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Executive Summary

The Seneca Nation of Indians proposes to have 36 AmeriCorps members who will provide Academic Enhancement activities consisting of remedial sessions in ELA and math and enrichment sessions in STEM, as well as enrichment sessions in Seneca language, history and culture. AmeriCorps members will also disseminate emergency preparedness materials at community events at the Seneca Nation Cattaraugus Territory and participate in disaster relief in the event of an emergency. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for 40 Seneca Nation students completing remedial/enrichment activities in ELA, math, and STEM; 40 Seneca Nation students completing enrichment activities in Seneca language, history, and culture; 500 Seneca citizens receiving disaster preparation materials; and 30 Seneca citizens completing Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. AmeriCorps members will leverage 50 volunteers who will provide enrichment sessions for Seneca Nation students in Seneca language, history, and culture and also distribute disaster preparation materials to Cattaraugus Territory residents, providing disaster relief as needed. This program will focus on the CNCS focus areas of Education and Disaster Services. The CNCS investment of \$157,230 will be matched with \$106,795 in private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

Today the people of the Seneca Nation (SN) face numerous challenges. The poverty rate is 27.0% for the SN Cattaraugus Territory, compared with 17.9% for Cattaraugus County, 19.1% for Chautauqua County, 14.6% for Erie County, the three counties surrounding the Cattaraugus Territory (American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013, Table S1701). Although the Cattaraugus Territory compares well with surrounding counties for high school completion (including equivalency attainment), the poverty rate for high school graduates is alarming: 22.3% for the Cattaraugus Territory, compared with 14.1% for Cattaraugus County, 15.2% for Chautauqua County, and 12.3% for Erie County (American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013, Table S1501). In addition, the unemployment rate is 9.1% for Cattaraugus County, 8.8% for Chautauqua County, and 8.6% for Erie County, while unemployment at the Cattaraugus Territory is an astonishing 21.3% (American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013, Table S2301).

Currently there is no community service group at the Seneca Nation. In keeping with its Theory of Change, the SN AmeriCorps Project will provide services to Cattaraugus Territory residents in a supportive atmosphere that acknowledges and values Seneca history, culture, and traditions. Seneca Nation AmeriCorps members will be actively recruited using a number of approaches. Social

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media, including Facebook and Craigs List, will supply information on the Project, as will advertising in local print media and word of mouth communication. Through My AmeriCorps, potential members will be able to learn about, and sign up for, the SN AmeriCorps Project. The SN AmeriCorps Coordinator will speak at local colleges about the Project. Since a major component of the Project will involve academic remediation in math and English Language Arts (ELA) for Native students in the elementary grades, the Coordinator will work closely with college math and English departments to target students with expertise in these subjects and a desire to work with youth. The number of members will be sufficient for the Project: two full-time 12-month members will be recruited, 16 will be reduced half-time members, 10 will be minimum time members, and 8 will be minimum time education only.

Once selected, members will receive training to prepare them for their commitment to service. The basic Service and Orientation training for new members will be rules and regulations for AmeriCorps, including AmeriCorps 101: History of Service in America, the AmeriCorps Network, and the Ethic of Service. Training will also include: background information on the Seneca Nation, training relevant to the areas of Disaster Services and Education; performance measures and how to collect data; program operating policies on the living allowance; benefits; timesheets to be signed by both the member and supervisor; procedures for making up missed service hours; safety protocol; travel policies; expense reimbursement; staff and member roles; recruiting and supervising volunteers; diversity and cross-cultural sensitivity; teambuilding; disaster preparedness activities: CPR, First Aid, and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training. A Policies and Procedures Handbook, to be electronically distributed to each member, will be developed, based on the Policies and Procedures Manual of the SN Human Resources Department. Upon receipt, each member will be required to sign that he/she has received, understands, and will abide by the contents of this document.

Branding of the Seneca Nation AmeriCorps Project will be accomplished in a number of ways. Each members will receive and be directed to wear an AmeriCorps T-shirt and polo shirt. Each site will have an AmeriCorps banner and window clings to identify that members are performing services at that location. At community outreach events, the AmeriCorps banner and signs will be displayed prominently. These events will provide Seneca citizens with information on AmeriCorps, its mission, and particular events that will take place as part of the SN AmeriCorps Project. In addition, AmeriCorps members and staff will reach out to potential stakeholders and partners, especially SOAR and the Service Collaborative, based in Buffalo, NY.

SN AmeriCorps members will recruit volunteers to provide an additional level of service to the Seneca

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Community, especially in the areas of disaster services and language preservation. Although all Seneca citizens will be welcome as AmeriCorps volunteers, a concerted effort will be made to recruit Seneca Elders to serve in this capacity. These are individuals who are likely to have the time to devote to volunteer activities. In addition, Elders have knowledge of the Seneca language and customs and will thus be able to provide invaluable assistance in the language preservation component of the AmeriCorps Academic Enhancement program.

To promote esprit de corps, members will develop, plan, and implement four service projects during their year of service. In this way, the bond between members will be reinforced and members will have additional opportunities to provide service to the Seneca Nation Community.

Monthly meetings for all members will provide opportunities for additional training, reflection, and teambuilding activities. The Project Coordinator will meet bimonthly with each member individually, to be proactive in dealing with any problem areas and to ensure that member participation continues at a high level. Follow-up site visits will take place regularly, to monitor member participation and assess progress being made.

To foster a commitment to a lifetime of service to their Community, members who successfully complete all assigned activities and duties associated with their tenure in the AmeriCorps Project will receive the Eagle Award for Community Service, to be conferred by the President of the Seneca Nation as part of the State of the Nation Address.

The AmeriCorps Program Coordinator will be in charge of the day-to-day operation of the Project and will also supervise activities of the Program Assistant/Family Data and Logistics Coordinator. This staff person will assist Project Coordinator in keeping detailed records, as mandated by CNCS, including time studies, time cards, staff meetings, and trainings, and will maintain records for individual members, as well as for office supplies and equipment. As Family Data and Logistics Coordinator, the Program Assistant will assist with research, design, and implementation of various data collection measurement instruments, as mandated by CNCS. This staff member will assist with logistical issues, including transportation, tracking student absenteeism, and researching the newest and most effective evidenced-based skills and techniques for academic remediation. The Program Assistant will also interview individual students to log the reason they believe they are struggling in ELA and math. The AmeriCorps Program Evaluator will carry out evaluative measures to prepare for year two of the SN AmeriCorps Project. The Evaluator will be an individual with extensive knowledge of AmeriCorps programs.

The focus of the Seneca Nation AmeriCorps Project will be on two of the 2015 funding priorities:

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Disaster Services and Education. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

Disaster Services: Naturally occurring disasters pose a threat to the Western New York Region in which the Seneca Nation is located. In 2009 the Cattaraugus Territory was impacted by a flash flood event. On August 9, 2009, two storm systems converged over Western New York and produced torrential rain that caused severe flash flooding in parts of Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and Erie Counties. Damage from the flooding was widespread. Many road culverts were washed out, and more than one-quarter of the roads in Cattaraugus County were compromised. Numerous contaminants filled the water systems and soil. The water supplies of communities were compromised by damage to village reservoirs and water-transmission infrastructures. Water and mud damage to residential and commercial properties was extensive. The Tri-County Region (Erie, Chautauqua, and Cattaraugus Counties) was declared a federal disaster area (FEMA-1837 DR-NY, August 8-10, 2009) and more than \$45 million in federal disaster assistance was distributed. As recently as last fall, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced funding for relief from additional severe storms that struck New York State in 2011 and 2013.

High water events and other naturally occurring disasters, including major ice jamming, pose a significant level of risk for results other than flood damage. These events comprise a constant threat of radioactive waste being leaked from the West Valley Nuclear Demonstration Site, the only commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing facility ever to operate in the U.S., located 21 miles upriver from the Cattaraugus Territory. Similar concerns exist for the Peter Cooper Superfund Site in Gowanda, NY, located along the 16-mile span of Cattaraugus Creek running through the Cattaraugus Territory. Contaminants have seeped into Cattaraugus Creek; in addition, dangerous levels of arsenic, chromium, and zinc have been found in the soil and groundwater at the Site. Considerable negative impact to groundwater, surface runoff, migration of contaminants to nearby properties, biological/physical/chemical risk associated with existing contaminated sites, including heavy metals, PCBs, chlorinated volatile organic compounds (VOCs), arsenic, and petroleum, pose a continuous threat.

Seneca Nation corridors are vulnerable to terrorist threats, explosive devices, oil spills, chemicals spills, gas leaks, and hazardous substances being transported across its territories, including radiological nuclear waste from the nearby West Valley Demonstration Project. In addition, the Seneca Nation has experienced economic growth, resulting in the construction of many gas stations with underground storage tanks. Thus, the potential for poisoning water supplies of the Nation is high.

The CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads and several other major transportation routes (U.S. Routes

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219, 20, and 62; New York State Routes 5 and 39) pass through Seneca lands.

Winter weather events also pose a challenge. In the Southern Tier of New York State (in which the Cattaraugus Territory is located) snowfalls of one to two feet (and occasionally four feet or more) are common, as are monthly snowfall amounts of over 24 inches (<http://nysc.eas.cornell.edu/climate>).

Winter weather can begin as early as October and often lasts until the end of April (www.erh.noaa.gov/buf/climate/buf-snos00s.php). From November 17th to 21st of 2014, the region was pummeled with ten feet of snow, causing the closure of Interstate 90 (the New York State Thruway), as well as Interstate 20 and Interstate 5, all of which traverse portions of the Cattaraugus Territory. This weather event underscored the vulnerability of the Cattaraugus Territory when its primary access routes are rendered impassable, causing access to hospitals and other health care facilities to be compromised. Moreover, February 2015 saw temperatures of 10 to 25 degrees (Fahrenheit) below zero, with wind chills as low as 40 degrees below zero. Such dangerous temperatures constituted a significant threat to all area residents, especially the most vulnerable: the young, the elderly, and those with health issues.

All of these challenges to safety and security are exacerbated by a low level of preparedness for natural and man-made disasters, compounded by a lack of trust for outside agencies felt by Seneca Community members. Seneca citizens often fear speaking to non-Native service providers. Outcomes are, therefore, often not as effective as they would be if the issues in question were resolved within the Community. The fear of outside involvement keeps many Seneca citizens from reaching out to non-Native agencies to help with needs or problems. This lack of trust was clearly demonstrated during the aftermath of the August 2009 flood. Although many Seneca homeowners suffered considerable damage to their homes and property, they exhibited great hesitancy in requesting assistance from FEMA and other governmental agencies tasked with provision of disaster relief services. As a result, many residents did not receive the level of subsidy to which they were entitled.

The Theory of Change calls for a Disaster Services component with both proactive and reactive elements. One reduced half-time AmeriCorps member, working in collaboration with the SN Emergency Management Department, will coordinate efforts to collect emergency contact information and distribute materials, including procedures to follow in the event of various emergency situations, at events such as the Seneca Nation Fall Festival (held at the Cattaraugus Territory), monthly meetings of the Elders Sharing Circle, at sporting and other events held at the Cattaraugus Community Center, the Education Department, and the Early Childhood Learning Center, as well as to individual Seneca households. AmeriCorps members will also respond to questions or concerns

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about disaster preparedness or response from Seneca citizens.

AmeriCorps members will staff an informational table at a minimum of two community events per month. With a goal of reaching 500 Seneca citizens in the course of the year, they will distribute emergency materials and will encourage them to enroll in Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. In the event of an emergency, the AmeriCorps member serving as emergency coordinator will be the team leader to provide coordination of effort, distribute supplies, and provide other services as needed.

Personnel from the Emergency Management Department will facilitate training in disaster preparedness for AmeriCorps members and volunteers, who will contribute to relief efforts by staffing emergency outreach centers, making home checks on Elders and those with medical conditions, and providing meals for Seneca citizens.

The AmeriCorps Project will implement an outreach effort to recruit 50 Seneca citizens for the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) at the Cattaraugus Territory. A CERT will be able to respond to natural or man-made events that impact the Territory. The importance of responding quickly to emergency events was realized during the flash flood of August 2009, which significantly impacted roads, homes, and buildings at the Cattaraugus Territory. The Seneca Community not only relied on the capability of the Cattaraugus Territory Volunteer Fire Department, but was also forced to rely on outside assistance to help with response and recovery. When outside agencies unfamiliar with the Seneca Community engage Seneca citizens, the response can be inconsistent and/or ineffective due to cultural differences. Developing and training a Teen CERT and Adult CERT is unique: there are few within Indian Country. The provision of basic CERT skills, combined with a multi-skill technically advanced responder, will strengthen Seneca Nation ability to respond to catastrophic events in a timely manner. There are currently two county CERT groups and four volunteer fire departments to assist in providing basic CERT training. They will design and disseminate informational materials to recruit new CERT volunteers and will conduct recruitment sessions at Seneca Community events.

Through the efforts of AmeriCorps members, Seneca citizens will become more aware of the potential dangers of natural and man-made disasters to the safety and security of the Seneca Community. The Cattaraugus Territory Emergency Plan will have the added benefit of a greater degree of participation by Seneca Community members. As a result, the likelihood of the Cattaraugus Territory emerging from a disaster with minimal loss of life, health, and property will be enhanced.

Education: The second funding priority for Seneca Nation AmeriCorps will be education. This component will provide a comprehensive Academic Enhancement program for 75 Seneca students

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enrolled in seven elementary and middle schools in the Gowanda, Lake Shore, and Silver Creek Central School Districts. By the end of the 2015-2016 academic year, a minimum of 40 of these students will have completed the program.

The students will be intensively recruited. Guidance counselors in the participating schools will provide the names of those who are working below grade level, as of the end of the 2014-15 school year. An information packet will be sent to the parents of these students, explaining the program and offering an invitation to join.

One full-time member will be assigned to be a team leader and coordinate AmeriCorps members who will provide academic sessions in English Language Arts (ELA). One full-time AmeriCorps member will serve that function for math and STEM-related topics. One reduced half-time member will work in the area of Seneca language, history, and culture. One reduced half-time member will be assigned to each of the designated schools. This AmeriCorps team will work directly with students on an individual and group basis, building on academic lessons that connect directly to the district curriculum and the Common Core Learning Standards.

Research sources have long reported that reading achievement is fundamental to success in school and that difficulty in reading accelerates poor academic performance. Well-implemented academic intervention can result in significant improvements on standardized measures of reading achievement (Power & Cummings, 2011). The National Indian Education Study (18 Mar. 2015) found lags in achievement and persistent gaps among Native students, with more than one-third below basic level in reading and math. These scores have remained basically unchanged for a number of years.

In The State of Education for Native Students, the Education Trust has asserted that achievement results for Native students have not made progress in recent years, and the gaps between Native and white students have increased (<http://edtrust.org>, August 13, 2013). The following data compares 2014 scores for all students, and for Native students, on New York State Assessment Tests at each of the elementary and middle schools at which Seneca students will receive Academic Enhancement activities. For all but one of these designations, Native students scored lower (and sometimes significantly lower) than students in the school as a whole.

Percentage of Students Scoring At or Above Proficiency Level, Grades 3-8, New York State English Language Arts (ELA) and Math Assessments (New York State School Report Card, 2014)

Gowanda Elementary School: All Students: ELA: 23; Math: 32

Native American Students: ELA: 7; Math: 15

Gowanda Middle School: All Students: ELA: 13; Math: 13

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Native American Students: ELA: 7; Math: 7

A.J. Schmidt Elementary School (Lake Shore District): All Students: ELA: 23; Math: 35

Native American Students: ELA: 20; Math: 19

John T. Waugh Elementary School (Lake Shore District): All Students: ELA: 20; Math: 31

Native American Students: ELA: 9; Math: 14

Lake Shore Middle School: All Students: ELA: 26; Math: 20

Native American Students: ELA: 9; Math: 14

Silver Creek Elementary School: All Students: ELA: 23; Math: 31

Native American Students: ELA: 4; Math: 28

Silver Creek Middle School: All Students: ELA: 33; Math: 22

Native American Students: ELA: 26; Math: 25

The following information, derived from data of the three districts in which Seneca Nation students are enrolled, show the number and percentage of Seneca students who are below grade level in ELA and math. This data speaks to a need for remediation to help Seneca youngsters to bridge the achievement gap and, in doing so, be better prepared for high school and the world of work.

Intervention activities in the elementary and middle grades can also help to stem the dropout rate for Native American students, which in 2008 was, on average, 75% higher than the national dropout average (Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development).

Native American Students Below Grade Level in ELA and Math: Elementary and Middle Schools in the Gowanda, Lake Shore, and Silver Creek Central School Districts, 2014:

Kindergarten Native Students: 48 Below Grade Level: ELA: 26 (54.2%); Math: 10 (20.8%)

1st Grade Native Students: 56 Below Grade Level: ELA: 30 (53.6%); Math: 28 (50.0%)

2nd Grade Native Students: 65 Below Grade Level: ELA: 35 (53.8%); Math: 30 (46.2%)

3rd Grade Native Students: 57 Below Grade Level: ELA: 39 (68.4%); Math: 35 (61.4%)

4th Grade Native Students: 51 Below Grade Level: ELA: 31 (60.8%); Math: 31 (60.8%)

5th Grade Native Students: 60 Below Grade Level: ELA: 50 (83.3%); Math: 38 (63.3%)

6th Grade Native Students: 47 Below Grade Level: ELA: 45 (95.7%); Math: 39 (83.0%)

7th Grade Native Students: 50 Below Grade Level: ELA: 39 (78.0%); Math: 30 (60.0%)

8th Grade Native Students: 56 Below Grade Level: ELA: 40 (71.4%); Math: 42 (75.0%)

Grades K-8 Native Students: 490 Below Grade Level: ELA: 335 (68.4%); Math: 283 (57.8%)

On December 4, 2014, the Huffington Post described a White House report which stated that education for Native American students is in a state of emergency, and citing, among other factors, a

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lack of culturally relevant curriculum (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/04/native-american-education_n_6264696.html). In *Teaching the Native American*, Gilliland (1999) asserted that students must be able to see the connection between material taught in school and what they must know in order to be a contributing member of their community. In *Effective Teaching Strategies for Engaging Native American Students*, presented at the 2006 Conference of the National Association of Native American Studies, Sorkness and Kelting-Gibson said that Native students who come to school with a grounding in their culture demonstrate fewer at-risk behaviors, including academic issues and social, emotional, and psychological problems. The Theory of Change of the SN AmeriCorps Project calls for a program of academic remediation in ELA and math, to improve grades and attitudes toward school and create a solid foundation for the demands of high school. As indicated by the Theory of Change, AmeriCorps members will receive best practice training before and during their year of service. They will be trained to utilize research-based pedagogical strategies to help Seneca students improve their academic performance, including: individualized instruction, in which lessons are tailored to the learning style and level of understanding of the student (Martino, 1993; Gaustad, 1992; Topping, 1988); instruction free of competition, during which students progress at their own pace (Gaustad, 1992; Topping, 1988); private instruction apart from whole class instruction (Gaustad, 1992; Topping, 1988); increased praise, feedback, and encouragement (Topping, 1988); closer monitoring from the teacher and AmeriCorps member to maximize time on task (Topping, 1988); skills demonstrated instead of just verbalized (Topping, 1988); and companionship (Topping, 1988; Martino, 1993; Miller et al., 1993; Kalkowski, 1995; Cotton, 1998). Members will model appropriate attitudes toward school to help Seneca students better connect with their school and their community. This program will provide both remediation in academic subject areas, as well as instruction in Seneca language, history, and culture.

Individual and small-group Academic Enhancement sessions will be provided by members serving as academic coaches for three sessions per week of approximately 30 minutes per session (90 minutes per week) beginning October 15, 2015 and ending May 30, 2016. Members will work in the afterschool program to the extent that their college schedules allow. Emphasis will be on New York State Common Core concepts in ELA and math, with input on content from classroom teachers. Members will not be displacing school staff: much of the remediation will take place after school. If members do work in the classroom, they will do so with the permission of, and under the direction of, the classroom teacher. Members will play a supportive role in the classroom, working on skill reinforcement that the teacher does not have time to do.

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The Academic Enhancement component will also include opportunities to reinforce STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) subject matter presented in the classroom. Members will incorporate STEM concepts and demonstrations into their sessions with students and will encourage students to explore the possibility of a STEM-related college major and a possible career in a STEM field. Seneca students will also learn how ELA and math skills are needed to make a STEM career a reality.

Data collection will come from two main sources: the Gowanda, Lake Shore, and Silver Creek Central School Districts attended by Seneca Nation students and Erie 2 BOCES. In 1948 the New York State Legislature established Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) to provide educational programming and related services to school districts in the state. The Gowanda, Lake Shore, and Silver Creek Districts are all served by Erie 2 BOCES. Because of its centralized structure, BOCES will be able to provide data that will be invaluable to the Academic Enhancement component.

Members will utilize ELA and math pre- and post-tests developed by teachers who have students participating in the program. The pre-test will be administered during the week of October 1, 2015, while the post-test will be administered during the week of May 31, 2016. Baseline data from the 2014-2015 school year will be collected from the three participating school districts. Information will be gleaned from school records, teacher surveys, and student surveys.

The Theory of Change calls for a second component of the Academic Enhancement program, which will address the low level of knowledge and appreciation of Seneca language, history, and culture among Seneca youth. A great deal of this can be attributed to the hundred year effort to assimilate Native American Peoples into the majority culture, much of which took place in the boarding schools established in the U.S. and Canada. The Thomas Asylum for Orphan and Destitute Indian Children, on the Seneca Nation of Indians Cattaraugus Territory, was opened in 1855. From 1905 to 1957, it functioned as a residential school, the Thomas Indian School, with classes through ninth grade. For over fifty years, Native children were removed from their families, placed in the School, and forbidden to speak their own language or in any way express their culture. As was the experience of those who attended similar schools, the transgenerational trauma caused by this forced relocation and assimilation is felt to this day by former students, their families, and by the Seneca Nation as a whole. The devastating results of these efforts to obliterate Seneca identity are especially observed than in the area of language, with only about twenty fluent speakers of Seneca remaining (verbal report: Business Conference at Seneca Nation Allegany Territory, April 2015). There are no known fluent speakers of Seneca under the age of 50 at the Cattaraugus Territory. Most Seneca students only know vocabulary

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for colors, animals, clans, and a few greetings (Cattaraugus Department of Education Cultural Activity and Language Center).

Joshua Fishman, sociolinguist and expert on endangered languages, proposed in his 1991 book, *Reversing Language Shift*, a continuum of eight stages of language loss with stage one being the closest to survival and stage eight being the closest to total extinction. Applying this continuum model, it is clear that the Seneca language is in stage eight, the criterion for which is that only a few isolated elderly speakers of the language remain.

It is crucial that Seneca youth have opportunities to learn as much of their language as possible, both to preserve the language from extinction and to benefit students on an individual basis. In *Teaching American Indian and Alaska Native Languages in the Schools: What Has Been Learned*, Thomas D. Peacock and Donald R. Day have asserted that Native students who know their language develop a clearer sense of identity and a deeper understanding and appreciation of their culture and their role in that culture (ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools: Charleston, WV. December 1999. p. 3). One AmeriCorps member will serve as coordinator of a language, history, and culture program under the direction of the Seneca Nation Department of Education Cultural Activity and Language Center. This member will coordinate with other members working in the schools to incorporate a Seneca vocabulary word of the day, a Seneca historical fact of the day, and a Seneca cultural theme of the week. The coordinator will also develop projects for the other members, which will be displayed at five to ten monthly events at the Cattaraugus Territory. The coordinator will recruit volunteers to work with the students on Seneca language skills. These sessions will take place during afterschool hours at the school sites and at the Cattaraugus Territory on Saturdays. Efforts will be made to recruit volunteers from among Seneca Community Elders, since they possess the most thorough knowledge of Seneca language, history, and culture that can be shared with Seneca youth. Including activities that highlight Seneca language, culture, and history during Academic Enhancement sessions will foster a connectedness on the part of Seneca students with their school environment and will increase the overall relevance that the students perceive to be part of their educational experience. Pre- and post-tests developed by the AmeriCorps member overseeing the Seneca language and culture component will assess the change in knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes brought about as a result of this intervention.

The study of Seneca language, history, and culture will continue over the summer, with the addition of 10 summer members. Classes will be conducted on these topics for both Seneca youth and AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps members and Seneca students will also participate in activities

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designed to develop leadership skills.

The Academic Enhancement activities implemented by members will form a comprehensive package to address gaps in academic achievement currently experienced by Seneca students. These interventions will also help Seneca students to connect more closely with their heritage by increasing their knowledge of their traditional language, their history, and their culture.

Organizational Capability

The Seneca Nation of Indians has extensive experience in writing and managing grant-funded projects and currently administers several million dollars in federal grants annually through its Fiscal Affairs Department, which provides accurate, timely, and comprehensive financial and information services. Department operations and responsibilities include accounting, budget management, grants and contracts management, fixed asset inventory control, invoice and payroll services, and procurement. The Comptroller Accounting Office, Accounts Payable Office, Purchasing Office, Grants Office, and Payroll Office comprise the Fiscal Affairs Department.

Because of the amount of federal funding, the Nation is required by law to be audited annually by an external firm. The audit conforms to the requirements and standards of OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-profit Organizations. The annual audit assesses Seneca Nation fiscal health, presents the financial position of the Nation, and certifies if Seneca Nation financial statements are free of material misstatement. The Nation closely analyzes its annual audits, using the audits as an opportunity to better manage its finances. If findings are identified, the Nation works quickly to address and resolve them through Corrective Action Plans.

The Purchasing Office assists Nation departments in obtaining bids on essential goods and services. This office is also responsible for preparing purchase orders and confirming that Nation procurement policies and procedures are followed, closely adhering to the Seneca Nation Procurement Policy Statement. The Director, with the support of the Purchasing Officers, is responsible for purchase orders for procurement of materials/services and purchase requisitions. The Purchasing Office obtains and manages prices, materials specifications, delivery dates, and invitations to bid. The Office follows strict bidding requirements based on the cost of materials and services and compiles and closely monitors files, reports, price lists, and progress reports.

The Grants Office, which includes the Grants Compliance Officer and Grants Budget Officer, is charged with financial reporting for over 75 grants and contracts with local, regional, state, and federal agencies, and private foundations, coordinating and facilitating all aspects of outside funding coming into the Nation. The Grants Office monitors budgets and compliance with grant awards and

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contract requirements. The Office is tasked with supervising drawdowns and issuing reimbursements. The Grants Budget Officer and Compliance Officer compile and disseminate monthly reports, financial statements, and account details for external funds. The Grants Office also contributes to the preparation of narrative reporting requirements, financial forms (SF 269 A), and contract closeouts. Grant application and reporting procedures are performed in accordance with the Seneca Nation Grant Application and Award Policy, adopted by the Seneca Nation Council on March 12, 2007.

Quarterly reviews are conducted to ensure that progress toward grant goals and objectives is being made in a timely manner and that funds are adequately, properly, and effectively being expended. Expenditure of grant funding is carried out subject to the Seneca Nation Procurement Policy Statement, adopted by the Seneca Nation Council on June 2, 1999 and amended on four subsequent occasions. The Policy details methods of procurement, bidding requirements, contract forms, invoicing procedures, payment procedures, ethics guidelines, inventory, real property and equipment recording to assure continuing control over grant funded assets, disposition procedures, and other requirements.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

The proposed budget for the Seneca Nation AmeriCorps Project provides for a cost per member of \$13,213. The match from the Seneca Nation is 40%, well above the match of 24% required by the Corporation for National & Community Service. All budget line items will stand up to OMB scrutiny. The proposed budget is cost effective and adequate to provide for the range of training and services to be delivered by the Project. Included in the budget are provisions for: member living allowance, member training and staff training, personnel expenses and fringe benefits, staff travel to CNCS-sponsored meetings, supplies, and Project operating costs.

The costs charged for Personnel (i.e., Program Coordinator) directly relate to the operation of the Project, since this staff person will supervise AmeriCorps members and oversee Project functioning. Fringe benefits for this position have been accurately calculated. Funds have been budgeted for travel to CNCS-sponsored meetings. No equipment will be purchased as part of the Project. Funds for supplies will be for small-ticket items, including office supplies (paper, pens, ink, etc.) and will involve no supply items costing over \$1,000 each. All items in the budget have been itemized and their presence in the budget is justified. Living allowances are correct for the number of members and the time for which they will serve. The match has been calculated correctly, based on the years of the project.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

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The Seneca Nation AmeriCorps Project will utilize formative and summative evaluation to assess Project efficiency, its progress toward meeting stated objectives, and the effects that the Project is having on AmeriCorps members and Seneca Nation citizens. Formative evaluation will enable the Education Department, as lead Project department, to determine if changes or adjustments should be made to Project activities to increase efficacy. Summative evaluation will enable Project personnel to gauge the overall Project success, and begin planning for continuation into the second year and beyond. Every aspect of the Project will entail some evaluative activity. Evaluation will be conducted with two main components: evaluation of members and evaluation of the benefits to ensue to Seneca Nation citizens as a result of member activities.

The first and most easily assessed evaluation criterion is member attendance at each training opportunity. Sign-in sheets will be provided at each training, including emergency preparedness and emergency exercise demonstrations, preparation for Academic Enhancement activities in the schools, and Seneca Community service learning.

Members will also complete surveys at four predetermined times during each project period. These surveys will assess student attitudes on trainings attended, as well as on follow-up events and activities. Students will have the opportunity to express their opinion on effectiveness of the trainings, topics covered, and anticipated usefulness later in life, as well as on the activities and events to which they have been assigned and in which they have provided services to Seneca Nation citizens.

Members will meet with the Program Coordinator quarterly during the project period. At these times, the Program Coordinator will ascertain member level of satisfaction with the Project. The frequency of these meetings, as well as the one-on-one interaction between Coordinator and member, will provide enhanced opportunities to determine if any problems or challenges exist and to be proactive in dealing with them.

The opinions of Seneca Nation citizens will also be elicited, by means of a questionnaire, at the conclusion of each activity or event at which AmeriCorps members have provided services. These questionnaires will seek to ascertain the appropriateness and effectiveness of the activity/event/service provided, as well as their opinion on the ability of the member(s) to interact with Seneca citizens and deliver an acceptable level of service.

These formative evaluation measures will be used to provide ongoing AmeriCorps Project assessment. In this way, adjustments can be made when they are deemed necessary or advisable. Activities and events provided for the benefit of Seneca citizens can be assessed for appropriateness and effectiveness; training and service opportunities for AmeriCorps members can also be evaluated for the benefit(s)

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ensuing directly to members and indirectly to Seneca citizens.

Clarification Summary

b. i. - Added at conclusion of Executive Summary:

At the end of the first program year, AmeriCorps members will be responsible for 40 students completing an Academic Enrichment program, including work in math and English Language Arts (ELA), and a component in Seneca language, history, and culture. AmeriCorps members will also be responsible for disseminating disaster preparedness information to 500 Seneca citizens at the Cattaraugus Territory and having 30 Cattaraugus Territory residents complete Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training.

b. ii. - The students who will participate in the Academic Enhancement component will be intensively recruited. Guidance counselors in the participating schools will provide the names of those who are working below grade level, as of the end of the 2014-2015 school year. An information packet will be sent to the parents of these students, explaining the program and offering an invitation to join.

b. iii. - Seneca Nation AmeriCorps members will be actively recruited using a number of approaches. Social media, including Facebook and Craigs List, will supply information on the Project, as will advertising in local print media and word of mouth communication. Through My AmeriCorps, potential members will be able to learn about, and sign up for, the SN AmeriCorps Project. The SN AmeriCorps Coordinator will speak at local colleges about the Project. Since a major component of the Project will involve academic remediation in math and English Language Arts (ELA) for Native students in the elementary grades, the Coordinator will work closely with college math and English departments to target students with expertise in these subjects and a desire to work with youth. Branding of the Seneca Nation AmeriCorps Project will be accomplished in a number of ways. Each members will receive and be directed to wear an AmeriCorps T-shirt and polo shirt. Each site will have an AmeriCorps banner and window clings to identify that members are performing services at that location. At community outreach events, the AmeriCorps banner and signs will be displayed prominently. These events will provide Seneca citizens with information on AmeriCorps, its mission, and particular events that will take place as part of the SN AmeriCorps Project.

b. iv. - Once selected, members will receive training to prepare them for their commitment to service. The basic Service and Orientation training for new members will constitute the rules and regulations

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for AmeriCorps, including AmeriCorps 101: History of Service in America, the AmeriCorps Network, and the Ethic of Service. Training will also include: background information on the Seneca Nation; training relevant to the areas of Disaster Services and Education; member roles; diversity and cross-cultural sensitivity; teambuilding; and disaster preparedness activities: CPR, First Aid, and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training. A Policies and Procedures Handbook, to be electronically distributed to each member, will be developed, based on the Policies and Procedures Manual of the SN Human Resources Department. Upon receipt, each member will be required to sign that he/she has received, understands, and will abide by the contents of this document.

b. v. - Monthly meetings for all members as a group will provide opportunities for additional training, reflection, and teambuilding activities. In addition, the Project Coordinator will meet bimonthly with each member individually, to be proactive in dealing with any problem areas and to ensure that member participation continues at a high level. Follow-up site visits will take place monthly, to monitor member participation and assess progress being made.

b. vi. - To promote esprit de corps, members will develop, plan, and implement four service projects during their year of service. In this way, the bond between members will be reinforced and members will have additional opportunities to provide service to the Seneca Nation Community. AmeriCorps team leaders will plan, organize, and lead teambuilding activities, such as movie nights and pool parties at the Saylor Building, ice skating, pot luck dinners, hiking at Allegany State Park, and similar activities.

b. vii. - The supervisors for the Seneca Nation AmeriCorps Project will receive one-half day of training to prepare them for their roles. This training will include the following topics: background information on the Seneca Nation; training relevant to the areas of Disaster Services and Education; performance measures and how to collect data; program operating policies on the living allowance; benefits; timesheets to be signed by both the member and supervisor; procedures for making up missed service hours; safety protocol; travel policies; expense reimbursement; staff and member roles; recruiting and supervising volunteers; diversity and cross-cultural sensitivity; teambuilding; disaster preparedness activities: CPR, First Aid, and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training.

The Seneca Nation AmeriCorps Project views accountability as one of its core program values. The program will set an extraordinary level of commitment to accountability for all partners involved in

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the Project. The core of the Seneca Nation (SN) AmeriCorps Accountability Values will be following the SIMPLE outline: Set Expectations, Invite Commitment, Measure Progress, Provide Feedback, Link to Consequences, and Evaluate Effectiveness. This will be accomplished by the following sequence.

All supervisors and partners will be trained in accountability and AmeriCorps rules and regulations before members begin serving; they will sign a contract acknowledging that they understand and agree to follow all AmeriCorps rules and regulations, including what are allowable and unallowable activities.

If a violation of any AmeriCorps rules or regulations occur, the following consequences and corrective action will occur for partner sites or administrator/supervisor violations. Upon receipt of the complaint, the member will be immediately be removed from that site until the matter can be investigated by the Project Coordinator. At the conclusion of an immediate investigation, the Project Coordinator will meet with the offending partner and attempt to resolve the issue, following the SIMPLE outline. The following protocol will be followed for partner sites or administrator/supervisor violations. If the issue cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the Project Coordinator, the member will be reassigned to another partner site that has demonstrated the ability to follow AmeriCorps rules and regulations.

Members will be trained in accountability and AmeriCorps rules and regulations before and during service. They will receive a handbook and sign a contract with expectations of their conduct while in the SN AmeriCorps Project. Members will be encouraged to know SN AmeriCorps Project rules and regulations; they will be trained and encouraged to vigorously pursue and report any violation, whether it involves themselves or others. They will be educated on, and provided with, materials to report any violation to the following parties: the AmeriCorps Project Manager, the Seneca Education Department Assistant Director of Lifelong Learning, or the Seneca Education Department Director of Education.

Members will also receive feedback on accountability during bimonthly meetings with the Project Coordinator. Members will submit a report if they personally witness any violation of program rules or regulations. The Project Coordinator will submit a monthly report on violations of program rules and regulations to his supervisor and to the AmeriCorps Program Officer.

If a violation of any AmeriCorps rules or regulations is committed by a member, the member will be immediately removed from service. The Program Coordinator will investigate the violation and give a written statement of consequences and corrective action to the member. A progressive disciplinary

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protocol for members will be followed, unless a major violation of rules and regulations has occurred. This review will be subject to review by the Seneca Education Department Assistant Director of Education and the appeals process listed in the member service contract.

b. viii. - Members providing Academic Enhancement will not be displacing school staff. If members do work in the classroom, they will do so with the permission of, and under the direction of, the classroom teacher. Members will play a supportive role in the classroom, working on skill reinforcement activities that the teacher does not have time to do.

b. ix. - The number of AmeriCorps members (38) will be sufficient to carry out the activities and provide the services of the Project: two full-time 12-month members will be recruited, 16 will be reduced half-time members, 10 will be minimum time members, and 8 will be minimum time education only.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics