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Executive Summary

The Conquering Opiate Abuse Together (COAT) in Western Maryland program proposes to have nine (9) AmeriCorps members who will serve with the prescription drug and opiate crisis by educating the community on resources and programs available to them in the four westernmost counties in Maryland: Allegany, Garrett, Washington, and Frederick. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for engaging 450 community members in open community forums, one-on-one meetings, hotlines, and other outreach activities to distribute resource materials. This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Healthy Futures: Reducing and/or preventing prescription drug and opioid abuse. The CNCS investment of $37,203 will be matched with $12,495, $5,895 in public funding and $6,500 in private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

1. NEED

In 2016, Maryland faced record highs with the number of drug overdoses and fatalities related to the misuse of opioids. (Blackblume 2017) Based on preliminary data from 2016, Frederick County law enforcement responded to over 400 opioid overdoses (nearly triple the amount in 2015), over 50 of which were heroin fatalities. (Arias 2017) Washington County faced the "deadliest year on record for heroin overdoses" this past year with 287 reported overdoses; 58 of which were fatal. (Blackblume 2017) Allegany County’s number of heroin overdose fatalities doubled from 22 in 2015 to 44 in 2016, with 267 total heroin overdoses reported in 2016 compared to 153 in 2015. (Blackblume 2017) Earlier this year, Governor Larry Hogan declared Maryland in a State of Emergency due to the severity of heroin, opioid and fentanyl use and abuse in Maryland. (Maryland 2017) Based on these recent and dire statistics, there exists an immediate need to provide intervention strategies within the counties that represent western Maryland.

In addition to the overwhelming presence of drug abuse in this region, the unemployment rate in three of the counties (Garrett 5.6%, Allegany 5.6%, and Washington 4.5%) exceeds the unemployment rate of 3.8% for Maryland (US Dept. Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics December, 2016). The earning power is also significantly less in western Maryland as evidenced by a per capita income comparison of western Maryland, which has an average of $27,763, versus the State of Maryland's average of $37,522. The four counties have an average of 13.25% of residents living below poverty (with Allegany County at 20%), compared to 9.7% statewide and 13.5% nationwide (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). This level of unemployment and poverty exacerbates the issue of drug abuse in the region,
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which puts additional strain on community resources.

2. INTERVENTION
To combat the rising numbers of opioid related overdoses and fatalities, Frostburg State University (FSU) will be partnering with county health departments, local non-profit agencies and regional drug abuse prevention councils in the four county region to increase and enhance drug use prevention and educational outreach services across the western Maryland region of Frederick, Washington, Allegany, and Garrett counties. The nine (9) AmeriCorps members (ACMs) (1 Full Time with stipend and 8 Minimum Time EAOs) serving within COAT will be trained and educated on the resources available in the state, factors around the increase in usage and addiction in the region, overall addiction, critical issues related to the opioid crisis, local resources/services available (detox and rehabilitation facilities (in patient as well as outpatient treatment) in the area and state wide), intervention processes, education and techniques. ACMs will be trained through the partnering agencies on how to respond to emergency situations in which an individual is in immediate need of resources or emergency service(s). Education materials will be provided on the various rehabilitation centers in Maryland, free standing detox centers (example- Massie in Cumberland and Father Martin on the Eastern Shore), rehabilitation facilities that accept insurance, detox periods before an individual can be admitted into a rehab facility, length of stay, the appropriate individuals will be referred to MAT programs that provide medications that help with withdrawal symptoms (suboxone and methadone), and education will be provided on the use of Narcan. These trainings will be critical in the intervention process within the communities being served. The primary task of the ACMs will be to assist in the development and implementation of twelve (12) (approximately three (3) per county) seminars, trainings, town halls and other community-based events to educate the community about the risks of drug use, overdose prevention, and addiction resources available. In addition to supporting their service sites, ACMs will collaborate with each other, local law enforcement, drug task forces, and other stakeholders to maximize efforts. ACMs will also provide additional marketing and outreach efforts to increase attendance and enhance content delivery of community-wide education and prevention events. The COAT program will assist in educating individuals currently battling opiate addiction as well as their friends, family and community members on the availability of resources within the region and state. Resource distribution and education provided by COAT ACMs will include, but may not be limited to, open community outreach programs; guest speakers; individual-level interactions; group-level interactions; hotlines; clearinghouses; presentations in schools; and online social media outlets.
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Through these efforts, COAT will help those struggling with addiction find counseling, rehab centers, and other assistance programs as well as help family members identify coping strategies and a support network. This proposed intervention for the COAT program is supported by research that indicates that education is one of the primary strategies for combating the opioid epidemic.

One of the main partners for this initiative will include the Office of Community Advocates located in Allegany and Washington Counties. This partner will host one full-time AmeriCorps member. Additional partners to host minimum time EAO ACMs will be identified at the June 8th Addiction Symposium hosted in Allegany county and additional community meetings.

3. THEORY OF CHANGE/LOGIC MODEL

AmeriCorps members (ACMs) will contribute to programming at the nine (9) partner sites that are serving high-need populations in the region. COAT will engage nine (9) ACMs in direct service focusing on addressing the heroin and opiate crisis in western Maryland. COAT ACMs will serve in the following slot types: one (1) full-time stipend slot serving approximately 35 hours per week and eight (8) Minimum Time Education Award Only slots serving approximately 12 hours per week.

All nine (9) ACMs (1 FT, 8 MT-EAO) will serve with partners in the four-county region that are currently working to combat the high rates of heroin and opiate overdoses, deaths, and general addiction. ACMs at each of these agencies will develop and/or implement educational activities and provide individuals and groups with the information about resources available to them within the county, state, and nation to assist them through their personal, or closely related, battle with opiates and heroin.

Within the identified partnering agencies, ACMs will provide services to a target of 450 individuals as outlined in the applicant defined performance measure. This information may be delivered using methods such as individual-level interactions, group-level interactions, hotlines, clearinghouses, and so forth. The number of individuals reached will be unduplicated and tracked via sign-in logs for attendance at group and individual meetings.

Based on the Logic Model, the short-term outcome states that individuals and community agencies will be more aware of resources available to them to help with opiate addiction and other related issues. The medium-term outcome is that the resources are utilized more often by community members. The long-term outcome is that there is a decline in overdoses and deaths from opiate abuse.
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4. EVIDENCE BASED
As outlined in the following articles, strong evidence suggests that the proposed education-based program design for COAT will be effective in increasing awareness of the risks of drug use and abuse, community resources, intervention strategies, and other support systems available. Kim Krisberg's 2013 article in the National's Health "Maryland Health Officials confront rise in heroin-related deaths" stresses the importance of educating the community. Krisberg wrote, "Auerback noted that her community is no stranger to heroin abuse. She said in the late 1990s Carroll County had one of the worst heroin abuse rates in the country. In turn, it has the unfortunate advantage of knowing how to tackle the problem. Auerback and her colleagues are now busy raising awareness, educating local physicians on the new heroin data and convening community stakeholders such as health providers, law enforcement and school officials, to develop strategies to prevent further deaths" (2013).
(Moderate Evidence) In the 2016 article Managers Can Help Lead The Fight Against The Opioid, Geoff Beckwith wrote about the issues of opioid abuse in Massachusetts; "The Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Board of Directors created a special Municipal Opioid Addiction and Overdose Prevention Task Force to assist local officials as they take action to combat the epidemic in the communities... The Task Force focused its efforts in several key areas, including identifying opportunities for leadership at home and across the state enhancing intra- and inter-community information sharing, increasing public education and awareness, and ensuring the effective coordination of resources between federal, state, and local agencies" (Beckwith). (Moderate Evidence) Organizations have begun educating the public on the issues. "Officials delivered data to at least 40 attendees at the town hall before showing "Chasing the Dragon," a movie featuring the testimonies of various heroin addicts. The Del Fest Foundation provided free pizza and beverages as well as an iPod Shuffle that was raffled off at the end of the meeting." (Cumberland Times) However, it is time to move past educating about the issue, and begin educating the public on the resources available to them, how to access them, and how to begin to reverse this crisis through intervention.

5. NOTICE OF PRIORITY
Based on the 2017 AmeriCorps Targeted funding priorities and the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, COAT fits into the following target priority area: Healthy Futures: Reducing and/or Preventing Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse. As demonstrated in the needs section, western Maryland is rural and severely under-resourced with an increasing opioid problem. COAT will partner with nine (9) non-profit and government agencies in the four-county area. The Office of Community
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Advocates will utilize a full-time member while eight (8) other partners will utilize 300 EAO Members. Frostburg State University will serve as the intermediary, providing the infrastructure including all financial and payroll responsibilities, administrative support, and programmatic structure.

Together, COAT and Frostburg State University will play the essential role of intermediary in western Maryland, serving a critical role in providing both infrastructure and mature management that creates synergy, thus bringing nonprofits and government partners with limited human and fiscal resources together to meet the unmet needs of western Maryland.

6. MEMBER TRAINING

COAT ACMs and partnering supervisors are required to participate in Pre-Service Orientation (PSO), Site Orientation, and on-going training throughout the program year. PSO consists of a two-day structured training with an overview of National Service, History of Service, Segal Education Award, roles and responsibilities, what it means to be an AmeriCorps member, Prohibited Activities, review and signing of contracts and position descriptions, and the National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC). All parts of the NSCHC will be completed before members begin direct service. The Prohibited Activities are reviewed and signed by ACMs and supervisors and are posted at all sites. COAT will provide a Member handbook containing policies, procedures, and emergency contact information. ACMs will commit themselves to fully engaging in their service journey and will recite the AmeriCorps Pledge as the COAT Corps.

Site Orientation consists of a one-week, site-specific orientation to set expectations and provide ACMs direct training. The COAT Coordinator will work directly with site supervisors to create effective placement site orientations for ACMs. COAT will utilize the talents and expertise within the partnering agencies, providing trainings for members that are hosted by supervisors and/or staff. This allows for sites to give back to the larger program and allows for a greater follow up on trainings.

To ensure ACMs are prepared for service, ACMs receive ongoing training throughout the year. ACMs are encouraged to suggest trainings they believe will benefit them during their service year or will provide professional development. COAT will partner with the Appalachian Service Through Action and Resources (ASTAR) in Western Maryland program to ensure all ACMs in western MD are given the same opportunities for professional development. These trainings include, but may not be limited to, Strength Quest (identifies top leadership traits), Diversity Training (FSU Diversity Center), Mentor Me- student engagement (FSU’s Education Department), Volunteer Management and Leadership
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(FSU Office of Civic Engagement), Health and Wellness (Garrett County Health Administrator Sandy Miller), CPR/First Aid, Check and Connect, Character Playbook, and Career Development. Character Playbook teaches students self-awareness, how to make positive choices, and promotes healthy self-image. Frostburg State University has secured a partnership with Lynda.com, an online training and certification program with over 2,000 trainings free to those with FSU credentials. ACMs will be required to complete at least one identified training per month with additional trainings encouraged. COAT members will also receive on-going trainings specific to the opiate crisis as new information becomes available and new programs are started.

7. MEMBER SUPERVISION

Frostburg State University has 23 years of experience managing multi-site, national service programs. Site requirements will be outlined in the Service Site Application Instructions and Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Sites must demonstrate a capacity for success and are carefully reviewed for compliance. Site supervisors will be trained by COAT staff to follow AmeriCorps regulations and priorities, which include Prohibited Activities training. Supervisors must attend Pre-Service Orientation with the selected ACMs. Sites/supervisors are encouraged to attend and participate in professional development seminars offered through Frostburg State University and are encouraged to share expertise. The oversight and support to supervisors includes monthly meetings/conference calls, ongoing contact with the COAT Coordinator, and site visits to monitor member progress and site compliance as well as to ensure consistency in program implementation. The COAT Coordinator will communicate weekly to programs via an email distribution list. Monthly conference calls, email updates and/or individual site meetings include discussions on upcoming events, trainings, and a question/answer session. Sites will also submit quarterly progress reports. ACMs will submit monthly progress reports along with timesheets to supervisors. In addition, sites will receive copies of the Grant Provisions, OMB A-133, and copies of the Member Contract and the Member & Site Handbooks. In addition to these supports for site supervisors, all ACMs will receive mid-year and end-of-the-year evaluations administrated by site supervisors. ACMs will evaluate assigned service sites, supervisors, and site experience. This two-way evaluation process is openly communicated so improvements can be made individually and program-wide. Informal evaluation occurs monthly between ACMs and supervisors reviewing timesheets, journals, success stories, and progress reports.

8. MEMBER EXPERIENCE
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ACMs will receive valuable lifelong skills and experiences while serving, which can be utilized beyond their term of service and valued by future employers. ACMs are provided opportunities to serve throughout Maryland, broadening their experiences in service and connecting them to the broader national service network and the bigger picture of the impact of AmeriCorps. Examples of special projects broadening ACMs opportunities will include, but are not limited to, Glories Happy Hats (making caps for terminally ill children), Beautify the Burg (hands on service alongside community members), and National Service days including MLK Day of Service, 9/11 day of service, and others. As part of the program requirements, ACMs will receive monthly reports to complete independently of the site required reports. The reports completed by ACMs include questions related to the training opportunities they have experienced, exploring strengths and challenges, and reviewing personal reflections and success stories. As all members of this grant will be working toward the same goal, the COAT Coordinator will host quarterly group meetings with all members for them to share resources and reflect as a group as to what obstacles they are facing and what success they have achieved. COAT will focus its recruitment efforts within the area being served with the intention of compiling a diverse team of ACMs each year to the program. Site supervisors will take the lead role in selecting their ACMs to ensure they are qualified and a good fit for their organization.

9. COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION
COAT, site supervisors, and community partners will actively promote their involvement with AmeriCorps through uniforms, printed material, and word of mouth. Frostburg State University, COAT, and site partners will update their website ensuring the information is accurate and user-friendly with additional links and applications, which improves the visibility and access of AmeriCorps. ACMs receive uniforms and additional patches and buttons with the AmeriCorps logo to further promote their identity. COAT will work closely with Frostburg State University’s Social Media and Marketing team to promote the AmeriCorps program across the state. During PSO, ACMs and supervisors will participate in role playing and public speaking (including rehearsing the "elevator speech") to reinforce the importance of knowing what to say and how to be prepared. The service sites will also be required to have an AmeriCorps logo visible to support AmeriCorps. ACMs will learn about public speaking, sharing and spreading awareness related to the impact of AmeriCorps from the onset of the program. By adequately preparing the ACMs and supervisors to speak about AmeriCorps, a support system is built to embrace and share the AmeriCorps experience.

Organizational Capability
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1. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND & STAFFING

Frostburg State University's National Service portfolio includes continuous funding with ASTAR in western Maryland, funding with VISTA and Learn and Serve America. Frostburg State University has amassed decades of experience managing federal grants, and the institution's overall grant portfolio exceeds $6 million. As the intermediary, Frostburg State University provides a sound financial structure and compliance to the program and overall oversight of the operation and fiscal management.

In order to assist the COAT program in starting a new AmeriCorps initiative that will be successful, compliant, and up and running by August 15th, the A STAR program will act as mentors and give guidance on AmeriCorps regulations. ASTAR has been successfully administered with Frostburg State University as the intermediary for the past 23 years. ASTAR will provide copies of all documents, handbooks, policies, and procedures for COAT to adopt into the program. ASTAR staff will provide assistance with training and will include the COAT AmeriCorps members and staff in all areas of AmeriCorps compliance and regulation, and trainings. ASTAR staff will continue to act in a mentorship capacity once the COAT program is established. Without the assistance of ASTAR, it is likely that this new program would not be able to begin by the August 15th deadline for the start of the 2017-18 service year.

The Assistant Vice President of Student and Community Involvement, William Mandicott, provides 23 years of management, supervision and leadership experience with national service programs. The Director of the Office of Civic Engagement, Patrick O'Brien, provides seven (7) years of experience in national service and additional support with experience in community outreach and grant writing.

Frostburg State University's Grant Accountant, Sara Wilhelm, has 14 years of experience and is responsible for expenditure approval, compliance monitoring, setting indirect cost rates, invoicing, and preparation of financial reports for the University’s restricted funds.

2. COMPLIANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

COAT and partners will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including Prohibited Activities and allowable activities. Frostburg State University will work alongside partners to ensure compliance and the proper implementation of the AmeriCorps grant, oversee expenditures, and provide support in detection and prevention of compliance issues. Initial guidance with the oversight of the COAT program implementation will be provided by staff of ASTAR and the various departments within
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Frostburg State University. ASTAR has a history of sound compliance and accountability practices. ASTAR continues to comply with report guidelines and deadlines through quarterly progress and monthly financial reporting. In the most recent years ASTAR has been 100% compliant in regards to portal compliance and accuracy of financial reporting. These are just a few examples of the commitment to providing best practices ASTAR strives to maintain in programming, commitment to recruiting, supporting, and retaining effective members. ASTAR will be an excellent resource to serve as a mentor and guide COATs through the AmeriCorps world.

Frostburg State University's Grant Accounting, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP), Payroll, Accounts Payable, Human Resources, Student Affairs, and Student and Community Involvement are the main departments on campus who provide consistent support and oversight related to areas of compliance and accountability. COAT and site partners will be required to adhere to all local, state and federal policies and procedures as they implement the COAT grant. COAT will conduct site visits, webinars and conference calls to provide updated materials, reminders, and reinforce areas of importance. Memorandums of Agreement and Site Agreements are in place to ensure partners understand and adhere to regulations and compliance. These documents are approved by the University Legal Counsel, signed by partnering supervisors (or authorized representatives), and retained on file at the university and within COAT. COAT will conduct annual compliance reviews of partnering sites and sites will be responsible for any findings and/or rectifying compliance issues. In the event issues are identified, program/site staff and ACM(s) will meet with COAT and Frostburg State University to discuss the issue and determine the course of action to be taken. Examples of possible action include, but may not be limited to, more frequent visits from COAT staff, additional trainings, and/or termination of site MOA and/or ACMs.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

1. COST EFFECTIVENESS

As an intermediary program for western Maryland, the main costs of the start of this grant include the recruitment, criminal history checks, training, and placement of members at COAT's multiple partnering agencies. On-going support activities listed in the grant include supervision by the COAT Coordinator, member trainings, and travel. The current budget is adequate to complete all performance measures listed. COAT is requesting 2.69 MSYs, with a cost per MSY of $13,830, which is below the maximum allowed cost per member. COAT has also met the required 24% match ($12,495) demonstrating strength of partnerships and broadened community investment. FSU has dedicated funds to ensure the success of the program ($3,685). Partner sites will contribute $6,500 per
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FT member. ($6,500; proposed- secured upon completion of MOAs in July).

The A-star program acknowledges the cost prohibitive site match that exists, especially for those non-profits that are currently doing work in communities to address the opiate crisis. It is for this reason that the bulk of members will be MT members, thus removing the need for site match, to allow greater ability to partner with those sites in greatest need of assistance in providing trainings to the western counties in Maryland.

2. BUDGET ADEQUACY

The proposed budget is adequate to carry out the COAT program, provide support to the 9 partners and support ACMs' training and professional development. COAT meets the specific site needs in each county and will utilize expertise from the field and Frostburg State University for trainings and development.

The budget allows for travel, guest speakers, required criminal history checks and training. COAT's match is at 25%, which is secured with state, local, and private funding. A summary of the major budget items being supported by CNCS and/or Grantee (matching) funds include:

Personnel Expenses/Benefits- 1 PT Staff- Salary: Coordinator ($20,486 CNCS); Benefits: Coordinator ($1,625 CNCS); Staff Travel: attend local, state, and national events (travel/mileage reimbursement, lodging, registration fees and site visits) ($787 Grantee); Staff Training: ($2,300 CNCS) Supplies: ACM uniforms ($600 Grantee); Member Training: orientation, program trainings/seminars ($600 Grantee); Other Costs: Criminal history checks ($1,083 Grantee) Community Outreach Program ($200 CNCS); Member Support Costs: living stipend, FICA, health care and Workers Compensation ($10,733 CNCS/$6,115 Grantee); Approved Indirect Cost Rate: CNCS fixed rate ($1,487 CNCS/$2,310 Grantee) and Commission fixed amount ($372 CNCS).

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

Section C - Staff Travel -- The mileage reimbursement rate exceeds the 2016 federal mileage rate. Please confirm the rate is higher as a result of your organizational policies, or adjust the budget.
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accordingly.

The mileage reimbursement rate has been changed from $0.54 to 0.535 to meet the allowable federal mileage rate.

Section C -- Staff Travel - CNCS encourages funds to be budgeted for travel to CNCS sponsored meetings. Please revise the budget to include funds, if necessary.

AND

Section C -- Staff Travel -- Please provide a clear purpose of travel for the Regional travel line item.

The line items listed under regional travel are for CNCS sponsored meetings as well as travel for site visits as this program is implemented across 4 counties. To clarify this, the cost of hotels have been placed under the CNCS sponsored events line item and the mileage reimbursement remains under the regional travel. It is important to know that the Coordinator will have access to State Vehicles for travel to conferences such as CNCS meetings as well as for pre-planned site visits. The mileage listed for regional travel is for the few times a year the state vehicles are not available or for unplanned work/service related travel in their personal vehicle.

Section E -- Please clarify why 10 uniforms have been budgeted, yet 9 slots are requested.

This was an error. The number of uniforms has been reduced to 9 to match the number of members.

Section II.B. -- Please check the calculation for the FICA, it appears incorrect. ($12,630 x 7.65% = $966)

The calculation was incorrect and has been adjusted to reflect the correct amount.

Section II.B. -- Please move the fee for paper checks to Section I.I.

The fee for paper checks has been moved to Section I.I.

Continuation Changes

N/A