

## PART I - FACE SHEET

<b>APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE</b>		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)		
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):	3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:  19-JAN-11	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:
2b. APPLICATION ID:  11AC124446	4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER:  09ACHMN0010011
<b>5. APPLICATION INFORMATION</b>		
LEGAL NAME: Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation  DUNS NUMBER: 868918244	NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes):  NAME: Barbara Gunderson  TELEPHONE NUMBER: (507) 455-3215 134  FAX NUMBER: (507) 455-2098  INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: barbarag@smifoundation.org	
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 525 Florence Avenue Owatonna MN 55060 - 4754 County: Steele		
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):  363454285	7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit  7b. Community-Based Organization	
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box).  <input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input 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:  <b>Corporation for National and Community Service</b>
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: 94.006  10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps State	11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT:  AmeriCorps LEAP Initiative  11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):	
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc):  25 southern MN counties: Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Jackson, LeSuer, Martin, Mower, McLeod, N		
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 08/15/11    END DATE: 08/14/12		14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF:    a.Applicant <input type="text" value="MN 001"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="MN 001"/>
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: <input type="text" value="1"/>		16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?  <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
a. FEDERAL	\$ 260,000.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT?  <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
b. APPLICANT	\$ 209,236.00	
c. STATE	\$ 0.00	
d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00	
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00	
g. TOTAL	\$ 469,236.00	
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:  Barbara Gunderson	b. TITLE:  Program Director	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER:  (507) 455-3215 134
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:		e. DATE SIGNED:  07/13/11

## Narratives

### Executive Summary

The AmeriCorps LEAP Initiative supports young children in their social-emotional development so they will be ready for kindergarten. Forty LEAP members serve as positive role models in preschool environments implementing social-emotional interventions for identified children. Members will also promote routine reading and play activity in the home, connect parents to community resources and engage volunteers to strengthen the early childhood advocacy movement across 25 counties in southern MN.

### Rationale and Approach

#### 1. Program Design

##### a. Problem

Social-emotional development in children 0-5 is defined as the child's ability to express and regulate emotions, form close and secure relationships and explore environments and learn. These competencies are increasingly recognized as closely connected to preschoolers developing linguistic and cognitive capacities and academic success. According to Peth-Pierce (2001), "social-emotional school readiness is critical to a successful kindergarten transition, early school success and even larger accomplishments in the workplace." Children who fail early on in school often experience emotional and behavioral problems later in school, further escalating their risk for mental health issues.

Harvard University's National Council on the Developing Child November 2007 report "The Science of Early Child Development; Closing the Gap between What We Know, and What We Do" draws the same conclusion. "Emotional well-being and social competence provide a strong foundation for emerging cognitive abilities, and together they are the bricks and mortar that comprise the foundation of human development."

## Narratives

The 2009 Minnesota School Readiness study, conducted by the Minnesota Department of Education, shows that 47% of sampled children are not proficient in the social-emotional skills needed for kindergarten readiness. The study further concludes that children from low-income families are more likely to lack proficiencies that contribute to school readiness. Specifically, students whose household income was 400% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) were up to 3 times more likely to be making progress or proficient in school readiness domains compared to a student whose household income was less than 250% of FPG.

In the 25 counties in southern Minnesota to be served by AmeriCorps LEAP Initiative, there are 53,000 children ages 0-4 (Kid's Count, Minnesota Data, 2008). Of these children, it is estimated that more than 25,000 will experience social-emotional deficits when they reach kindergarten.

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF)'s experience working in the early childhood field has also provided some anecdotal evidence regarding the impact of deficits in social-emotional development. In 2009, Kindergarten, Head Start and early childhood teachers from communities connected to SMIF through our early childhood programming reported that the social-emotional development levels of children hold them back from learning and succeeding in school. In community surveys administered in these same communities, respondents (general population) indicated a need for access to, and increased awareness of, early childhood mental health.

Aggravating the problem is the current economic environment. Southern Minnesota mirrors the national statistics of increased poverty. Over the last nine years, the Median Family Income within LEAP's 25 county region in Southern Minnesota has slowly declined (Minnesota Compass 2010) while the number of children living in poverty has increased (Minnesota Kids Count 2010).

## Narratives

As an organization dedicated to economic vitality, SMIF sees a clear connection between investing in our youngest children and preparing them to be the workers, entrepreneurs, and leaders of tomorrow. The quality of life experiences from 0 to 5 position a child's life trajectory for learning, achieving and succeeding. We are therefore committing our AmeriCorps program resources to build the social-emotional competencies of low-income young children through our regional Head Start network.

For the past eight years, SMIF has been a leader in promoting investment in early childhood initiatives in southern Minnesota. A major component has been 19 Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) coalitions, established to advance the cause of young children by creating a common vision for the community, implementing early childhood focused projects, and sustaining the focus on issues impacting young children. Encompassing 66 communities, the coalitions have implemented new literacy efforts, mental health focused activities, kindergarten transition strategies and support for early childhood care providers.

SMIF's ECI coalitions are connected to others across the state through the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative. This Initiative, which involves all six Minnesota Initiative Foundations, represents a network of 86 community coalitions that serve 750,000 Minnesotans. Four hundred promising strategies have been implemented and documented for sharing across the state.

SMIF believes the future workforce -- and consequently the economic vitality of our communities -- depends on our steadfast commitment to early childhood education and development. This belief is supported by research proving that healthy brain development is foundational to school success, long-term health and overall well-being.

## Narratives

### b. Solution: AmeriCorps Member Role and Responsibility

Healthy brain development begins with providing a full range of basic needs - adequate nutrition, shelter and sleep; however, it is the critical components of nurturing, consistent caring interaction from parents and caregivers that build the brain in the first five years of life. Scientific research shows that experiences children have early in life shape their developing brain architecture (Cohen, Onunaku, Clothier & Poppe, 2005) strongly affecting whether they grow up healthy, productive members of society.

Further, infants, toddlers and preschoolers with social-emotional problems who receive early interventions are more likely to complete high school, live independently, maintain productive employment and avoid criminal behavior as they mature (Glascoe). Early self-regulation has a stronger association with school readiness than IQ or entry-level reading or math (Blair 2002, 2003; Normandeau & Guay, 1998).

Low income children are at increased risk of experiencing social-emotional and other school readiness deficits (Early Childhood Minnesota, Wilder Research, 2009). Children, who are under stress due to economic insecurity, and lack of basic needs, are not able to regulate easily. However, a loving, positive caregiver can provide the time and attention needed for resilience, balance and mental health.

Harvard University's National Council on the Developing Child November 2007 report "The Science of Early Child Development; Closing the Gap Between What We Know, and What We Do" provides the model for the AmeriCorps LEAP (Learning Early Achieves Potential) framework.

## Narratives

"Initiative, self-confidence, and persistence in learning, as well as the ability to work cooperatively and resolve conflicts with peers --all of which are core characteristics of students in a successful school, citizens in a healthy community, and the workforce of a prosperous society. Substantial progress toward this goal can be achieved by assuring high quality early learning experiences both at home and in community-based settings, through a range of parent education, family support, early care and education, preschool, and intervention services." [Emphasis added]

SMIF's experience over the past two years bears out these findings. At the end of the service term, our overall member 1:1/small group end-outcomes show that 78% (2009) and 76% (2010) of children served achieved social-emotional proficiencies for school readiness.

Comparing LEAP social-emotional outcomes of 78% and 76% proficiencies achieved to the random sample through the 2009 Minnesota School Readiness study indicating a 53% proficiency rate in social-emotional skills, one can conclude that LEAP is effective and making positive contributions toward increasing social-emotional proficiencies and early school, and later life, success.

The LEAP Initiative supports a program model of individual member or small teams matched to partner sites in communities across 25 southern Minnesota counties. Members will provide activities for 16-18 children in assigned classroom and interventions for a minimum of 10 children identified by teachers needing focused support to achieve social-emotional proficiencies. Members will also provide parent education and recruit volunteers to help build the programs that support our youngest children.

### 1. ACTIVITY -- Social and Emotional Support

## Narratives

Forty members will provide interventions of 1:1 and small group activities and complete process of baseline benchmark, mid- and year-end assessments for 400 preschool children to achieve social-emotional school readiness.

Members will be trained in one of two evidence-based social-emotional curriculums: Second Step or Incredible Years, to build social connections and emotional development of identified children.

Methodology will be implemented through 1:1 and small group interventions with children in the classroom and topic presentations and events for parents and caregivers.

Member lesson activities will be intentionally designed offering a variety of experiences for children to express and regulate emotions, form close and secure relationships and explore classroom environments and learn. LEAP strategy will support weekly education themes and add value to classroom management.

Sample interventions for emotion regulation include providing opportunities for children to practice patience by taking turns during circle time and waiting to share in conversation; offering a child visual cues for deciding what to do next with difficult transitions in classroom routine; or creating a special area away from the group when a child needs time and space to calm down before rejoining classroom activity.

Members will record daily observations of progress toward social-emotional proficiencies in the child's file that is shared with teaching staff for year-end achievement. Individual student benchmarks, mid-year and year-end assessments will be taken using the Teaching Strategies Gold (formerly called

## Narratives

Creative Curriculum) social-emotional domain markers for school readiness.

With their unique perspective and training, members supplement paraprofessional and teaching staff by providing targeted interventions that explore emotion regulation or social skill weakness. Through every encounter with a child, members build developmental assets for social-emotional competence. Members will concentrate on creating a rich language and reading environment, design activities that develop targeted social skills and increase each child's ability for expressing and regulating emotion.

LEAP members also serve side-by-side with Minnesota Reading Corps members in some Head Start sites, which provides added strength to early childhood national service strategies to close the kindergarten readiness achievement gap. Improvements in social-emotional school readiness will significantly impact each child's chances for academic success and mastering the rigors of kindergarten.

### 2. ACTIVITY -- Parent Education

Forty members will provide 400 parents/caregivers with topic education and connection to community resources that support the social-emotional development of their children.

Members will share information on dialogic reading and the importance of routine reading aloud, sleep deprivation, nutrition, outdoor play and exercise through parent education meetings and events. These member activities will be structured within the site's parent education program and include a 30-day routine reading challenge and suggested play and learning activities for increased bonding and habits within the home. Members will plan family fun nights and collaborate to develop service projects that engage families and connect caregivers to early childhood resources. Each member will



## Narratives

strive to expand parent/caregiver knowledge on simple, practical steps to build child developmental assets. Believing that parents are the child's first and foremost teacher, the goal is to provide opportunities for parents and caregivers to build bonds for closer relationships and consistent routines within home environments.

Members will consult with teachers on contributing to parent meetings to provide information on topics that support social-emotional well-being and encourage a family reading commitment to build bonds between adult and child. Informational topics and planned family events will be designed to increase "protective factors" for children they serve. Protective factors for families include 1) nurturing and attachment between parent and child, 2) knowledge of effective parenting and child development, 3) being socially connected and resilient and 4) having concrete supports for meeting basic needs and having access to essential community services to insure safety and well-being of their children. Research shows that protective factors are linked to a lower incident of abuse and neglect in families.

Member contributions will build awareness on topics that support healthy well-being of children and provide activities that strengthen parent/child interaction. The frequency and depth of member contributions will be determined by each partner site's parent education protocol of monthly or quarterly parent meetings.

### 3. ACTIVITY -- Volunteer Generation

Forty members will recruit 200 citizens as volunteers to support the early childhood programming, public awareness and support efforts.

## Narratives

Members will share information on the importance of social-emotional school readiness, brain research and their LEAP service experience with local citizen groups to recruit volunteers of all ages in service to the local early childhood movement. As enthusiastic champions and advocates for each child's success, members will encourage others to make a difference within their own sphere of influence; by reading to children to build bonds and early language and literacy skills; by volunteering for family events and service projects that connect community resources and early childhood information to needy families.

We are requesting 40 member full time slots to conduct these activities, which will double current LEAP resources. We believe this is the right time to make this expansion because we have demonstrated the positive impact that LEAP members have made in early childhood settings. At the same time, the economic downturn has significantly increased the stress on our target population. Our community partner sites have realized the positive impact LEAP members have in the classroom and are adding more slots to meet the increased needs of the children they serve.

SMIF is also seeking to expand beyond our 20 county service area to bring AmeriCorps resources to five additional counties. Our motivation is to expand the availability of resources while maintaining an effective program. Our long standing successful AmeriCorps program and our relationship with Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF) puts us in a strong position to make this expansion. We are immediately connected to early childhood resources in these new counties through our relationship with a sister foundation and statewide Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative network.

c. AmeriCorps Member Selection, Training and Supervision

## Narratives

SMIF has developed an effective strategy for recruiting qualified applicants. We have found the most effective method is word-of-mouth and referrals from alumni, current members and site partners, staff and board members. SMIF also sends email bulletins to other partner networks, uses the national recruiting website and ServeMN statewide college recruiters. Participating on college job panels and career fairs has generated applicants as well. We are currently receiving applicant interest for the 2011-12 service term through the national CNCS web site.

SMIF is intentional in seeking and balancing the diversity of the Corps. We promote equal opportunity in all marketing materials and partner with organizations that can cast a wide net to reach people of color, disability, class and age. For example, specific marketing will be done with nonprofits that serve diverse populations to increase our recruitment reach.

Member selection includes a thorough process of application review and face-to-face interviews with a three-member panel consisting of LEAP staff and potential site supervisors. The final selection process will balance age, gender, ability, education, ethnic and racial diversity.

Local candidates are recruited to the program both through SMIF and through the local community partner sites.

SMIF has an extensive organizational reach as well as strong personal networks via our staff and Board. Both are used to get information out about the program. Since word of mouth is such a powerful recruiting tool, staff and member alums are instrumental in actively recruiting individual members.

## Narratives

Community partner sites are also encouraged to act as recruiters for the program. Having familiarity with LEAP's impact in the classroom and the community, sites use their local networks to bring in interested parties who then go through the AmeriCorps screening and review process as described.

### \*Training

Members will receive orientation to the AmeriCorps program and early childhood social-emotional development via the Orientation Retreat. During the 30-hour Retreat members will receive the AmeriCorps handbook and information on the following topics:

1. AmeriCorps National, State and LEAP Initiative organization overview, expectations, performance measure data collection and reporting standards, OnCorps timesheet and reflections
2. "The Six Keys: Strategies for Promoting Children's Mental Health in Early Childhood Programs"; dialogic reading, and Woven Word -- Early Reading First, Head Start and academic standards of social/emotional concepts curriculum.
3. Brain Research, Child Development, and Family Protective Factors
4. Time Management, Community Stakeholder Analysis, and Project Planning
5. Team Building, Group Dynamics, and Strength-based Leadership Styles

After program orientation, members begin a 30 day initiation period at their sites. This period is key in connecting the content of the program orientation with the hands on delivery of member's service.

Members begin by attending the teacher in-service and special site orientation training prior to the official school start. LEAP guarantees that members receive a full site orientation by collecting a signed site orientation checklist at the first full Corps meeting following placement.

## Narratives

Members meet the students they will serve and get familiar with their classroom. Members also use this time for observation and assessment. It is during this time that teachers and members identify which students will be involved in special interventions.

Members begin learning about the community they are serving during the initial 30-day classroom observation period. This orientation starts with the member conducting an analysis of all the early childhood stakeholders in the community (parents, teachers, employers, local government, etc.). Next sites provide data about local early childhood programs as well as poverty, refugee and immigrant statistics within the families served at the host site. Members attend and participate in local early childhood coalition or other early childhood focused collaborative meetings to develop a broader understanding of the challenges and barriers with providing support to families.

SMIF uses member feedback and community site recommendations to provide members with relevant orientation, training and support so that they are prepared and successful in their service. As described here the information received during orientation provides a foundation for members as they initiate their services. The 30 day observation period gives them familiarity with the classroom and the students. Quarterly trainings then build on both the orientation and the members experience during the previous quarter. Finally, individual support to members is designed to provide them assistance in unique circumstances not addressed elsewhere.

### Quarterly Trainings

Training is continued through quarterly two-day Corps meetings scheduled to share best practices, review skills, and cover additional topic trainings, including:

1. Focused Discussion Skills/Three Civic Reflections

## Narratives

2. Communication Skills/Conflict Resolution/Diversity
3. Disability training (i.e. Alcohol Fetal Syndrome, Autism, and ADD)
4. Volunteer Recruitment/Advocacy and Public Presentations
5. Collaboration/Service Event Planning and Management
6. Social and Emotional Development/Performance Outcomes Review
7. Member Presentations/Strengthsfinder Profile
8. Life after AmeriCorps/Mentoring Contracts

Teambuilding exercises build esprit de corps and connection to LEAP's vision and its role within both state and national service movements. Career development modules include top five strengths assessments taken prior to orientation and individual leadership style assessment throughout the service term. "Life after AmeriCorps" planning includes four sessions with a mentor.

The goal is to use common learning and the group norming process to establish a solid foundation for service and an enthusiastic connection to a larger effort to "get things done" and "make a difference" for children in southern Minnesota. Reaching this goal solidifies a high level of commitment to the team resulting in an engaged Corps dedicated to high performance.

### Supplemental Training and Resources

In between quarterly meetings, smaller regional team meetings or telephone check-ins will keep members connected and address any support needs. LEAP staff also provides support through OnCorps timesheet and monthly reflection review.

Members have opportunities to reflect and learn from their service in the following ways:

## Narratives

- \* Members submit monthly service reflection, which are reviewed by program staff to determine follow-up and assistance when necessary.
- \* Full Corps meetings and service events serve to reconnect the team to the larger mission and overall participation in the statewide and national service movement.
- \* Each member works with a mentor and spends some focused time discussing "Life after AmeriCorps." Mentors are community leaders and members are encouraged in their own service through this relationship.
- \* As a part of their service, members commit to engaging in five new civic engagements activities. Examples include: writing advocacy letters to the editor, observing city, county or school board meetings, and planning LEAP service projects in collaboration with community groups. The goal of this activity is to connect members to a deeper civic engagement service ethic.

### \*Supervision

The LEAP Initiative has an appropriate host site support and monitoring system to ensure members receive quality on-site supervision. Program staff ensures that each member has a well-oriented site supervisor, coaching and resource support, and is connected to larger early childhood activities for a greater sense of purpose, network and accomplishment.

AmeriCorps LEAP is introducing the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) this year. This system, developed by researchers at the University of Virginia, is designed to focus on interactions in the classroom so that educators can understand and improve their teaching practices and more effectively create a classroom environment conducive to student learning. We will use the social-emotional portion to provide ongoing performance evaluation for members and fast-track member

## Narratives

effectiveness in delivering interventions. Using CLASS as a framework for observing members in the classroom will build the relationship with teachers while improving the classroom environment.

The members are supervised by a staff member of the local community partner site. Typically, the supervisor is the Executive Director or other leadership staff member of the community partner site. LEAP Program Director serves as staff supervisor, coach and general advocate for balancing member and site goals for success.

Site supervisors are determined by the individual community partner sites. The expectation is that the community partner site will identify a supervisor who has an appropriate amount of time to commit to supervision of the member, a demonstrated interest in social-emotional development of children and a commitment to meeting compliance rules of the grant.

Site supervisor orientation includes 1) contract review and performance measure reporting, 2) site handbook and program orientation training, and 3) an initial 30-day follow-up site visit with supervisor and classroom teachers to review member site orientation, site supervision, social-emotional development goals and program data reporting requirements. Ongoing support is available through one-on-one coaching from program staff and bi-annual site supervisor learning network meetings to share best practice for LEAP member engagement and integration within the classroom.

### d. Outcome: Performance Measures

The overall change we want to see at the end of our three-year grant cycle is that more children demonstrate social-emotional competencies needed for Kindergarten success.



## Narratives

Our impact measures will focus on the number of children demonstrating gains, the number of parents/caregivers reporting increased knowledge of social-emotional development and resources, and increased number of volunteers engaged in regional early childhood advocacy and support.

Specifically:

80% of 400 preschoolers receiving LEAP intervention program of 1:1 and small group activities show gains in standardized social-emotional school readiness proficiencies. Interventions develop listening skills, ability to follow directions and stay on task; build self or social awareness; practice self-management; relationship skills and decision-making. Progress tracked through Child Assessments (baseline/mid-year/year-end) to measure Teaching Strategies Gold proficiencies are taken by member and verified by teacher.

75% of 400 parents/caregivers report increased knowledge of community resources and methods to build bonds in the home to strengthen social-emotional school readiness skills for Kindergarten. Progress measured through attendance logs and post event surveys.

200 citizens are engaged as volunteers in support of early childhood programming, raise public awareness and support efforts for school readiness. Progress measured through attendance logs.

Information from child assessments, attendance logs and post event surveys will be aggregated and reported annually through OnCorps progress reports.

Performance measure targets are based on past outcomes and input from partner sites.

## Narratives

### e. Volunteer Generation

Forty members will recruit 200 citizens as volunteers to support local early childhood programming, raise public awareness on the importance of early childhood development and support efforts for school readiness.

LEAP members will speak to early childhood coalitions to learn where additional volunteers are needed in local school readiness efforts. Members will schedule presentations with civic groups to share their national service experience and the importance of investing in early childhood school readiness. Members will obtain commitments from individuals interested in volunteering through attendance logs.

Volunteer positions include serving on advisory and coalition leadership teams, writing letters and talking to legislators, public speaking to expand awareness within the community, reading in the classroom and at service events, mentoring teen parents, and volunteering at family service events. Volunteers provide leadership to spread the word, model supportive behavior and connect more people to school readiness efforts.

Volunteer will be recruited to fill a variety of roles including:

1. Parent educator
2. Family night host
3. Classroom Reader
4. Classroom parent/grandparent

## Narratives

5. Advisory committee member
6. Coalition leadership team member
7. Letter writer
8. Presenter
9. Public Policy advocate

Members will recruit volunteers through community presentations, family/early childhood events and one-on-one contact. Members will not be responsible for managing volunteers; this responsibility will fall to the individual partner sites or local coalitions.

### f. Partnerships and Collaboration

The collaborative partnerships that undergird LEAP service are both wide and deep. The geographic expansion proposed here is possible through our 25 year relationship with our sister organization Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF). Most recent collaborations include youth workforce development efforts as well as our ongoing statewide effort to advance the cause of young children through the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative.

LEAP will also build on the relationships SMIF and SWIF have in communities that are host to Early Childhood Initiative coalitions. These coalitions bring together community and business leaders from across the community and provide them with the resources to create a common vision, implement programs, and sustain the organizing effort. Through this extensive network, both Foundations have connections in communities with individuals and organizations engaged in the issue of early

## Narratives

childhood development. LEAP members will be connected to these networks as part of their orientation to the communities in which they will serve.

Community stakeholders include community partner sites, law enforcement, hospitals, public health, and a variety of nonprofits, businesses and school systems. All believe early childhood education and development is foundational to positive economic futures, prepared workforce and general civic health of communities.

Site partner focus groups were completed in 2009 to begin evaluating the effectiveness of our work. Feedback from coalition partners is ongoing but we specifically sought input from both member and site participants to determine what was working; making adjustments to improve processes.

Members are strong stakeholders in their term of service. SMIF supports member's role within the site and community as LEAP ambassador. We also empower members to develop leadership skills by offering coaching, project sponsorship and support as they develop new collaborative efforts. The LEAP term of service is an experiential process for each member and, for most; it is their first professional experience in community service. Members are immersed in learning; the legal host provides the anchor as they set sail to "get things done" and "make a difference" for children and families they serve.

Key donors are also stakeholders, making additional resources available to advance early childhood development in the region. These donors include individuals, local governments, businesses, SMIF's Youth Trust Fund contributors and annual early childhood contributors IBM Corporation, The McKnight Foundation, and Capstone Publisher.

## Narratives

### g. Sustainability

SMIF anticipates embedding the work of the LEAP members in a number of ways. Initially it is our hope that the social-emotional support modeled by members is so clearly beneficial to host sites that interventions become normal practice, that social-emotional supports will become just as much a part of every young child's life as learning the alphabet.

Members create content as part of their service, which can be used by sites and other early childhood focused groups. For instance, LEAP members have created over 100 dialogic reading tip sheets for common books found in early childhood programs. Members also create the social-emotional activities and classroom supports throughout the year.

For the benefit of community partner sites, SMIF will offer Learning Networks. These Networks will provide a forum to share best practice and strategies for early childhood and LEAP partner sites with the goal of sustaining connections that create regional synergy towards systems change.

Part of members' service is to make presentations in the community, at family fun nights and parent meetings connected to early childhood sites. Each of these events is an opportunity to change the life of at least one child and to demonstrate to the larger public the value of social-emotional support for young children. Our goal is to educate more citizens on the cost-effectiveness of investing in early childhood, to engage more citizen leaders and increase the momentum of the public conversation on investing in early childhood.

## Narratives

Members also build sustainability into the program through volunteer generation. By recruiting new volunteers to the local early childhood initiative, members expand the circle of concerned citizens who advocate for early childhood initiatives -- specifically school readiness and connecting families to existing resources.

LEAP members will also connect with our Early Childhood Initiative coalitions with a particular focus on mental health and social-emotional development activities to help achieve goals and engage more volunteers in local early childhood advocacy efforts.

SMIF has other significant resources dedicated to early childhood development. Over the last six years, IBM Corporation has provided more than 190 computers to early childhood settings across the region through our Young Explorer grant program. Capstone Publishing provides thousands of books through our BookStart program so that each child will have a book of their own. The Youth Trust Fund- established by cornerstone gifts from Wells Fargo Bank, Mayo Clinic, IBM Corporation, Red Wing Shoe Company- provides funding to expand Home Visiting programs to diminish child abuse and neglect. The McKnight Foundation has been a long-time and significant financial supporter of Early Childhood Initiative coalitions and other early childhood focused activities on early language and early literacy development.

SMIF continues to seek out new resource partners within our region and across the state and nation in partnership with our sister Minnesota Initiative Foundations as part of the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative.

### Organizational Capability

#### 2. Organizational Capacity

## Narratives

### a. Organizational Background

The primary contact for this grant application is SMIF President & CEO Tim Penny; secondary contact is Program Director, Barbara Gunderson.

SMIF has served as legal host of an AmeriCorps grant since 1994 with member allotments as high as 66 members within a 3-city cluster model with a budget of \$1.5 million.

Additionally, SMIF has 24 years' experience managing other Federal grants including USDA Rural Development Fund, Disaster Revolving Fund and a Small Business Development Fund with loan assets over \$2.7 million dollars.

SMIF has implemented its fundraising systems to support AmeriCorps LEAP Initiative. This includes individual requests as well as requests to corporate and foundation funders.

SMIF has been able to support service initiatives and member skill development by helping members' access SMIF resources. SMIF has a number of grant programs that support early childhood development and all sites are made aware of these opportunities. Members can practice grant writing skills with an application to these programs to build capacity of their sites. Another example is fundraising events for which LEAP can provide a small bit of financial support as well as support from service of other members. In one such case, a member organized a music festival which raised substantial program support for a Head Start Center in need of an outdoor track for large motor skill development. Children at this center were unable to utilize the trikes for exercise for years due to location of building within a transitional housing area.

## Narratives

SMIF receives funding from a number of sources. Listed below are the category of funders and the percentage of their support as well as the top five funders for FY10.

### SMIF Funding Sources

Business (56) 6%

Local Government 4%

Individuals (157) 3%

Foundations/Nonprofits/ (26) 36%

Federal Government 13%

In-kind 9%

Endowment Earnings 22%

Loan Revenue Fee's 7%

SMIF's top five funders in FY10 were

The McKnight Foundation \$1,107,000

ServeMN \$352,664

Capstone Publishers \$176,430

US Small Business Administration \$163,414

Southwest Initiative Foundation \$91,819

Corporation for National Service funding represent 13% of SMIF's budget.

SMIF has received AmeriCorps Competitive funding each of the last five years totaling \$2,329,588.



## Narratives

This represents 7% of SMIF's budget during the last five years.

The AmeriCorps LEAP Initiative is part of the overall strategy of SMIF's Workforce Initiatives focused on providing skilled workers today and in the future. Senior Workforce Program Officer RaeJean Hansen, a 20-year SMIF veteran, leads the workforce team and directly manages the LEAP Program Director. Vice President/CFO Brian Conzemius, who has worked with the AmeriCorps program for 11 years, provides fiscal and compliance oversight.

The LEAP Initiative is an integral part of how SMIF delivers on its mission of building tomorrow's workforce by supporting early childhood development. As evidenced in this application, life and work success is contingent on an early life of learning, achieving and succeeding. LEAP is one of the approaches used to guarantee that early success is provided for as many of our children as possible. Others include our Early Childhood Initiatives, and our Home Visiting, BookStart and Young Explorer grant programs. Taken in their entirety, this group of programs represents SMIF's commitment to preparing young children for kindergarten and life-long success.

Other primary LEAP team members include Early Childhood Coordinator Teri Steckelberg, Financial Coordinator Bonita Sommers and Grants Director Suzy Meneguzzo. Teri connects LEAP opportunities with the network of Early Childhood Initiative coalitions and is a member of the Statewide Minnesota Initiative Foundation Early Childhood Central Coordination Team where she works to broaden the network of support for LEAP Initiative expansion within statewide coalitions. Bonita provides administrative detail to budget and member benefit processes. Suzy Meneguzzo provides oversight to grant, site and member application strategies to insure LEAP processes are consistent with SMIF's operating policies and procedures.

SMIF's Board of Trustees is comprised of 15 leaders recruited to bring a wide range of expertise to

## Narratives

governance of the Foundation. Board members serve as connection points between LEAP members and community groups, and engage in early childhood advocacy efforts on behalf of the organization. Both past and current board members also help recruit new members.

### b. Staffing

Barbara Gunderson leads the LEAP Initiative in her 11th year as Program Director. She is responsible for overall program management and grant compliance, planning and design, personnel development, supervision and training. Barbara has over 22 years of professional experience in managing programs and leading groups within nonprofit and governmental sectors. Her tenure as Program Director includes significant contributions toward member retention and satisfaction; she increased enrollment and retention from 42% to 100% while a cluster director. She holds an MBA certification in nonprofit management, a BS in sociology, is a Blandin Community Leadership Program alumni, certified AmeriCoach, and Institute of Cultural Affairs trained group facilitator. She serves as coach and facilitator, providing strong oversight in building supportive relationships with all program participants.

LEAP Initiative Associate Lynn Smith provides key administrative support, assistance for member and site recruitment, engagement, enrollment and record maintenance. She is a licensed K-6 Elementary Teacher with 14 years' experience including eight years of early childhood/preschool teaching and five years teaching children of migrant farm workers. Lynn also has Early Childhood Administration experience in a Montessori Preschool. Lynn's experience is a significant addition to the LEAP team and provides invaluable support to program participants.

For 11 years, Vice President/CFO Brian Conzemius has managed all fiscal systems, including the AmeriCorps grant. SMIF has sound compliance programs and reporting for all of its federal and foundation fiscal activities which have resulted in zero compliance or reporting issues in the past

## Narratives

during any of our audits, including required A-133 audits. The 2009 Independent Auditor's Report on Compliance in accordance with OMB Circular A-1-133 findings conclude that "the legal grant host complied with requirements applicable to its major federal programs for year ended June 20, 2009." SMIF continues to provide its Board of Trustees with a yearly risk assessment of all program areas which are monitored by the Trustees and forwarded to our auditors for testing.

When community partner sites are notified about member placement, a visit with program staff is scheduled. The site supervisor receives an orientation at that time that includes information about the program, compliance, expectations, and ways to access additional support.

Site host monitoring and compliance includes a 30 day site visit with periodic monitoring ongoing through site visits and member check-in at Corps meetings. Technical assistance is provided to sites by staff at site orientation and continued throughout the term as needed.

This year Learning Networks will also be added. In addition to providing a group forum for the community site partner orientation and training, the Networks will provide an opportunity for community partner sites to share promising practices, challenges, and consider ways in which they can support LEAP members' strategies to raise social-emotional competencies and overall early childhood school readiness efforts.

### c. Multi-State Applicants Only

NA

### d. Multi-Site Applicants Only

The majority of AmeriCorps LEAP Initiative service sites will be Head Start Centers sponsored by regional community action programs. Remaining service sites include Early Childhood Family Education programs, faith-based nonprofit preschool programs, health and county agencies serving at-risk teen or single parents, ESL families and workforce programs, home visiting and public school Community Education preschool/Kindergarten school readiness programs.

## Narratives

Sites are recruited by referral through our Early Childhood Coalitions, specific staff targeting, and SMIF partner network through regional request for proposals. All site applications are reviewed by a panel of staff and ranked according to best fit for LEAP Initiative end outcomes, past compliance and reporting, quality of site member supports and supervision. We prioritize the need of children and families over ability to pay the placement fee.

Applications are considered in light of achieving the priority outcomes, the AmeriCorps criteria, special considerations and additional criteria as identified by SMIF. SMIF's additional criteria include indication that the site is committed to social-emotional development of young children, familiarity with LEAP's preferred curriculum and a systemic approach to supporting social-emotional health. Program staff is responsible for identifying the criteria in each application and ranking each application against evaluative criteria.

Community partner sites generally have a prior relationship with SMIF. They are past or current grantees, have participated in issue specific training, learning circles, early childhood coalition activities and/or served as an AmeriCorps community partner site in the past.

### e. Current Grantees Only

\*Enrollment -- 2009-2010 100% Full time/125% Half Time 107% Average for 3 years

\*Retention -- 2009-2010 82.4% Full Time/100% Half Time; 84.9% Average for 3 years

Explanation for three early departures: 1) one left to start a second term of service with another program, 2) one failed to submit reporting and 3) one member felt the program was a mismatch for her goals.

Retention will be improved by focusing on providing members with timely and ongoing support as challenges arise and supporting community partner sites in selecting appropriate site supervisors.

## Narratives

The LEAP program as proposed here will expand into an additional five counties. This geographic spread introduces increased costs in terms of keeping Corps members connected. Specifically, there are increased costs for travel for program staff and members, increased time commitment on the part of program staff to providing one-on-one and group support to members and community sites spread further on the edge of the service region. While the expansion increases our reach we do not want it to negate the esprit de corps or connection to the larger early childhood work.

\*Cost per MSY

### f. Special Circumstances

The service area of the expanded AmeriCorps LEAP Initiative encompasses 25 counties in southeastern and south central Minnesota. With a combined population of just over 800,000, these counties are predominantly rural with a few hub urban centers- Rochester, Mankato, Winona, Austin, Owatonna, and Faribault- with populations greater than 20,000. More than 90% of the 222 communities in this region have populations of 20,000 or less. More than half have populations of 1,000 or less.

The poverty rate of the 25 counties combined is 9.2%. However, just over half (13) of the individual counties exceed the state average of 9.6% including Blue Earth (15.8%), Cottonwood (11.9%) and Winona (13.7%). The rate of children living in poverty follows similar trends with 13 of 25 counties with rates higher than the state rate of 11.4% (2008) with one county (Mower) as high as 16%.

(Demographic and Poverty information from Regional Community and Economic Trend Report, July 2005, Minnesota Compass and Kid's Count- Minnesota Data)

## Narratives

While Southern Minnesota is home to corporate and philanthropic givers (Schwanns Corporation, Mayo Clinic, IBM, Hormel, etc.), overall giving to greater Minnesota by Minnesota grantmakers trails giving to the Twin Cities metro area. According to the Minnesota Council on Foundation (Giving in Minnesota 2010), of the over \$500 million given by Minnesota Grantmakers, 32% went to the Twin Cities metro area while 12% was directed specifically to the communities of Greater Minnesota.

### **Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy**

#### 3. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

##### a. Cost Effectiveness

Demonstrate how your program has or will obtain diverse resources for program implementation.

SMIF has three secured funding sources: legal host in-kind resources, member placement fees and SMIF cash support via our endowment.

SMIF will continue to use its organizational fundraising approaches to garner support for LEAP program implementation. These include solicitation of individuals, local governments and businesses, local community support and foundation and corporate donations.

SMIF needs \$308,992 from non-Corporation sources to support LEAP which is currently secured through in-kind support from SMIF, cash contribution from SMIF, and community site placement fees.

## Narratives

SMIF will use its Donor Services team to continually increase the non-Corporation portion of support for LEAP. In addition to personal, business, and government solicitations, SMIF will seek out unique in-kind support. A past example is a partnership with IBM which has made Young Explorer computers available to early childhood education programs. SMIF will continue to identify these types of opportunities and pursue them to support LEAP's focus on social-emotional development, building on its successful track record of raising non-federal funds.

### b. Current Grantees Only

In this request, SMIF seeks to double the FTE member positions while also increasing its own cash contribution. The goal is to build on our existing relationships (SWIF, local communities) to increase the reach of the program and replicate services while maintaining program quality.

### c. Special Circumstances

Reference Cost per Member

### d. Budget Adequacy

The budget as proposed supports placement of 40 members at a grantee match level of 37%. This would double our FTE count. Additional cash is provided through increased site fees and increased grantee contribution. SMIF will continue to leverage its fundraising efforts to increase the outside support for this program.

## Narratives

SMIF relies on leveraging all of its internal early childhood budget and expertise to ensure the goals are attained by the LEAP program. SMIF provides a match that is over 50% over the requirement set forth by the AmeriCorps program. Additionally, SMIF annually budgets over 25% of its overall budget to support early childhood efforts including the LEAP program. Internal strategy is in place to raise additional funds to support programs in the most cost effective way yet maintain highest standard for delivery, child outcomes, and experience to participants.

e. EAPs and Full Time Fixed Amount Applicants Only

NA

C. Evaluation Summary or Plan

Internal evaluation and external partner focus groups conducted in 2009.

D. NA

E. NA

F. NA

### **Evaluation Summary or Plan**

C. Evaluation Summary or Plan



## Narratives

Internal evaluation and external partner focus groups conducted in 2009

SMIF completes program, annual and multi-year evaluation to both demonstrate our impact and steer our strategic planning.

Program evaluation is conducted for every public event through participant surveys and staff reports. This information is used to immediately inform staff as they prepare for the next event. The LEAP Initiative uses this approach to continually improve training and select topics of interest to members.

Annually, SMIF compiles data about achievements and outcomes of the previous year's work. This data is aggregated across the organization and used to communicate with our board of directors and funders on our short term progress. LEAP Initiative outcomes are integrated into this information.

Every few years, SMIF reflects on its recent past as it prepares for strategic planning. Each of the annual evaluation summaries and aggregated data from the program evaluations are gathered and used as a starting point. Next, data from the external environment is considered by the board and management of the organization. The resulting document is used as the jumping off point for the next multi-year plan.

### **Amendment Justification**

NA

### **Clarification Summary**

Budget Clarification Items:

Adjustments made on line items - changing from 40 to 20 MSY

## Narratives

### Section 1-A: Personal Expenses - VP/CFO Role

Fiscal oversight provided by VP/CFO and Financial Coordinator included in Section III.

Administrative/Indirect Costs total.

### Section 1-A: Personal Expenses - LEAP Program Director 100% usage

LEAP PD time was adjusted to 90%; the remaining 10% of it allocated to grant application development (federal funds can not be used to write grants) and covered by legal host.

Section 1-A: Personnel Expenses: Supervisors on average spend at least three hours per week with member supervision. The 2.5% reflects the percentage of nonfederal funds per salary sites can contribute in in-kind toward member supervision. Adjusted to 20 from 40 site supervisors on egrants totalling \$25,000.

See program clarification for detail on supervisory role.

### Section 1-B: Personal Fringe Benefits

FICA and Staff Benefits adjusted on eGrants budget.

### Section 1-C: Staff Travel

CNCS Sponsored Training includes Conference Expenses (Hotel, Travel and Meals) \$2000

Flight 1 Person - \$800; Motel 1 Person - \$700; Meals 1 Person - \$300; Ground Transportation 1 Person - \$200

### Section 1-C: Staff Travel ServeMinnesota Meetings

## Narratives

Program Director attends six bi-monthly ServeMinnesota meetings x 104 miles per trip

Section 1-F: Contractual & Consultant Services

Moved \$2000 to Section III/Administrative Indirect Costs.

Section 1-G: Member Training: LEAP Team Service Projects

\$600 Leap Team Service Projects = \$30x20 members for supplies

This \$600 line item was deleted from Member Training and transferred to Member Supplies/Member Service Supplies line item.

Section 1-G: Staff Training - Coaching Workshop and Social-Emotional Training

Program Director attends Coaching Workshop @\$450 for member Corps team building success and Life after AmeriCorps planning.

Program Director and Program Associate attend social-emotional training @ \$200 (\$100/per person).

Section 1-I: Other Program Operating Costs: Criminal history checks are completed for all members, employees or other individuals who receive a salary, education award, living allowance from the grant.

\*Background Check Listing on eGrants budget was changed.

We now show two costs for background checks eGrants budget - State/NSOPR and FBI Fingerprint check for anyone in recurring access of vulnerable populations.

\*Site Supervisor background checks will be paid by sponsoring Community Partner Site.

LEAP staff criminal history check is complete and covered within legal host personnel budget.

## Narratives

### Section 1-I - Other Programming Costs - Marketing Recruitment Assistance/Publicity

The legal host contributes communication staff time in-kind to educate the 25 county region on AmeriCorps LEAP social-emotional school readiness activity throughout the year.

#### Programmatic Clarification Items:

##### #1: Amount of Individual Supervision Members Receive

LEAP Site Supervisors spend, on average, a total of three hours per week supervising the member at their site. This amount of time is not reflected in the budget due to a significant portion of supervisors salaries being federally funded (as explained in the budget clarification for Section 1-A).

The member's primary site supervisors are the mental health consultant, social worker or lead program supervisor connected to the partner site. The primary site supervisor provides oversight to assure all site/member compliance regulations are met, conducts 30-day, mid-year and year-end evaluation of member, makes sure member is established at site, and meets with the member weekly; moving to bi-weekly as year progresses and relationship is established. The primary site supervisor insures that member and teacher work well together and settles any issues that may come up. The secondary supervisor is the classroom teacher who provides daily interface and a quarterly CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) evaluation on the member's implementation of social-emotional strategies and interventions as well as used as a tool to develop relationship between teacher and member for classroom interaction and synergy for child's success.

We confirm our goal of single site placement of 20 MSY members.

## Narratives

#2: Conversion of member slots

It is our goal to achieve 100% MSY member enrollment. We have found that in order to enroll the most qualified applicants, we sometimes need to convert slots for qualified applicants who are only able to serve in half time position with our program. Refill slots have been converted to half time positions to reflect the amount of time the member will have to complete their hours in the remainder of the program year.

#3: Relationship of LEAP members with MN Reading Corps members - how do positions augment each other? Are members of both programs serving the same children?

The roles of LEAP and MN Reading Corps (MRC) members augment each other within the early childhood setting.

LEAP members focus on a child's behavior regulation and development. They provide a well-rounded social skill and emotion regulation foundation that prepares the child for focused learning in phonemic awareness, letter recognition, rhyming, and picture naming activities for early literacy development. While LEAP members work with children who are developing social skills and emotion regulation, MRC members are able to focus on a child's literacy intervention. Both are critical factors in getting children ready to learn. The two programs complement each other well.

Our experience with overlap is minimal. Last year we had three sites with both LEAP and MRC members.

## Narratives

Our experience confirms that Head Start families face numerous challenges that are barriers to a child's learning, i.e., poverty, language barriers, immigrant and refugee status, unemployment, single parent households, domestic violence, incarcerated parents, and drug and alcohol dependency. These children benefit greatly from LEAP and MRC members helping them learn, achieve and get ready for kindergarten.

Performance Measure Clarification Items:

\*Changed MSY amounts from 40 to 20 on eGrants Performance Measure

\*Changed numbers of clients served and percentages to reflect change to 20 MSY

\*Aligned our Early Childhood National Service Measures into one

\*Both ED-20 and ED-21 Outputs are combined with ED-23 Intermediate Outcome Performance Measure

\*Performance Measure ED-23 was revised to reflect current numbers of 200 children served; 200 preschool children start program; 160 complete the year of interventions; 128 (80% of 160) preschool children demonstrate gains in social-emotional development.

\*Removed our Volunteer Generation Performance Measure since outputs can be captured in demographics section of the Grantee Progress Report.

\*Removed Parent/Caregiver Performance Measure since it isn't major program activity.

We will track internally as members will still provide education and activity to engage parents/caregivers throughout the year. By tracking activity for continuous improvement, we'll learn how this additional connection with parent and child adds value to our ED-23 Performance Measure.

\*Tried to remove "Human Needs" Category - was not successful so submitted a request to the eGrants Help Desk

## Narratives

Help Desk Reference number for follow up: #110713-000411

### Continuation Changes

NA

## 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 checked="" 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"/> |

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas      20

### Service Categories

- School Readiness/Head Start/Early Childhood Education      Primary       Secondary   
Other Human Needs      Primary       Secondary

## Parent/Caregiver Education for Bonding and Community Connection

**Service Category:** Other Human Needs

**Measure Category:** Needs and Service Activities

### Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Members will present a variety of education topics that are connected to healthy brain development and social-emotional well-being to parent/caregiver groups to expand knowledge and motivate parent/caregivers to do more to build bonds and increase positive adult/child activity in the home. Members will also share information on community resources that are available to support families and/or provide school readiness support. Members will present topic information at parent meetings, plan and promote family activities (i.e., 30-day routine reading challenges, 1:1 routine play activity to build bonds and stronger connections). Members will promote family fun nights and family community events to broaden parent/caregiver's awareness of opportunities for fun connections within community, decrease isolation and strengthen bonds between adult and children 0-5.



Results

**Result: Intermediate Outcome**

75% of 400 parents/caregivers who attend LEAP member presentations report increased knowledge on early childhood topics, play activities and community resources.

Indicator: Parents/caregivers increase know ledge on w ays to bond or connect to community.

Target: Members educate 400 parents/caregivers on topics and activities that build bonds and connection to community resources.

Target Value: 75%

Instruments: Post Survey

PM Statement: 75% of 400 parents/caregivers report increased know ledge of community resources and methods to build bonds in the home to strengthen social-emotional school readiness skills for Kindergarten.

Prev. Yrs. Data:

**Result: Output**

400 parents/caregivers attend training sessions conducted by LEAP members.

Indicator: Attendance at parent/caregiver meetings

Target: Parents/caregivers sign attendance sheets at training sessions conducted by LEAP members.

Target Value: 400

Instruments: Attendance logs

PM Statement: 400 parents/caregivers attend LEAP member presentations as show n through meeting attendance logs.

Prev. Yrs. Data:

## National Performance Measures

### Priority Area: Education

**Performance Measure Title:** ED 23: Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of social and emotional development

**Service Category:** School Readiness/Head Start/Early Childhood Education

### Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Preschool children needing social-emotional development for school readiness identified by site partners. Those children with challenging behaviors will receive 1:1 and small group interventions to build social-emotional school readiness skills through daily interface and weekly lessons to make gains in ability to express and regulate emotion, form close and secure relationships and explore environment and learn. Members will assess children 3x a year - collecting baseline, mid-year and year-end assessment to measure gains in achieving Teaching Strategies Gold social-emotional school readiness proficiencies for Kindergarten success.

### Result: Output

Result.

200 preschool children identified by mental health staff or classroom teachers as needing LEAP member social-emotional school readiness support and intervention are matched to 20 FTE AmeriCorps LEAP members.

Indicator: ED20: Children starting in an early childhood education program.

Target :200 preschool children needing social-emotional skill development.

Target Value: 200

Instruments: Teaching Strategies Gold Social-Emotional Behavior Checklist Baseline Assessment

PM Statement: 200 preschool children identified by mental health staff or classroom teacher as needing social-emotional support for school readiness will start in AmeriCorps LEAP Initiative early childhood education program.

### Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

80% of 160 preschool children completing AmeriCorps LEAP member early childhood program will demonstrate gains in social-emotional development for school readiness.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) ED23: Children demonstrating gains in social and emotional development.

Target :80% of 160 preschool children falling behind for social-emotional school readiness show improvement.

Target Value: 128

Instruments: Teaching Strategies Gold Social-Emotional Proficiency Skill Assessment

PM Statement: At least 128 preschool children (80% of 160) completing AmeriCorps LEAP member intervention program demonstrate gains in social-emotional development for school readiness as measured by Teaching Strategies Gold Social-Emotional Proficiency Skill Year-End Assessment

### Result: Output

Result.

## National Performance Measures

Result.

160 preschool children (80%) complete 10 months participation of social-emotional development of 1:1 and small group service support with 20 FTE AmeriCorps LEAP members.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) ED21: Children completing an early childhood education program.

Target :160 (80% of 200) preschool children receiving LEAP social-emotional school readiness interventions complete a year-end assessment.

Target Value: 160

Instruments: Year-end Assessments

PM Statement: 160 preschool children participating in LEAP social-emotional school readiness interventions complete a year-end assessment.

## Required Documents

**Document Name**

**Status**

Evaluation

Already on File at CNCS

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable