



## Corporation for National and Community Service

### Learn and Serve America Youth Engagement Zones 2010

The purpose of the *Youth Engagement Zones* initiative is to increase student engagement (including attendance and behavior) and improve student achievement (including graduation rates and college-going rates) through community collaborations. These grants build on a community's assets to create a network of individuals, organizations and institutions that support young people's positive development by:

1. Engaging youth as positive contributors through service-learning to demonstrate the relevance of academic coursework and the value of civic engagement to their educational and personal development;
2. Connecting with citizens from diverse communities, backgrounds and perspectives to provide expanded opportunities to serve; and
3. Building enduring capacity within communities to become more effective at using service as a solution to address pressing challenges.

This opportunity will provide youth, particularly those from disadvantaged circumstances, with service-learning experiences that will increase student civic, academic and life skills while meeting local community needs. Programs engage middle and high school students in school-based and community-based service-learning projects that are intensive, structured, supervised, and designed to produce identifiable improvements to the community. Service-learning activities encourage collaborative community problem-solving that increases students' academic and civic engagement while improving the odds that they will succeed in secondary school and graduate from high school.

Eligible applicants for this competition include partnerships among: one or more community-based entities, a local educational agency serving a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students, and a community college; all located in a high-need, low-resource geographic area.

**Applicant:** buildOn (formerly Building with Books), Bronx, NY

**Project Contact:** Wesley Byers  
(718) 812-1516  
wesley.byers@buildonus.org

**Grant Award:** \$850,000

**Program Summary:**

buildOn will establish a Youth Engagement Zone (YEZ) in the South Bronx neighborhood of New York that will target the students at Banana Kelly High School, which struggles with low graduation and high poverty rates among its students. buildOn YEZ will improve the engagement, attendance, and behavior of at-risk youth, while providing leadership opportunities and increasing graduation rates. Working with new and established community-based environmental partners, service-learning projects will address issues such as river restoration, water and energy conservation, recycling, and green space. In addition, buildOn YEZ will enlist help from partners such as the Bronx Community College, the NY State Commission on National & Community Service, and General Electric as a private sector environmental advisor to plan at least three high-profile school-wide days of service annually.



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**Applicant:** Children, Inc., Covington, KY

**Project Contact:** Jordan Huizenga  
(859) 431-2075 x 128  
jhuizenga@childreninc.org

**Grant Award:** \$757,351

#### **Program Summary:**

Children, Inc. will implement an Early Learning Success Initiative (ELSI) in partnership with Covington Independent Public Schools, a school district in Kentucky that serves 3,700 students. Through the initiative, high school students will tutor younger children so that both parties are motivated to perform better and advance in their schooling. High school students will create learning games, address obesity and oral health, and run book drives so that every young child can start his or her own personal library. They will mentor children in reading and will teach dance, music and art.

In addition, the ELSI seeks to double the number of high school students earning dual college credit in a program provided free of charge by the local community college. These service-learning projects will take place in five elementary schools, 15 child care centers and other community sites through partnerships with organizations such as Boys and Girls Club, the Carnegie Art Center and Northern Kentucky University.



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**Applicant:** Earth Force, Inc., Denver, CO

**Project Contact:** Lisa Bardwell  
(303) 433-0016 x 6  
lbardwell@earthforce.org

**Grant Award:** \$1,179,040

#### **Program Summary:**

Earth Force will provide service-learning opportunities to nearly 2,000 participants in the Northeast Denver Youth Engagement Zone (NDYEZ), building the math and science skills of middle and high school students who will address the community's environmental challenges. This program's activities concentrate in a diverse area of Denver that faces chronic social and environmental challenges.

With the help of community partners Youth Biz and Redline, the NDYEZ will build green learning labs at three local schools, teaching math and science curricula through the creation of urban gardens. Other partners such as Metro Volunteers, GrowHaus, the Community College of Denver, and Denver Urban Gardens will provide program and leadership training and support for teachers; access to healthy food, classes, and mentoring for students; and after-school and out-of-school programs that reinforce classroom learning and offer opportunities for students to gain job skills.



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**Applicant:** Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Cloquet, MN

**Project Contact:** Jason Holliday  
(218) 879-4593  
jasonholliday@fdlrez.com

**Grant Award:** \$700,000

#### **Program Summary:**

The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa will establish a Youth Engagement Zone that concentrates on the local high school, the Fond du Lac Ojibwe School. The project, "Connecting Through Service" (CTS), will integrate four research-based strategies to engage high school students at risk of dropping out. CTS will implement the student engagement intervention Check & Connect, embed service-learning into core academic curricula, integrate entrepreneurial standards and skills with service-learning projects, and establish a youth leadership group to support on-going student voice and leadership.

At the end of the three-year grant period, three curriculum-based projects that address the need for social or financial entrepreneurship that increases income-producing options will be required in the high school's core curriculum. With the help of partners such as the Reservation Business Committee, the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota and National Youth Leadership Council, CTS will improve student attendance, engagement and academic achievement. CTS also intends to increase graduation rates and encourage enrollment at the local community college.



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**Applicant:** Kent Intermediate School District, Grand Rapids, MI

**Project Contact:** Steve Dieleman  
(616) 365-2271  
stevedieleman@kentisd.org

**Grant Award:** \$880,905

#### **Program Summary:**

The Kent Intermediate School District (ISD) Youth Engagement Zone, located in southwest Michigan, will engage three high-need schools to address the issue of urban decay and the need to support green infrastructure. In partnership with the Wittenbach Wege Agriscience and Environmental Education Center and Grand Rapids Community College, Kent ISD will focus on community and environmental revitalization through youth-led service-learning projects. At the end of the three-year grant period, exemplary service-learning project lessons will be developed and required in the curriculum of all schools within Kent ISD. These service learning lessons will be made available to all public, private and charter school districts.

Moreover, secondary students will continue to build relationships with the college's students and faculty by working collaboratively on service-learning programs. Teachers and secondary students will receive training in academic service-learning and target the needs of the Greater Grand Rapids area.



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**Applicant:** Seattle Public Schools, Seattle, WA

**Project Contact:** Lois Brewer  
(206) 252-7874  
lbrewer@seattleschools.org

**Grant Award:** \$1,050,000

#### **Program Summary:**

Seattle Public Schools, in partnership with Nature Consortium, Seattle Parks and Recreation and South Seattle Community College (SSCC), will improve student engagement, academic achievement, graduation rates and college attendance in the Seattle Youth Engagement Zone (SYEZ). In this diverse area encompassing neighborhoods in the south central region of Seattle, many middle and high school students struggle with math and science. Through the service-learning projects, SYEZ expects scores on measures of academic engagement to increase by 50 percent.

Focusing on attendance, behavior and attachment to school and community, specialists will build a catalogue of community needs and work with students and community members to address them. The SYEZ will support STEM-based service-learning projects, such as SSCC's partnership with a local high school that will provide a college-level math course and prepare the students for college entrance exams. Additional links to STEM curriculum and academic standards include a chemistry study examining water quality and an analysis of ecosystems that support a healthy river.