

PART I - FACE SHEET

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to conform to the Corporation's eGrants System)		
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):	3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE: 21-JAN-11	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:
2b. APPLICATION ID: 11AC124196	4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: 09ACHTX0010001
5. APPLICATION INFORMATION		
LEGAL NAME: CIS of Central Texas DUNS NUMBER: 137610309 ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 3000 South IH-35, #200 Austin TX 78704 - 6536 County:	NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Jennifer Jeffs TELEPHONE NUMBER: (512) 464-9732 FAX NUMBER: (512) 462-0825 INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: jjefts@cisaustin.org	
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 742369020	7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit 7b. Local Affiliate of National Organization	
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box). <input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> A. AUGMENTATION B. BUDGET REVISION C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER (specify below):		9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: Corporation for National and Community Service
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER:94.006 10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps State	11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Communities In Schools of Central Texas AmeriCorps	
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Travis, Williamson, Hays and Caldwell counties in Texas	11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):	
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 09/01/11 END DATE: 08/31/12		14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="TX 025"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="TX 025"/>
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: <input type="text" value="3"/>		16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?
a. FEDERAL	\$ 709,521.00	<input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON: DATE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372
b. APPLICANT	\$ 709,980.00	
c. STATE	\$ 0.00	
d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00	
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00	
g. TOTAL	\$ 1,419,501.00	
17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO		
18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.		
a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Suki Steinhauer	b. TITLE: CEO	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (512) 464-9713
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:		e. DATE SIGNED: 04/28/11

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Executive Summary

CIS provides year-round drop out prevention services on 57 campuses in 5 Central TX Independent School Districts (ISD) including: Austin, Hays, Lockhart, Georgetown, and Bastrop. CIS targets schools in underserved communities with large at-risk student populations. The CIS AmeriCorps members serve as supportive mentors, academic supporters and service-learning project leaders to at least 1,225 students each year. Our success rate is impressive with 98% of students remaining in school.

Rationale and Approach

1. RATIONALE AND APPROACH

a) COMPELLING COMMUNITY NEED

In Central Texas, over 100,000 students have been identified by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as "at-risk" of dropping out of school for risk factors such as being held back in school, failing the TAKS test, or being pregnant or parenting. The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA, 2007) reports TX has a 34% school attrition rate. TX schools are losing 1 student every 4 minutes. The study also noted that Hispanic and African-American students have approximately 20% higher attrition rates than White students. These statistics are especially concerning since the American Community Survey notes that 60.5% of Austin's population is African-American or Hispanic and Hispanics account for 80% of the population growth since 2000. Even more alarming, 2 of the 5 counties Communities In Schools of Central Texas (CIS) serves have higher attrition rates than the state average. Travis County's school attrition rate is 36% and Bastrop County's rate is 35%.

School dropouts are an enormous drain on the economy. The estimated cost to TX for the more than 2,000,000 dropouts since 1985 is \$500 billion, which includes: lost income; lost tax revenues; increased job training; welfare expenses; unemployment and criminal justice costs (IDRA, 2004). Dropouts are more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors such as premature sexual activity, early pregnancy, crime, violence, alcohol/drug abuse, and suicide. Dropouts are also more likely to be incarcerated and 2/3 of TX prisoners are dropouts (Center for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency).

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Children cannot learn at their potential when in crisis or facing significant non-academic challenges. Most students who drop out of school deal with multiple barriers to their education: poverty; unattended health needs; hunger; unemployed parent or domestic violence. Although dropout statistics focus on the "end game" of high school graduation, dropping out of school is a lengthy process. Retrospective studies show the identification of dropouts can be accomplished with reasonable accuracy based on review of early school performance (behavior, attendance, academics) (Barrington & Hendricks, 1989). Consequently, the CIS AmeriCorps program primarily targets students in 3rd-8th. Child development involves moving from one psychosocial crisis to another (Erikson). Children in 3rd-8th grade are resolving the crisis of "industry versus inferiority", which means they will either master and succeed in school, or fall farther behind and ultimately drop out. CIS AmeriCorps members provide the link needed to ensure students' success by positively engaging students in school through mentoring/supportive guidance, academic support, and service-learning.

CIS provides year-round drop out prevention services on 54 campuses (22 elementary, 18 middle, 12 high, and 2 alternative) in 5 Central TX Independent School Districts (ISD) including: Austin, Hays, Lockhart, Georgetown, and Bastrop. CIS targets schools in underserved communities with large at-risk populations. Our success rate is impressive with 98% of students remaining in school. Our AmeriCorps program is unique as it is designed to meet student needs in both urban and rural communities on campuses with a CIS program. One-sixth of our members serve on rural campuses where social services, community resources, and volunteers are scarce. Their presence on rural campuses is essential to meet the need for caring, supportive adults and additional resources.

Mentoring researcher Dr. Jean Rhodes concluded that mentors contribute to youth development by enhancing social-emotional development, being a role model and advocate and improving cognitive development through dialogue and listening. These influence factors converge to provide positive outcomes across three primary behavioral areas: academics (increased attendance, improved grades and better attitudes toward school); risk behaviors (decreased substance use and delinquent behavior); and

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psychosocial development (positive social attitudes, self esteem). CIS focuses on developing student-led goals and assisting students in improving their attendance, academics or behavior. Research indicates the most important factor for a successful mentoring program is that the program is student centered. Our members tailor activities to meet the needs of each student and develop student-centered plans based on individual needs, making necessary changes to ensure student success. Our 07-08 independent evaluation indicated 83% of students who received AmeriCorps mentoring improved in at least one area of concern (attendance, academics or behavior). This has been attributed by our independent evaluation to the targeted activities set up by members. A significant correlation was found between the number of mentoring hours that a student received and behavior outcomes. This proves a measurable and significant impact.

CIS is truly a public/private partnership. The school districts we serve, as well as TEA, are fully committed to and provide funds for our program. CIS recognizes the importance of support from other stakeholders including students, parents, teachers, school administrators, counselors, business leaders and community volunteers. In order to gauge changing needs and most effectively serve our students we solicit yearly feedback via stakeholder surveys to assist in program planning, development and implementation on each campus. AmeriCorps staff conduct regular site visits to meet with members and their supervisors, the CIS Program Manager (PM) to ensure they provide appropriate services the CIS program otherwise could not. In addition, the AmeriCorps staff attends PM meetings to solicit feedback concerning program improvements. At the beginning of each school year, the PM meets with the Principal to review the annual campus plan that includes AmeriCorps service responsibilities. The Principal approves the campus plan ensuring we meet the specific student needs on each campus.

b) DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES AND MEMBER ROLES

115 members (30 FT, 30 HT and 55 Education Award Only (EAO)) will serve as supportive mentors, academic supporters and service-learning project leaders to at least 1,225 students each year. We build community capacity by reducing the dropout rate, supporting the work of public schools, involving

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students in giving back to their community, and enhancing members' skills, commitment and lifelong civic engagement.

Stakeholder surveys demonstrate a continued need for supportive adults to address individual student needs. CIS and our AmeriCorps program strive to accomplish this as services are based on individual student needs, targeting measurable, outcome-based results. Past years' evaluations show that our members help students improve their grades, behavior and attendance, while engaging them in their community through service-learning experiences.

Often, there are non-academic issues that hold students back in the classroom. Many students become increasingly disengaged from school due to various personal, family and social barriers. Members work with the student, teacher and parents to address the root causes of academic problems. A teacher, parent, counselor or school administrator refers students to CIS. Upon referral, the PM does an initial assessment and matches appropriate students to the members. The members' campus presence allows our PMs to focus their clinical skills on very high needs children while members serve students with less severe behavior, academic and attendance issues. This allows CIS to serve a larger number of at-risk students.

FT and HT members begin service in Sept. and are on the school campuses for the entire school year. They also support students during summer programming. Approximately 1/2 of the EAO members serve for the entire school year while the other 1/2 complete their service during the fall or spring semester. Each year campuses complete a member request form to meet the needs of their students and individual campus. Utilizing the information from these forms, FT and HT applicants are matched to the campus based on their skills and campus needs. EAO members are typically interns that individually seek out their campus site to fulfill their internship requirements. Well-trained members serve on high need urban and rural elementary, middle and high school campuses in 4 Central TX school districts. Members serve their entire term on the same campus, providing student and member continuity. All AmeriCorps members receive day-to-day supervision from their campus PM. In addition to the PM,

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members receive regular contact via phone or e-mail and at least 2 site visits/semester from their AmeriCorps Program Coordinator. During site visits, the Program Coordinators meet individually with each member and the PM to discuss member progress, successes and concerns. CIS AmeriCorps activities are contained in 4 major categories: mentoring/supportive guidance; academic support; service-learning projects and volunteer recruitment.

MENTORING/SUPPORTIVE GUIDANCE

30 FT, 30 HT and 55 EAO members provide structured 1:1 and group mentoring/supportive guidance activities for students referred to CIS for behavior, attendance or academic problems. They give consistent and individualized attention to students who need extra support that the classroom teacher, counselor or even parents cannot provide. They serve in a coordinated effort with the PM, teachers, school administrators, counselors, students and parents to create a safety net for their kids. Members work with students on issues that specifically relate to the CIS referral. Overall goals for mentoring/supportive guidance are to improve behavior, attendance rates and/or grades, which ultimately will increase school success and promotion rates while reducing the dropout rate.

FT and HT members focus specifically on 3rd-8th grade students. These school years are critical as students are developing behavior patterns that will affect high school success. If we work intensively with students during this time, we will build positive behaviors and patterns that facilitate school success. Members provide a minimum of 900 (HT) or 1700 (FT) service hours and each works with 10-20 students, at least 1 hr/wk for the entire school year.

55 EAO members will serve students in grades K-12 on any of the CIS campuses. The majority of EAO members are interns pursuing Social Work or Education degrees. The Education Award serves as an added incentive during their internship, and connects them to National Service. Their service builds upon preparations from their studies, internship training and AmeriCorps training. Their service term lasts 3-12 months and they provide a minimum of 450 service hours. EAO's facilitate therapeutic groups such as anger management, grief and loss, play or art therapy. Each EAO works with 6 students at least 1

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hr/wk for the duration of their service. Daily EAO activities might include: coordinating with teachers regarding services for their students; setting goals and tracking progress; processing difficult situations and developing coping strategies; discussing future goals; sending progress postcards home to parents or facilitating a therapeutic group.

Each CIS member has a unique experience based on their individual skills and talents as well as the students they serve. The following personal account by a former member illustrates common events during a Day in the Life as a CIS AmeriCorps member.

"I am the first to arrive and don't have a 1st period appointment. Yet, 3 of my students walk in having finished their work in Health. We do an enrichment activity until the bell rings. During 2nd period, I have 2 bilingual students in a Math class. One needs a little guidance while the other can speak but not write in Spanish, and has severely limited English skills. I pull a student out to do 1-1 Math tutoring. We get it done, walk it back to her teacher and thank her for letting her be at CIS. In 3rd period, my student and I discuss ways to improve his relationship with his mom as we are involved in a game of UNO - he is determined to beat me. 4th Period - I meet with a student who has expressed interest in gangs. We discuss the cons of being in a gang, and look at what other school activities he can be involved in. We look at the website for the TX Correctional Youth Facility to see statistics of the students who end up there. Our goal is to keep his grades up and recognize that he is a part of this world, this life, and his family & friends. 5th period- I meet with another student and we participate in "The Thinking, Feeling, and Doing Game." It is a great way to ask questions that lead to deeper discussions. We have been working on helping him be a problem solver - as opposed to a problem creator. We finish the activity, go play "Horse" at the basketball court and I get beaten rather miserably. 6th and 7th period, a teacher for my English groups has a TAKS Benchmark exam scheduled for the class and asks if I can reschedule. So I e-mail, work on my files, and eat a late lunch. Midway through 7th period another student was let go early from class and I have paperwork to finish. I tell him he can be with us as long as he is reading, or doing homework. A day in the life of a CIS AmeriCorps member is one filled with the need for flexibility,

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patience, reachable goals, and a creative approach to daily challenges."

In 07-08, students were most often referred for behavior. As defined by CIS, such behavior includes: poor social skills, disruptive classroom conduct, delinquent behavior or violence. Members design student activity sessions that address the referral reason. For example, if a student is referred for behavioral issues, the member will first develop a trusting relationship with the student. They then facilitate activities targeting the specific behavior. Members also write up mentoring activities they found to be effective. The activities are compiled into a resource guide and made available on our website to members, community volunteers, and staff to use with students.

Applicants must answer rigorous interview questions regarding their experience working with children and their understanding of the CIS member roles and responsibilities. They must understand that they will be a supportive adult role model-not a typical friend. All members go through intensive pre-service, ongoing training, and monthly member support sessions during their term. An extensive program of training modules is listed in the Member Development section.

Members and supervisors are trained on the AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities. These are also incorporated in the member contract and reiterated by staff during site visits and at member gatherings. Coordinators ask members and supervisors questions at each site visit to ensure that the members' activities are appropriate. We place reminders in our newsletter and review member and supervisor time logs to ensure compliance.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

FT and HT members provide academic support to 3rd-8th graders. They work with students on a 1:1 basis or in small groups for a minimum of 1 hr/wk per student for at least 12 weeks. Members coordinate their efforts with teachers and use teacher-identified materials with students who have failed a core subject (Math, Reading, English, etc.) or TAKS test. Teachers have identified these students as being at-risk for school failure. Each year, 65% of the students receiving academic support who are served for at least 12 wks pass the previously failed core subject or previously failed TAKS test.

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Additionally, 75% of these students will be promoted to the next grade level.

Our members do not fall under the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) definition of tutors as they are not doing curriculum based tutoring. Academic support activities include: academic goal setting and homework help; deficient skill development; classroom support; facilitating meetings between students and teachers and sending student progress postcards home to parents. We developed specific academic coaching protocols for our members to help them develop appropriate and effective relationships with students, teachers and parents. All of these people play an important role in ensuring the students get the highest levels of support and resources to help them succeed in school and ultimately graduate. Members incorporate goal setting into their sessions and involve their students in developing improvement plans. Each member and student complete agreements that specify their commitment to work together on the goals they set. After each grading period, agreements are reviewed and modified, progress is documented, and new goals are set.

The intensive member application process includes a Reading and Math Assessment. The results serve as a screening and training tool to identify training needs in addition to our general academic support. We utilize strong relationships with teachers, TEA staff, AmeriCorps staff, former and 2nd year AmeriCorps members and other local AmeriCorps programs to provide members with high levels of training. Our entire academic support training program is included in the Member Development section.

Members frequently serve English as Second Language (ESL) students as these students drop out at a higher rate than their English-speaking peers. To better serve this population, we will continue working with community experts such as: Literacy Austin, Austin ISD, and the UT AmeriCorps program to provide ESL training and access to local resources. We also add elective trainings as driven by the needs of our members and students.

SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS/VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Service-learning is a method that combines meaningful service to the community with learning

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components. Studies show that involvement in service-learning boosts students' academic achievement, improves social skills and prepares students to enter the workforce (Learning Indeed, 2002). FT and HT members facilitate the planning and implementation of service-learning projects, involving student volunteers in grades 3-8. Projects are campus or community based, one-time or ongoing, and include participation in National Days of Service. Our past program evaluations have shown that service-learning groups were more effective than any other type of group. The more service-learning hours a student received, the more likely their behavior improved. Behavioral improvement has been as high as 93% of students who participated in our service-learning projects.

We model service-learning principles: by engaging members in the planning, preparation and implementation of trainings and service days; by providing ongoing reflection opportunities and by recognizing the members in a variety of venues during their service year. By modeling these practices, we ensure that student service-learning projects meet a community need, allow time for reflection and critical thinking, facilitate learning and include time for celebration. All members participate in the Volunteer Project Leader certification training provided by Hands On Central Texas which includes specific training on identifying community need, and project management. Projects are documented through service-learning logs. Examples of previous projects include: school gardens and beautification, snack packs for homeless individuals, nursing home pen pal program; building peace benches, making blankets for women's shelter, and a Black History Month Display.

Members also participate in recruitment activities for the CIS community volunteer program. Members coordinate their efforts with our Volunteer Coordinator by facilitating recruitment presentations at local businesses, faith-based institutions, parent teacher meetings and community based organizations surrounding their service site. FT members will receive volunteer management training to assist in volunteer orientation and training sessions on their campuses.

c) MEASURABLE OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Annually, 115 members impact at least 1,225 students and more than 175 volunteers. All outputs and

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outcomes are closely aligned with assessed needs of our students and program goals, as well as the CIS mission and vision. We collect output data on the number of: students receiving mentoring and supportive guidance and academic support; service-learning projects completed; volunteer recruitment presentations made and the community volunteers recruited.

We collect outcome data on the number and percent of students receiving mentoring/supportive guidance that show improvement in the referral area (academics, behavior or attendance) as measured by teacher surveys. We also collect outcome data on the number and percent of students receiving academic support for a minimum of 12 wks who pass a previously failed core subject or previously failed TAKS test and who are promoted to the next grade.

AmeriCorps staff, members and site supervisors work together to ensure all output and outcome data is collected and reported upon in time for aggregation and analysis. Data collection and data entry training sessions are included in the member service training calendar. The CIS Data Coordinator provides support in this area to members and supervisors.

Output and outcome targets were determined through stakeholder planning sessions and a thorough review of stakeholder surveys, prior year program evaluations, promotion rates, pass/fail rates and behavior improvement percentages. Targets set are realistic and achievable, yet challenge our members and program.

d) PLAN FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

CIS uses a comprehensive case management database designed by TEA to track student outcomes. This database is designed to record, track, report and maintain program and students data. It was specifically designed to facilitate case management for CIS clients and to measure and report accurate, auditable key performance measures and outcomes information. AmeriCorps members will input student data and service logs that are transmitted monthly to our data specialist. We are able to separate services provided by AmeriCorps members to evaluate the members' program services and track their outcomes. Outcomes based on data collected by members from report cards and teacher surveys, are recorded into

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the database for retrieval, aggregation and analysis. This allows us to attribute student outcomes directly to our members.

AmeriCorps staff continuously looks to program stakeholders and our evaluation to self assess and make necessary program improvements. For example, our 07-08 program evaluation recommended moving the member retreat from the Spring to the Fall. This recommendation was undertaken in the 08--09 program year with the inauguration of a member orientation retreat. PMs have already noted an increased commitment and connection between this year's corps members which they directly attributed to the member retreat.

We seek ongoing stakeholder feedback in a variety of formal and informal ways. AmeriCorps staff has an open-door policy with regard to our members. Staff formally solicits member feedback via: regular site visits, mid-term meetings, our listserv, monthly member support sessions, training evaluations, an anonymous suggestion box, program planning sessions, end of term reflection sessions and exit surveys. Staff formally solicits supervisor feedback via: site visits, supervisor list serve and program planning sessions.

Our detailed site monitoring and support plan has been refined and improved upon each year. Our monitoring tools are repeatedly shared with other TX AmeriCorps programs and CIS programs across the country as best practices and are updated yearly based on staff, member and site supervisor feedback.

e) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

School Administrators request the presence of CIS on their campus as they recognize overwhelming student needs and limited resources. Responding to the dropout crisis, TEA specifically requested CIS support to provide additional student academic support, reduce student stress in the school environment, and support English language learners. As indicated earlier, CIS conducts annual stakeholder surveys of students, parents, teachers and school administrators and reviews these results to develop appropriate programming.

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Stakeholder surveys consistently list mentoring and academic support as essential student needs. In addition, CIS staff report that academic support and mentoring can directly address the education barriers faced by our clients. Even after 7 years of AmeriCorps services, surveys continue to list academic support and mentoring services as essential or very important to their campus.

Each year, CIS students and parents, as well as teachers and school administrators, provide AmeriCorps feedback surveys for every campus. The survey contains questions to solicit feedback on program effectiveness and improvement areas related to members' activities. We also hold an annual planning session with site supervisors who know student, campus and community needs. Each CIS PM must develop a campus plan for their yearly activities. This campus plan begins with a dialogue with the school principal regarding the needs of the students and the campus. The PM then designs services to address those needs, including how AmeriCorps members will be mobilized to assist.

CIS collaborates with 90 community organizations. These relationships help us to broker a tremendous variety of services into the schools, ensuring that CIS is involved at all levels in the communities where we provide services.

f) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Our AmeriCorps program has strong relationships with other local, state, and national service programs through a number of formal and informal activities that allow us to nurture these relationships, bring our members together for service and collaborate to raise awareness of national service. Examples include: local Program Director meetings; Coordinator lunches; joint swearing in ceremonies and training days; an AmeriCorps sports league; joint National Service day projects and recruitment events; and cross referrals of applicants. Each year Austin AmeriCorps members plan a service project for Austin AmeriCorps Awareness Day (AAA Day). Last year members from 8 AmeriCorps programs painted 15 peace benches for local community centers and assisted at a Women's Resource Fair for low-income women. This annual event raises awareness of the impact of AmeriCorps and National Service and allows the members from various programs to collaborate and share their service experiences. This

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past year to assist in recruitment efforts, Austin programs established an Austin AmeriCorps website featuring a description of programs. Our staff are also mentors to other AmeriCorps staff in the state. We share our best practices and effective member management systems with other National Service programs via the National AmeriCorps list serve and the Effective Practice Collection on the National AmeriCorps website.

Regular communication with the CNCS state office ensures that local AmeriCorps VISTA and Senior Corps members are aware of our service days and opportunities to connect with our members. We encourage our members to consider a 2nd term of service with another National Service program or stream. A number of our alumni have continued their commitment to National Service through AmeriCorps*VISTA, AmeriCorps NCCC, and Teach for America.

g) POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

Our AmeriCorps program could be replicated in any of the 200 CIS affiliates as our member service activities are in line with the CIS mission, vision and menu of core services. Our staff has presented our program model and evaluation results to CIS National. Additionally we have been contacted by multiple CIS affiliates, local non-profits as well as the OneStar Foundation to share our model and effective practices. The core structure of CIS, which places social workers, support staff and volunteers on public school campuses, lends itself to the effective utilization of AmeriCorps members. As supervisors, CIS PM's provide high levels of support and on-site guidance to members. Longstanding relationships with school administrators, teachers and families ensure members' access to students who are most in need of mentoring and academic support. We will continue to share our program design, results and effective practices with other CIS affiliates.

Organizational Capability

4. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

a) ABILITY TO PROVIDE SOUND PROGRAMMATIC AND FISCAL OVERSIGHT

Since 1985, CIS has worked towards fulfilling its mission of helping kids stay in school and prepare for

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life. We have managed scores of public contracts, and grants from private foundations and donors. CIS has routinely had "clean" audits and has met program goals for grant-funded activities. We were one of the first CIS programs in the country to be accredited by our national organization, and have received favorable evaluations of programs, large and small.

CIS has 23 years of experience in administering federal grants including: Workforce Investment Act funds; CNCS; US Department of Education funds for Even Start and Male Involvement Project projects; US Department of Health and Human Services funds through contracts with the Texas Workforce Commission and the TEA.

We have successfully managed an AmeriCorps grant for the past 7 years! During that time period grant requirements and provisions have changed and unforeseen challenges have arisen. Despite these changes and challenges we have continued to operate a successful, high-quality program. We have continued to maintain an open line of communication with the OneStar Foundation to ensure program compliance and are regularly called upon to share our effective practices. The CIS AmeriCorps staff meets weekly to discuss programmatic issues and review any upcoming or new grant requirements. New staff receive a thorough orientation including a review of the AmeriCorps provisions and regulations, and grant application.

Our strong administrative and financial expertise is evidenced by our record of excellence and lack of findings in numerous audits by various public and private funders including an OIG audit, and our own annual independent audits. Our CFO, a CPA, and Senior Management Team have developed strong financial controls, Standard Operating Procedures, Personnel Policies, and Financial Management manuals. Our systems are carefully operationalized, trained on, and monitored. Finally, our Board of Directors (BOD) reviews monthly financial statements.

During previous program years, our AmeriCorps program has been deemed low risk. We regularly exceed compliance expectations and are often asked to share our systems and policies with other programs.

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One of our strongest program features is the on-site monitoring provided to our sites. Coordinators maintain regular communication with sites via regular site visits, telephone, e-mail and emergency visits as needed. Providing high quality training and ongoing communication to our site supervisors decreases crises and promotes productive supervisor-member relationships. Members and supervisors receive and are trained on AmeriCorps personnel policies and procedures at the beginning of the year.

b) BOARD OF DIRECTORS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND STAFF

Our program goals are to improve student behavior and academic performance and involve students in service-learning projects. These goals align with the overall mission of CIS to help kids stay in school and prepare for life. Our BOD supports programming that furthers this mission, and therefore supports the AmeriCorps program. They meet monthly and receive a report from the CEO as well as AmeriCorps specific information. The BOD and a cross section of staff members recently completed an agency strategic plan ensuring that all program activities are in alignment with the organization's vision and mission and includes AmeriCorps service activities.

The CIS organizational structure provides high levels of support to the AmeriCorps program staff. The Director of Volunteer Services and Community Partnerships has been with CIS for more than 7 years. She was the AmeriCorps Director for 5 years and has extensive experience managing federal contracts and developing programming and partnerships. She is supervised by the CEO and makes reports to the BOD. She advocates for the program at key meetings to ensure alignment of program and organizational goals. The CFO has over 9 years of experience with CIS and has experience managing federal, state and local funding sources. He has established sound accounting practices for CIS and our AmeriCorps program.

The Program Director has 7 years experience with National Service including 5 years as the director of another TX AmeriCorps program. During her time with National Service she has developed systems and policies that are held up as best practices for other programs. She has extensive experience in the non-profit sector including service-learning, and international development, and she is an AmeriCorps

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alumnus.

Our Coordinators provide high quality training and support to AmeriCorps members and site supervisors. They have backgrounds in education, social work and National Service. Our Administrative Assistant develops and maintains excellent systems for member records and provides strong administrative support to staff.

c) COMMITMENT FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT OR IMPROVEMENT

Our program is committed to continuous improvement. Evidence lies in the many ways we evaluate our structures, systems and policies including: weekly staff meetings, annual independent performance evaluations, site visit feedback and ongoing stakeholder communication. Member meetings with the Director produce improvement areas from the member perspective. We solicit, review and implement all appropriate recommendations for program improvement from our annual program evaluation and stakeholder surveys.

d) PLAN FOR EFFECTIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

CIS has many structures in place to assess, identify, develop and implement training for staff, including members. We provide ongoing and monthly professional development trainings open to all staff. An annual retreat provides additional training for all staff, including members. The Director of Prevention Services facilitates monthly support sessions and staff has regular supervision meetings. Yearly professional development plans are reviewed and updated during annual performance evaluations. Our Professional Development Specialist and social workers offer in-house training and technical assistance (T/TA) to staff, members and site supervisors.

Local partnerships are utilized when training and technical assistance needs arise. For example, we realized that member morale dips around the middle of the school year. Upon consultation with members, supervisors and staff, we realized that they were experiencing compassion fatigue from dealing with students' emotional issues. A community partner developed and offered training. All members and staff now receive Compassion Fatigue training in December.

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We frequently utilize T/TA that is available through the OneStar Foundation and National Service providers. We utilize our local National Service partners as well as the Austin Community College Center for Community Based and Nonprofit Management. We seek appropriate training and technical assistance whenever necessary.

d) SOUND RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AS AN ORGANIZATION VOLUNTEER GENERATION AND SUPPORT

As previously mentioned, CIS manages a network of 1,100 volunteers recruited from the local business, university and faith-based communities. We utilize an online volunteer application and each volunteer meets with our staff to determine eligibility and fit. Volunteers are placed after clearing a criminal background check. All receive training at our Central office as well as orientation at the service site. Our BOD recently approved the hiring of a Volunteer Coordinator. This new position shows a deep commitment by the BOD and senior staff to effectively utilize volunteers to increase organizational capacity. Each year CIS facilitates interns who undertake projects to increase our organizational capacity including: evaluating stakeholder surveys, creating community resource guides and assisting the development department.

As stated in an earlier section of the application, we are working to recruit additional volunteers from underrepresented groups. We have developed partnerships with the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Austin Area Interreligious Ministries, parent teacher groups and the African American Boys/Men and Girls/Women Conference to identify volunteers in our target populations.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

CIS coordinates or collaborates with 92 community groups including but not limited to: the Community Action Network; Success by Six coalition; Directors of Volunteers in Austin, the Literacy Coalition of Central TX; the Basic Needs Coalition; Travis County After School Network; Children and Youth Mental Health Planning Partnership; the Austin Child Abuse Prevention Coalition and the TX Early Childhood Education Coalition. Our participation in these collaborations shows that CIS is a valued partner in

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social service and education arenas. It allows us to partner with a multitude of community groups to broker additional services for clients.

CIS is listed in Worth Magazines' 100 Best Charities and the Austin Business Journal has repeatedly awarded CIS as one of the Best Places to Work. Our AmeriCorps program won a Governors Volunteer Award in 2003.

PERFORMANCE LEVELS

CIS has a strong history of managing federal, state, and local grants including AmeriCorps funding through CNCS. These various funding sources have differing grant requirements and require an assortment of deliverables. Throughout the history of CIS we have established programmatic systems to ensure the accomplishment of all grant deliverables, timely reporting and that all specific performance measures are met. Each grants performance measures are created after extensive consultation with stakeholders and if applicable, the review of previous evaluations.

e) EXPERIENCE WITH STATE AND/OR FEDERAL GRANT MANAGEMENT

As noted earlier in the application CIS has an extensive history of state and federal grant management. Our strong grants management systems ensure that program staff adhere to all applicable grant regulations and laws pertaining to the specific grant funding. We are regularly visited by other CIS affiliates or local non-profits to share our programmatic, financial and management systems.

Each year, we successfully meet the AmeriCorps match requirement with various local, state, private, in-kind and cash sources. Agency staff time makes up a great deal of our match in the form of professional supervisors across all service sites. Public schools have supported CIS for 20 years by providing in-kind space, access to students and student records, and faculty support. Local ISDs, various private foundations and United Way funds provide cash match for member support costs. In-kind donations of training space come from Austin Parks and Recreation, and local non-profits. In-kind food donations for member trainings come from local businesses and members receive discounted bus passes from the Public Transportation Authority. Match commitments are fully documented in the budget. As the

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AmeriCorps match requirements increase, our match % will increase from 46% in year one to 47% in year 2 to 48% in year 3.

f) SUCCESS IN SECURING COMMUNITY SUPPORT COLLABORATION

Our program is involved in collaborations that increase service quality and reach. Partners include Housing Authority of the City of Austin (sites for members to extend academic support services after school and during July), the Austin AmeriCorps Network (opportunities for members to connect with and serve alongside other National Service participants), and the Austin Area Interreligious Ministries (supporting volunteer recruitment efforts). All collaborations are unique and expand our reach. We will identify and develop partnerships and collaborations in the rural areas as they have fewer resources to draw upon.

LOCAL FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

As specified above, non-federal resources used to support the match are diverse and represent many cash and in-kind contributions. Local and State cash to support member stipends and other program costs is garnered from the United Way, TEA, City Housing Authority, various private foundations and local ISDs.

We receive in-kind match from a variety of sources. We count supervisor time as in-kind match to the grant. Additionally, our long history with ISDs secures in-kind school space and each year new CIS programs open on campuses in high need areas, increasing match and expanding our scope. We are expanding rural services at a fast pace, as Hays County is one of the fastest growing counties in TX. Additional sources of in-kind match and the resources they provide are listed in the previous collaboration section.

We build community support for the program by including member match costs in new grant proposals and contracts. Additionally, our 2001-02 tutoring results were published in the scholarly School Community Journal. These outcomes, as well as our mentoring outcomes, lend themselves to additional

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program support while we work towards program sustainability. The hallmark of CIS and our AmeriCorps program is leveraging community resources into the schools to promote student success.

WIDE RANGE OF COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders include our BOD, senior management, supervisors and members, school administrators and faculty, parents, students, business and faith based partners and community volunteers.

Each stakeholder relationship is in a different developmental stage. We build upon these relationships as we increase the level of support each gives to the program. For example, we will leverage additional dollars from the Housing Authority, as members will now provide mentoring support to students during the month of July. We continue receiving in-kind donations as previously described. We seek additional stakeholders on an ongoing basis to further increase resources and community support for our program.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

CIS has been in existence for 23 years and has expanded from 5 to 54 schools and more growth is expected in the coming years. The increasing need for social services on public school campuses drives our growth. Members are vital resources to campus staff, especially on our rural campuses as the needs in these communities are so great while resources are scarce. Expansion to rural schools is rapid and expected to continue. Members and community volunteers are essential partners in the CIS response to this crisis.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

5. COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY

a) CORPORATION COST PER MEMBER SERVICE YEAR (MSY)

Our proposed program has 59.55 MSYs. The cost per MSY of less than \$13,000 is well below the maximum allowable rate of \$16,000. This is extremely cost effective and reasonable for our program design. The cost per MSY decreases each year as we leverage additional resources.

b) DIVERSE NON-FEDERAL SUPPORT

Our match sources are non-federal and represent local, state and private contributions. They include

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United Way, TEA, local ISD's, City Housing Authority and various private foundations including the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation. The AmeriCorps match is written into contracts that fund CIS member sites. A corporate adopter for the AmeriCorps program is being sought and our development department has committed to raising dollars to fund the match. Our sustainability plan is in alignment with the agency plan and includes additional cash, in-kind and volunteer resources.

c) DECREASED RELIANCE ON FEDERAL SUPPORT

We have always met or exceeded the match requirements and will continue to do so in this grant cycle. We will exceed the required match percentage in all 3 years by matching 46%, 47%, and 48% respectively. This long-range plan expands our local support base by securing additional match each year and increasing our grantee share while decreasing the CNCS share and our reliance on Federal support.

d) BUDGET ADEQUACY

Adequate funds are budgeted for coordination and support, proven by our retention rate and high rate of returning members. The budget ensures appropriate staffing levels so members receive appropriate training and supervision levels. Funds for an independent evaluation support efforts to continuously improve our program. Previous evaluation results were published and the evaluation and its recommendations are essential to our meeting and revising our desired outputs and outcomes. There are no extraneous items in the budget and our budget complies with RFP guidelines.

Sites are distributed across 4 counties across a 50-mile long region. Supervisors provide daily guidance, but reaching all of these sites for monitoring and compliance is costly. Members must travel to Austin for training and National Service events. It would be an irresponsible use of Federal dollars to decrease our cost per MSY, as it would not provide adequate funds to serve such a geographically diverse and challenging population.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

EVALUATION PLAN

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We have conducted annual, independent external evaluations since our program began in the 2001–2002-program year. For 2009-2012, we will refine and continue this practice. Our evaluation budget for each program year is \$10,000.

We propose to continue contracting with RH2 Consulting to provide evaluation services for the CIS AmeriCorps program. RH2 Consulting staff has extensive knowledge and experience of evaluation methodology, CIS and the clients we serve. RH2 is currently conducting an agency-wide evaluation to determine best practices and highest impact of service delivery.

The evaluation will cover each program year beginning on September 1 and extend through the end of each program year to August 31 with an independent report compiled for each program year. The members will begin collecting data for the evaluation as soon as they complete their pre-service training and begin meeting with students.

The purpose of this evaluation is to promote continuous program improvement by assessing the effectiveness of the CIS AmeriCorps program by reporting the effects of our members' mentoring and academic support on student grades, promotion rates and teacher assessment of behavior. Progress for mentored students will be evaluated with an end of year teacher report on behavior from the teacher who initially referred the student for CIS services. Progress for students receiving academic support services will be measured by comparing the previous failing 6-week report card grade in a core subject with the final grade at the end of the current school year in that core subject. It is important to note that the initial failing grade is averaged into the final grade so it is a particularly rigorous evaluation standard. A mid-term evaluation report to the AmeriCorps staff summarizing progress toward each AmeriCorps members' performance measure goals will include the number of students served in first semester and report on student gains. The final evaluation report will discuss key findings, detail student results, and provide detailed recommendations for program improvement. These reports will be shared with any and all appropriate program stakeholders.

Our evaluation will use an alternative design as opposed to the classic experimental-control

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comparison, in which a control group does not receive any of the treatment. The expense, ethical issues and difficulty associated with securing large traditional control groups in multiple school districts prohibits a traditional experimental design for this evaluation. The wide range of service intensity received by the students in this evaluation suggested an alternative, however. Researchers in the field of education have devised an alternative design when a traditional control group is not feasible. In this alternative method a within-program control group is formed when a group of children is compared with a group of similar children who received the same treatment, but less of it. "This alternative within-program control group is potentially a more stringent test of a treatment than the classic form of comparing something to nothing. If statistically significant outcomes arise, they clearly can be directly attributable to what is happening in the program in conjunction with the amount of treatment that is provided" (Fitzgerald, 2001). The within-program control group alternative will be used to gauge the effectiveness of both the mentoring and academic support program by comparing outcomes for those who received more hours of service with those who received less.

Members, AmeriCorps staff and supervisors will collect student demographic data, report card grades, standardized test scores (TAKS), attendance records and student referral forms. These will be inputted into the CIS case management database by the Texas Education Agency specifically for Texas CIS programs. The members will also submit rosters of students served in October, December, February and April so that the evaluator can then pull the appropriate student data from the database for analysis. Our members enter student progress data, detailed service notes and the hours of contact they have with their students in the CIS database each day. All time spent with students is described by four different variables: group or individual, type of academic support, target subject or other subjects, and mentoring. Only direct contact with the student will be recorded for this evaluation. For example, time spent checking on grades or looking for a student is not included. The intent is to measure only time that AmeriCorps members actually spend with their students. This allows us to see exactly how the members are spending their time with students in order to analyze which activities produce impacts in the

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students. For example, one year the program evaluation indicated that there was a 93% behavior improvement rate for mentored students who participated in service-learning activities. Of 110 students who participated in service learning activities, only eight did not improve their behavior.

At the end of the school year, the members will collect final student grades and test scores. We will look to see if each student receiving academic support services from an AmeriCorps member was promoted to the next grade level. The members will disseminate surveys to teachers who referred students for services to assess whether or not each student's behavior improved. A final evaluation report will be completed at the end of each year and include results for the mentoring and academic support performance measures as well as overall recommendations for programmatic improvement.

The evaluator will conduct semi-structured interviews with a small sample of randomly selected students to capture direct student impact. All interviews will be conducted at the students' schools. The questions will focus on four domains: satisfaction with the mentoring relationship, goal setting and accomplishment of goals, the quality of the relationship, and changes the student might have noticed in self, academics, behavior or attitude at home and school. These results will be contained in the final evaluation report.

The Service-Learning and Volunteer Recruitment outcomes are aggregated and analyzed by the AmeriCorps staff and are reported on in the state mandated progress reports. This data will be given to the evaluator for inclusion in the final report.

The evaluation plan aligns with our assessed community need and major service activities of mentoring/supportive guidance and academic support services to students who are at-risk of dropping out. The evaluation will provide an accurate and stringent analysis of these two focus areas and the impact of CIS AmeriCorps activities. This evaluation plan rigorously supports and evaluates our program design. The AmeriCorps staff and community stakeholders will review our data, results and the recommendations contained in the evaluation report in order to make program improvements. We will use the program evaluation and results to further garner support and resources for the CIS AmeriCorps

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program.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

2011-2012 Grant Clarifications

Clarify if any additional strategies will be done with regards to the civic reflection?

Currently two staff members have been trained in facilitating civic reflection sessions. One of these staff members has received additional training to train civic reflection facilitators. Members will have the option to participate in at least three civic reflections during their service term. The civic reflection pieces are selected based on the time of year, member concerns/issues, and the facilitators goal for the session. Overall the session goals are to allow a scheduled, facilitated time for members to reflect on their service and the impact they are having on a daily basis.

Confirm that the start date for the program is 09/01/2011.

Yes, the program start date is 09/01/2011.

2010-2011 Grant Clarifications

Criminal history checks are required for all grant funded staff and AmeriCorps members. A detailed description of the requirements can be found at: <http://www.nationalservicerresources.org/criminal-history>. Please verify that you will conduct criminal history checks on all staff that are funded under this grant.

AmeriCorps members undergo an FBI fingerprint check and NSOPR database check during the

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interview process. Campus-based Communities In Schools of Central Texas (CIS) staff receive a fingerprint background check and NSOPR as per the school district guidelines and CIS staff not directly working with students undergo a Texas Department of Public Safety background check. All criminal history checks are in accordance with CNCS requirements.

2009-2010 Grant Clarifications

**Please note that the drastic budget cut to our original proposal has a significant impact on the number of students we will be able to serve (218 fewer students) and the number of campuses where members will be placed (4 fewer campuses). This decrease in services to students and campuses is in direct contrast to the increased needs for services we are seeing due to the current economic climate. The required budget reduction has forced us to decrease our administrative assistant position to 30 hours/week. Consequently, requiring us to also cut our number of member slots. We have also had to increase our match rate to 49% (up 3%) when our required match rate is 38%. This has added an extra burden on our program during a difficult economic climate.

If you will be serving vulnerable populations, please confirm that criminal background checks will be completed for staff and AmeriCorps members.

AmeriCorps members undergo an FBI fingerprint check and NSOPR database check during the interview process. Campus-based Communities In Schools of Central Texas (CIS) staff receive a fingerprint background check and NSOPR as per the school district guidelines and CIS staff not directly working with students undergo a Texas Department of Public Safety background check.

Though the program mentions specific collaborations with other AmeriCorps programs, the crosstream collaborations are not described in detail, other than regular communication with the CNS State Office and that some alumni have gone on to serve with VISTA or NCCC. Please elaborate on specific cross

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stream collaborations beyond the referral program.

CIS collaborates throughout the year with AmeriCorps VISTA's through the planning of the Austin AmeriCorps Awareness Service Day. The VISTA's are an integral part of the planning committee. CIS also has an established relationship with the local RSVP for available volunteer opportunities and has hosted an NCCC team that was providing local service. All crosstream programs are invited to CIS AmeriCorps service projects and member events.

Please provide more local data on the specific school districts and/or counties to be served to support the compelling need, as statistics are only provided for the two counties, Bastrop and Travis, and not the other three to be served.

As noted by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA, 2007), Hays County's school attrition rate is 31%, Caldwell County's school attrition rate is 24% and Williamson Country rate is 27%.

Although these districts attrition rates are not higher than the state average there is still a compelling need for services in these counties as evidenced by the percentages of at-risk students, economically disadvantaged and high minority group populations. According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), 45.2% of Hays County's schools students are at-risk, 41.5% are economically disadvantaged and 52.2% of the students are Hispanic or African-American. The statistics for Caldwell County schools students are 48.2% at-risk, 57.8% economically disadvantaged and 48% of the students are Hispanic or African-American. Williamson County statistics are as follows: 37% of the students at-risk, 37.8% economically disadvantaged and 26% of the students are Hispanic or African-American.

These statistics are an aggregate for each of the districts; however, Communities In Schools of Central Texas staff works hand in hand with district personnel to target the highest needs schools within each district.

Please elaborate on plan to improve enrollment and retention rates.

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Communities In Schools of Central Texas has had a consistently high enrollment rate. During the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 program years the enrollment rate was 92% and 90% respectively. For the 2007-2008 program year, the enrollment rate was 100%. To maintain our high enrollment rate and ensure 100% enrollment consistently across the grant years, AmeriCorps staff post the available member positions on a wide variety of internet job sites, attend local recruitment fairs, coordinate recruitment events with other Austin-based AmeriCorps programs, and attend targeted recruitment activities with the CIS Volunteer Services team (i.e. faith-based community organization meetings, and speaking at the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, etc.). During the interview process, applicants are asked how they heard about the available member positions to ensure staff time and resources are best allocated during the recruitment process.

A high retention rate is paramount to the success of our program as we work with at-risk children. CIS has multiple support systems in place to ensure that members are satisfied and successful during their service year. The CIS member orientation retreat assists in building a strong corps connection and support network between members themselves. Prior to service and during the retreat multiple local resources are shared with members to assist with the financial stresses of a National Service year including: food stamp procedures, CIS employee assistance program, and housing resources.

AmeriCorps and CIS staff also undertake to provide multiple support layers for members to ensure the successful completion of their service year. Members meet with their supervisors for weekly individual supervision and bi-monthly group supervision. These meetings allow members to staff difficult cases, and express any concerns they may have with the program and/or their service. The AmeriCorps Program Coordinators have regular site visits with each member and their supervisor to ensure that issues or concerns are addressed at the early stages and to guide all parties to a satisfactory solution. Members also meet with the Program Director when they have completed 50% of their hours to discuss any issues and suggestions for program improvement. Members meet monthly for training and an hour is allotted for member support time. This time allows members to reconnect with each

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other, share ideas, and staff cases.

CIS and AmeriCorps staff strongly believe in recognizing the wonderful work of the AmeriCorps members through multiple venues. Members receive a bi-monthly newsletter which includes shout-outs from supervisors detailing their good work. All AmeriCorps members receive a birthday card and are invited to the CIS volunteer recognition ceremony.

Please elaborate on the screening, orientation, support and supervision and ongoing training of community volunteers that result in the high volunteer retention rates.

Communities In Schools of Central Texas has a comprehensive volunteer program that results in the high volunteer retention rates. All potential volunteers must submit an online volunteer application, attend an interview with the Volunteer Coordinator, and undergo a national background check. During the interview the Volunteer Coordinator clarifies the potential volunteers expectations for their experience and ensures the available volunteer opportunities match the interest of the volunteer. The interview also helps to identify any possible challenges in the volunteer role (i.e. scheduling constraints) so that time and resources are not wasted. At this time, the Volunteer Coordinator reviews the volunteer service agreement which delineates specific guidelines on boundaries, confidentiality, hours record-keeping and regular scheduling of the volunteer commitment.

After the interview process the Volunteer Coordinator works to find an appropriate volunteer opportunity match for the applicant. Once a match is made the volunteer attends a 2 hour volunteer orientation which includes the following: overview of the CIS mission and service model, who we serve, why we are needed, day-to-day logistics of volunteering, boundaries, confidentiality, challenges to expect, and role of the Program Manager (the volunteer's supervisor).

CIS believes that volunteers are an essential part of our agency and as such provides a wide variety of ways that volunteers are supported and supervised. The Program Manager who is the volunteer's day-

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to-day supervisor provides all volunteers with a campus orientation including office procedures, how to pull students from class, and a campus tour. They also maintain regular and open communication with the volunteer in person, via e-mail and/or via phone. The Volunteer Coordinator also distributes a monthly newsletter, provides online resources, and hosts volunteer support luncheons where volunteers can discuss successes and challenges around a selected topic.

Please elaborate on the capacity building piece as it relates to the community outside of the partner schools and CIS itself.

To ensure successful programming, CIS depends upon strategic partnerships within the community. More than 90 community and school district partnerships enhance the depth and effectiveness of services by bringing additional basic needs resources (i.e. meals, shoes, school supplies), supportive adult relationships (mentors, tutors), enrichment (college campus visits, wellness programming, therapeutic art workshops), and even financial assistance (holiday assistance to families, HEB gift cards) to the children and families we serve. Many of these partner organizations serve a very specific community need and do not have the capacity to establish a long-term relationship with the school districts. CIS has a strong, established partnership with the school districts and is utilized by many of these smaller partner community organizations as a gateway for providing their services to the community. This access allows the partner organizations to broaden their scope, build on available services and increase awareness about their own mission.

The CIS Director of Volunteer Services and Community Partnerships works daily to connect varying organizations with CIS. These partnerships not only benefit CIS students, families and staff, but also provide increased awareness about the goals and mission of the partner organization to the school, faculty, students, and parents. The established partnerships cover a wide variety of organizations including faith-based groups, large corporations, small local business, civic groups, University-based student organizations, and volunteer groups.

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Please elaborate on the lifetime of service objective and how the program plans to achieve this as required of all Texas programs.

This will be discussed with OneStar in regards to Performance Measures to be established for the 2009-10 program year.

OneStar Foundation mandates a statewide performance measure for member development. The lifetime of service measures readiness to serve through the program year and the likeliness to continue serving upon completion of the term of service. Programs conduct orientation and training throughout the year for members to ensure that the measure is met.

CIS has consistently exceeded the targets of this measure as set by the OneStar Foundation. CIS's strong pre-service retreat and orientation ensures that members are equipped to provide their service successfully and have a desire to continue serving their community.

Continuation Changes

Year Two

Enrollment

Communities In Schools of Central Texas has had a consistently high enrollment rate with a 100% in the 2007-2008 program year. During the 2008-2009 program year the enrollment rate decreased to 83.5%. Multiple factors contributed to this drop in enrollment including a complete staff turnover during the 2007-2008 program year and a decrease in the number of interns referred to our agency for education award only slots. The 2008-2009 enrollment rates for full-time and half-time members were 93.3% with only 2 remaining slots for each term. The lowest rate of enrollment was for the EAO slots at 72.7% which was due to the decrease of agency interns.

In the current program year, 2009-2010, our enrollment rate is 85.9% with 100% of full-time and half-time slots filled. The number of EAO slots was decreased from 55 to 40 to align with the decrease in agency intern referrals. Currently 25 of the 40 EAO slots are filled and the remaining will be filled

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during the spring semester during which time the majority of our agency interns serve. The CIS of CT AmeriCorps staff have revised recruitment strategies and have been working closely with local University staff to ensure 100% enrollment during the current program year.

Retention

Communities In Schools of Central Texas AmeriCorps program has implemented multiple strategies to increase our program retention rate which is still significantly above the national average. During the 2008-2009 AmeriCorps staff revamped the interview and selection process to include a second interview by the site supervisor prior to program acceptance. This allows the applicant to connect with their site supervisor while being introduced into their daily work environment -- the school campus. A member orientation retreat was also added to ensure a strong foundation of esprit de corps is built from the very beginning and strong member support systems are implemented throughout the service year.

CIS of CT AmeriCorps staff have continued to implement strategies to ensure our retention rate is even higher during the 2009-2010 program year. AmeriCorps program coordinators have been assigned campuses by school level (i.e. elementary or middle school). This allows the Coordinator to easily identify issue areas by level and communicate directly with the CIS level director to ensure these issues are addressed and appropriate support is provided. AmeriCorps staff have also implemented civic reflection sessions which have been shown in other states to greatly increase retention rates and connect members service with the larger picture of civic engagement.

Program Expansion

The number of member slots in the 2009-2010 program year was decreased by 20% due to a decrease in CNCS funding. The funding decrease impacted 8 CIS campuses which had requested AmeriCorps members and for which this request could not be fulfilled. CIS of CT campuses have seen an increase in the number of students requiring mentoring and tutoring services due to the increased stresses from the

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current economic climate. For this reason we are requesting an additional 4 full-time member slots. These member slots would allow an additional 80 students and 2 campuses to be served. CIS of CT AmeriCorps is requesting full-time slots as these slots have the highest enrollment and retention rates each year and we are working diligently to increase both of these rates. With the addition of 4 members, CIS of CT is requesting a 10 hour/week administrative assistant to assist in the maintaining of program and member records and to input the large amount of student data collected to support the performance measures and the external program evaluation.

In the current proposed budget the cost per MSY increases from \$12,971 to \$13,230 which is accounted for by the required increase in member living allowances. Due to the significant increase of program costs in the grantee share including program rent, and member bus passes it would be prohibitive for CIS of CT to completely absorb the member living allowance increase. CIS of CT cost per MSY is still significantly below the maximum amount and is aligned with the state average. CIS of CT has also exceeded their program goals and performance measures each year demonstrating a strong program model.

Year Three

Enrollment

The CIS of CT enrollment rate for 2009-2010 was 100%.

Retention

Our retention rate was 90.2% in 2009-2010 which rose from 81.2% in 2008-2009 due to the implementation of multiple strategies. Both of these rates are well above the national average and we strive to increase our retention rate each program year. CIS of CT AmeriCorps staff has continued to implement strategies to ensure our retention rate is even higher during the 2011-2012 program year.

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During the 2009-2010 program year AmeriCorps program coordinators were assigned campuses by school level (i.e. elementary or middle school). This allows the Coordinator to easily identify issue areas by level and communicate directly with the CIS level director to ensure these issues are addressed and appropriate support is provided. Continuing this process also ensures that AmeriCorps Program Coordinators can establish long-term working relationships with the individual member supervisors allowing for better communication and understanding of supervisory styles. AmeriCorps staff will also continue implementing civic reflection sessions which have been shown in other states to greatly increase retention rates and connect members service with the larger picture of civic engagement.

Program Expansion

CIS of CT campuses have seen an increase in the number of students requiring mentoring and academic coaching services. The CIS of CT quarter time members are largely social work and counseling interns from local universities. The universities have provided CIS of CT with an increased number of interns. For this reason we are requesting an additional 10 quarter-time education award only member slots to offer this great opportunity to the agency interns and meet the increased student need.

The program expansion of 10 quarter-time education award only members would allow CIS of CT AmeriCorps to address the drop-out problem with an additional 60 students. As a result of these members, 60 more students will have one hour of weekly supportive guidance from a caring adult. The members will assist the students with academic and behavioral issues based on the student's individual needs. With the addition of the 10 members, CIS of CT is requesting additional program support costs such as: member uniforms, member nametags and campus supplies.

Program Budget

In the 2011-2012 budget the cost per MSY is \$13,212 which is a decrease from the 2010-2011 program

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budget which was \$13,243. The CIS of CT cost per MSY is still significantly below the maximum amount and below the state average. The CNCS grant amount has increased due to increased program costs with 10 additional members, and cost of living increases in staff salaries and member living allowances. The CIS of CT grantee share is also still above the grantee match requirements. CIS of CT has also exceeded their program goals and performance measures each year demonstrating a strong program model.

Performance Measures

Performance measures were updated to account for the increased number of AmeriCorps members.

Performance Measures

SAA Characteristics

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

Priority Areas

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

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 53.58

Service Categories

Other Education

National Performance Measures

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

In Central Texas, over 100,000 students have been identified by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as 'at-risk' of dropping out of school for risk factors such as being held back in school, failing the TAKS test, or being pregnant or parenting. The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA, 2007) reports TX has a 34% school attrition rate. TX schools are losing 1 student every 4 minutes. The study also noted that Hispanic and African-American students have approximately 20% higher attrition rates than White students. These statistics are especially concerning since the American Community Survey notes that 60.5% of Austin's population is African-American or Hispanic and Hispanics account for 80% of the population growth since 2000. Even more alarming, 2 of the 5 counties Communities In Schools of Central Texas (CIS) serves have higher attrition rates than the state average. Travis County's school attrition rate is 36% and Bastrop County's rate is 35%. Consequently, the CIS AmeriCorps program provides mentoring/supportive guidance to at-risk students in grades K-12 in order to improve their grades and ultimately reduce the number of students who drop out of school.

Leading mentoring researcher Dr. Jean Rhodes concluded that mentors contribute to youth development by: 1) enhancing social-emotional development; 2) being a role model and advocate; and 3) improving cognitive development through dialogue and listening. These influence factors converge to provide positive outcomes across three primary behavioral areas: academics (increased attendance, improved grades and better attitudes toward school); risk behaviors (decreased substance use and delinquent behavior); and psychosocial development (positive social attitudes, self-esteem).

96 AmeriCorps members will provide mentoring/supportive guidance/coaching to a total of 1,000 disadvantaged K-12 grades students one-to-one or in small groups at least one hour each week for at least 12 weeks.

Result: Output

Result.

96 AmeriCorps members will sustain mentoring/supportive guidance/coaching to a total of 800 disadvantaged K-12 grades students one-to-one or in small groups at least one hour each week for at least 12 weeks.

Indicator: (DELETED) ED4: Youth/mentor matches sustained.

Target : 96 AmeriCorps members will sustain mentoring/supportive guidance/coaching to a total of 800 disadvantaged K-12 grades students one-to-one or in small groups at least one hour each

National Performance Measures

Result.

week for at least 12 weeks.

Target Value: 800

Instruments: Student rosters

PM Statement: 96 AmeriCorps members will sustain mentoring/supportive guidance/coaching to a total of 800 disadvantaged K-12 grades students one-to-one or in small groups at least one hour each week for at least 12 weeks.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

560 students will have improved academic performance as measured by six or nine week report card grades.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) ED5: Students w/ improved academic performance.

Target : 70% (560) of the students who sustain their mentoring/supportive guidance/coaching

relationship will have improved academic performance.

Target Value: 560

Instruments: Student rosters and report cards

PM Statement: 96 AmeriCorps members will sustain mentoring/supportive guidance/coaching to a total of 800 disadvantaged K-12 grades students one-to-one or in small groups at least one hour each week for at least 12 weeks. 70% (560) of the students sustaining a mentoring relationship will have improved academic performance as measured by six or nine week report card grades.

Result: Output

Result.

96 AmeriCorps members will commence mentoring/supportive guidance/coaching to a total of 1,000

disadvantaged K-12 grades students.

Indicator: (DELETED) ED3: Youth/mentor matches started.

Target : 96 AmeriCorps members will commence mentoring/supportive guidance/coaching to a total of

1,000 disadvantaged K-12 grades students.

Target Value: 1000

Instruments: Student rosters

PM Statement: 96 AmeriCorps members will commence mentoring/supportive guidance/coaching to a total of 1,000 disadvantaged K-12 grades students.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Already on File at CNCS

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable