

Narratives

Executive Summary

The New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program mobilizes the talents of college students and community members, the resources of institutions of higher education, and the expertise of nonprofit organizations to address critical community needs in Burlington, Mercer, and Middlesex counties in New Jersey. AmeriCorps members focus their efforts on mentoring at-risk youth, providing food and housing assistance to low-income individuals and facilitating adult education programs.

Rationale and Approach

Compelling Community Need

For the past nine years, the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program has sought to address critical community needs throughout Mercer and Middlesex counties. More specifically, this initiative aims to provide food assistance to individuals and families in need and increase the number of mentors for at-risk youth. The need for these services in Mercer and Middlesex counties is well documented in research literature and by the community agencies involved in this program. We are requesting 30.11 MSY to help meet these needs.

HUNGER:

Research shows that the United States is currently experiencing economic distress. Individuals and families residing in communities within Mercer and Middlesex counties are struggling to make ends meet. The poverty rates in Trenton and New Brunswick are 21 percent and 27 percent, respectively.[1] In addition, approximately 5 percent of Trenton and New Brunswick residents are unemployed.[2]

Individuals and families in New Jersey are turning to government programs and nonprofit organizations for much needed assistance. Recent reports indicate that the demand for food stamps more than

Narratives

doubled from October 2007 to October 2008.[3] In addition, our community partners are facing increased demand from the public for food assistance. For example, in 2001, the Crisis Ministry of Princeton and Trenton served 650 households.[4] The number of households increased to 1050 by August 2008.[5] From September 2008 to October 2008, the agency experienced a 30 percent increase in demand and currently serves 1400 households, including approximately 1000 children.[6] At Elijah's Promise Soup Kitchen in New Brunswick demand for meals has risen 20 percent in the past year.[7] In a recent article, the Executive Director of Elijah's Promise, stated "if the numbers (of recipients) keep rising and donations remain low, we have may have to face turning people away, which we've never done before." [8] As described above, Elijah's Promise is facing a decrease in donations while demand for services continues to rise. For example, a recent fundraiser brought in only \$12,000, which Finston indicates is one-third of the typical amount raised.[9]

As demand for services rises, our community partners rely on AmeriCorps members and the additional volunteers they recruit to expand the agency's capacity to serve its growing client base.

CHALLENGES FACING AT RISK YOUTH - THE NEED FOR MENTORS

The challenges confronting young people, particularly those in the communities of Middlesex and Mercer counties continue to mount. These counties experience some of the state's highest poverty rates. Fifty-four percent of students at New Brunswick High School are eligible for the free lunch program while 41 percent of students at Trenton Central High School are eligible.[10]

The serious issues related to poverty hinder the ability of youth to succeed both socially and academically. For example, only 77% of students from New Brunswick High School graduate according to Public School Review.[11] There is a compelling need for youth to develop positive relationships with adults committed to helping them succeed both socially and academically. Mentoring programs are

Narratives

critical to providing youth with the support needed to encourage their social and academic success. With the assistance of a mentor, youth have the opportunity to explore their interests, form healthy relationships, and connect with positive role models.

A study by Public Private Ventures on the mentoring program, Big Brothers Big Sisters found that mentees "were less likely to have started using drugs or alcohol, felt more competent about doing schoolwork, attended more school, got better grades, and had better relationships with their parents and peers than they would have had they not participated in the program." [12] Nationwide, "an estimated 15.1 million young people still do not have, but need or want, formal mentors." [13].

Youth in Mercer and Middlesex counties are in the position to participate in programs supported by the efforts of Bonner AmeriCorps members. By increasing the number of members participating in our program, this initiative will allow more young people to benefit from involvement in a mentoring program. By having positive role models, youth will be able to build confidence, gain knowledge, and develop pro-social behaviors.

Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteers are a vital resource to community organizations as they seek to support and expand client services during trying economic times. Bonner AmeriCorps members will remain committed to engaging volunteers in service within Mercer and Middlesex counties. Because a majority of our members are college students, they will focus their efforts on recruiting their peers at each participating institution of higher education. According to a recent study by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the state of New Jersey ranks 49th out of 51 in the percentage of college students who volunteer in their communities. [14] This initiative will allow higher education institutions and

Narratives

community partner organizations to continue to work together to increase the quantity and quality of volunteerism within the state. For example, in 2007-2008, The College of New Jersey mobilized approximately 1000 students to participate in community service projects. Data from a pre and post test showed that two-thirds of students indicated a desire to volunteer again.

References

[1] United States Census Bureau <<http://quickfacts.census.gov>>

[2] Bureau of Labor Statistics <www.bls.gov>

[3] The Star Ledger <www.nj.com>

[4] [5] [6] The Crisis Ministry of Princeton and Trenton

[7] [8] [9] My Central Jersey <www.mycentraljersey.com>

[10] [11] Public School Review <www.publicschoolreview.com>

[12] Public Private Ventures <www.mentoring.org>

[13] Mentor <www.mentoring.org>

[14] The Record <<http://www.northjersey.com/business/nonprofits/26270454.html>>

Description of Activities and Member Roles

The New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program mobilizes the talents and interests of college students and community members, the resources of institutions of higher education, and the expertise of community-based organizations to address issues of hunger, mentoring, and other human needs. The program has three primary goals:

- 1) Recruit, train and support a team of AmeriCorps members devoted to delivering basic client services and building organizational capacity;

Narratives

2) Recruit, train, and support AmeriCorps members as they develop the knowledge and skills required to serve at the forefront of campus-wide efforts to engage other students, staff, and faculty in meaningful community service projects;

3) Instill in members a life-long ethic of service and an increased understanding of civic engagement activities.

The New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program is a multi-site collaboration involving five institutions of higher education and five primary community-based organizations in Middlesex and Mercer counties. Our full- and part-time AmeriCorps members will serve together in teams at a wide range of organizations addressing community needs related to poverty, education, the environment, citizens with disabilities or elderly populations. However, Bonner AmeriCorps members will primarily be involved in efforts to alleviate hunger, mentoring at-risk youth, and volunteer management.

The Program Director and Program Associate manage the programmatic, fiscal and administrative components of the collaboration with the support of campus directors and site supervisors. Each participating campus employs a program director who is responsible for recruiting, training, and managing minimum-time Bonner AmeriCorps members, who are almost all students at our participating colleges and universities. Site supervisors at the participating community partner agencies are responsible for recruiting, training, and managing the full- and half-time AmeriCorps members.

The campus directors meet with our minimum-time members weekly or bi-weekly throughout their term of service. Through these all-group, small team, and individual meetings, campus directors orient the members to the goals and requirements of the Bonner AmeriCorps program, provide knowledge-

Narratives

and skill-based training, and offer opportunities for reflection. The model provides a built-in support system and a natural structure for weekly team meetings for training, program planning, and reflection.

In addition to the campus staff support, each participating community partner agency designates a site supervisor to train and manage our full- and part-time members while on site. Site supervisors are responsible for orienting members to the service site, providing training specific to the member's responsibilities, monitoring member performance and hours and completing member evaluations. This dual supervision structure helps to ensure that members receive the support and feedback needed to make a positive impact on the community and successfully complete their terms of service.

Both our full- and half-time AmeriCorps members will provide direct services and engage in capacity-building activities, with a special focus at our five primary community-based organization partners. Our members will also develop volunteer opportunities and build the organizational infrastructure needed to recruit, train, manage and recognize volunteers.

Participating institutions are described below:

1) The College of New Jersey - Bonner Center for Civic and Community Engagement

The Bonner Center works to create opportunities that simultaneously build the capacity of students and community organizations in Trenton. The Bonner Center will recruit and manage two full-time members and 20 minimum-time members under the direction of Director, Patrick Donohue.

Members at The College of New Jersey will focus their efforts on coordinating and implementing service

Narratives

projects for the college community. During these service days, members will deliver a pre-service educational session, facilitate the service activity and conduct reflection discussions at the conclusion of the project. Members will also be involved with mentoring activities and hunger relief.

2) Middlesex County College - Democracy House

Like the Bonner Center, Democracy House strives to develop programs that simultaneously build the capacity of students and community partners agencies. Democracy House will recruit and manage one full-time, two half-time and 20 minimum-time AmeriCorps members under the direction of Kevin McGowan.

Members will focus their efforts on mentoring at-risk youth in the New Brunswick area through organizations such as Puerto Rican Action Board. Members will continue to support a long-time community partner, Elijah's Promise Soup Kitchen. Members assist with the agency's anti-hunger initiatives and nutrition education programs.

3) Rider University - Center for Multicultural Affairs and Community Service

Through various programs coordinated by the Center, students are given opportunities such as AmeriCorps to use their talents to serve individuals and families in need. Rider University will recruit and manage one-half time and 20 minimum-time AmeriCorps members under the direction of Community Service Coordinator, Heather Brisby. Minimum-time members will serve with mentoring programs throughout Trenton including the Trenton Afterschool Program. Members will also serve at the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen.

Narratives

4) Mercer County Community College

Mercer County Community College will recruit and manage 10 minimum-time members. Donna Munde, Professor of Communication Studies, will lead the team of AmeriCorps members. Members at Mercer County College will serve alongside members from The College of New Jersey and Rider University in both mentoring and anti-hunger programs.

5) Rutgers University

The Civic Engagement and Service Education Partnerships (CESEP) Program supports service learning and the civic mission of Rutgers University by linking faculty and students to local, state, and national community organizations. The CESEP program is headed by Dr. Maurice Elias, Academic Director and Professor of Psychology.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES AND ROLES

> Mentoring

AmeriCorps members will serve as mentors for homeless, low-income and or/at-risk youth. Their efforts will extend to:

- developing enrichment activities that explore the youth's area of interest, such as art, music, the environment, sports and/or recreation;
- engaging the youth in community service and service-learning projects;
- assisting the youth with homework and/or class projects.

Narratives

Approximately 40 members will serve as mentors for youth with a number organizations throughout Mercer and Middlesex counties. Partner agencies include, but are not limited to:

1) Trenton After School Program, Trenton

We project that twelve minimum-time members will serve with the Trenton Afterschool Program (TASP). At TASP, members will mentor participating youth with the goal of helping them develop knowledge and skills in the areas of conflict resolution, leadership, and citizenship. In addition, members will focus on developing enrichment opportunities that explore the child's areas of interest, such as art, music or the environment.

2) El Centro de Recursos para Familias, Trenton

We project that approximately five minimum-time members will serve with El Centro de Recursos para Familias, a family resource center of Catholic Charities. Bonner AmeriCorps members from Rider University initiated the youth mentoring program at El Centro in 2003. Members, serving as mentors, will develop enrichment activities that explore the youth's area of interest, such as art and/or recreation, engage the youth in service-learning projects and assist the youth with homework and/or class projects.

3) Puerto Rican Action Board, New Brunswick

Puerto Rican Action Board (PRAB) focuses on enhancing the capacity of individuals and families. Members at Middlesex County College contribute to PRAB's youth mentoring programs at Roosevelt Elementary School, New Brunswick Middle School and New Brunswick High School.

Narratives

4) Lincoln Elementary School, New Brunswick

Members at Middlesex County College serve with the afterschool program at Lincoln Elementary School. This program allows youth in grades 4-8 to participate in comprehensive afterschool activities, thus allowing the children to have access to homework help, media arts projects, science activities and recreation activities.

> Anti-Hunger Activities

Approximately two full-time, three half-time and 30 minimum-time members will engage in direct service and capacity-building activities at various anti-hunger organizations. Members will participate in food delivery programs as well as lead educational workshops concerning hunger for members of the community.

Specifically, members will focus their energies on the following:

- Serving food to clients;
- Providing food delivery to home bound clients;
- Securing food donations;
- Organizing and maintaining food pantries;
- Providing nutritional education to clients;
- Facilitating volunteer activities;
- Delivering community education programs related to poverty and hunger.

Partner agencies include, but are not limited to:

Narratives

1) The Crisis Ministry of Princeton and Trenton, Princeton and Trenton

We project that one full-time, one half-time and one minimum-time member will serve with the Crisis Ministry of Princeton and Trenton. The Crisis Ministry provides food assistance to low-income individuals and families in Mercer County. Clients can choose from a variety of food items including meat, dairy products and fresh produce at the Crisis Ministry's food store in Trenton.

Members will help prepare and organize the food store, screen clients to determine program eligibility and assist customers in selecting foods while shopping. Members will also lead educational workshops concerning hunger and homelessness.

2) Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, Trenton

We project that one half-time, and approximately 15 minimum-time members will serve with the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK). Members serve in a variety of capacities at TASK. They assist with food preparation and distribution, the collection and distribution of toiletries, and train and supervise volunteers from the community.

3) Elijah's Promise, New Brunswick

We project that one full-time and approximately 15 minimum-time members will serve with Elijah's Promise. Our members will serve in all aspects of Elijah's Promise's operations.

Members will focus their efforts on providing meals at the soup kitchen and the House of Manna. The

Narratives

House of Manna program provides meals to low-income families in the New Brunswick community. Families are served at individual tables to mirror a home dining experience.

4) Farmers Against Hunger, Trenton

All members will have the opportunity to participate in service projects with Farmer's Against Hunger (FAH). FAH is a produce collection and distribution program of the New Jersey Agricultural Society. FAH is dedicated to collecting and distributing surplus fruits and vegetables from New Jersey farmers to those facing food insecurity through local community organizations. In 2007 alone, FAH distributed approximately 1.5 million pounds of food to community organizations.

5) Jewish Family and Children's Service, Princeton

One minimum-time member will serve with Jewish Family and Children's Services (JFCS), a social service agency that addresses the needs of individuals and families. JFCS provides services to all ethnic, racial and special needs populations. The Bonner AmeriCorps member will be involved in supporting and expanding the agency's Kosher Food Pantry which served 97 unduplicated families representing 314 individuals in 2007. The member will secure donations for the food pantry and manage client access to the pantry.

The duties and responsibilities of AmeriCorps members at participating institutions and community agencies do not duplicate those of paid staff. Campus program staff and site supervisors receive instruction related to appropriate and inappropriate roles for AmeriCorps members through face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and email communication.

Narratives

The receipt of funding will allow AmeriCorps members to continue to make a positive impact on the lives of those served by the community partner agencies described above.

Member Compliance Related to the Prohibited Activities

There are several mechanisms in place to ensure that supervisors and members have a full understanding of the AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities. These mechanisms are described below.

- Campus directors and community agency site supervisors are informed of the Prohibited Activities in the Community Partner Agreements.
- Members receive training on the Prohibited Activities during orientation and a list of the activities is also included in the Member Contract. Members are given a copy of the contract for their records.
- The New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program staff review the Prohibited Activities with campus directors at four annual meetings.
- Each semester, campus directors use our online Bonner Web-based Reporting System (BWBRs) to complete a profile of each service opportunity available to members. New Jersey Bonner Leader Program staff review each service opportunity to ensure that every opportunity is eligible and appropriate for AmeriCorps service.
- Finally, the list of Prohibited Activities is also available on our website.

Measurable Outputs and Outcomes

Narratives

Performance Measures:

> Mentoring

Output: Members will mentor a total of 350 homeless, low-income, and/or at-risk youth over the three term of the grant.

Intermediate Outcome: 60% of mentees will achieve one personally identified goal.

End Outcome: 60% of mentees will demonstrate an improvement in pro-social behaviors including respect for others, resisting peer pressure, improved attitude towards school, and/or speaking positively about oneself.

> Community Awareness

Output: Members will facilitate 40 on-site orientations, presentations, and/or special events explaining issues relating to poverty, public safety, and/or volunteer opportunities in the local community over the three-year term of the grant.

> Volunteer Recruitment

Output: Members will recruit 1,500 volunteers over the three year grant period to serve at community-based organizations.

Narratives

Measurement Tools:

As described below, we have developed a number of tools to assist us in measuring progress towards meeting our performance measures.

> Mentoring

Output: Attendance rosters

Intermediate Outcome: Mentored Children's Achievement Log (developed with Project STAR)

End Outcome: Mentoring Assessment Tool (developed with Project STAR)

Attendance rosters are collected from service sites each quarter. The Mentored Children's Achievement Logs are submitted in the second quarter. The Mentoring Assessment Tool is collected in the third quarter.

> Community Awareness

Output: Community Awareness Activity Report Form

Members complete the Community Awareness Activity Report Form after each presentation. They report on the date and location of the presentation, the number of attendees, and the content of the presentation.

> Volunteer Recruitment

Narratives

Output: Volunteer Recruitment Activity Report Form and Attendance Rosters

Members complete the Volunteer Recruitment Activity Report Form following each day of service. The report asks for information on the date and location of the project, the number of volunteers recruited, and a description of the service activities. Members also turn in attendance rosters from the event.

Plan for Self-Assessment

The New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program staff utilize a wide range of strategies for evaluating progress towards achieving performance measures, self-assessment and continuous program improvement. These strategies are described in detail below.

Performance Measures:

The New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program Director evaluates performance measure data on an on-going basis. The Program Director collects and reviews all reporting tools to ensure that the program is on track to meet all identified performance measures and if needed, implements the corrective actions required to ensure that all performance measures are met.

Self-Assessment and Continuous Improvement:

> Bonner Web-based Reporting System

The Bonner Web-Based Reporting System (BWBRs) has dramatically increased our ability to track member status. Our campus directors enter community agency, service opportunity, and training and

Narratives

enrichment opportunities in BWBRS.

Every AmeriCorps member has a personal profile and login for BWBRS. Upon receipt of a complete AmeriCorps Enrollment Workbook, our staff enters each member's AmeriCorps enrollment information into BWBRS so it mirrors the data that is found in CNCS WBRS. AmeriCorps members use BWBRS to enter their Community Learning Agreement (CLA). The Community Learning Agreement is a document that articulates the member's service and learning objectives and their specific position description. Members then use BWBRS to track their training and service hours. At the end of each month, the campus directors and site supervisors submit this paperwork to the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program staff. Staff then enter the weekly hour totals in CNCS WBRS.

The BWBRS features described above and other enhancements planned for the coming year enable AmeriCorps members, campus directors and New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program staff to closely monitor member, campus, and overall program performance.

BWBRS provides an electronic mechanism to inform campus staff of issues related to member paperwork and member hours. Members and their supervisors can view a list of any pending issues such as incomplete timesheets. Members, campus directors, and program staff can use BWBRS as a means of secure communication pertaining to such issues. BWBRS creates an email log that can be accessed at any time.

> Bonner Student Impact Survey

The Bonner Student Impact Survey is our primary tool for assessing the impact of the program on AmeriCorps members. The 73 question pre-enrollment survey and the 104 question post-enrollment

Narratives

survey examine among other issues the member's habits of civic engagement and intentions for post-AmeriCorps service. Survey results guide our efforts to instill in members a life-long ethic of service.

In addition to the strategies described above, New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program staff have developed additional written and face-to-face strategies that assist us and our campus directors in managing and improving a program that supports effective member development, community partnerships, and service activities.

> Campus Assessment & Reporting

The Bonner Self-Assessment Tool has been designed to provide campus programs with a rubric of the most important indicators of a high-quality program. The tool consists of 38 indicators in the areas of staffing and governance, program administration, member development, advising, community partnerships, and campus-wide activities. After programs complete this tool, the Program Director meets with campus director and other staff to discuss program strengths and areas for improvement.

> Regular Phone & Email Communication

The New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program staff distribute a weekly email update to all campus directors and community partner staff. In addition, we field or initiate regular phone contact with the campus directors to provide guidance and answer questions.

> Site Visits

We carefully plan site visits in order to monitor program implementation and impact. New Jersey

Narratives

AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program staff conduct visits to campuses and community partner agencies to assess member recruitment and training, service placements and to monitor site compliance with AmeriCorps regulations and provisions.

Community Involvement

Our community partners, campus representatives and Bonner Foundation staff have met regularly together to collaborate in the development of the program since the initial planning activities in 1999. We have established open and constant communication through various channels among members, community partner staff, and campus directors to effectively respond to the evolving needs the community.

These historical partnerships allow the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program to offer sustained and meaningful service placements. We devote much time and energy to identifying the needs of the community and assessing the roles members can play in meeting the identified needs. To accomplish this, the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program staff conduct an annual meeting with participating campuses and community partners. During this gathering, agency staff share their organization's successes and challenges and report on the needs of their clients. For example, many of the hunger relief organizations that we work with have indicated that demand for food is up while donations are dwindling. This information has allowed us to explore the ways in which members can help alleviate the burdens that these organizations currently face.

To maintain on-going dialogue throughout the year, program staff communicate regularly with campus and community partner staff via phone, email and site visits. The program staff also attend educational gatherings hosted by community agencies such as Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness and the

Narratives

Association for Children of New Jersey in order to learn more about particular issues within the counties where our members serve. Campus directors also attend similar gatherings and maintain regular communication with site supervisors with the goal of gathering the information needed to better serve the communities in which our program operates.

Relationship to Other National Service Programs

The College of New Jersey and the Bonner Foundation are actively involved with multiple national service programs.

In addition to the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program, The College of New Jersey and the Bonner Foundation jointly manage the national Bonner AmeriCorps Education Award Program funded by The Corporation for National and Community Service. In 2007-2008, the National Bonner AmeriCorps Program engaged 840 students as AmeriCorps members at 60 participating institutions. Members participating in each program attend joint training events and participate together in Seasons of Service events.

The Bonner Foundation is active in two current Learn and Serve America initiatives. In 2006, Princeton University in partnership with the Bonner Foundation received a Learn and Serve grant to institutionalize community-based research on college and university campuses. In 2008, Princeton University administrators invited staff from participating community partner agencies to a focus group to explore how colleges and universities can assist nonprofit organizations with community-based research projects. In July 2008, Middlesex County College in partnership with the Bonner Foundation received a Learn and Serve grant to promote the use of social media tools to enhance volunteerism and civic engagement. This initiative will help train members on the use of social media tools to increase

Narratives

volunteerism.

Potential for Replication

In 1990, the Bonner Foundation began providing community service based scholarships to 1,500 students at 25 colleges and universities. These students engage in 10 hours of community service during the school year, complete a full-time summer of service and upon graduation, receive additional funding from the Bonner Foundation to repay student loans. When the Corporation for National and Community Service developed alternative AmeriCorps enrollment models including minimum-time positions, it allowed us to replicate the students in service model at additional higher education institutions.

Funding for this proposal will allow the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program model to expand to additional college campuses and community organizations in the state of New Jersey. There are a number of additional institutions who have also expressed interest in implementing the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program on their respective campuses.

To facilitate the network's growth, we have developed a wide range of print resources for new campuses, beginning with the AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program Start-Up Guide. This guide walks new staff through the program model and steps required to set up appropriate systems for tracking and reporting.

We have presented the model at a number of conferences including the American Association of Colleges & Universities and the National Society for Experiential Education. We have also been approached by other State Commissions who are interested in developing collaborations among higher

Narratives

education institutions.

Organizational Capability

Sound Organizational Structure

Ability to Provide Sound Programmatic and Fiscal Oversight:

Since 2003, the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program has been administered by The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) with active support from the Bonner Foundation. Both organizations have a sound track record in administering Federal, State, and local grants.

Founded in 1855, TCNJ has become an exemplar of the best in public higher education. Currently, the College manages over \$20 million in state, federal and private grants.

In 1989, the Bonner Foundation began working with colleges and universities, seeking a way both to provide scholarships to students who could not otherwise afford to attend college and to drive students and institutions of higher education to service in their own communities.

Cumulatively, The College of New Jersey and the Bonner Foundation have successfully managed the following Federal national service grants awarded since 1992:

- three 3-year AmeriCorps National Direct grants
- three 3-year AmeriCorps State Formula grants
- two 3-year Learn & Serve America consortium grants totaling more nearly \$2 million;
- three 3-year U.S. Department of Education's Fund to Improve Post-Secondary Education program totaling more than \$1 million.

Narratives

The College of New Jersey provides the following programmatic, fiscal and administrative resources to this grant:

- central administrative and fiscal systems for grants management reporting directly to Provost;
- two New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program staff who manage, track, and report on the programmatic and fiscal aspects of the grant;
- experience in managing a campus-based service program through the Bonner Center for Civic and Community Engagement.

The Bonner Foundation provides the following programmatic support:

- three senior staff (Wayne Meisel, President; Robert Hackett, Vice President; Ariane Hoy, Senior Program Officer) with more than 50 years of combined experience in managing multi-site, campus-based community service and service-learning programs;
- extensive training and support resources for campus directors and site supervisors;
- a national network of 75 Bonner campuses that share best practices and resources for campus service programs;
- infrastructure and funding for convening four annual conferences for campus directors, community partners, and key student leaders;
- staff training and support for participating campuses and agencies in how to recruit, support, sustain, manage, and evaluate student volunteers, as well as for strategic planning for building campus-wide service centers and a culture of service;
- development and maintenance of the Bonner Web-Based Reporting System;
- \$230,000 in annual grants to participating campuses and community partner agencies to expand

Narratives

programmatic components.

Managing a Multi-Site Program:

Selecting Service Sites

The New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program staff collaborates with campus directors to ensure that Bonner AmeriCorps members are placed at appropriate community partner agencies. All service sites must be nonprofit organizations or public schools within Mercer and Middlesex counties. Each agency must allow agree to provide a site supervisor for the member, appropriate training and adequate workspace and supplies for the member to carry out his or her responsibilities. The site supervisor selected by the agency must also agree to maintain regular communication with the campus director and/or New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program staff.

Site Monitoring

Our ability to monitor and support service sites is dramatically enhanced by the tools described below. We employ each of these tools to aid us in managing a multi-site program.

1) Bonner Web-based Report System (BWBR)

- Service and Training Activities: BWBR enables program staff to monitor service placements and training activities at all participating subsites. Campus directors input service and training descriptions into BWBR on an on-going basis. Our program staff then reviews the service and training opportunities to ensure member activities are appropriate for AmeriCorps.

Narratives

- Member Status: BWBRS also allows program staff to assess member status. BWBRS displays information on all members enrolled in particular grant year, their start dates, the number of hours completed to date and their expected end date. A second screen shot enables program staff to see how many hours a member has logged, the number of hours approved by the supervisor, and the number of hours approved by the program staff. The system breaks out the hours into training and service. This allows us to monitor the 20% cap on training hours.

- Time Sheets: Members use BWBRS to record service and training hours. They print out hard copies of the time sheets and then obtain the signature of their site supervisor and/or campus coordinator. Time sheets are then sent to program staff for approval. Once received, program staff review the time sheets to ensure that they are completed correctly and approve the appropriate entries in the each member's account on BWBRS and the Corporation's WBRS system. If there are problems, program staff notify the campus director/site supervisor and the member via BWBRS.

2) Site Visits

Program staff conduct site visits to participating campuses and community partners. During these visits, program staff engage in the following activities:

- Meet with Campus Director to discuss program and administrative compliance;
- Meet with members;
- Lead member training workshops or reflection activities;
- Visit participating community partner agencies.

Narratives

3) Annual Meetings

The Foundation hosts several annual meetings for campus directors each year. During these meetings, we train campus staff on AmeriCorps policies and procedures. In addition, program staff meet with members at the annual Bonner Congress Meeting in October.

All participating higher education institutions, with the exception of Mercer County College and Rutgers University, have been part of the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program for the two previous grant cycles. Middlesex County College, Rider University and The College of New Jersey receive annual grants from the Bonner Foundation to support their AmeriCorps members. Seven of our service sites are programs that the Bonner Foundation has supported for more than 15 years through its Crisis Ministry Program. The Crisis Ministry Program focuses on working with and supporting initiatives which address both the needs of the hungry and the root causes of that hunger.

Esprit de Corps

Throughout the program year, we engage in a variety of activities to build a sense of teamwork and common purpose among our diverse team of Bonner AmeriCorps members. At the campus and community partner level, members attend an orientation at the beginning of the program year. Much time is devoted to icebreaker and team building activities which allow members to get to know one another and learn how to work together as a team. At weekly or bi-weekly basis, members meet together with the campus or site supervisor for training and reflection activities. Members also have the opportunity to participate in service trips such as Hurricane Katrina relief work in New Orleans. It is evident that these trips increase morale and enthusiasm towards service activities. Many of our campuses also have dedicated space for members to gather, work on service projects and/or complete

Narratives

class assignments.

Given the varying locations of our subsites, we have developed a number of opportunities to bring the entire corps together. At the beginning of the year, the entire corps attend the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program Launch. In addition to training sessions, the event includes informal time and group activities that allow members to meet and get to know one another. In addition, Bonner AmeriCorps members attend the State Commission launch each October which allows them to meet AmeriCorps members from throughout the state of New Jersey. Throughout the year, members gather together for Make a Difference Day, MLK Day of Service and National Youth Service Day in addition to training workshops coordinated by the New Jersey State Commission on National and Community Service. Bonner AmeriCorps members also have the opportunity to travel together to national Bonner gatherings including Bonner Congress, the Impact Conference and the Summer Leadership Institute. We are also beginning to use social media tools such as Facebook and blogs to enhance communication between members at different subsites and build esprit de corps.

Board of Directors, Administrators and Staff:

This grant provides funding for both a Program Director and an Administrative Assistant. Christen Foell, Program Director for the Bonner Center for Civic and Community Engagement at TCNJ, will serve as the Project Director for the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. She will provide programmatic and fiscal oversight, working closely with Lloyd Ricketts, Associate Treasurer in the Office of Finance and Business Services. This office is responsible for oversight of grants and contracts. Ms. Foell also serves as the Project Director for the College's AmeriCorps National Direct Education Award Program. Ms. Foell holds a Master of Public Administration in Nonprofit Management from Seton Hall University. She has extensive program and volunteer management experience having worked

Narratives

with the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and Special Olympics prior to joining the TCNJ staff in 2006.

The grant also funds a part-time Administrative Assistant who will handle member file management. We will conduct a employment search for this position should we receive funding.

Patrick Donohue, Director of the Bonner Center for Civic and Community Engagement, will supervise the efforts of Ms. Foell. Mr. Donohue started the first New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program at Middlesex County College. He is also the former director of the Trenton Center for Campus and Community Partnerships.

Ms. Foell and Mr. Donohue will collaborate closely with Robert Hackett, Vice President of the Bonner Foundation. Since 1997, Mr. Hackett has been a lead project director in three Learn and Service America grants, a series of National Direct and New Jersey State AmeriCorps grants, and three FIPSE grants. Mr. Hackett has also designed and managed the development of (a) the Bonner Foundation's website (www.bonner.org) and (b) the Bonner Web-Based Reporting System currently used by 80 campuses and 2,500 students. Beginning this summer, BWBRS will be licensed by other national AmeriCorps programs as a replacement for the CNS WBRS system (www.bonner.org/bwbrstour/index.html).

The New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program will also utilize the skills and expertise of Bonner Foundation staff Wayne Meisel and Ariane Hoy. Rev. Meisel has been President of the Bonner Foundation for 17 years and was the co-founder and former director of the Campus Opportunity Outreach League. Ms. Hoy serves as the Senior Program Officer for the Bonner Foundation. Before joining the Bonner Foundation staff, Ms. Hoy served as the Executive Director of Campus Outreach

Narratives

Opportunity League and as Vice President for Programs at Jumpstart.

AmeriCorps members are supervised directly by the campus director and community partner staff. The Program Director and Administrative Assistant support their efforts through campus visits and regular communication.

The campus director is directly responsible for overseeing the recruitment, training, direct service activities, program activities, communication, and tracking within this program. The campus collaborates on and reports the activities to the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program staff to ensure quality and continuity. Campus administrator profiles are noted below.

1) The College of New Jersey: Pat Donohue, the Director of the Bonner Center for Civic and Community Engagement, has managed various AmeriCorps initiatives for more than 11 years and directed a Learn and Serve initiative from 2003-2006.

2) Middlesex County College: Kevin McGowan, Coordinator of Democracy House at Middlesex County College, brings valuable experience as a former AmeriCorps member as well as a staff member for a Youth Civic Engagement initiative funded by Learn and Serve America.

3) Rider University: Heather Brisby, Coordinator of Community Service, has extensive experience in program and volunteer management having previously served as the Community Impact Manager and Volunteer Center Director for the United Way of Hunterdon County. The program at Rider falls under the supervision of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Chair of the New Jersey State Commission for National and Community Service, Dr. Anthony Campbell.

Narratives

4) Mercer County Community College: Professor of Communication, Donna Munde holds a Master of Arts in English Literature and a Master of Communication and Information Systems. Professor Munde has taught service learning courses for the past four years at Mercer County Community College.

5) Rutgers University: Amy Michael serves as the Senior Program Coordinator for the Office of the Associate Vice President for Academic and Public Partnerships in the Arts and Humanities. She holds a Master's Degree in Language Education from Rutgers University's Graduate School of Education and a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing. Claudio Mir is the Program Coordinator for Rutgers Civic Engagement and Service Education Partnerships Program. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University.

Plan for Self-Assessment or Improvement

The College of New Jersey undergoes on-going internal and external assessments to ensure that we maintain the organizational capacity to manage the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. The Office of Finance and Business Services which manages the fiscal administration of the grant is subject to an annual audit by an outside accounting firm. Information from the audit is contained in the A-133 Audit Report which is given to the New Jersey State Commission on National and Community Service. The State Commission conducts its own fiscal and programmatic monitoring each year to ensure that we are operating the program in accordance with AmeriCorps regulations and provisions. We use the feedback from these monitoring visits to improve our systems, update our policies and procedures, and to guide our continuous improvement plan.

The staff of the Bonner Center at TCNJ and the Bonner Foundation meet on a regular basis to discuss staff roles and address human resources issues that may affect the operation of the grant. If needed,

Narratives

corrective action is taken to resolve any issues influencing the administration of the program.

Plan for Effective Technical Assistance

The New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program staff identifies and provides financial and programmatic technical assistance to subgrantees through face-to-face meetings, phone calls and email correspondence.

Strategies include:

- coordinating annual meetings for subgrantees during which we review the AmeriCorps provisions and financial matters related to the grant;
- on-going communication and training via in person meetings, phone calls and email correspondence with our campus directors and AmeriCorps members to answer inquiries, communicate new initiatives or resources, give reminders on reporting deadlines, and provide immediate technical assistance as needed;
- conducting site visits to participating campuses and community partner agencies to assess program implementation and monitor compliance with AmeriCorps regulations;
- providing an extensive series of Implementation Guides, which provide step-by-step instructions, recommendations, and best practices for various program components such as Advising (e.g., one-on-one advising), Co-Curricular (e.g. recruitment, orientation, team meetings) Curricular (e.g. service-learning, community-based research)

Narratives

- a comprehensive calendar for the campus directors which provides a month-by-month guide to important reporting deadlines, target dates for particular community partner activities (such as when to do a site visit), and a recommended training agenda built on the 60+ Bonner Civic Engagement Training Modules (which are downloadable from our website);

- individual campus consulting by New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program staff to assist campuses in developing their customized Member Development Roadmap, a process which includes (a) a campus self-assessment survey used to identify their current training, reflection, placement, and meeting activities and (b) a planning tool used to identify intentions in terms of skill, service, and knowledge development for each year of a member's participation in the program, and (c) recommendations on strategies for delivering these through enhancements to the programming identified in the survey;

- the AmeriCorps Management Handbook which outlines policies, procedures, best practice recommendations, and Frequently Asked Questions.

All the above technical assistance approaches are introduced at and complemented by three annual gatherings organized by the Bonner Foundation staff. These meetings build a strong network for the campus programs so that directors can turn to each other for advice and technical assistance. The agendas for these meetings are driven by the needs articulated by the field through on line surveys and advisory/working groups. The Bonner Foundation provides financial assistance to participating campuses for meals and lodging costs at these meetings, which are often hosted by participating campuses.

Narratives

These gatherings include:

- The annual New Bonner Directors & Coordinators meeting is held in New Jersey each summer. This meeting reviews the program's history, mission, and model. It also trains the campus staff in the more technical aspects of managing a program.
- The annual Fall Bonner Directors & Coordinators Meeting focuses on best practices and new initiatives, reviewing AmeriCorps policies and reporting requirements, and building the professional bonds among campus directors and faculty who then turn to one another during the rest of the year for advice and support.
- The Summer Leadership Institute takes place each June. The location rotates among the participating campuses. There are three tracks. One track for Bonner AmeriCorps members in a leadership role, another for Bonner AmeriCorps members engaged in a service plunge, and a comprehensive track for the campus directors and interested faculty. Workshops are delivered by national Bonner Program staff, leaders in the national service field, and community partners.

Accomplishment as an Organization: Volunteer Generation and Support

Our participating campus partners have college-wide community service centers, which function as the campus' central hub for volunteer recruitment, training, placement, reflection, and support for service-learning initiatives. Advancements in the field have allowed such centers to develop sophisticated systems for managing college students and the unique nature of campus-community partnerships.

In 2007-2008 alone, the centers involved in this consortium have managed more than 450 college

Narratives

students engaged in service through their various programs.

Each of our community partner organizations relies on volunteers in all aspects of their operations. This initiative will allow our partners to expand, intensify, and focus their efforts.

As the sponsoring institution in this proposal, The College of New Jersey has a strong commitment to community service. Starting in 1995, the College required all 1,200 freshmen to do community service. As of 2004, the program features were intensified. Students must now complete a minimum of 25 hours of community work in two components to meet the community engaged learning requirement. The first component is what we refer to as the "First Year Experience". Freshman students participate in an eight hour service experience which includes a training component, direct service activities, and a closing reflection. The second component is an advanced experience that directly links critical thinking about community issues with applied work in a community setting. It requires community service as part of an approved course, a series of courses within a program, or an equivalent sustained experience.

Member efforts to recruit volunteers are supported by the staff of the Bonner Center for Civic and Community Engagement. The staff consists of the Director, Associate Director, Program Director, three Program Associates, the Program Assistant, the File Manager and a Project Fellow.

In addition, the College annually allocates 7% of its total work-study budget to community service placements including a literacy component defined in the regulations. We also provides half and full tuition scholarships for students engaged in service.

Accomplishment as an Organization: Organizational and Community Leadership

Narratives

In 2004, The Center for Innovations In Civic Participation and America's Service Commission's recognized the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program as one of America's 50 Most Innovative AmeriCorps Programs. The program's profile and best practices were included in a publication that was shared with state commissions, practitioners, policy makers and funders.

In 2005, The National Society of Experiential Education named The Bonner Foundation "The Foundation Leader of the Year" for establishing a program that advances experiential education and where top management's commitment is evident through the organization's continuing efforts.

In 2006, The Association of American Colleges & Universities highlighted the Bonner Program's unique and comprehensive Developmental Model for civic engagement in a special 24-page Diversity Digest that was mailed to 10,000 of their members.

In 2008, The College of New Jersey was named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction. Also in 2008, the College received an award from Governor Corzine for its ongoing efforts to improve the section of the Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park that cuts through Trenton, in particular the greenway project near Shiloh Baptist Church.

Accomplishment as an Organization: Success is securing match resources

Because of consistently strong performance and positive impact on both community needs and the campus culture of service, the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program continues to be successful in securing annual matching resources.

These in-kind and cash commitments come from each participating campus and community partner, as

Narratives

well as from private foundations. All of these commitments have been secured for the 2009-2012 funding cycle. Campuses and community-based organizations hosting Bonner AmeriCorps members will provide the match for member support costs from their annual operating budget. The Bonner Foundation will provide funding for member training, member travel, member training, supplies, staff travel, evaluation and member healthcare. Participating higher education institutions and community partners provide the staff support to manage members.

Terms and conditions of the relationship between the College and participating institutions and community partners are agreed upon in an annual contract.

Success in Securing Community Support

1) Collaboration

Collaboration serves as the foundation for the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. For nearly ten years, participating higher education institutions and community partners have worked together to address community needs related to hunger, mentoring and other human services. All parties have played an active role in making this program successful. As a result of these collaborations, community partner agencies are now able to better serve their clients. For example, with the help of members from Rider University, El Centro de Recursos is now able to offer an afterschool program for Latino youth in the Trenton area. In addition, Elijah's Promise now offers bagged lunches for working individuals who might otherwise have gone hungry during the day. Community organizations such as Farmer's Against Hunger and the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen benefit from the skills of hundreds of volunteers recruited each year by AmeriCorps members at The College of New Jersey.

Narratives

As a multi-site initiative, our program has a wide range of community stakeholders, as described elsewhere in this proposal. The program has drawn upon their expertise in numerous ways, including providing member training, organizing joint service events, and participating in collaborative fundraising efforts.

Seven of our service sites are programs that the Bonner Foundation has supported for more than 15 years through its Crisis Ministry Program. The Crisis Ministry Program focuses on working with and supporting initiatives which address both the needs of the hungry and the root causes of that hunger. The Bonner AmeriCorps members and the other volunteers they recruit and manage have become important contributors in the daily operations of these community partners.

2) Local Financial and In-kind Contributions

Over the past nine years, participating institutions and community partners have made increasingly valuable in-kind contributions to support the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. Participating institutions of higher education have campus-wide civic engagement centers in which the AmeriCorps program is housed. These centers have permanent staff, office space and program budgets provided by the institution, providing strong evidence of the school's on-going commitment to the community. Participating community partners also devote staff time, space and materials to the program. The Bonner Foundation also provides in-kind support to the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. Senior staff members including Wayne Meisel, Robert Hackett and Ariane Hoy assist with program development, member training and staff training on an on-going basis.

3) Wide Range of Stakeholders

Narratives

The stakeholders involved with the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program include Bonner AmeriCorps members, staff of participating higher education institutions and community partners, clients receiving services, community members, volunteers, funders, TCNJ staff and Bonner Foundation staff.

From the program's inception, these stakeholders have provided continued non-financial support. Bonner AmeriCorps members devote their time, talents and energy to meeting critical community needs throughout Mercer and Middlesex counties. Staff of higher education institutions and community partners facilitate meaningful service placements for members, provide specialized training for members, and offered structured supervision designed to help Bonner AmeriCorps members excel in their service responsibilities. Clients served by community partner agencies provide valuable feedback on how the organization can better meet their needs. Community members and volunteers support the efforts of the New Jersey Bonner Leader Program by donating much needed food and supplies to community partner agencies and devoting their time to serving alongside Bonner AmeriCorps members at nonprofit organizations throughout Mercer and Middlesex counties.

We are currently developing an advisory committee comprised of current AmeriCorps members, AmeriCorps alumni, campus directors, site supervisors, staff of The College of New Jersey and Bonner Foundation staff. This group will meet twice a year to discuss relevant issues related to our program and develop additional collaborative initiatives.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

1) Corporation Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)

Narratives

The cost per MSY will be \$12,161 which is below the allowable cost of \$12,600 per MSY.

2) Diverse Non-Federal Support

The New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program has been successful in securing significant non-federal resources for program implementation and sustainability.

The Bonner Foundation's long-term commitment to the success of the program is demonstrated in part, by its commitment to increase the cash match award to TCNJ to \$37,018. These matching funds will be used primarily for program support costs, member healthcare, and program evaluation.

Participating campus and community partners have made support for members part of their annual operating budgets. Matching cash funds for Living Allowance, FICA and Workers Compensation will increase to \$56,431. The partnering campuses and community partners have pledged significant staff support for recruiting, training and managing their members. In-kind staff time is valued at \$100,000.

The requested increase from 20 MSY to 30.11 MSY will strengthen our program's ability to meet community needs and generate additional volunteers to help address the identified needs.

2) Decreased Reliance on Federal Support:

Our decreased reliance on Federal support is demonstrated by our continued ability to decrease the Federal share of our program budget. In the 2009-2010 grant year, our matching share will reach 45 percent. The Corporation's share will be 55 percent. Our required cost share for 2009-2010 is 38%.

Narratives

3) Budget Adequacy:

The College of New Jersey has a strong commitment from the participating campuses and community organizations to provide direct cash match for the member support costs. In addition, campuses provide in-kind matching funds via the salary of the campus director. The director is responsible for building partnerships with service sites, recruiting members, coordinating training opportunities, and managing members. The campus directors play a central role in the coordination of the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. We are very pleased that participating colleges and universities have made significant financial commitments in the form of cash match for member support costs and in-kind contributions of staff salaries. We believe these contributions demonstrate a strong dedication to the sustainability of our program and its positive impact on communities throughout Middlesex and Mercer counties. Finally, participating campuses and community partners contribute office space, utilities, meeting space, and equipment.

The Bonner Foundation has made a commitment to TCNJ to provide a cash and in-kind match for the program operating costs, program evaluation, and member health care. Over \$19,000 of the required cash matching funds support member training, member travel and member healthcare.

The resources described above enables us to ensure that members receive the training, supervision, monetary support, and supplies necessary to meet critical community needs and achieve program objectives.

FY09 Budget Clarification Response

Budget Modifications

Narratives

Given the recommended MSY amount (20.63) and the recommended funding level (\$251,808), we modified the breakdown of our slot request and revised our budget to reflect the parameters outlined by the Corporation. The total MSY requested in the modified budget is 20.53. The Corporation total funding request is \$251,573. A number of the responses to the clarification questions outlined below include references to the revised budget.

1. The program must clarify whether the Program Director will devote 100% of her time to the project. Please clarify why the applicant has budgeted for only one Campus Director but the program is located on five different campuses.

We are in the midst of implementing a staff restructuring plan which will result in the Program Director allocating 40% of her time to the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. The Program Director will be assisted by a Program Associate who will allocate 60% of her time to the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. We will also hire an Administrative Assistant who will devote 20% of his/her time to the project. We respectfully request the ability to modify the Personnel Expenses section of our proposed budget in eGrants to reflect these changes.

In retrospect, we recognize that we should have listed each campus coordinator and his/her in-kind salary contribution separately in the budget rather than listing the combined sum. We have modified the budget to reflect individual campus contributions. In-kind salary contributions from participating campuses are as follows:

> Middlesex County College: Bonner Coordinator: \$18,000

Narratives

> Rider University: Bonner Coordinator: \$25,000

> The College of New Jersey: Bonner Coordinator: \$18,000

The faculty member who leads the New Jersey Bonner AmeriCorps Program at Mercer County Community College is not directly paid for the time she contributes to the program, however, her teaching course load is reduced to allow her the time needed to administer the program.

2. The program narrative states that Site Supervisors and Bonner Foundation staff salaries are in-kind contributions, however they are not included in the budget (p.59). Please clarify the omission of these key staff positions.

There are two primary reasons we did not include in-kind salary contributions of Site Supervisors and Bonner Foundation staff. First, we do not need these match calculations to meet our overall required match. Second, doing so would be pose a prohibitive administrative burden on both groups of partner organizations. It would not be an easy matter to document the percentage of time Site Supervisors devote each day to supervising Bonner AmeriCorps members and for the Bonner Foundation staff in their advisory role and in the form of developing resources and hosting national Bonner gatherings. Nevertheless, we include them in our narrative to convey the range of programmatic and organizational support that are contributing to the success of the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program.

3. The applicant needs to clarify why it bases the fringe benefits calculations on \$56,000 which is not reflected anywhere in the budget.

The \$56,000 figure is the sum of the salaries reflected in the original budget submitted for the Program

Narratives

Director (\$42,500) and the Administrative Assistant (\$13,500). In our revised budget, we have listed fringe benefits separately for the Program Director, Program Associate and Administrative Assistant.

4. The applicant should provide the number of site visits in the calculation for staff travel.

The Program Director and/or the Program Associate will conduct approximately four site visits per month. However, the number of site visits per month is somewhat flexible based on the level of support needed by each sub-grantee.

5. Please clarify member training food costs.

Our program design includes five full-day member training and service events for the 2009-2010 grant year. These events include:

- > New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program Launch (October 2009)
- > Make a Difference Day (November 2009)
- > Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January 2010)
- > Youth Service Day (April 2010)
- > New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program End of Year Event (May 2010)

In this proposal we request funding for a total of 79 members. We budget \$8 per member per event for food (\$8 is the approximate cost a boxed lunch). Therefore, the cost of food for each event totals \$632 (79 members x \$8 = \$632). The total food cost for our five scheduled events is \$3160.

6. Please clarify Enrichment Grant costs.

Narratives

The Bonner Foundation provides a total of \$45,000 in Enrichment Grant funds to three participating campuses. Institutions use Enrichment Grant funds to support New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program activities. The awards are as follows:

- > Middlesex County College: \$10,000
- > Rider University: \$10,000
- > The College of New Jersey: \$25,000

Funds are used to support the following activities:

- > Member orientation;
- > Service trips;
- > Member training;
- > Staff travel to Bonner Foundation sponsored conferences;
- > Hiring a Bonner Senior Intern to assist with the AmeriCorps program.

9. The program must clarify how the Program Director will manage the AmeriCorps state program while continuing to serve in her current capacity as Program Director for the national direct program. The applicant also needs to clarify why she is budgeted at 100% usage under this grant if she is managing both programs.

As described in the Organizational Capacity narrative, the Program Director will oversee both the AmeriCorps National Direct and AmeriCorps State Programs. Current staff restructuring efforts will result in the Program Director allocating 40% of her time to managing the New Jersey AmeriCorps

Narratives

Bonner Leader Program. A Program Associate will handle member training, Seasons of Service events, and program evaluation. An Administrative Assistant will handle member file management and fiscal tracking. The change in staffing structure will allow the Program Director to manage both the National Direct and New Jersey State grants effectively and efficiently.

We recognize that we ought to have included the Program Director's total salary and the percentage of time devoted to the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program in our proposed budget rather than the \$42,500 figure which represented a portion of her salary at that time we submitted the grant proposal. A correction has been made in our revised budget.

11. In Other Program Operating Costs: Provide amount of subgrants and calculations.

The Bonner Foundation provides a total of \$45,000 in Enrichment Grant funds to three participating campuses. Institutions must use Enrichment Grant funds to support New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program activities. The awards are as follows:

- > Middlesex County College: \$10,000
- > Rider University: \$10,000
- > The College of New Jersey: \$25,000

Funds are used to support the following activities:

- > Member orientation;
- > Service trips;
- > Member training;

Narratives

- > Staff travel to Bonner Foundation conferences;
- > Hiring a Bonner Senior Intern to assist with the AmeriCorps program.

The annual amount of the Enrichment Grant for the identified institutions are determined by the Bonner Foundation Board of Trustees.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

Evaluation

This internal evaluation covers the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 grant years. This report assesses both member recruitment and retention as well as community impact and member development. The findings are described below.

[A] Recruitment and Retention

1) Recruitment Rates

2006-2007: 100%

2007-2008: 94%

It is evident that we experienced recruitment challenges in 2007-2008. We ended the program year with one remaining full-time position and four minimum-time positions. The available full-time slot is due to one member changing to a part-time position after the deadline for filling full-time slots. Mercer County Community College was unable to fill all the minimum-time positions allotted to them this year, leaving us with four available slots. Given the recruitment challenges at Mercer County Community College, we decreased the number of slots awarded to the institution for the 2008-2009 grant year. We

Narratives

reassigned the slots to campuses and community partners that reached 100% enrollment in 2007-2008.

Action Plan: In order to improve our recruitment rate, we plan to provide additional support and resources to particular subgrantees (e.g. Mercer County College) who are in need of assistance with recruiting. We will work with subgrantees to help them identify and collaborate with various offices and programs on campus to identify students who might be interested in serving as Bonner AmeriCorps members. Our experience with Mercer County Community College has demonstrated the need to provide additional recruitment assistance to start-up programs.

2) Retention Rates:

2006-2007: 75%

2007-2008: 84%

We are pleased to see that our retention rate improved by nine percent from 2006-2007 to 2007-2008. High attrition rates at Mercer County College in 2006-2007 had a negative impact on our overall retention rate for the year. Therefore, we reduced the number of slots awarded to Mercer County College in 2007-2008 to allow the campus director to focus more of his or her time on providing the support needed to help members complete their term of service.

In 2007-2008, 11 members exited the program without receiving an award. Two members left for academic reasons and one member left to care for her newborn daughter.

Action Plan: There are a number of factors that influence our retention rates, including the increasing

Narratives

cost of education, the rigor of some academic programs and personal and family issues. To improve our retention rates, we are working with participating institutions to help them develop a more comprehensive recruitment and selection process. We are developing resources that we hope will aid institutions in selecting members who are likely to complete their term of service. We are also encouraging campus staff to increase the frequency of required one-on-one meetings with members. These sessions provide members with a confidential and supportive environment in which to discuss challenges that may affect their ability to successfully complete their term of service. In addition, the campus supervisor has the opportunity to share his or her concerns about the member's performance. Together, the member and campus supervisor can discuss and implement strategies to overcome the identified challenges and help the member complete his or her term of service.

3) Community Impact

> Mentoring

Impact: In 2006-2007 and 2007-2008, Bonner AmeriCorps members mentored 646 homeless, low-income and/or at-risk youth. At this time, we are unable to report on the long term impact given that our end outcome changed from 2006-2007 to 2007-2008. In 2006-2007, our end outcome for mentoring was as follows: "75% of tested low income, homeless, and/or at-risk youth working with NJ Bonner Leaders will demonstrate an increase in learning by gaining at least one grade level in reading and/or math."

During the 2006-2007 grant year, we determined that it would be more appropriate to measure the development of prosocial behaviors in mentees. Member activities focused more on helping youth develop prosocial behaviors than assisting them with raising their grades. Therefore, we adjusted our

Narratives

end outcome for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009. The new end outcome is as follows: "75% of youth mentored by members of the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program will demonstrate an improvement in pro-social behaviors including respect for others, resisting peer pressure, improved attitude towards school, and/or speaking positively about themselves."

Survey results indicate that 91% of youth assessed demonstrated improvement in at least one of the following pro-social behaviors:

- Respect for others
- Resisting peer pressure
- Improved attitude towards school
- Speaking positively about himself/herself

> Volunteer Recruitment

Impact: A pre and post test administered to volunteers recruited at The College of New Jersey revealed that two-third of volunteers who participated in a service project indicated a desire to volunteer again in future. This demonstrates that one-time service opportunities motivate individuals to volunteer again. TCNJ recruited approximately 1,000 volunteers in 2007-2008.

Action Plan: Going forward, we also plan to track the percentage of individuals who volunteer again as part of the activities of the Bonner Center for Civic and Community Engagement.

> Member Development:

Narratives

Impact: The New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program seeks to help members develop the knowledge and skills necessary to serve in a leadership capacity during their term of service and beyond.

In 2006-2007, 40 percent of members served in a leadership role during their term of service. In 2007-2008, 37.5 percent of members served in leadership capacity.

We also strive to instill in our members a life-long ethic of service. We are pleased that many of our members complete a second term of service or remain involved in volunteerism after completing their term. Twenty-six percent of members from our 2006-2007 grant year chose to enroll in a second term of service. We are aware of eleven additional members who chose to stay active in community service following their term of service. Again, twenty-six percent of members from our 2007-2008 grant year are currently completing a second term of service. Twelve additional members chose to remain active in service following their term of service. Two of the members enrolled in our 2007-2008 grant year are now working for one of our community partners.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

Clarification for 2011-2012 Year 3 Continuation

Budget Clarification Items:

1) The Corporation's share of the revised program budget is \$313,495 and the proposed MSY total is 24.72. The Corporation's cost per MSY is \$12,682. Our proposed match percentage is 48%. The Budget Section has been revised accordingly.

2) We added the registration fee for the 2011-2012 National Grantee Conference to the proposed budget

Narratives

in eGrants under Staff Training. We will use match funds to pay the registration fee.

3) The funds budgeted for Speaker Honorariums that were originally listed under Member Training have been moved to Contractual and Consultant Services. We will utilize consultants to provide specialized trainings for our AmeriCorps members on topics such as Volunteer Management, Fundraising, Program Evaluation and Strategic Planning.

4) We will conduct criminal history checks on all AmeriCorps members and grant funded staff (Program Director and Enrollment Manager). In addition, we will conduct criminal history checks on our campus directors whose salaries are used as in-kind match. Criminal history checks will include a search of the National Sex Offender Registry Public Website and a search of the designated statewide repositories.

FBI checks will be conducted on AmeriCorps members and staff included in the program budget who have recurring access to vulnerable populations. We are currently working with the New Jersey State Commission to determine the process for obtaining FBI checks. Unfortunately the statewide repository in New Jersey (State Police) does not facilitate FBI checks.

Programmatic Clarification Items:

5) We anticipate that 100 economically disadvantaged individuals will participate in adult education programs (25 literacy students, 50 basic skills students and 25 GED students) coordinated by AmeriCorps members. Based on historical data, the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK) believes 20% or 5 adults enrolled in the GED program will obtain their GED during the 2011-2012 program year. Many of the clients at TASK need a great deal of tutoring to pass the GED test and are dealing with issues such as homelessness which make completing the testing regiment more difficult.

Narratives

6) We will work with the staff of our mentoring program sites to determine if participating mentees meet the definition of a "disadvantaged youth" as outlined by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Program sites collect demographic data on youth when they enroll.

7) Member service activities will focus primarily on the Education and Economic Opportunity priority areas. Members will engage in service activities related to:

- > Mentoring at-risk youth
- > Hunger Relief
- > Housing Assistance
- > Adult Education

We will recruit and manage 12 full-time, 3 half-time and 53 minimum-time Members. Anticipated Member placements and service activities are described below.

Twelve full-time Members will be placed at the following colleges and community partner agencies.

> The Crisis Ministry: The Member will serve with the agency's hunger prevention program which provides healthy food options to individuals and families facing economic hardship.

> Habitat for Humanity of Trenton: The Member will serve as the agency's Volunteer Coordinator. The position is responsible for recruiting and managing volunteers who assist with home builds and other activities that support Habitat for Humanity's mission to build safe, affordable housing for low income individuals and families.

Narratives

> HomeFront: The Member will serve at Cherry Tree Club, a high quality, free and accessible preschool program for homeless and at-risk children in Mercer County, New Jersey. The Member will work one-on-one with children to improve school readiness.

> Jewish Family and Children's Service of Greater Mercer County: The Member will provide case management services to clients in need. Clients can access a variety of services including a food pantry and financial assistance for housing costs and medical equipment.

> Mercer Street Friends: The Member will serve with the West Ward Project, a strategic endeavor to develop, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of a coordinated system of care to improve child and family wellbeing in the West Ward of Trenton, NJ. The project builds on the agency's established array of family support, youth development and early childhood education services and its long-term dedication to the West Ward. The Member will play a vital role in the development, implementation, and evaluation of this project, thereby making significant contributions to the community wellness of the West Ward of Trenton.

> Trenton Area Soup Kitchen: The Member will serve as the Volunteer and Client Services Assistant. This position is responsible for helping to coordinate the agency's adult education program and other client services such as food and clothing assistance.

> Burlington County College: The Member will serve as the Team Leader for the AmeriCorps program at Burlington County College. Under the direction of the Campus Director, the Team Leader is responsible for developing and maintaining community partnerships, facilitating service projects, providing guidance and support to Members and assisting with Member development activities.

Narratives

> Middlesex County College: The Member will serve as the Team Leader for the AmeriCorps program at Middlesex County College. Under the direction of the Campus Director, the Team Leader is responsible for developing and maintaining community partnerships, facilitating service projects, providing guidance and support to Members and assisting with Member development activities.

> Rider University: The Member will be responsible for strengthening community partnerships with local after-school mentoring programs by assisting with curriculum development, designing enrichment activities for participating youth, and recruiting and training volunteer mentors.

> Rutgers University New Brunswick: The Member will serve as the Team Leader for the AmeriCorps program at Rutgers University New Brunswick. Under the direction of the Campus Director, the Team Leader is responsible for developing and maintaining community partnerships, facilitating service projects, providing guidance and support to Members and assisting with Member development activities.

> Rutgers University Future Scholars Program: The Member will coordinate the Future Scholars Mentoring Program which provides academic and social support to middle and high school students in the New Brunswick area.

> The College of New Jersey: The Member will assist with the coordination of the after-school mentoring program at Hedgepath Williams Middle School. The Member will assist with curriculum development, design enrichment activities for participating youth, and recruit and train volunteer mentors.

Three half-time Members will be placed at the following community partner agencies.

Narratives

> Elijah's Promise Soup Kitchen: One Member will coordinate and conduct cooking classes for low income residents that promote skill building to prepare healthy meals at home on a budget. The second Member will coordinate mentoring and tutoring opportunities for students enrolled in the culinary jobs training program.

> Rescue Mission of Trenton: The Member will assist with coordinating counseling and other services for individuals enrolled in the agency's outpatient substance abuse treatment program.

Fifty-three minimum time Members will be placed at the following colleges and universities.

> Middlesex County College: Fifteen Members will serve with youth mentoring programs, hunger relief organizations, and adult education programs.

> Rider University: Thirteen Members will serve with youth mentoring programs, hunger relief organizations, adult education programs and agencies serving individuals with disabilities.

> Rutgers University: Ten Members will serve with youth mentoring programs, hunger relief organizations, and agencies serving the homeless.

> The College of New Jersey: Members will serve with youth mentoring programs, hunger relief organizations, and adult education programs.

8) Noted.

Narratives

Performance Measure Clarification Items:

9) We anticipate that 75 disadvantaged youth (as per the Corporation's definition) will participate in mentoring programs that meet the Corporation's definition of a school or community based mentoring program as outlined in the guidance on the National Performance Measures. Additional youth will participate in mentoring programs that are structured differently.

10) Bonner AmeriCorps members are expected to implement service-learning activities for mentees. We define service-learning as a "strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities."(National Service Learning Clearinghouse) Below are two examples of service-learning projects implemented during our 2010-2011 program year.

> Mentees at the Salvation Army learned about the environmental effects of littering and pollution. Afterwards they participated in a trash clean-up project.

> Mentees at the Boys and Girls Club, El Centro, HomeFront and YMCA learned about the plight of stray and abandoned animals in shelters. Mentees then designed colorful bandanas for the cats at SAVE shelter in Princeton. Wearing a colorful bandana is a wonderful way for shelter cats to get noticed by potential adopters.

11) The National Performance Measures Frequently Asked Questions indicate that programs need to create at least one set of aligned performance measures for each Focus Area in which the program has opted into the National Performance Measures pilot.

Narratives

We anticipate that 4 of the 9.5 MSY (42%) assigned to the Opportunity Focus Area will provide job skill training primarily through serving with adult education programs. The remaining MSY will participate in service activities related to hunger relief and housing assistance. Because 42% of the assigned MSY will address job skill training, we feel our aligned measures in the Opportunity Focus Area should correspond to these activities.

We made some clarifications to our outputs and outcomes outlined in the Performance Measures section based on historical data provided by our community partner.

12) The performance measures related to Member Development were deleted.

13) The MSY totals for the two focus areas have been adjusted.

Clarification for 2010-2011 Year 2 Continuation

A. Budget Clarification Items

1. Section C. - Staff Travel

> Mileage Rate

The mileage rate has been adjusted to \$.50 per mile in the budget section of eGrants.

2. Section G. - Staff Training

Narratives

> Staff Training Conferences - Parent Organization

The Program Director and Program Associate will attend conferences throughout the year to learn more about program models related to mentoring at-risk youth, hunger alleviation and volunteer management. The knowledge gained from these conferences will help Program Staff shape program design including member training and service activities. These conferences will also provide a forum to identify experts who can provide knowledge and skill-based training for members. The funds budgeted will cover registration costs. Below is a sampling of the conferences Program Staff attended in the past year.

- 2010 Princeton Community Works: Workshops focused on volunteer management, program evaluation and fund-raising.

- 2010 Learning to End Hunger Connecting Classrooms and Communities Conference: Workshops offered on the New Jersey Food Stamp Enrollment Project and school and community gardens.

- 2010 Northeast Organic Farmer's Association Winter Conference: Workshops focused on food sustainability and school gardens.

> Staff Training Conferences - Subgrantees

Site supervisors from community partner organizations and campus directors from participating colleges and universities will attend the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program Subgrantee meeting. At this meeting, we cover AmeriCorps policies and procedures related to member activities, member management and fiscal systems. Special attention is given to the Prohibited Activities and

Narratives

program evaluation requirements.

Campus directors will also attend the Bonner New Directors and Coordinators Orientation (July), the Fall Bonner Directors and Coordinators Meeting (November) and the Summer Leadership Institute (June). The content of these meetings is described below:

- New Directors and Coordinators Orientation: This meeting will provide a thorough overview of the history, vision, and operational details for managing a Bonner Program. AmeriCorps policies and procedures are reviewed at this orientation.

- Fall Directors and Coordinators Meeting: Campus directors will attend workshops focused on strategies for working with community partner agencies, best practices for training members, and tools for managing, empowering and holding members accountable.

- Summer Leadership Institute: Campus directors will attend workshops focused on particular issue areas including food policy, the environment and youth development.

Detailed explanation of expenses:

- New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program Subgrantee Meeting
25 attendees (\$15 for food and \$10 for Program Management binder) = \$625

- New Directors and Coordinators Meeting
6 attendees (\$900 for three nights lodging and \$360 for six meals) = \$1260

Narratives

- Fall Directors and Coordinators Meeting

15 attendees (\$2250 for three nights lodging and \$900 for six meals) = \$3150

- Summer Leadership Institute

15 attendees (\$2250 for three nights lodging and \$900 for six meals) = \$3150

3. Section C. - Staff Travel

The clarification letter instructs us to remove the budgeted amount for airfare to the National Conference on Volunteering and Service. The reason given is that the conference is in New York City which is only an hour train ride from Princeton, NJ where our program is based. However, it is the June 2010 meeting that is in New York City and this budget is for 2010-2011. The budgeted funds for airfare will cover transportation costs to the June 2011 meeting. The Corporation has not yet announced where the meeting will be held and therefore we need to budget for airfare in the event that travel via air is required.

We brought this issue to the attention of our Fiscal Officer at the State Commission and our Program Officer at the Corporation. We were instructed to include the explanation above in our Clarification Narrative.

4 and 5. Section I. - Other Operating Expenses and Section III. - Match

> Overview of Enrichment Grants

In 2010-2011, the Bonner Foundation will provide Enrichment Grants to Middlesex County College,

Narratives

Rider University, Rutgers University, and The College of New Jersey. These funds are designed to support key program elements including:

- Orientation: The orientation for New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program members must be designed to prepare members for their term of service.

- First Year Service Trip: A service trip for first-year students enrolled in the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. This trip must take place in an area where members are able to encounter differences in culture.

- Second-Year Service Exchange: Members in their second year participate in a service project with Bonner students from another college or university.

- Bonner Intern: These funds are used to support a student worker who assists with the administrative and programmatic management of the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. Intern duties may include one-on-one meetings with members, collecting data on performance measures, visiting members at their service sites, and coordinating member travel to Bonner sponsored events.

- Travel to Bonner Foundation Sponsored Gatherings: Funds are used to help campus directors with transportation costs to attend Bonner Foundation gatherings including the Fall Directors and Coordinators Meeting and the Summer Leadership Institute.

- Community Fund: Funds are made available to community agencies that work with the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. A selection process must be established and members are to participate in the evaluation and monitoring process.

Narratives

> Enrichment Grant Distribution

- Middlesex County College (\$1500 for Orientation, \$2500 for First Year Service Trip, \$2000 for Second Year Service Exchange and \$2500 for Bonner Intern and \$2500 for Travel) = \$11,000

- Rider University (\$1500 for Orientation, \$2500 for First Year Service Trip, \$2000 for Second Year Service Exchange and \$2500 for Bonner Intern and \$2000 for Travel, and \$2000 for Community Fund) = \$12,500

- Rutgers University (\$1500 for Orientation, \$2500 for First Year Service Trip, \$2000 for Second Year Service Exchange and \$2500 for Bonner Intern and \$2000 for Travel, and \$2000 for Community Fund) = \$12,500

- The College of New Jersey (\$1500 for Orientation, \$2500 for First Year Service Trip, \$2000 for Second Year Service Exchange and \$2500 for Bonner Intern and \$2500 for Travel, and \$3000 for Community Fund) = \$14,000

Total: \$50,000

6. Briefly justify new costs per MSY of \$12,782.

In our revised budget, the cost per MSY is \$12,645. For 2010-2011, our community partners requested additional full-time members to help them meet the high demand for services in light of the economic climate. Expanding to include five additional full-time members along with an increase in the monthly

Narratives

health insurance premium increases our health care costs for 2010-2011 by 150%. Therefore, the cost per MSY reflects an increase from 2009-2010. In the revised budget, we include a match contribution of \$3283 for health care and therefore the Corporation cost per MSY decreased from \$12,782 in our original budget to \$12,645 in our revised budget. We remain \$325 under the allowable cost of \$13,000 per MSY.

B. Programmatic Clarification Items

7. Staff Structure

The Program Director (.4 FTE) and Program Associate (.6 FTE) will manage the programmatic, fiscal and administrative components of the collaboration with the support of campus directors and site supervisors. The Program Director and Program Associate are responsible for training campus directors and site supervisors, managing member files, coordinating all corps training and service events, conducting program evaluation and completing programmatic and fiscal reports.

Each participating college or university employs a campus director (.5 FTE) who is responsible for recruiting, training, and managing AmeriCorps members. The campus director supports 10 to 20 members. Campus directors meet with AmeriCorps members weekly or bi-weekly throughout their term of service. Through these all-group and small team meetings, campus directors educate members on the goals and requirements of the Bonner AmeriCorps program, provide knowledge- and skill-based training, and offer opportunities for reflection. This model provides a built-in support system and a natural structure for meetings for training, program planning, and reflection. Campus directors also meet one-on-one with members throughout their term of service. These meetings allow the campus director to not only provide positive feedback to the member, but discuss with him or her areas of

Narratives

improvement such as time management and organizational skills. These meetings allow the member to request additional support from the campus director and share any concerns regarding service activities.

Each participating service site is required to designate a site supervisor to train and manage AmeriCorps members while on site. Site supervisors are responsible for orienting members to the service site, providing training specific to the member's responsibilities, monitoring member performance and hours and completing member evaluations. Site supervisors provide support to 3 to 5 members. The support of the site supervisor provides the member with the tools necessary to excel in his/her placement and successfully complete the term of service. Member supervision by the site supervisor is directly monitored by the campus director. The campus director meets regularly with members and site supervisors to ensure that members receive the appropriate training and supervision from the agency.

Our three tiered program management structure (Program staff, campus directors, and site supervisors) allows us to run an effective and efficient program that positively impacts the community and instills in members a life-long ethic of service.

8. Please clarify how the national program is run at a cost of \$800 per MSY and this program is budgeted for \$12782.

The National Bonner AmeriCorps Program is an Education Award Only Program. AmeriCorps members enrolled in the national program do not receive a living allowance. In addition, we do not enroll full-time members in the national program, thus we do not pay for healthcare. The College receives \$800 per MSY to cover the administrative costs associated with running the program including staff salaries and benefits, travel funds for site visits, office supplies and background screenings.

Narratives

The program design for the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program includes minimum-time, part-time and full-time members. All members receive a living stipend. Full-time members receive health care coverage as required by the Corporation. The living allowance and health care costs result in a higher cost per MSY for the New Jersey Program.

9. Background Checks

We will conduct background checks on all members and all grant funded staff. The cost of the background checks will be covered by matching funds from The College of New Jersey. We will conduct a National Criminal Check through Lexis Nexus and will also complete a search on the National Sex Offender Registry. The budget has been updated to reflect the costs (\$8 per person) associated with conducting background checks on grant-funded staff.

Continuation Changes

Year 3:

I. Applicant Information

No changes.

II. Application Information

Modified program start and end dates.

III. Executive Summary

Entered.

IV. Program Design

Narratives

For the past eleven years, the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program has sought to address critical community needs such as food assistance and mentors for youth throughout Mercer and Middlesex counties in New Jersey. We respectfully request 30.03 MSY for the 2011-2012 grant year. This request represents an increase of 5.06 MSY from 2010-2011. Receiving additional MSY will allow us to increase the number of AmeriCorps members engaging in service activities related to Economic Opportunity.

Members will provide food assistance to individuals and families in need, housing services to the homeless and those at-risk for homelessness, and adult education classes to members of the community.

a. Problem

The need for enhanced services related to Economic Opportunity is well documented in research literature and by our community partner agencies. Residents of Mercer and Middlesex counties continue to experience financial hardship compounded by the economic downturn. The poverty rates in Trenton (Mercer County) and New Brunswick (Middlesex County) are 21 percent and 27 percent, respectively.[1] The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in November 2010, the unemployment rate in the Trenton-Ewing Statistical Area stood at 7.6%.[2] The unemployment rate for the New Brunswick-Edison Statistical Area stood at 8.3%.[3]

Given the current economic climate individuals and families are turning to government programs and nonprofit organizations for food assistance, housing assistance, and adult education programs. In December 2010, the U.S. Conference of Mayors released the findings of a study that assessed the status of hunger in 27 cities, including Trenton, New Jersey. The study found that requests for food assistance in Trenton increased by 15% in 2010.[4] Our community partners also report rising demand for food

Narratives

assistance as the economy continues to struggle. Today the Crisis Ministry of Princeton and Trenton reports serving 1300 household per month.[5]

High poverty and unemployment rates in Mercer and Middlesex counties make it extremely difficult for homeless persons to secure stable housing and for low-income individuals and families to remain in safe, affordable housing. Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness reports that "57% of lower income households in Mercer County pay more than the recognized affordability standard of 30% of income for housing." [6] The Alliance also notes that "on any given day in Mercer County, at least 1062 people experience homelessness." [7] The effects of homeless are indeed devastating. The School of Public Affairs at the University of California Los Angeles reports that homeless persons experience malnutrition, sleep deprivation, health issues and physical assaults.[8].

Adult education programs offer valuable services to individuals who lack a high school diploma. According to the report, "Left Behind in America: The Nation's Dropout Crisis," 18.9 percent of males between the ages of 16 and 24 were high school dropouts in 2007.[9] Lack of a high school diploma negatively impacts earnings potential and makes a college education inaccessible. The National Center for the Study of Adult Learning reports that "acquiring a GED leads to greater quarterly earnings growth." [10] In addition, obtaining a GED allows individuals to enroll in college. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median income for a full-time worker who is at least 25 years of age is \$33,801.[11] The median income for an individual with a bachelor's degree is \$55,656.[12]

REFERENCES

[1] United States Census Bureau <<http://quickfacts.census.gov>>

[2][3] Bureau of Labor Statistics <www.bls.gov>

[4] United States Conference of Mayors <www.usmayors.org>

Narratives

[5] The Crisis Ministry of Princeton and Trenton

[6] [7] Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness <www.merceralliance.org>

[8] University of California Los Angeles School of Public Affairs

<www.spa.ucla.edu/dup/projects/HomelessWebPage/Effects.html>

[9] Left Behind in America: The Nation's Dropout Crisis

<www.clms.neu.edu/publication/documents/CLMS_2009_Dropout_Report.pdf>

[10] The National Center for the Study of Adult Learning

<http://ncsall.gse.harvard.edu/research/brief_tyler2.pdf>

[11] The College Board <www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/starting-points/156.html> [12] The

College Board <www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/starting-points/156.html>

b. Solution: AmeriCorps Member Roles and Responsibilities

In the event we are awarded additional MSY, we plan to place Members at the following community-based agencies:

- > The Crisis Ministry of Princeton and Trenton
- > Habitat for Humanity Trenton Area
- > Jewish Family and Children's Service of Mercer County
- > Mercer Street Friends
- > Trenton Area Soup Kitchen

The service provided by AmeriCorps members will allow the aforementioned agencies to enhance their capacity to offer critical services to the community during difficult economic times.

Members will engage in the following activities:

Narratives

Food Assistance

Members will:

- > secure food donations;
- > provide clients with healthy food options;
- > organize and maintain food pantries; and
- > distribute food vouchers to clients.

Housing Assistance

Members will:

- > screen clients to determine eligibility for rental, security deposit and/or utility assistance and foreclosure counseling;
- > provide case management to ensure clients receive appropriate financial assistance;
- > recruit volunteers to build safe, affordable housing;
- > assist clients in locating safe, affordable housing; and
- > refer clients to other services as needed.

Adult Education Programs

Members will:

- > recruit volunteer tutors;
- > recruit students for the programs;
- > assess students' baseline knowledge and skills;
- > implement lesson plans; and
- > evaluate students' progress.

Narratives

c. Outcomes: Performance Measures

We will use the national performance measures in the Education and Opportunity Focus Areas. The Performance Measures section in eGrants has been updated to reflect the national performance measures.

V. Organizational Capacity

a. Organizational Background

The primary contact for this application is Program Director, Christen Foell. She can be reached at (609) 924-6663 or cfoell@bonner.org. The secondary contact is Bonner Center Director, Patrick Donohue. He can be reached at (609) 771-2362 or pdonohue@tcnj.edu.

The College of New Jersey's budget for fiscal year 2011 is \$209,226,000. Revenue sources as follows:

- > Tuition & Fees: \$97,698,000
- > State Appropriations: \$55,706,000
- > Room & Board and other Auxiliary Income: \$45,265,000
- > Federal Grants: \$8,030,000
- > Other Revenue: \$ 2,527,000

The funds requested in this proposal represent less than 1% of the College's total operating budget.

The Bonner Center for Civic and Community Engagement has secured funding for its service activities and initiatives from the following sources:

- > Bonner Foundation
- > Comcast

Narratives

- > Janssen Pharmaceuticals
- > New Jersey Department of Corrections
- > Public Service Gas and Electric
- > Sunshine Lady Foundation

b. Staffing

In September 2010, we hired Laine Slatton to serve as Enrollment Manager for the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. Ms. Slatton is responsible for managing all Member file paperwork. Ms. Slatton earned a bachelor's degree in Women's and Gender Studies from Vanderbilt University. Ms. Slatton brings extensive administrative experience having previously served as the office administrator for a private school.

c. Enrollment

During our last full year of program operation (2009-2010), we achieved an enrollment rate of 100%.

The enrollment rate for our current program year (2010-2011) is 98%. We have 2 unfilled minimum-time slots. We are using the minimum-time slots for summer terms in 2011.

d. Retention

During our last full year of program operation (2009-2010), we exited 78% of Members with an award.

There are a number of factors that influenced our retention rate in 2009-2010 including:

- > the rising cost of higher education coupled with the economic downturn which forced some Members to withdraw from school and thus exit the Bonner AmeriCorps Program.
- > the rigor of some academic programs which resulted in Members exiting from the Bonner AmeriCorps

Narratives

Program in order to improve their grades and remain in school.

> personal and family circumstances which prevented Members from completing the term of service.

To improve our retention rates we are implementing a number of strategies including:

- > developing resources to help campus directors and site supervisors identify factors that might affect a Member's ability to complete the term during the screening process rather than after service begins;
- > requiring campus directors and site supervisors to increase the frequency of one-on-one meetings; and
- > encouraging campus directors and site supervisors to refer Members who experience personal or academic difficulties to appropriate resources in the community such as counseling or social services.

VI. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

a. Cost Effectiveness

Corporation Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)

The cost per MSY will be \$12,427 which is below the allowable cost.

b. Diverse Non-Federal Support

The New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program has been successful in securing significant non-federal resources for program implementation and sustainability.

The Bonner Foundation's long-term commitment to the success of the program is demonstrated in part, by its commitment to providing the cash match award to TCNJ for \$48,970.

Participating campus and community partners have made support for Members part of their annual operating budgets. Matching cash funds for Living Allowance, FICA and Workers Compensation will total \$167,995. The partnering campuses and community partners have pledged significant staff support

Narratives

for recruiting, training and managing their Members. In-kind staff time is valued at \$25,000.

c. Decreased Reliance on Federal Support

Our decreased reliance on Federal support is demonstrated by our continued ability to decrease the Federal share of our program budget. In the 2011-2012 grant year, our matching share will reach 47 percent.

Year 2:

I. Applicant Information

No changes

II. Application Information

Modified program start and end dates

III. Rationale and Approach

Compelling Community Need:

For the past ten years, the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program has sought to address critical community needs such food assistance and mentors for youth throughout Mercer and Middlesex counties. We respectfully request 25 MSY for the 2010-2011 grant year.

Measurable Outputs and Outcomes:

Updated

> Mentoring

Narratives

Output: In Year 2, members will mentor 100 youth.

Intermediate Outcome: In Year 2, 80% of youth enrolled in the mentoring programs served by members will work in teams to complete one or more service-learning projects.

End Outcome: 60% of youth will increase pro-social behavior and other behavioral traits that promote lifelong personal success.

> Volunteer Recruitment

Output: In Year 2, members will recruit 300 volunteers to serve at community-based organizations.

IV. Member Outputs and Outcomes

Enrollment:

During our last full year of program operation (2008-2009), we achieved an enrollment rate of 100%.

The enrollment rate for our current program year (2009-2010) is 94%. We have 5 unfilled minimum-time slots. We plan to use the remaining minimum-time slots for summer terms in 2010.

Retention:

During our last full year of program operation (2008-2009), we exited 82% of members with an award. We still have one active member, therefore, this figure does not represent our final retention rate for 2008-2009.

There are a number of factors that affected retention in 2008-2009, including the economic climate, the

Narratives

rigor of some academic programs and personal circumstances. To improve our retention rates, we continue to work with institutions to help them develop comprehensive recruitment and selection processes, member support mechanisms and avenues for member recognition.

1) Given the variety of factors that can affect a member's ability to complete his or her term of service, we continue to coach campuses on how to identify, evaluate and address these factors during the screening process.

2) We continue to encourage campus staff to increase the frequency of required one-on-one meetings with members. These sessions provide members with a confidential and supportive environment in which to discuss challenges that may affect their ability to successfully complete their term.

3) We continue to explore new strategies for member recognition based upon the fact that recognition positively influences retention. For example, we encourage our campus coordinators to nominate their members for New Jersey State Service awards.

Member Development Performance Measures:

Updated

Output: In Year 2, 100% of members will participate in trainings and/or reflection activities designed to increase service and leadership competencies.

Intermediate Outcome: In Year 2, 80% of members will demonstrate an increase in leadership skills.

End Outcome: In Year 2, 35% of members will serve in leadership capacities.

Narratives

V. Community Outputs and Outcomes

No changes.

VI. Organizational Capacity

Two of our participating colleges hired new Bonner AmeriCorps Program Directors in the past six months.

1) Middlesex County College: Maria De La Cruz, Director of Democracy House, brings valuable experience as a two term AmeriCorps member at Middlesex County College.

2) Rider University: Annie Pasqua, Assistant Director of Campus Life for Service Learning has experience in managing campus-based service programs having previously served as the Coordinator of Community Service at Lees McRae College and as a Program Associate at the Bonner Foundation. Jacqueline Wonsey, Coordinator of Community Service brings extensive AmeriCorps management experience to her role at Rider University having previously served as the AmeriCorps Program Coordinator for the Sycamore Service Corps at Indiana State University.

VII. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

1) Corporation Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)

The cost per MSY will be \$12782 which is below the allowable cost of \$13000 per MSY.

2) Diverse Non-Federal Support

Narratives

The New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program has been successful in securing significant non-federal resources for program implementation and sustainability.

The Bonner Foundation's long-term commitment to the success of the program is demonstrated in part, by its commitment to providing the cash match award to TCNJ for \$23890. These matching funds will be used primarily for program support costs including evaluation and assessment.

Participating campus and community partners have made support for members part of their annual operating budgets. Matching cash funds for Living Allowance, FICA and Workers Compensation will total \$47810. The partnering campuses and community partners have pledged significant staff support for recruiting, training and managing their members. In-kind staff time is valued at \$48000.

3) Decreased Reliance on Federal Support:

Our decreased reliance on Federal support is demonstrated by our continued ability to decrease the Federal share of our program budget. In the 2010-2011 grant year, our matching share will reach 42 percent.

Performance Measures

SAA Characteristics

- AmeriCorps Member Population - None Geographic Focus - Rural
 Geographic Focus - Urban 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 Familie | |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 19.64

Service Categories

Adult Education and Literacy (including ESL and GED)

Mentoring

National Performance Measures

Priority Area: Economic Opportunity

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

AmeriCorps members will facilitate adult education programs including basic skills, literacy and GED programs.

Members will:

- recruit volunteer tutors;
- recruit students for the programs;
- assess students' baseline knowledge and skills;
- implement lesson plans; and
- evaluate students' progress.

Result: Output

Result.

100 individuals will participate in adult education programs (25 literacy students, 50 basic skills students and 25 GED students) coordinated by AmeriCorps members.

Indicator: O2: Individuals receiving job training services.

Target : In Year 3, 100 individuals will participate in adult education programs (25 literacy students, 50 basic skills students and 25 GED students) coordinated by AmeriCorps members.

Target Value: 100

Instruments: We will modify the Client Attendance and Output Log developed by Project Star for use by our program.

PM Statement: In Year 3, 100 individuals will participate in adult education programs coordinated by AmeriCorps members.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

5 individuals participating in GED programs will obtain their GED. This result is based on historical data provided by our community partner.

Indicator: Individuals obtaining their GED.

Target : In Year 3, 5 individuals participating in GED classes will obtain their GED.

Target Value: 5

Instruments: GED completion certificate.

PM Statement: 5 individuals participating in GED classes will obtain their GED.

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

AmeriCorps members will serve as mentors for at-risk youth. Their efforts will extend to:

- developing enrichment activities that explore the youth's area of interest, such as art, music, the environment,

National Performance Measures

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

sports and/or recreation;

- engaging the youth in community service and service-learning projects;

- assisting the youth with homework and/or class projects.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

25 disadvantaged youth will improve their school attendance over the course of their involvement in mentoring programs supported by the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) ED6: Youth w/improved school attendance.

Target : In Year 3, 25 disadvantaged youth will improve their school attendance over the course of their involvement in mentoring programs supported by the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program.

Target Value: 25

Instruments: School attendance records.

PM Statement: In Year 3, 25 disadvantaged youth will improve their school attendance over the course of their involvement in mentoring programs supported by the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program.

Result: Output

Result.

In Year 3, 50 disadvantaged youth/mentor matches will be sustained by the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program.

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

Target : In Year 3, 50 disadvantaged youth/mentor matches will be sustained by the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. AmeriCorps members will engage youth in enrichment activities and assist youth with homework.

Target Value: 50

Instruments: We will adapt the Youth/Mentor Contact Log developed by Project Star for use in our program.

PM Statement: In Year 3, 50 disadvantaged youth/mentor matches will be sustained by the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. AmeriCorps members will engage youth in enrichment activities and assist youth with homework.

Result: Output

Result.

In Year 3, 75 disadvantaged youth/mentor matches will be commenced by the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program.

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

Target : In Year 3, 75 disadvantaged youth/mentor matches will be commenced by the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. AmeriCorps members will engage youth in enrichment

National Performance Measures

Result.

activities and assist youth with homework.

Target Value: 75

Instruments: We will adapt the Youth/Mentor Contact Log developed by Project Star for use in our program.

PM Statement: In Year 3, 75 disadvantaged youth/mentor matches will be commenced by the New Jersey AmeriCorps Bonner Leader Program. AmeriCorps members will engage youth in enrichment activities and assist youth with homework.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Already on File at CNCS

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable