funded grant years. Early exits of members have largely been "for cause" terminations due to violations of policy or low member performance. We have been aggressively developing strategies to improve Member retention by continuous improvement of member screening and matching, member support and training, as well as working with our site supervisors to ensure that members are retained and report that their year of service was valuable, productive and satisfying. To inform these efforts, we conducted a large survey of former members in October, 2013 to more fully understand the service year from the member's perspective and how it could have been improved i.e. through training, supervisor support, on-going technical assistance etc.

During the last two full years of operation, Boys Hope Girls Hope exceeded each of its Performance

## **Narratives**

Measure targets. No compliance issues or areas of weakness/risk have been identified.

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

The budget presents adequate resources for the program design and anticipated outcomes. The cost per MSY is slightly higher than in our previous submissions but this reflects the dramatic increased investment we plan to make in member training and preparation for their role. We have also increased the number of Members we are requesting and are proposing a broader reach which includes two new sites.

Funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service are the only federal dollars received/managed by Boys Hope Girls Hope. Non-corporation resources commitments for this proposal are secured through fundraising from individuals and foundations, accounted for in the Boys Hope Girls Hope budget and from restricted campaign funds earmarked for affiliate support. In previously funded AmeriCorps grants, we have been very successful in exceeding the required matching resources.

#### **Budget Adequacy**

As stated relative to costs per member, the design of the Go! Team program relies heavily on the success of its Members, and the distribution of the resources budgeted reflects it, investing heavily in member training, support and supervision. Other costs, such as member stipends, insurance, supervision and operational expenses including criminal history and FBI checks for members as well as mentors are accounted for, reflecting the remaining resources necessary for the program to reach its stated goals, including broadening the reach of the program and deepening its impact.

### **Evaluation Summary or Plan**

We have interpreted the Go! Team AmeriCorps project as not meeting the criteria for "Same Project" as it does not include all of the benchmarks listed in the same project definition included in the application glossary. Specifically, Go! Team addresses a different issue area and priorities than our previously funded Links project. Per the announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity page 14, "A program will be considered a re-competing application if it satisfies the CNCS definition of "same project. If the project does not satisfy the definition of re-competing, it will not be required to submit an evaluation plan, summary or completed evaluation.

We do intend to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the program and our plan, developed with external evaluator Dr. Kavita Mitapalli, is described below.

## **Narratives**

The evaluation will focus on the impact of the AmeriCorps program on student performance, retention from grade-to-grade and long-term, matriculation into higher education. The basis of evaluation efforts will be the program's logic model which outlines the resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes necessary for success of the program.

Go! Team's effectiveness will be measured in four ways: (1) Extent to which the program met the goal and objectives and targets stated in the grant proposal; (2) Extent to which students participated and engaged in various program activities during the school year and in the summer; (3) Extent to which participants improved on assessments, showed enthusiasm and engagement; and (4) Extent to which various systemic efforts were successful in supporting and enhancing the initiative. The evaluation will employ a utilization-focused evaluation approach. Project leaders will collect process and short-term outcome data related to the long term overall goals and objectives of increasing academic achievement and engagement of the project's participants thereby increasing their academic achievement and grade-to-grade articulation and long-term, college matriculation.

Methods will include pre-interim-post measures of engagement, enthusiasm and college-readiness to include the Children's Hope Scale, developed and validated by C. R. Snyder The University of Kansas, Lawrence, The 40 Developmental Assets survey, developed and validated by The Search Institute and the Am I Ready College Preparation Survey based on the college-ready profile defined by the American Association of University Professors and developed to correlate to the College Road curriculum. Measures of academic performance include the LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory) administered at the beginning of each semester and the MAZE administered annually for students up to the 9th grade. MAZE is a valid and reliable research-based assessment system endorsed by the Consortium on Reading Excellence. Finally STAR MATH will be utilized to benchmark and follow student progress in mathematics and administered pre and post.

Boys Hope Girls Hope will utilize its existing data bases and management software to track student attendance and determine the numbers of volunteers leveraged by AmeriCorps members.

### **Amendment Justification**

This section is not applicable at this time

# Narratives

## Clarification Summary

### A. Programmatic Clarification #1

Per instruction, the following is the list of 17 operating sites at which we intend to operate the Go! Team AmeriCorps program. The information below is congruent with the Multi-State Operating site list.

Site 1. Boys Hope Girls Hope -- Arizona

Members = 3

Site 2. Boys Hope Girls Hope -- Baton Rouge

Members = 1

Site 3. Boys Hope Girls Hope -- New Orleans

Members = 1

Site 4. Boys Hope Girls Hope - Cincinnati

Members = 2

Site 5. Boys Hope Girls Hope - Colorado

Members = 2

Site 6. Boys Hope Girls Hope -- Detroit

Members = 2

Site 7. Boys Hope Girls Hope -- Chicago

Members = 1

Site 8. Boys Hope Girls Hope -- Nebraska

Members = 2

Site 9. Boys Hope Girls Hope -- New York

Members = 2

Site 10. Boys Hope Girls Hope -- San Francisco

Members = 2

Site 11. Boys Hope Girls Hope -- Southern California

Members = 1

Site 12. Boys Hope Girls Hope -- Kansas City

Members = 1

Site 13. Boys Hope Girls Hope -- Baltimore

Members = 1

Site 14. Boys Hope Girls Hope -- National Center

## Narratives

Members = 2

Site 15. Boys Hope Girls Hope -- St. Louis

Members = 4

Site 16. Girls Hope -- Pittsburgh

Members = 2

Site 17 Boys Hope Girls Hope San Antonio

Members = 2

Site Total: 17

Member Total: 31

The logic model (sites in inputs) and budget (site supervisor manuals) have been changed to reflect the 17 sites defined in the Operating Site list. The 20 cities/counties listed in the narrative were included to demonstrate levels of need in areas from which the program intends to draw it's participants rather than the exact location of sites at which AmeriCorps Members will be placed.

### B. Budget Clarification #1

Worker's compensation costs have been budgeted and added to Section II, Member Support Costs, section of the budget.

### B. Budget Clarification #2

We request that this application for funding be considered for the amount equal to the request.

### B. Budget Clarification #3

This request does not exceed the maximum allowable cost per MSY, although it is acknowledged that the CNCS amount requested may be higher than than for other grantees. This project, and the project budget, was constructed with the intent to build and operate an ambitious, highly impactful program serving some of the nation's most at-risk young people. The investment necessary to achieving that goal is not fully reflected in the calculation of Budget section II alone. The level of impact we have defined in our performance plan can't be achieved without significant grantee investment in Member development and support, on-going monitoring and other support costs and Boys Hope Girls Hope intends to provide nearly 90% of those necessary resources, which per Member, represents an additional \$8,729 investment in each member service year. Because of the need for significant matching resources needed for program success, the MSY costs were not able to be more fully

## Narratives

reduced. Overall, the application's budget exceeds the overall grantee share requirement.

### C. Performance Measure Clarification

Per guidance from Program Officer, responses to Clarification points 1-6 have been completed in the "Enter Instrument" field of the Performance Measures module.

#### Performance Measure Clarification #1

For outcomes ED27A and ED27B, we will measure each student's level of improvement using the LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory.) Students can be counted as "improved" if their pre-program percentile improves to the 50th percentile or higher by the end of the program year. For outcome ED5 students are "improved" if their MAZE scores demonstrate reading at the "Benchmark" level (demonstrating comprehension skills appropriate to their grade level) by the end of the program year. MAZE is a research-based assessment system, endorsed by the Consortium on Reading Excellence that measures reading comprehension in 3 levels of risk of failure to read successfully at grade level. Benchmark (low risk -able to read at grade level) Strategic (moderate risk) and Intensive (high risk)

#### Performance Measure Clarification #2

Completion of Go! Team program each year is defined as a student attending at least 75% of program sessions offered.

#### Performance Measure Clarification #3

ED 1 was added per instructions.

#### Performance Measure Clarification #4

For ED27A we will utilize the LASSI to measure academic engagement - specifically attitude towards school and general motivation for succeeding in school. Students will be counted as "improved" if their pre-program percentile on the Attitude Scale improves to the 50th percentile or higher at the end of the program year on the Attitude Scale of the LASSI. The LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory) was developed and validated by the University of Texas at Austin - Cognitive Learning Strategies Project.

#### Performance Measure Clarification #5

For ED27B we will utilize the LASSI to measure academic motivation - specifically the motivation to perform tasks related to achievement: text book reading, preparing for class and completing assignments on time.

Students will be counted as "improved" if their pre-program percentile on the Motivation Scale

## **Narratives**

improves to the 50th percentile or higher on the Motivation Scale at the end of the program year. The LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory) was developed and validated by the University of Texas at Austin - Cognitive Learning Strategies Project.

### Performance Measure Clarification #6

Students' success or failure in school is closely tied to their ability to comprehend informational text. As students progress through school, understanding informational text becomes both more essential and more challenging. Informational text increasingly becomes the source of students' new knowledge and information. The demands of learning from text also increase as text becomes more complicated in middle and high school. To improve their level of reading proficiency -- or just to maintain it -- students must become more advanced in both the range and flexibility of their reading comprehension strategies.

For diagnostic purposes, intervention planning and response to intervention measurement it is necessary to assess comprehension processes as well as outcomes. For these purposes, we have chosen the MAZE task. School districts/states across the U.S. value MAZE as an acceptable indicator of decoding, fluency and comprehension (Fuchs & Fuchs 1992.)

The investigation of MAZE as a valid, reliable and sensitive instrument was conducted by Shin, Deno and Espin in 2000. The research body supporting MAZE as a valid and reliable tool for various populations of students is considerable, and MAZE remains "the best quick and dynamic assessment of reading comprehension" according to the Minnesota Research Institute on Progress Monitoring at the University of Minnesota. MAZE is also identified by the U.S. Department of Education as an "Idea That Works" and meets the CNCS threshold for a standardized instrument as it has been validated externally on a random-selected population of students.

### D. Strategic Engagement Slots #1

Boys Hope Girls Hope is committed including a broad community as participants in our mission. To this end, our Member recruiting plan will include outreach to State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies, State Disability Service agencies, College career/disability resource centers and the Workforce Recruitment Program and Employee Assistance Referral Network. We do not have a strong level of experience with/well developed network for recruiting members with disabilities but believe we could target this pool of talent, and ensure appropriate accommodation and assistance for

## **Narratives**

3-5% of our awarded slots.

D. Strategic Engagement Slots #2

Boys Hope Girls Hope is not requesting additional MSY's.

E. MSY with No Program Funds Attached Clarification

N/A These clarifications do not include a request for no-cost MSY's.

### **Continuation Changes**

This section is not applicable at this time

### **Grant Characteristics**