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Executive Summary

The AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program will provide volunteer services, which will strengthen parent involvement at 42 school sites in the Springdale and Rogers School Districts, targeting 14,000 Hispanic and Marshallese students and their families. Forty-four members will serve as parent liaisons, provide interpretation/translation services, mentor secondary students and assist with the Parents Advancing Readiness for Educational Success (PADRES) program to train Hispanic/Marshallese parents to become partners in their child's education.

Rationale and Approach

1. Program Design

a. Problem

In the past decade Northwest Arkansas has experienced an explosion of new immigrant workers, primarily Hispanic and Marshallese. These workers are finding welcoming communities and employment opportunities in Northwest Arkansas and are bringing their children and extended families with them. According to the U.S. Census, the number of Hispanics in Arkansas has grown more than 12 times faster than the state's population as a whole between 2000 and 2009. The biggest influx of Hispanic families can be seen in Benton and Washington Counties, home to the Rogers and Springdale School Districts. Between 2000 and 2009, Benton County's Hispanic population grew 115% from 13,469 to 33,825. In Washington County the Hispanic population grew 118% from 12,932 to 28,225. Currently there is a combined student population of 33,000 in the Rogers and Springdale School Districts of which approximately 42% or 14,000 are Hispanic students. In 1991-92 less than 1% in each district were in this Hispanic category. Following the current trend in student population growth, it is expected that by 2020 the Hispanic student population could reach over 25,000. The projected number of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students could approach 50% of the combined student population.

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The number of Marshallese students enrolled in the Springdale School District is approximately 1,579 students which is 8% of the student population, the largest in the United States. The Marshallese citizens are allowed to enter the United States to work without a Work Visa because of an agreement that was reached between the two countries in 1986 under the Compact of Free Association. A large number of the Marshallese families have migrated to the Springdale, Arkansas area because of the employment opportunities especially with Northwest Arkansas being the home to one of the largest poultry companies in America, Tyson Foods, and home to one of the largest international retailers, WalMart.

The influx of Hispanic and Marshallese children with limited English skills has presented educational challenges for the Rogers and Springdale Schools. Both districts have responded with additional program resources for students with limited English proficiency. Bilingual staff (certified and non-certified) have been added to support the students in learning English. Staff have been trained extensively in ESOL strategies to use in the classroom, and many materials/supplies have been purchased to support the learning needs of the students.

Translation services and parent engagement in both school districts continue to be definite challenges. As we investigated reasons for the lack of Hispanic and Marshallese parent involvement, the following three reasons continued to surface: lack of trust, language barriers, and lack of understanding of the parent's role and responsibilities in the American education system. These students are coming from cultures with significantly different expectations for the parents in their child's education. During the first seven years, the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program has made great strides in bridging the communication gap and impacting parent involvement among the Hispanic and Marshallese populations, but there is still a tremendous need for our program to continue to expand as non English speaking populations continue to grow in Northwest Arkansas. Annual district needs assessments distributed to parents, teachers, and administrators still point to the

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need for translation services and increased parent involvement. As each school's staff meets bi-annually with parent focus groups in their ESOL programming, it continues to be apparent that there is still a gap in the ability of parents to understand information coming from the school and a definite need to continue to build parent confidence in an effort to strengthen working relationships with school personnel. Annual parent surveys reflect the resounding necessity to have an AmeriCorps member to bridge the communication gap. Better than 94% of the Hispanic/Marshallese parents responded positively to the 2010 Family Outreach Program Parent Satisfaction Survey. Parents agree that an AmeriCorps member speaking their native language provides beneficial communication and makes the school environment comfortable and welcoming. Hispanic/Marshallese parents concur that they would like the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program to continue to provide translation services.

The research is very clear from the Harvard Family Research Project (2005) that children who have parents involved in their education have a greater probability for success. With the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), it is imperative that parents become full partners in the education of their children if schools are to meet the expectations of adequate yearly progress which is the minimum level of performance that school districts must achieve each year as determined under the federal NCLB Act. A tremendous amount of research supports the need to involve parents if students are to succeed. The "National PTA Standards for Parent/Family Involvement" cite research of more than 85 studies that document the "profound and comprehensive benefits for students, families, and schools, when parents and family members become participants in their children's education". When parents are involved, students have not only higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates but better attendance, increased motivation, better self-esteem, lower rates of suspension, decreased use of drugs and alcohol, and fewer instances of violent behavior (Epstein et al., 2002). Family participation in education is found to be twice as predictive of a student's academic success as a family's

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socioeconomic status (Walberg, 2005).

b. Solution

To provide the needed translation/interpretation services to Hispanic/Marshallese parents with limited English skills and increase parental engagement, the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program will provide 44 members at 42 school sites in the Rogers and Springdale School Districts. The goals of the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program are to bridge the communication gap between Hispanic/Marshallese parents and the schools and increase Hispanic/ Marshallese parental involvement to ensure student success. As the Hispanic and Marshallese populations continue to grow, the AmeriCorps Family Outreach program will continue to provide assistance to the parents and schools to bridge the communication gap in such areas as grades, attendance, school discipline, school policies, health, and emergency contact information.

Our AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program will provide a system of member services which will translate and strengthen parent involvement in each of the elementary, middle, and high school campuses in the Springdale and Rogers School Districts. The program will serve a population targeting approximately 14,000 students by using 44 bilingual half-time members, 19 members at 19 school sites in Rogers and 25 members at 23 school sites in Springdale. Each school site will be assigned a bilingual AmeriCorps member who will represent the Hispanic or Marshallese community.

Description of the Roles and Responsibilities:

1. An AmeriCorps member will support the existing school-based parent involvement plan as required by Act 603, the Arkansas Parent Involvement Law, to assist the Parent Liaison by increasing communication through translating oral and written communications, making home visits as requested, and providing a welcoming "face" to a newcomer to the United States. The member will provide services through the office of the Principal, under the direct supervision of the Parent Liaison to support the communication and outreach required by the teachers, counselors, and other school

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based personnel. The members will serve 3 days a week from September to June, and a typical day will begin at 8:00 am and end at 4:00 pm. AmeriCorps members will provide interpretation/translation assistance to the Hispanic and Marshallese families at the elementary, middle school, and high school campuses in both school districts.

2. An AmeriCorps member will assist school district personnel in expanding the Hispanic/Marshallese volunteer base at each school community. Each member will contact families and provide training under the supervision of the Parent Liaison. Resources from the National PTA office will be used as training materials with volunteers. Volunteers will be recruited to serve in the following activities: Watch Dog Dads, Safe Gate Moms, office assistance, field trip chaperones, etc. Member recruitment activities will include developing and distributing materials for recruitment, personal contact, and providing new volunteer training. The Family Outreach Program fits perfectly with the state law, Act 603, the Parent Involvement Law, which requires each school to identify a Parent Liaison position in the building. Act 603 defines the role of this position as one who assists in the development and implementation of a strong parent involvement plan. Act 603 sets the expectations for the design of and implementation of a volunteer program as a component of each school based plan which allows for the targeting of specific diverse populations. Therefore, each school site will have a designated person, the Parent Liaison, who will be the site supervisor for the AmeriCorps Program and will oversee and coordinate the Hispanic and Marshallese volunteer program.

3. In the 2011-2012 program year, we intend to expand the program to include members engaging in the Parents Advancing Readiness for Educational Success (PADRES) Program developed by the school's ESOL departments to: a. Provide limited or non-English speaking families with knowledge, tools, and skills to help their children succeed in life; b. Encourage parents and their children to be active members of the school and community with high expectations for themselves; c. Establish collaborative groups among parents; d. Train identified parents to become trainers of other parents.

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AmeriCorps members will recruit parents to participate in the PADRES Program, provide child care assistance during the meetings, and help facilitate the meetings.

c. AmeriCorps Member Selection, Training and Supervision

The school districts have established two employee positions to aid in the recruitment, retention, and training of the AmeriCorps members. These two staff members are: 1. A program director, who will oversee the grant for both districts and will serve as the daily operations manager of the project as well as supervise the activities of the members, monitor the required paper work of the members, and work with school personnel to solve minor problems; 2. An assistant director who will assist the program director in the recruiting efforts at both program sites as well as assist in the day to day operations of the program. Between the two school districts, there will be approximately 42 sites to supervise, 19 in Rogers and 23 in Springdale. The recruitment efforts will consist of activities such as: speaking to high school seniors and informing them about our AmeriCorps Program, the benefits of being an AmeriCorps member, recruiting members from the targeted Hispanic and Marshallese communities, soliciting college students who are interested in service learning activities, placing fliers at each of the schools in both districts, and advertising the need for bilingual AmeriCorps translators/interpreters as well as parent volunteers through the local Hispanic radio and television stations. The majority of our applicants are recruited through member referrals because of past positive member experiences. Since the purpose of our AmeriCorps Program is to be an outreach to the Hispanic and Marshallese families, the majority of the 231 members that have been enrolled are native Hispanic or Marshallese individuals. Eighty-four percent of the members that have participated in the program have been female, with a majority being Hispanic females between the ages of 18-22. Thirty-seven males have participated in the program, with the majority being Hispanic between the ages of 18-22. Since the program began in 2004, we have enrolled eleven Marshallese members. We have been able to enroll four non-Hispanic members, two of which were senior adults and two who had disabilities. Our

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program will continue to make the necessary accommodations to assist any potential member that might have a disability. We have attempted to target a wide range of applicants to participate in our program, but since our members need to speak, read, and/or write in both English and Spanish or Marshallese, this narrows our applicant pool significantly.

A selection committee will be established to interview a pool of member candidates. The committee will consist of school representatives as well as representatives from the Marshallese and Hispanic communities. The final selection will be determined by the program director and parent liaison. Criteria for selection will include passing a criminal background check, passing a Spanish or Marshallese fluency test, and having an understanding of the Hispanic and Marshallese culture. Letters of recommendation will be requested from a former employer and/or character references. The applicant must be able to communicate clearly and effectively with the targeted clients and must be have a good attendance history.

Members begin their year with an orientation in September. Topics include program performance measures, contract details, timesheet instruction, and member roles and responsibilities. Following this AmeriCorps orientation, members receive a position specific orientation from district ESOL staff members on school policies regarding written and oral interpretations and how to interact and talk with parents and students. Members will view an AmeriCorps video that will educate them about the history and philosophy of AmeriCorps and its various program components. Members will be informed of what "the prohibited activities" are which is also covered when each member signs their contract. Program goals will be reviewed including the necessary documentation needed to support those specific goals. We will also discuss the documents that are to be submitted on a monthly basis, such as time sheets, success stories, parent and volunteer logs, etc. Members will also set personal goals to be reached as a result of their involvement with the AmeriCorps Program. These personal goals may include completion of a GED or improved English and communication skills. By October

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member goals and objectives will be solidified after each person has had a chance to determine his/her particular interests. The program coordinator will assist members in connecting with the resources that will empower them to achieve their goals. Training provided throughout the year will include career exploration, continued education opportunities, conflict resolution, and communication skills.

Each member is also required to attend a district orientation in the first contract month to become fully informed of each school district's policy and procedures, reporting guidelines, and safety plan. The members will also have the option to receive training by the district Human Resource Department to prepare them to take the Para Professional Test. This training will be offered on a quarterly basis and is open to all AmeriCorps members. State law requires that any person who works with students in an educational setting must pass the Para Professional Test or have 60 hours of college credit. During the past six years, our program has had 36 former members that have successfully completed the training, passed the Para Professional Test, and were hired by the combined districts as Instructional Assistants.

The AmeriCorps members will receive Citizenship Training in the fall through either the Arkansas Service Commission's Entry Level Training or by the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program. If the program provides the training, the curriculum to be used is "A Guide to Effective Citizenship through National Service" developed by the Constitutional Rights Foundation. Advanced Level Training for members is offered by the Arkansas Service Commission in the spring of each year.

Additionally, members will be introduced to quality of life activities through monthly meetings and visits to local government entities, museums, libraries, and art centers. In this way members will have a well-rounded understanding of a healthy and productive community where citizens participate in the democratic society as well as the arts. Members will also complete a Community Service Project after they complete their fall Citizenship Training. Following Citizenship Training, the members will identify several issues/problems in their communities and brainstorm potential solutions. The

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members then pick a worthwhile project that will benefit the entire community, plan, and organize the event. In 2009 members conducted a Diaper Drive and in 2010 a Food Drive, both drives benefitting the Northwest Arkansas Samaritan Center.

The Program Director will hold monthly member meetings in each district beginning in September and ending in June at a central location to discuss issues members may be experiencing that might impact their success. During these meetings, members will also turn in time sheets, success stories, parent volunteer log, and parent contact log. This is also a time to allow members to reflect on their experiences both in the schools and in their community service. At each monthly meeting a guest speaker will be scheduled to discuss a select career/profession and the specific skills and qualifications needed. This is a great opportunity for the members to ask questions and gather information about specific careers of interest. Also professionals are scheduled quarterly to train members in the areas of developing a resume, preparing for an interview, and practicing professional ethics. These speakers and trainers are very beneficial to our members both during and after they leave the AmeriCorps Program and pursue their education and/or join the workforce.

The program director will conduct a mid-year and end-of-year interview with each of the members in order to give each member the opportunity to provide feedback and discuss issues/concerns in a private one-on-one setting. Each member also undergoes a mid-year and end-of-year evaluation that is conducted by their immediate site supervisor which is the parent liaison. This is another opportunity for the member to provide feedback as well as receive feedback in regards to their performance as an AmeriCorps member.

To foster civic participation through service learning and volunteerism, the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program has empowered members to reach out into the community and participate in quality service projects. Following is a sampling of the service learning projects our members have engaged civically in over the past six years and continue to participate in: 1. Snack Pack Program; 2.

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Samaritan Soup Kitchen; 3. Flu Clinic; 4. Nursing Home Holiday Activities; 5. Martin Luther King Day Celebration; 6. Mercy Health System Breast Cancer Screening; 7. Arkansas Read Program; 8. Community Clean Up.

It is our intent to expand our community service by hosting an event for Honor Flight in November of 2011. Honor Flight is a non-profit organization to honor America's Veterans for all their sacrifices. Top priority is given to the senior Veterans, World War II survivors. They are transported to Washington D.C. to visit and reflect at the World War II Memorial. Our event will pay tribute to all Veterans and raise funds for the NWA Chapter of Honor Flight.

Throughout the service day members will provide communication activities in the principal's office such as meeting parents, translating transcripts and notes, and answering the telephone when translation is necessary. Also our members will contact the parents by telephone regarding student absences. The member's site supervisor will be the parent liaison at each school. Any concern that a parent liaison has with a member will be directed to the program director who will call a meeting to assess the concern. Each member will receive a mid-term and end-of-year evaluation. The member and parent liaison will fill out the evaluation form separately, and then meet to review it together and discuss any differences in scores that may have occurred. Both the member and site supervisor will sign and date the evaluation form and send it back to the program director to put in the member's file. Also, the program director and/or assistant director will conduct site visits every month to visit with the members and parent liaison to answer questions or clarify concerns. By having monthly site visits and staff meetings, the members will receive the guidance and support they need to have a successful and productive term of service.

d. Outcome: Performance Measures

The AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program will address the focus area of Education. We will be using two of our own Performance Standard Measures for the focus area of Education and opting not

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to use a National Performance Measure. Over the next three years, the Family Outreach Program seeks to increase Hispanic/ Marshallese parental involvement which will in turn impact the academic performance of their children and youth.

Parental Engagement:

Output: AmeriCorps members will provide at least 3,500 written translations and/or oral interpretations per year for the Hispanic and Marshallese parents/relatives in the Rogers and Springdale School Districts.

Intermediate Outcome: 50% per cent of the Hispanic and Marshallese families will return to the school site to seek further assistance and/or take part in school volunteer program/activity.

End Outcome: The number of Hispanic students in both districts earning a Benchmark Literacy score below proficient will be reduced by 10%, therefore meeting annual state Safe Harbor provisions under Adequate Yearly Progress.

Volunteer Recruitment:

Output: Each year the members will recruit and train at least 100 volunteers who will serve a minimum of 750 volunteer hours in the school communities.

The following are some of the outcomes that the Family Outreach Program has accomplished in the first six years of the program. These demographics indicate the profound effect our program has had on improving the lives of our AmeriCorps members, strengthening the school communities, and fostering civic participation through service learning and volunteerism. Additionally, all school sites have consistently outperformed the state standard literacy scores on the Arkansas Benchmark Test which aligns with the continuing increase in parent involvement.

AmeriCorps Family Outreach Outcomes:

1. Total AmeriCorps Member Hours Served: 285,488

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2. Total Number of Parent Contacts: 16,780
3. Total Number of Service Activities that Participated In: 30
4. Total Number of Volunteers Recruited: 907
5. Total Number of Volunteer Hours: 3,500
6. Estimated Value of Volunteer Time(rate of \$20.85 per hour as indentified by the Independent Sector): \$72,975
7. Number of Members Employed by the School Districts: 36

e. Volunteer Generation

From the 2004 initial year of the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program to September 2010, 907 school volunteers have been recruited and 3,500 volunteer hours have been recorded. Our program will continue to use a variety of different avenues to recruit and support a diverse group of volunteers. We target a wide range of individuals who come from the Hispanic and Marshallese communities and differing socioeconomic backgrounds. Each year our members will recruit and train at least 100 volunteers who will serve a minimum of 750 hours in each school community. The volunteers will be recruited by members through personal contacts, PSA's, and school fliers. Most of our volunteers will be stay-at-home mothers and grandparents. We will also have some dads who work later in the day who will volunteer during the morning. Most of our volunteers will commit to events/projects that will take place on a limited basis during the school year. Some of the activities that the volunteers will participate in are as follows: office volunteers, class chaperones, Watch Dog Dads, Safe Gate Moms, PTA/PTO, etc. The volunteers will be trained by the AmeriCorps members and the parent liaison in each school with volunteer training materials from the National PTA. It is very important to expand the Hispanic and Marshallese volunteer base at each school to make these individuals feel more a part of the school and community in which they live. Although the most compelling reason to expand the volunteer base is predicated on the knowledge that the more involved a parent is in their child's

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education, the more likely their child will be successful in school. Both school districts recognize the tremendous impact that the recruitment of non-AmeriCorps volunteers has had in the schools during the first six years of the program. From 2004 to 2010, the number of volunteer hours has increased a total of 30% across both districts which reflect the broadening of the Hispanic/Marshallese volunteer base in each school district.

f. Partnerships and Collaboration

The AmeriCorps Family Outreach liaison model, which is a system of translation and parent engagement services provided by bilingual members at each school site, was developed seven years ago as a result of a meeting involving school and community personnel who were concerned about the roles and relationships of parents at school and in the community. Rogers Mayor Steve Womack, who had previous experience working with AmeriCorps programs both as a Mayor and a past Arkansas Service Commissioner, spearheaded the movement to organize the Family Outreach Program. Mayor Womack and the Arkansas Commission Executive Director met with Springdale Superintendent, Dr. Rollins, and Rogers Superintendent, Dr. Darr, to discuss the idea of using AmeriCorps members in the schools and the member roles and responsibilities if awarded a grant. After this meeting, school administrators along with principals, a representative from the Hispanic Women's Association, parents from the Hispanic and Marshallese communities, the ESOL school community liaisons, along with community leaders met in various settings and brainstormed possible solutions to bridging the communication gap and improving involvement of limited English parents in their child's school. The results of these meetings indicated that the most effective program model would be a school-based model to create and enhance trusting relationships among parents, school personnel, the parent liaison, and the broader community.

Out of this joint community effort came the development of the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program. As the Hispanic and Marshallese populations continue to grow, the AmeriCorps Family

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Outreach program continues to provide assistance to the parents and schools to bridge the communication gap in such areas as grades, attendance, school discipline, school policies, health, and emergency contact information. As our program enters its seventh year, the program continues to get support from both school districts and from city and community leaders and organizations and is leaving a lasting impact on the Hispanic and Marshallese communities.

The Family Outreach Program partners with the Jones Center for Families in Springdale and the Rogers Activity Center. Both of these facilities allow our program to use conference rooms to conduct trainings, meetings, and other program events during the year. The WalMart Foundation has graciously provided the entire Grantee Share for the first five years of the program and partial funding thereafter. The program has collaborated with the WalMart Corporation to form a mentoring program with the WalMart Associates. Each member is paired with an associate, and they meet once a month to discuss issues such as career choices and educational opportunities. The Outreach Program also receives yearly support from the local Hispanic radio and television stations which run the PSAs for recruitment, special events, and volunteer opportunities at no cost. Local businesses and community leaders from companies such as Arvest, Wal-Mart, Washington Regional Medical Center, and Northwest Arkansas Community College provide guest speakers for our monthly member meetings. A number of the topics include composing an effective resume, preparing for an interview, the proper dress and professionalism in the work place, and the necessary steps to enroll in college. The program will continue to build and sustain partnerships with key community organizations. We intend to focus on forming stronger relationships with leaders from the Hispanic and Marshallese communities we serve such as the Hispanic Womens Organization, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the Northwest Arkansas Hispanic Council, and the Northwest Arkansas Marshallese Community Organization.

g. Sustainability

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The AmeriCorps Family Outreach program is a partnership that leverages both school district and private resources to enable the Rogers and Springdale Public School Districts to provide both translation and/or interpretation assistance to the Hispanic and Marshallese families of both districts. The two main partners of the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program are the Rogers and Springdale School Districts. The Rogers School District currently acts as the legal applicant and financial arm of the program. Both districts provide office space, supplies, and equipment to the program administrators, and allow school personnel to conduct various training sessions for the AmeriCorps members. The site supervisors, the parent liaisons, devote at least two hours per week in-kind to support the program. Both districts also provide matching funds as much as their budgets will allow. Each district approved and pledged \$150,000 for a total of \$300,000 to be used during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 Program Years. The WalMart Foundation has provided approximately \$737,692 during the past seven years to help financially support the Family Outreach Program and has indicated they will commit funds for the 2011-2012 Program Year. These funds have been used to help the school district meet the match requirements during the first seven years of our AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program. Each district will continue to pursue monetary grants from both the private and public sectors and to actively solicit community support and partnerships. We have established contacts within the Rockefeller Foundation and are prepared to submit a proposal in early 2011. We are in the early stages of planning an AmeriCorps Community Celebration in the spring of 2011 to raise awareness of the AmeriCorps Program and celebrate the Hispanic and Marshallese communities. The event will bring together business and community leaders from both the Hispanic and Marshallese communities in an attempt to secure support and funding. The venue will feature a popular ethnic entertainer and food. We will have past and current AmeriCorps members speak to the audience about the effect the program has had on their personal goals and aspirations. Parents will be asked to speak about how the program has made them feel welcome and comfortable coming to their

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child's school to seek assistance and volunteer. In addition, school officials will speak about the profound impact the program has had on the schools' parent involvement and student learning.

Organizational Capability

2. Organizational Capability

a. Organizational Background

It is the mission and philosophy of both Rogers and Springdale School Districts to provide an environment where all students belong, all learn, and all succeed. To accomplish this mission, the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program, by providing interpretation and translation services and strengthening parent involvement, is an integral piece of each district's strategic plan. Both school districts have an outstanding reputation as being leaders and innovators in education. The districts have teachers who have been recognized as Nationally Board Certified. Both the Rogers and Springdale School Districts have managed millions of dollars in state, federal, and foundation grants and have demonstrated success in adherence to all grant guidelines, federal laws, regulations, EDGAR, and OMB circulars. The Rogers School District has successfully managed the Even Start Literacy Program and the Physical Education Program (PEP). Both programs received start up funds from federal grants and are sustained by the district to this day. Over the past decade the district has received ten 21st Century Community Learning Center Grants (CCLC) totaling \$5,400,000. Five of these 21st CCLC programs are still currently in place. The district has also received a grant from the Walton Family Foundation and the WalMart/Sams Club to start an Alternative School Program, Incentive for Student Performance Program, and a Pre-Kindergarten Program. In addition in 2009, the Rogers School District was awarded an AIMS Grant and an AT&T High School Success Grant to close the achievement gap and increase graduation rates. Through the state of Arkansas Better Chance Program the district has been able to establish and continue to oversee 14 quality pre-k classrooms. The Springdale School District has a history of grant awards which includes a recent

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Toyota Grant Award which provides support to children and families who are non-English speaking by developing the English skills of the parents and a Care Foundation Grant which supports an elementary school health initiative. The revenue for the Rogers and Springdale Public Schools is generated through the local, state, and federal government and from other sources such as state, federal, foundation, and corporate grants and school bonds. The combined 2010-2011 budget for the two districts totals approximately 280 million dollars as compared to the Corporations 2010-2011 program funding of approximately \$272,000. The Corporation funds .1% of the combined Roger's and Springdale's School Budgets.

Each school district has sound programmatic and fiscal oversight as evidenced by state level monitoring of those activities. Each school district has an annual audit to review the financial practices of the district, and the audits have shown the financial statements to be relevant, accurate, complete, and fairly presented. The Rogers School District will continue to serve as the fiscal agent and legal applicant of the Family Outreach Program. Another Memorandum of Understanding will be developed which will clearly delineate the responsibility of each school district as agreed upon and signed by each superintendent as evidence of commitment to the program. Each district will be responsible for payment of each members monthly living allowance check with the Springdale School District submitting an invoice to the Rogers School District for reimbursement. The program director will oversee the program in two different districts which are ten miles apart. The program director will have an office in each district and will conduct monthly member meetings in each district to ensure that program goals are met and to keep open lines of communication.

The day to day operations of the program are monitored by the Program Director, Mike Hummel, and the Assistant Program Director, Ruby DeSantiago, but the program is ultimately supervised at each central office under the direct supervision of the Springdale's Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Marsha Jones, and Instruction and the Roger's Director of Special Grant Initiatives,

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Madeline Allin. The primary contact is Ms. Allin and the secondary contact is Mr. Hummel.

b. Staffing

The AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program has excellent leadership in both the Rogers and Springdale School Districts. The two individuals that wrote the original grant were Karen Benham of Rogers and Dr. Marsha Jones of Springdale. Karen Benham is the past Director of Special Grant Initiatives for the Rogers Public Schools, and Dr. Jones continues in her position as the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, for the Springdale Public Schools. Dr. Jones has over twenty years of leadership experience in the Springdale Schools. As the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, Dr. Jones' most important role is to help each and every principal be successful in meeting the curricular and instructional needs of the students and faculty. She supports the efforts of the staff by providing them the very best in professional development support, curricular innovations, and visionary leadership.

Madeline Allin is the current Director of Special Grant Initiatives for the Rogers Public Schools. For the past three years she has written the district discretionary grants, developed and managed the budgets, and submitted reports for the numerous local, state, and federal grants received. Ms. Allin has direct oversight of these discretionary grants and their day to day operations. She has an Education Specialist Degree in School Administration. Her experience includes seventeen years as an educator/administrator and ten years in non-profit administrative work. She is currently a trustee on the National Association of Junior Auxiliaries Foundation.

The person in charge of finances for the Family Outreach Program is Kathy Hanlon and provides all the financial and programmatic orientation, training, and technical assistance. She is the Treasurer for the Rogers School District and has held the position for the last seventeen years. Overall, Ms. Hanlon has twenty-nine years experience in finance. She received the 2008-09 Arkansas School Business Manager of the Year Region III Award and presently holds the office of the President of the

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Arkansas School Business Officials. Ms. Allin and Ms. Hanlon work collaboratively in the fiscal management of many federal and private foundation grants.

The two people in charge of the day-to-day operations of the program are Mike Hummel and Ruby DeSantiago. Mr. Hummel received his Masters in Education in 1995 from the University of Arkansas, and has twelve years experience as an educator and five years experience working as the director of a local non-profit organization. He has a wealth of experience working with people of different ethnic backgrounds, hiring/interviewing personnel, preparing budgets and other reports, and talking to local civic groups and organizations. Through his work experiences, he has developed the skill sets to be an effective Program Director for the Family Outreach Program for the past seven years. Ruby DeSantiago was hired as the Assistant Program Director this past September. Ms. DeSantiago received her Bachelor of Political Science from Bingham Young University in May, 2010. She is bilingual and is a member of the Hispanic community in Rogers. Ms. DeSantiago brings a wealth of talents to the position with her organizational skills, excellent written and oral communication skills both in English and Spanish, and her clear understanding of the Hispanic culture. She is an excellent role model for our young Hispanic members who are aspiring to go to college.

The Program Director and Assistant Director report directly to Madeline Allin and Dr. Marsha Jones in regards to day to day operations of the AmeriCorps Program. Ms Allin and Dr. Jones report directly to the Rogers and Springdale Superintendents who in turn report to each district's School Board which is composed of elected community members.

c. Multi-State Applicants Only

N/A

d. Multi-Site Applicants Only

Each program school site is selected based on the Hispanic and Marshallese student population needs. There will be a total of 42 AmeriCorps Family Outreach school sites, 19 sites in Rogers, and 23

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sites in Springdale. All sites are under the direct supervision of each school district's central administration and held to a strict professional administrative structure with clear lines of authority for supervision and accountability.

e. Current Grantees Only(Enrollment, Retention, and Cost per MSY)

During the first six years of the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program, we have filled 100% of the member slots awarded to our program. As of December 1, 2010, all slots were filled for the 2010-2011 program year.

Since its inception, the program has made improvements in the retention rate, but we continue to struggle with the optimum 100% retention rate. During the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 program years, the retention rate improved to 81% and 83%. This is a significant increase from the first three years of our program when we only retained 70% of our members. The major reason we have not been able to attain the 100% retention rate is because of the high demand for bilingual workers in Northwest Arkansas in the service and business industries. In addition with the hard economic times that are upon us, AmeriCorps members are leaving to take full time positions to meet the financial needs of their families. Another major factor involved with the low retention numbers is that "volunteering" is a new concept to the Hispanic and Marshallese cultures. Over the last several years, we have been able to recruit a select group of members who have a better understanding of the commitment it takes to participate in the AmeriCorps program. In taking a step forward to improve our retention rate, the AmeriCorps members for the 2010-2011 program year are comprised of half-time members. In the past the majority of members who did not complete their year of service have been full-time members. We are confident this change will allow us to move toward having 100% of our current members complete their year of service. Now members will be able to serve in the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program half-time and have the opportunity to secure employment part-time to meet their financial responsibilities.

Narratives

The program directors and the selection committee will continue to better screen potential members and to stress to each member the importance of completing their AmeriCorps year of service to receive their Education Award. During our screening process we inform each person that this AmeriCorps position is not a job but is an opportunity to give back to the school districts and their community. We also discuss with them how much their monthly living allowance will be, and if there are any concerns regarding whether or not that amount will be enough for them to meet all of their monthly financial obligations, they should reconsider accepting an AmeriCorps position. Since retaining 100% of our members will be a major program priority, we have developed the following strategies: 1. Continue to provide quality trainings and guest speakers that will benefit the members during and after their AmeriCorps term; 2. Conduct more one on one visits with each member in order to continue to develop a positive relationship and help the members feel part of a team; 3. Increase member recognition during the school year at monthly school board meetings and/or other school functions; 4. Provide more member social events/gatherings in order to help them feel more valued and appreciated during their term of service. We will seek to have all potential members speak with and shadow both former and current members. It is our hope that by doing this potential members will develop a more realistic outlook regarding the role and responsibilities of an AmeriCorps member. The program director will counsel all potential members to determine if circumstances would deem that they resign their position in the near future.

The AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program has implemented an initiative to target high school seniors who are interested in attending college, but need some financial assistance to do so. Because of this change in the recruiting philosophy our retention rate has drastically improved during the last two program years. Our program will continue to properly screen all applicants and discuss with them in detail what a year commitment to AmeriCorps entails. The overall quality of our members has markedly increased during the last seven years and will continue to improve as public awareness of

Narratives

the AmeriCorps Program and its benefits to the Hispanic/Marshallese community continues to grow.

The 2011-2012 MSY cost per member will be below the cap of \$13,300 at \$13,296.

f. Special Circumstances

N/A

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

3. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

a. Cost Effectiveness

The CNCS cost per MSY is increasing to \$12,670 from \$11,017 because program costs have increased and this cannot be covered by the grantee share as the districts' cost per student is increasing with less funds provided by the state of Arkansas. At \$12,670 MSY, the budget is well below the 2011 cap of \$13,300, and our grantee share is at 50%, which is above the required 42%.

Non-Federal Support: Each district will continue to pursue monetary grants from both the private and public sectors and continue to actively solicit community support and partnerships in order to help decrease the reliance on federal support. The WalMart Foundation has provided \$737,692 during the past seven years, and we will continue to receive monetary support from this foundation and seek funding from other businesses and organizations. Both school districts will continue to provide facility office space to staff members, purchase supplies and materials for the members, and permit the district personnel to train the members. The Rogers Activity Center and the Jones Center for Families will continue to donate the use of their facilities to conduct staff meetings and training sessions for the AmeriCorps members.

In an effort to secure more financial support, our program will host a Hispanic/Marshallese Community Celebration event this spring. This event will bring together business and community leaders from both the Hispanic and Marshallese communities in an attempt to secure pledges of monetary support. We will have both past and present AmeriCorps members speak to the audience

Narratives

about how they benefitted from serving in AmeriCorps. We will also have parents as well as school officials speak to the audience about how the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program has benefitted both the parents and schools.

b. Current Grantees Only

The AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program will increase our grantee share costs from \$180,665 (2010-2011) to \$277,975. More in-kind has been delineated in the budget in the area of personnel cost for the site supervisor/parent liaison at each school site.

c. Special Circumstances

N/A

d. Budget Adequacy

The proposed budget for 2010-2011 is adequate to support the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program activities and services and is linked to program outputs and outcomes. A full time Program Director and Assistant Director is supported by the budget. The budget also supports member training, recruitment, and support.

Community support will continue to be exhibited through cash donations from local business partners. The WalMart Foundation has been a source of \$737,692 matching funds for the first seven years of our program, and has promised continued financial support. Recent conversations with the Rockefeller Foundation appear favorable in receiving a fiscal commitment to the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program. In kind support will continue to come from both districts, the Jones Center, and the Rogers Activity Center.

e. EAPs and Full Time Fixed-Amount Applicants Only

N/A

Evaluation Summary or Plan

4. Evaluation Summary or Plan

Narratives

The AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program participated in the Arkansas Service Commission Evaluation for 2007-2008. The observations noted were as follows: 1. The program has addressed the dual problems of communicating with parents with low English skills and helping their children become English-based learners with a well designed set of services; 2. Members serving as translators help parents understand school policies and regulations and in some ways act as enculturation agents, helping families learn the rules of the American society and education system so their children may succeed in school; 3. Teachers and administrators appreciate the services members provide as few are conversant in other languages; 4. Members are pleased with their tasks and feel they make a valuable contribution in their communities. The recommendation was that the AmeriCorps Family Outreach Program remain a funding priority for the Arkansas Service Commission.

Our program will again participate in the Arkansas Service Commission State Wide External Evaluation in April, 2011. This evaluation will focus on member satisfaction, member training, and site supervisor training. The Family Outreach Program will receive a written summary from the evaluator that will reflect the program's strengths and weaknesses.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

Section I.

A. Personnel Expense

The District Project Director is responsible for managing and supervising the program staff as well submitting the grant proposal to CNCS each year.

Parent Liaisons: The parent liaisons are principals, assistant principals, or counselors at a school where a member is placed. The \$80,000/year is an average of their salaries.

2. Staff Travel to Regional Conferences:

Narratives

The program staff will attend quarterly AmeriCorps Program Directors meetings/conferences that are sponsored by the Arkansas Service Commission. The purpose of these meetings are to plan and organize member training dates, locations, and topics, update guidelines and regulations, and address problems/issues that programs might be incurring. These trainings also allow the program directors to collaborate and share ideas. The Arkansas Service Commission also provides technical grant writing assistance in Little Rock each fall.

3. Member Travel:

We are providing a member food allowance to our members because the training sessions they will be attending will be at least 3 hours from Rogers/Springdale. Also, we listed 16 members who will be receiving the food allowance which is the average number of members who attend the out of town training sessions.

Programmatic Clarification Items

A. Student Performance Measure

The program has decided to omit this performance measure that measures the Hispanic and Marshallese student's performance in the Rogers and Springdale Public Schools as this would be too problematic to measure and does not align with the purpose of the program.

B. Member Training

1. Interaction with Parents Training and Managing Volunteers:

Members begin their year with an orientation in September. Topics include program performance measures, contract details, timesheet instruction, and member roles and responsibilities. Following this AmeriCorps orientation, members receive a position specific orientation from district ESOL staff members on school policies regarding written and oral interpretations and how to interact and talk

Narratives

with parents and students. Members will view an AmeriCorps video that will educate them about the history and philosophy of AmeriCorps and its various program components. Members will be informed of what "the prohibited activities" are which is also covered when each member signs their contract. Program goals will be reviewed including the necessary documentation needed to support those specific goals. We will also discuss the documents that are to be submitted on a monthly basis, such as time sheets, success stories, parent and volunteer logs, etc. The PTA/PTO representatives from each district will talk to the members about the different volunteer opportunities that each school district has for parents and will train the members to recruit/manage volunteers.

Training provided throughout the year will include career exploration, continued education opportunities, and conflict resolution and communication skills with regard to the interaction with parents.

Each member is also required to attend a district orientation in the first contract month to become fully informed of each school district's policy and procedures, reporting guidelines, and safety plan.

2. Non-Requirement of Para Professional Training:

The members will have the option to receive training by the district Human Resource Department to prepare them to take the Para Professional Test. This training will be offered on a quarterly basis and is open to all AmeriCorps members. State law requires that any person who works with students in an educational setting must pass the Para Professional Test or have 60 hours of college credit. Since the focus of our program is to be an outreach to the Hispanic/Marshallese parents, we do not require our members to take and pass the Para Pro Test. Our members do not provide academic support to students on a one-to-one basis unless a member has obtained the state credentials We provide the Para Pro Training and pay the test fee for our members as an added benefit for our members. During the past six years, 36 of our former members who have passed the Para Pro Test and received the

Narratives

credentials have been employed by the school districts as instructional assistants. Many have gone on to pursue a degree in education.

C. CNCS Cost Per MSY

1. Cost Per MSY Increase:

The CNCS cost per MSY is increasing to \$12,664 from \$11,017 because program costs have increased and this cannot be covered by the grantee share as the districts' cost per student is increasing with less funds provided by the state of Arkansas. At \$12,644 MSY, the budget is well below the 2011 cap of \$13,300, and our grantee share is at 50%, which is above the required 42%.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Performance Measures

SAA Characteristics

- AmeriCorps Member Population - None c
- Geographic Focus - Rural
- Geographic Focus - Urban
- Encore Program

Priority Areas

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Futures |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans and Military Families | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Services | |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 22

Service Categories

Other Education Primary Secondary

Parental Engagement

Service Category: Other Education

Measure Category: Not Applicable

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Our AmeriCorps members will provide both written translations and/or oral interpretations to at least 3,500 Hispanic and Marshallese individuals in the Rogers and Springdale School Districts.

Results

Result: Output

Our AmeriCorps members will provide both written translations and/or oral interpretations to at least 3,500 unduplicated Hispanic and Marshallese individuals in the Rogers and Springdale School Districts.

Indicator: Number of written translations and/or oral interpretations that our members provide to

Target: Our AmeriCorps members will provide both written translations and/or oral interpretations to at least 3,500 Hispanic and Marshallese individuals in the Rogers and Springdale School Districts.

Target Value: 3500

Instruments: Parent Contact Log

PM Statement: Our AmeriCorps members will provide both written translations and/or oral interpretations to at least

Result: Output

unduplicated individuals.

3,500 unduplicated Hispanic and Marshallese individuals in the Rogers and Springdale School Districts.

Prev. Yrs. Data:

Result: Intermediate Outcome

50% of the Hispanic and Marshallese individuals who receive communication assistance from a member, will return to the school site to seek further assistance and/or take part in school volunteer programs/activities.

Indicator: Parent Contact Log

Target: Number of Hispanic and Marshallese individuals who return more than one time to the school site to seek further assistance and/or take part in school volunteer programs/activities.

Target Value: 50%

Instruments: Parent Contact Log.

PM Statement: 50% of the Hispanic and Marshallese individuals who receive communication assistance from a member, will return to the school site to seek further assistance and/or take part in school volunteer programs/activities.

Prev. Yrs. Data:

Volunteer Recruitment

Service Category: Other Education

Measure Category: Not Applicable

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Each year the members will recruit and train at least 100 Hispanic and/or Marshallese non-AmeriCorps volunteers who will serve a minimum of 750 volunteer hours in the school communities.

Results

Result: Output

Each year the members will recruit and train at least 100 Hispanic and/or Marshallese non-AmeriCorps volunteers who will serve a minimum of 750 volunteer hours in the school communities.

Indicator: community volunteers recruited

Target: Each year the members will recruit and train at least 100 Hispanic and/or Marshallese non-AmeriCorps volunteers who will serve a minimum of 750 volunteer hours in the school communities..

Result: Output

Target Value: 100

Instruments: School Volunteer Log

PM Statement: Each year the members will recruit and train at least 100 Hispanic and/or Marshallese non-AmeriCorps volunteers who will serve a minimum of 750 volunteer hours in the school communities.

Prev. Yrs. Data:

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Already on File at CNCS

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable