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Executive Summary

Nearly 25% of low-income, first-generation-college students who score in the top quartile on standardized tests never go to college. The National College Advising Corps works to increase the number of students who enter and complete higher education by hiring and training recent college graduates to work in high-need, underserved high schools throughout the country. We provide the assistance and support students need to navigate the complex processes of college admissions and financial aid.

Rationale and Approach

B. Selection Criteria

1. Program Design

a. Problem

Our nation is facing a crisis in access to education and opportunity. Too many low-income, first-generation-college, and underrepresented students are not receiving the advice and support they need to identify and enroll in colleges where they stand a good chance of graduation. According to the U.S. Department of Education, 90 percent of the fastest-growing jobs today require post-secondary education, yet the U.S. lags behind other nations in young adults enrolled in higher education. This is disproportionately true for low-income students. Nearly a quarter of low-income students who score in the top quartile on standardized tests never go to college, and many of the remaining 75 percent who do attend college never attain bachelors' degrees.

In "From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College," the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago found that only 59 percent of students who aspire to attain a four-year college degree actually apply, and that of those who do apply, only 41 percent complete the steps necessary to enroll in a four-year college in their senior year. The study also found that disadvantaged students with low GPAs and ACT scores, and thus limited access to college, were

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unlikely to plan to attend, apply to, or be accepted to four-year colleges. Even many of the highest-achieving disadvantaged students--young men and women who were well qualified to continue their education beyond high school--did not consider attending a four-year college, and many who said they planned to apply, never actually did.

Why are disadvantaged students who are well qualified less likely to attend college than their more-affluent peers? The "Potholes" study found that the complexities of college and financial aid applications are a serious barrier for low-income students, many of whom are the first in their families to consider college. These students may additionally lack role models and advocates who can help them navigate the college admissions process.

The "Potholes" research identified areas where students are most likely to stumble in navigating the admissions and financial aid processes and what support best helps them overcome these obstacles.

The authors found that:

- * A strong college-going culture in the high school is the best predictor of whether students will take the necessary steps to apply for college.
- * Filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) may be the most critical step for low-income students to complete and the best predictor of whether students will apply. Additional research found that individuals who received assistance with the FAFSA were substantially more likely to submit the aid application, enroll in college the following fall, and receive more financial aid than those who received aid eligibility information but no assistance with the FAFSA.
- * Applying to multiple colleges makes admission more likely, and the positive effect of multiple applications is most significant for students who have lower levels of qualifications.
- * Among the most highly qualified students, having discussions on post-secondary planning and having strong connections to teachers are particularly important in ensuring that students are well-matched to a college that will best meet their academic and social needs.

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College counselors are critical to ensuring that students are encouraged and supported during the college application and matriculation processes; however, the national student-to-guidance counselor ratio of 467:1 means that the average student spends 20 minutes per year talking to his or her counselor. Moreover, low-income and first-generation students are particularly underserved, with many never seeing a college adviser.

A number of high-profile initiatives have focused on closing the education achievement gap between low-income, first-generation-college, and underrepresented groups and their more advantaged peers. However, we chose this problem because the gap in college-going and -completion rates will not be closed unless the gap in college advising is closed first.

b. Solution

NCAC applies the national and community service model to bolstering the capacity of our target community (public, low-wealth schools in particular) by placing recent college graduates in these schools to serve as advisers, college selection and application coaches, and building-level leaders in the cultivation of college-going norms and cultures in each school. This community service model makes the use of AmeriCorps members a natural fit.

The National College Advising Corps maintains a central national office based at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill (UNC serves as our fiscal and administrative home). The national office serves and supports the establishment and operation of Advising Corps programs run by higher education institutions in 14 states. The national office oversees program development, data collection, evaluation, strategy and expansion efforts, national training, performs site visits, hosts bi-weekly phone calls, a resource exchange, newsletters, and holds regular professional development retreats. The Advising Corps is not a recruiting program for our higher education partners, but rather an innovative way for colleges to assist high schools in helping students through the admissions process

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and find a college that will serve them well. Any post-secondary enrollment (community college, 4-year private, public, etc.) is considered a success. Current higher education institutional partners include Brown University, the University of California at Berkeley, Franklin and Marshall College, the University of Georgia, the University of Illinois, the University of Michigan, the University of Missouri-Columbia, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (national headquarters), the University of Texas, Tufts University, the University of Utah, and the University of Virginia. Each institutional partner employs a full-time program director who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the members, relationships with the high schools, data collection, implementing a work plan in consultation with each high school, and compliance.

The Advising Corps, supported by this proposal, will employ 86 full-time members who will work in the school buildings. The near-peer model is one of the most exciting and innovative aspects of our program. Each adviser is a recent college graduate who can relate to the students in the high school in powerful ways. Over 60% of our advisers are underrepresented or first generation students themselves and can deliver the message, "If I can succeed in college, you can too!" These advisers embody the AmeriCorps commitment to foster a new generation of engaged citizens through service. The mission of a college adviser (member) is to work with the stakeholders in the school to create and execute a plan that empowers students to achieve college access and success. The work of an adviser may differ depending on the school's resources and population. Each adviser creates a strategic plan with the assistance of the Program Director and school staff. This is to ensure that there is a common work plan for the school and that we do not compete, but rather complement and leverage other college-going activities and personnel in the school. Responsibilities include:

- * Work collaboratively with guidance staff, principals, teachers, and others at partner high schools to increase the awareness, preparation, and college-going disposition of underserved students.
- * Provide individualized support with college and financial aid applications, including assisting the

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student with the concept of "best fit."

- * Perform outreach and coordinate publicity in the school, ensuring that students are aware of possible opportunities involving college admission, the application process, testing, scholarships, and financial aid; provide information through presentations, website, brochures, and other various forms of communication.
- * Organize and conduct college tours and visits for students and their families.
- * Track student progress toward college goals through maintenance of online database.
- * Host college fairs and info sessions for students.
- * Conduct SAT/ACT prep workshops.
- * Help students find scholarship resources outside of university and government funding.

Members are trained to implement and measure the above activities, and program directors (supervisors at the higher education partner institutions) provide regular feedback to ensure desired outcomes are achieved. Advisers work full-time (1700 hours), using the calendar of the school in which they serve. They may renew for a second year of service upon mutual agreement of the university partner, school system, and adviser. As advisers are not professional counselors, they may not engage in activities such as scheduling, testing, disciplinary actions, and psychological assessment and will comply with rules on AmeriCorps prohibited service activities and all other AmeriCorps requirements. This proposal requests \$722,400 to address the need documented above by building the capacity of NCAC to more widely implement the evidence-based building-level practices in high schools in seven of the states that the Corps serves. NCAC has successfully raised matching funds in support of this \$722,400 proposal, and in fact will be able to support all program costs, supplies, and equipment necessary to accommodate the 86 members and additional institutional partners. Thus funds requested herein are for member support-\$8,000 each in salary support for 86 members, as well

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as indirect costs. These 86 advisers will serve an estimated 25,800 students. Through this grant, we will add advisers (members) to our existing programs in the following states: California, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Utah. NCAC is dedicated to adding value to the AmeriCorps community, and we look forward to collaborating, sharing practices, and learning from our state commissions and other AmeriCorps grantees.

c. AmeriCorps Member Selection, Training, and Supervision

With the assistance of the national office of NCAC, each partner institution is responsible for recruiting members (advisers). The location of NCAC partner programs at selective universities nationwide affords the program a large pool of well-qualified applicants. Program directors begin adviser recruitment during the fall semester and use a variety of strategies to recruit top public service-minded scholars to the Advising Corps. Strategies include:

- * Collaborating with on-campus partners such as: Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, Center for Public Service, Student Government, Student Clubs and Organizations, Educational Opportunity Programs (TRIO/Upward Bound, Student Support Services, McNair Scholars Program), Admissions Office, etc.
- * Hosting recruitment events on campus such as a booth at a Diversity Career Fair and information sessions for interested candidates.
- * Publicizing the positions through the student newspaper, social networking sites, campus calendars, career services postings, email blasts, etc.
- * Communicating with faculty, staff, and administration to ask for nominations of top seniors who would be interested in college access service work.
- * Using targeted recruitment strategies to learn about the top seniors on campus through word of mouth, student newspaper, campus buzz, and extend a personal invitation to apply to the program.

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In addition to the adviser selection criteria and desired skills and attributes, program directors give close consideration to whether the adviser reflects the diversity of the high school and community where they will serve. NCAC employs a near-peer model, meaning advisers are close in both age and circumstance to the students they serve. Many adviser candidates will meet the age, academic achievement, and skill set requirements to be hired as an adviser. However, those who in addition come from the same or similar communities NCAC serves will be even more successful in connecting with students and the community to achieve the program's goals.

Members will be oriented to the Advising Corps and AmeriCorps at both the state and national levels. Currently, each partner program leads its own comprehensive summer training program for their advisers, planned and executed by the program director. Summer training programs are 4-6 weeks in length and are hosted at the partner institution. Prior to summer training, new advisers will have already spent time shadowing their outgoing predecessor at their high school service site. Shadowing allows for the new adviser to be oriented to the site, the on-site supervisor, and the community prior to training. Summer training culminates with a capstone National Leadership Institute in Washington, D.C. hosted by the NCAC national office. The goal of the Leadership Institute is to inspire commitment to public service and establish "esprit de corps" among all advisers and further familiarize advisers with the barriers to higher education that low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students face.

All partner programs use local experts in admissions, financial aid, student engagement, cultural/ethnic sensitivity, and other topics to serve as faculty during summer training. Additionally, program directors at each partner institution are responsible for developing and implementing state-specific training curricula for their members. However, all programs are unified by a standard course of summer training topics including:

- 1) College Access and the National College Advising Corps

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- 2) Professional demeanor in the public schools and adviser/student relationship
- 3) Planning your year/Developing a work plan
- 4) Getting to know your service community: local collaborations and building a network of resources
- 5) Admissions and the college application process: Match and fit
 - a. SAT/ACT registration and test preparation
 - b. Career and major exploration and the college search
 - c. College tours and college fairs
 - d. College applications, recommendation letters, essays
 - e. FAFSA and financial aid and scholarships
- 6) Engaging Students: Working with diverse populations and first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students, Confidentiality and FERPA,
- 7) Tools and resources in college advising
- 8) Communicating with program director and Advising Corps colleagues and the NCAC Resource Exchange

In addition, program directors schedule regular in-service trainings or professional development opportunities throughout the academic year. Depending on the size of the program and the geographic distance between advisers, some program directors implement ongoing training by organizing their advisers into clusters by region. Benefits to organizing advisers into regional clusters include:

- * Building a cluster network where both college advisers and their on-site supervisors can support and call upon one another.
- * Understanding and working within the unique culture of the cluster area.
- * Understanding and addressing college access challenges specific to the cluster area.
- * Building collaborations with other community-based or access programs in the cluster area.

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* Expanding public awareness of the NCAC program within the cluster area.

Training varies by location, and topics are also determined based on when advisers need training or refreshers on topics most. The chart below provides some examples of ongoing/regional/cluster trainings by month. Ongoing training by cluster is also an opportunity to invite other local college access programs to the table so that the advisers learn about them and them about us.

September * Admissions refresher

* Understanding the impact of standardized testing on admissions

October * Working with other college access programs

November * Essay-writing

December * FAFSA refresher

January * Discussion on latest articles/research on college access

* Understanding financial aid award letters

February * Life after the Corps

* Planning Decision Day events

March * College match and fit

April * Helping students prepare for the transition to college and their first year

NCAC program directors and the national office provide numerous opportunities for members to share and celebrate their achievements, participate in leadership and career development learning experiences, and reflect on their backgrounds and reasons for serving and the life lessons learned over the course of their civic experience. These opportunities for discussion, interaction, and reflection

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include:

- * Regular written reflection log reports
- * Ongoing/regional/cluster trainings for advisers
- * Sessions at local summer training and the national leadership institute related specifically to using your Corps experience lifelong
- * Assigned peer mentors who provide support and an outlet for reflection
- * Professional development sessions at summer and ongoing training

Each university partner selects and employs a full-time program director to lead the efforts of the local program including supervision of advisers and developing and maintaining relationships with partner high schools and school districts. Program directors maintain close communication with advisers in a variety of ways including regular written reflection logs, regular site visits, ongoing regional trainings, and impromptu phone call check-ins. The national office of NCAC provides training and oversight of program directors through annual site visits, bi-weekly conference calls, an annual Program Director meeting, and an online toolkit and listserv for training and sharing of best practices. The program director serves as the advisers' primary supervisor. However, the importance of an on-site supervisor cannot be diminished. Each partner school appoints an on-site supervisor for the college adviser. Most frequently the on-site supervisor is the school counseling chairperson or the senior counselor.

The on-site supervisor:

1. Serves as the adviser's primary contact, resource and advocate within the school, facilitating the adviser's integration into the life of the school and providing appropriate advice and counsel.
2. Holds ongoing meetings with the college adviser to provide updates on progress, solve issues that arise and explore opportunities for further strategic collaboration.
3. Works closely with the program director to ensure that the relationship between the adviser and the school remains strong and that the adviser is effectively serving students and advancing the goals of

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4. Attends site supervisor orientation, regional cluster meetings, or other required meetings/trainings.

Program directors lead orientation meetings for on-site supervisors and advisers at the start of each academic year. This is an opportunity to further explain how the program operates and to provide essential information regarding high school policies and culture to the adviser.

d. Outcome: Performance Measures

The overall changes we wish to see at the end of the three year grant cycle are increased college enrollment rates and upward trends in retention rates among our treatment high schools. Key performance indicators that lead to college access and success will help to measure the impact of the program. These indicators are compiled using the ConnectEdu data collection platform, which tracks indicators such as 1) the number and percent of students attending college tours, fairs and information sessions; 2) the number and percent of students completing college applications; 3) the number and percent of students registering for SAT/ACT exams; and 4) the number and percent of students completing the FAFSA. NCAC's external evaluators at Stanford University will report each year on the performance indicators and early results. In preliminary findings, treatment high schools are experiencing as much as a 14% increase in college going rates in urban Providence, RI and rural North Carolina communities. Performance measure targets are based on studies that indicate the significant barriers to college enrollment.

NCAC collects a number of other measurable outputs and outcomes, with the key outcomes being the percentage of all students and the percentage of targeted (low-income) students who apply for and win acceptance to college at participating high schools. We benchmark three years prior to program establishment and compare the metrics achieved each program year to these benchmarks, with the expectation that we will achieve a long-term impact of increasing underrepresented and low-income

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students' college preparation and attendance behaviors to levels similar to those of their non-disadvantaged peers. In addition to post-secondary enrollment, we also measure student persistence rates throughout college. NCAC has implemented the Connect.Edu data collection program that requires member partners to track these and other program metrics in support of our data collection and evaluation program. The Advising Corps, through this proposal, will address the Education priority area and we will use standard performance measures ED1 (Number of students who start in an AmeriCorps education program), ED2 (Number of students who complete participation in an AmeriCorps education program), and ED10 (Number of students entering post-secondary institutions).

The Connect.EDU software allows for effective central office, partner, and site-based tracking of activities. Aggregate data is collected at the national office across member and community/partner levels. Specifically, the Connect.Edu program tracks activities such as participation in college fairs, campus visits, SAT and FAFSA workshops, and advising appointments. Process data such as this is analyzed, shared across the membership, and archived to allow for continuous program improvement. In addition, NCAC has commissioned Eric P. Bettinger, Ph.D., of Stanford University to conduct an exhaustive program evaluation that is currently underway. As part of this evaluation, Dr. Bettinger is conducting focus groups at a number of public high school service sites with students, teachers, parents, and administrators. In addition, he is conducting a follow-up survey of NCAC adviser/members. This evaluation will collect both summative and formative information and as such will identify program strengths and weaknesses; gather feedback from and provide feedback to members, service sites, and partners; and help to resolve any systemic issues. Results of the latter will inform continuous improvement efforts in program process and administration. Dr. Bettinger will also run all baseline and service year data through the National Student Clearinghouse to confirm matriculation rates from participating high schools.

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e. Volunteer Generation

As active participants in the communities they serve, advisers are encouraged to recruit and integrate volunteers into their work. Advisers recruit volunteers through relationships with their partner high schools, community leaders, and their university (alumni clubs). Advisers utilize volunteers to provide capacity at events, expose students to greater resources, and publicize their work to the larger community. School, community and family volunteers have assisted college advisers during, college and financial aid workshops and events, financial literacy workshops, college campus visits, and careers fairs. Undergraduate student volunteers from the partner institutions have provided volunteer assistance working one-on-one with students during college application drives. Each adviser also brings the capacity of the entire partner university with them, so visits from admissions and financial aid professionals, faculty, and administrators are the norm. Having the ability to call on university experts to volunteer their time at underrepresented high schools is an enormous resource to the high school.

We anticipate that each adviser will receive 40-60 hours of additional service capacity per month through their collaboration with volunteers. Advisers will be responsible for recruiting, supporting, and acknowledging volunteers. On the national level, our advisory board consists of committed volunteers from a variety of sectors including business, education, government, philanthropy, and community development.

f. Partnerships and Collaboration

The key local partners for NCAC are the host partner universities, and most specifically, the high

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schools in which our advisers are placed. Our target communities play a vital role in identifying the needs and activities that we implement. For example, school and community leadership participate in the recruitment, selection, and training of members as well as identifying target high schools and interventions. This ensures the target community feels ownership of the program and the adviser. The adviser must live full-time in the community he or she serves and integrate into the life of the community-- attending sporting events and community activities. Advisers also integrate community members into college access activities. For example, members of the local banking community have assisted with the completion of FAFSA forms and provided financial literacy workshops for students and families for no charge. The advisers reach out to the community members to assist with publicity, host meetings, and provide volunteers for college fairs and financial aid workshops.

Also at the school level, strategic collaboration efforts are underway. We have begun implementing Postsecondary Leadership Teams. These teams are designed to convene all college access stakeholders at the school to strategize around outcomes. The teams meet at least once per month to review data points and refine strategies for their schools. Data points may include key indicators such as the number of college applications completed for each student, number of students registered on the FAFSA website, number of students completing the FAFSA, number of students registering for the SAT/ACT, and number of students attending a college tour or fair. Members of the team may include: Assistant Principal, all Counselors, College Adviser (member), Special Education Representative, Postsecondary Seminar teachers, GEARUP Coach, AVID teacher, TRIO partners, and Senior class sponsor.

Over the three-year program period, we will continue to engage community partners and stakeholders in the activities mentioned above. They are invaluable thought partners, service providers, and evaluators of our work. We will continue to ask for their guidance, feedback, and advice. As we work to create a college-going culture in the community, we will look to our volunteers

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and high school graduates to discuss their successes with the college application process and stress the importance of college to both individuals and communities as we engage a global, knowledge-based economy.

NCAC has successfully forged a number of partnerships with all the leading organizations involved in addressing the problem of college access including: the federal TRIO programs, GEAR UP, the National College Access Network, College Summit, and the YMCA mentoring efforts. We have engaged in program, outreach, and networking activities and conducted presentations on-site and at conferences including the American Youth Policy Forum, National College Access Network Conference and the College Board Forum. Executive Director Dr. Nicole Hurd has also presented testimony before the Department of Education/Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance.

g. Sustainability

NCAC has raised substantial private funds and secured significant public support for its program. Since its national expansion in 2007, NCAC has developed and is now executing a plan to achieve long-term sustainability. The plan takes full advantage of NCAC's university and high school partnerships and is designed to build a diverse base of local, regional, and national support, both private and public. Through commitments of the presidents, chancellors, and provosts of its partner universities, the program benefits from each partner's considerable development infrastructure, including their major gifts officers, annual fund programs, and government relations staff. In addition, NCAC's direct service to individual high schools gives both its partner institutions' programs and the NCAC national office important access to a wide variety of often untapped local funding. The national office's development efforts are carefully coordinated with partner institutions so as to maximize fund raising efforts. Recently, NCAC hired its first full time Director of Development to

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oversee and manage its national and regional fundraising efforts.

With the help of the Bridgespan Group, NCAC developed a five-year funding plan that calls on partner universities to contribute 60 percent of their annual operational costs, with the national office providing the other 40 percent, as well as all national office operational costs. An aggressive fundraising plan to reach the revenue goals has begun by seeking one-time and recurring federal and state government funds and ongoing private support from corporations, foundations and individuals. NCAC has established an Advisory Board that guides its strategy for expansion and long-term sustainability and assists in turning a powerful young program into a full-fledged national movement—one that will help thousands of deserving low-income students find their way to college. Current board members include President Emeritus Erskine Bowles (University of North Carolina), Rep. Joaquin Castro (Texas House of Representatives) and Peter Grauer (Chairman of Bloomberg LP), who have agreed to help continue to recruit a diverse and dynamic board with leaders from education, business, and philanthropy.

NCAC has also reached out to high school partners and professional associations to ensure sustainability. Many local programs meet with school boards, parent associations, chambers of commerce, and other local stakeholders regularly to discuss the innovation, effectiveness, and sustainability of this effort. The NCAC national office also reaches out to professional associations such as the American School Counselors' Association, the College Board, and the National Association for College Admission Counseling.

UNC-Chapel Hill serves as the institutional home of the National College Advising Corps. In addition to the financial and in-kind support indicated in our proposed budget, the University currently provides office space, telephone service, computers and computer networking, and miscellaneous supplies at no cost to the Corps. The University also provides, free of charge, administrative support for communications, event planning, and finances. It is our intention to build long-term, sustainable

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partnerships between our high schools, communities, and higher education institutions. As higher education does not always engage in such partnerships, we see ourselves as innovative and committed to developing and sustaining a new model for social entrepreneurship and service.

h. Tutoring Programs Only -- N/A

Organizational Capability

2. Organizational Capability

a. Organizational Background

Primary contact for this application: Nicole Farmer Hurd, Ph.D., Executive Director, nhurd@unc.edu, 919-962-2240.

Secondary contact: Jim Mulvey, Director of Development, jmulvey@unc.edu, 919-962-5323.

The University of North Carolina, the administrative home and fiscal agent for the National College Advising Corps, has extensive experience administering federal funds, managing over \$100 million in federal grants each year.

To date the organization has successfully secured diverse funding and support and built capacity with partner institutions to ensure sustainability. The national NCAC office has raised significant private support beginning with a grant from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation of \$623,000 for a pilot year. In 2007, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation invested \$12 million over four years in national expansion following the successful pilot. In addition, over the last three years the national office has secured funding from the Lumina Foundation for Education (\$299,600), the Bank of America Foundation (\$1,000,000), the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation (\$300,000), and the Kresge Foundation (\$1 million). In 2009, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funded the Bridgespan Group to complete a five-year strategic business plan for NCAC.

NCAC state partners have also raised more than \$23 million over the last three years for their respective programs regionally. This includes support from the Doris and Donald Fisher Foundation

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(\$975,000) for California, the Watson Brown Foundation (\$600,000) and AT&T for Georgia, the Utah System of Higher Education for Utah, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (\$950,000) for Illinois, the Balfour Foundation (\$200,000) for Massachusetts, the Kresge Foundation for Michigan, and TG for Pennsylvania. In addition, regional partners have received more than \$3.2 million in public support from state office of the Corporation for National and Community Service for states that are not included in our national proposal.

Nationally, the 2011-12 budget for the Advising Corps will exceed \$12 million. Our proposed AmeriCorps project has a budget of \$2,864,400, which represents less than 25 % of the Corps' national budget. The amount requested from the Corporation is \$722,400, approximately 6% of our national budget.

The NCAC national office is housed administratively at the University of North Carolina and is staffed by a group of five professionals, led by Executive Director Nicole Hurd. National staff will implement the AmeriCorps program in conjunction with the local Program Directors for the individual sites.

The NCAC advisory board, which will eventually number twelve members, meets twice per year at sites to be rotated among the constituent institutions. Founding members serve initial fixed terms of two years; subsequent appointments will be for fixed terms of three years. Board members review regular NCAC reports and provide counsel for their implementation, remain up-to-date about the program's scope and services, and serve as ambassadors for the program by communicating its achievements to others. Board members will also be asked to nominate new board members and to provide leadership for the development and sustainability efforts of NCAC. This board works closely with NCAC staff on implementation of fundraising efforts and guides strategy for expansion and long-term sustainability.

b. Staffing

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The AmeriCorps program will be managed by the members of the NCAC national office in conjunction with the local Program Directors and the on-site college advisers. The national office will oversee implementation of the program on a national level, while the college advisers will provide the full time service as AmeriCorps members working on-site at high schools throughout the country.

The professional staff of the Advising Corps includes the national staff, program directors, and advisers. NCAC employs five full-time staff and a contract employee at the national headquarters. The Executive Director, Dr. Nicole Hurd, provides primary oversight of the national office and NCAC's constituent institutions. This includes responsibility for sustainability and fundraising initiatives, the supervision of partner programs (which entails site visits to each partner at least once a year), the management of data collection and evaluation, advocacy for the Corps on state and national levels, and the cultivation of new partnerships. Dr. Hurd has received both national and state level recognition for her development of the National College Advising Corps and recently was named an American Memorial Marshall Fellow for 2011. She recently served as an expert author for the Department of Education's practice guide, "Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do." She lectures nationally on college access issues and holds appointments in the Office of Admissions and the School of Education at UNC-Chapel Hill. Hurd holds a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia.

The Deputy Director of NCAC, Veniese Bradley, is responsible for working with the partner programs on strategy, goal setting, implementation, data collection, training, and evaluation. Ms. Bradley began her college access work in the Chicago Public Schools. She is an experienced college access professional who has utilized her MBA degree to support school level teams to graduate all students prepared for college and careers. In 2004, Ms. Bradley joined the Chicago Public Schools Department of Postsecondary Education and Student Development as a Postsecondary Coach at Kenwood Academy. In this capacity, she partnered with the school counseling team, faculty, and building

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administrators to create workshops and implement data-driven programs to increase college enrollment.

Jim Mulvey, NCAC Director of Development, is responsible for developing and implementing the fundraising strategy at a national level as well as assisting partners with their state/local fundraising. Mr. Mulvey has worked in nonprofit development for his entire career of more than 24 years.

Previously, Jim was with the National Multiple Sclerosis Society where he led the development of a major gifts program for the Eastern NC Chapter. Jim has also worked as the Director of Development for the Libraries at NC State University, the Director of Development for the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh, and as a fundraising consultant to nonprofits throughout the east coast.

Jennifer Cox Bell, Associate Director of Programs, focuses on three critical areas of the national office's strategy: expansion within our state programs; development of practices and policies which will help strengthen member programs; and implementation of a sustainability plan which includes consulting with member programs in regards to model implementation and fund development.

Previously, Jennie served as Senior Assistant Director of Admissions and Program Coordinator for the Carolina College Advising Corps at the University of North Carolina. As the program coordinator for the Carolina Corps, she managed all day-to-day operations of the program including supervising, recruiting and training college advisers for service in 53 high schools statewide.

The NCAC leadership team also includes the Associate Provost and Director of Undergraduate Admissions of UNC-Chapel Hill, as well as members of the UNC Advancement Office, all of whom provide invaluable in-kind assistance with fundraising and sustainability. Senior UNC-Chapel Hill administrators are also actively involved as leaders and consultants, providing hundreds of hours of service annually at no cost to the Corps. These administrators include the Chancellor, the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, and the Director of Federal Affairs. University administrators are strong

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advocates for the Corps, and have demonstrated their commitment through written support, visits to potential funders and policymakers, and regular visits to high schools served by NCAC. The national headquarters is housed administratively within, and is a division of, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, which reports to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost. NCAC has established a vibrant advisory board that will guide its strategy for expansion and long-term sustainability and assist in turning a powerful and growing program into a full-fledged national movement-- one that will help thousands of deserving low-income students find their way to college.

Each state has a well-qualified program director. The national office currently provides financial and programmatic orientation for program directors of partner institutions through an annual program director's retreat, bi-weekly conference calls, regular site visits, a program director manual, and an online toolkit and listserv. For funds distributed from the national office, financial and narrative reports are required twice a year. Training and technical support for the online data collection system, ConnectEDU, is offered annually and on-demand as needed. All of these methods are employed for the continued monitoring of partner programs and to ensure compliance with the NCAC model requirements.

c. Multi-state Applicants Only -- consultation with State Commissions

As a collaborative organization dedicated to serving students alongside our fellow service organizations, our partners have reached out to service commissions in the following states:

*California: Mr. Jose Rivas, Program Director for the Destination College Advising Corps (UC Berkeley), contacted Karen Baker, Secretary of Service and Volunteering for California Volunteers, in January 2011. *Georgia: Dr. Libby Morris, Program Director for the Georgia College Advising Corps, contacted John Turner, Executive Director of the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism. National direct consultation form submitted to the Georgia Commission in January 2011. *Illinois:

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Ms. Lindsay Peters, Program Director for the Illinois College Advising Corps, contacted Ted Gibbs, Executive Director of the Illinois Commission, in January 2011. *Massachusetts: Mr. Andy Cahill, Program Coordinator for the Massachusetts College Advising Corps, contacted Emily Haber, Director of the Massachusetts Service Alliance. National direct consultation form submitted to the Massachusetts Alliance in January 2011. *Michigan: Mr. Dilip Das, Special Counsel to the Provost, contacted Paula Kaiser VanDam of the Michigan Community Service Commission, in January 2011. *Pennsylvania: Mr. Bob Freund, Program Director for the Keystone College Advising Corps (Franklin and Marshall College) contacted Karen Kaskey, Executive Director of PennSERVE: The Governor's Office of Citizen Service. National direct consultation forms submitted to PennSERVE in January 2011. *Utah: Ms. Aretha Minor, Program Director for the Utah College Advising Corps, contacted Shar Lewis, Executive Director for the Utah Commission on Volunteers. National direct consultation form submitted to the Utah Commission in January 2011.

d. Multi-state Applicants Only -- proposed member service sites

Proposed member service sites include the following:

California-Operating site: University of California, Berkeley, Service sites: High schools in eight cities, including San Francisco and Oakland

Georgia-Operating site: University of Georgia, Service sites: High schools in four cities, including Athens and Augusta

Illinois-Operating site: University of Illinois, Service sites: High schools in seven cities, including Chicago and Springfield

Massachusetts-Operating site: Tufts University, Service sites: High schools in 10 cities, including Boston

Michigan-Operating site: University of Michigan, Service sites: High schools in Detroit, Grand Rapids

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Pennsylvania-Operating site: Franklin and Marshall, Service sites: High schools in 12 rural towns

Utah-Operating site: University of Utah, Service sites: High schools in four cities, including Salt Lake City

All of the operating sites listed above are current NCAC partner institutions. Partner institutions must meet the following selection criteria:

- * It is a single stand-alone university with a 6-year graduation rate of at least 70%.
- * It is a flagship or prestigious university within its state. Flagship and prestigious universities bring resources, brand, and a strong alumni base to the NCAC network.
- * It demonstrates a commitment to the innovative mission and goals of NCAC.
- * It is committed to and has a strategy for locally funding a minimum of 60% of annual program expenses each year.

Selection of high school service sites is the decision of the program director at the partner institution with the following guidelines for consideration provided by the national office of NCAC.

1. Does the high school's population match the population NCAC aims to serve? Program directors with the assistance of NCAC research free and reduced lunch rates, college-going rates, college-going rates for adults in the community, average family income, and percent of underrepresented students to see if high schools match the population NCAC aims to serve.
2. Geographic considerations including proximity to the host institution, availability of affordable housing for advisers, proximity to other AmeriCorps or Advising Corps service sites.
3. What is the high school's level of receptiveness and commitment to the program?
4. What is the high school's ability to comply with student-level data requirements?
5. Is there a potential for local funding opportunities in the area?

The NCAC national office and advisory board currently use similar selection criteria to AmeriCorps regulation 45 CFR §2522.475 in that partner institutions of high education are selected based on their

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quality, social innovation, and ability to sustain the program. NCAC will continue to use the criteria above in addition to the specific requirements outlined in 45 CFR §2522.475 moving forward with selecting new partners. All high school service sites currently adhere to AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR §2522.450 in that the program serves children and youth, addresses educational needs, increases service-learning on higher-education campuses in partnership with their surrounding communities, and supports distressed communities.

e. Current Grantees Only -- N/A

f. Special Circumstances

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

3. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

a. Cost Effectiveness

NCAC's strategic roadmap allows it to scale within each state it is serving by implementing memoranda of understanding with university partners, which ensure they commit to contributing a minimum of 60 percent of the budget for at least 16 advisers at the state level. The national office contributes the remaining 40 percent of the budget through its national fundraising efforts. The NCAC model's cost-efficiency also makes it easily replicable and scalable. The cost per adviser averages \$45,000, including living allowances, health care, regional program support, training, management, evaluation, and loan forgiveness. Annual living allowance for advisers is \$22,000. To fully support this project, NCAC will need \$2,142,000 from non-corporation sources. Current commitments include \$500,000 from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation; \$500,000 from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation; and \$100,000 from an anonymous donor. In addition, NCAC is working with other potential funders including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, NY Life, and the Lumina Foundation for Education.

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b. Current Grantees Only -- N/A

c. Special Circumstances

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill serves as the fiscal agent and administrative home of the Advising Corps and works in partnership with other universities in 14 states.

Our proposed AmeriCorps program provides national service to students in seven states.

Four of our states, RI, VA, MO, and TX, enjoy AmeriCorps state support and will continue to apply for AmeriCorps state support, so they are not included in this national application. We will all work to share best practices and strengthen our program together.

As the Kennedy Serve America Act authorized college advising as a recognized AmeriCorps activity and mentioned the National College Advising Corps in the conference report language, we are excited to submit this application and hope to join the AmeriCorps national portfolio.

d. Budget Adequacy-N/A

e. EAPs and Full-time Fixed-Amount Applicants Only

The total amount budgeted to operate the program at the locations included in this application is \$2,864,400. The Corporation share is \$722,400, and the share to be raised by NCAC is \$2,142,000. NCAC has developed a growth and strategy plan with the Bridgespan Group addressing personnel, financial resources, and management capacity. Plans are in place to grow the network of program

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partners in current and new states while sustaining quality and the essence of the near-peer model. NCAC has raised substantial private funds and secured significant public support for its program. Since its national expansion in 2007, NCAC has developed and is now executing a plan to achieve long-term sustainability. NCAC has hired a development professional to manage its national fundraising program. Through commitments of the presidents, chancellors, and provosts of its partner universities, the program benefits from each partner's considerable development infrastructure, including major gifts officers, annual fund programs, and government relations staff. To date the organization has successfully secured diverse funding and support and built capacity with partner institutions to ensure sustainability. The national office has raised significant private support beginning with a grant from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation for a pilot year. In 2007, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation invested \$12 million over four years in national expansion following the successful pilot. This gift enabled expansion from one to ten partner institutions in ten states. In addition, the national office has secured funding from the Lumina Foundation for Education, Bank of America Foundation, TG, and the Kresge Foundation. In 2009, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funded the Bridgespan Group to complete the NCAC business plan.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A- as instructed by the application instructions as we are a first-time prospective grantee. We do have a third party evaluator, Professor Eric Bettinger and have produced such results as a 14% increase in college-going in both the urban and rural schools we serve as compared to control schools.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

Thank you for the opportunity to present clarifications to our application.

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Budget Clarification items

- a) As requested, the budget has been revised for a grant of \$336,000 with 40 MSYs and 40 member positions.

- b) As a new grantee, we confirm that we will complete the three pre-award documents and the on-line financial certification prior to the award of the grant.

- c) We verify that criminal history checks will be conducted on all members, employees, and other individuals who receive a payment from the grant as outlined in your requirements.

Programmatic Clarification Items

- a) Please clarify the amount of time members spend with individual students. Provide further description of how the program is designed for various grade level students and which activities are provided at which grade level to lead to the desired outcomes. If the primary cohort is seniors, with the goal of post-secondary enrollment, provide additional detail regarding the amount and level of intervention provided to those seniors.

Members spend over 80% of their time in direct service of students. Approximately 3/4 of this time is direct one-on-one advising. Most of this time is spent with seniors. The remaining 1/4 of direct time with students is spent on workshops and classroom presentations. The remaining 20% of members' time is used for an intensive summer training program, ongoing training sessions, data collection, evaluation, and meeting time with program supervisors.

Activities for specific grade levels:

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Seniors: One-on-one advising/assistance with college exploration, SAT/ACT registration, college applications, FAFSA completion, scholarship searches and applications, understanding financial aid award letters, preparing for transition from high school to college, finding resources for summer bridge opportunities. College visits also happen for seniors in the fall. The desired outcome is enrollment at a postsecondary institution. Each senior is seen multiple times and develops an action plan with the adviser.

Juniors: Some one-on-one advising, but also group workshops and classroom presentations related to preparing for college, SAT/ACT registration, and summer college prep. opportunities; also, college campus visits. The desired outcome is college awareness and preparation for the senior year activities.

Sophomores/Freshmen: Mostly workshops/classroom presentations related to importance of post-secondary education, financial planning, and how to prepare now. The desired outcome is early college awareness and preparation for junior year activities.

b) Please provide additional information regarding how frequently the member meets with either the program director or the on-site supervisor, and how the member is evaluated.

The member (adviser) meets with the on-site supervisor daily and program director at least once a month in person for in-service training and interacts several times a week (if not daily in many cases) by phone and email.

Evaluation: During the year, college advisers should receive informal feedback on an ongoing basis,

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primarily based on weekly and monthly reports and progress tracking on goals/deliverables. In addition, formal evaluations occur according to a schedule:

- * Each adviser completes an evaluation with the program director within the first 60 days of service.
- * Each adviser completes a formal mid-year evaluation in December or January.
- * Each adviser completes a formal year-end evaluation in May or June.

It is a best practice among programs that all evaluations be done in-person and include the site supervisor. In advance of these meetings:

- * The adviser completes a self-evaluation.
- * The site supervisor completes an adviser evaluation which can be the same as the adviser self-evaluation.
- * The program director completes an adviser evaluation.

Adviser/program midyear evaluation

We require that in December or January of each year, the program director visits each partner site to conduct a mid-year evaluation. The site supervisor, college adviser, and program director (along with others suggested by the site supervisor and approved by the program director) can be present at the this meeting. This mid-year assessment can be coupled with the adviser self-assessment.

Each participant is asked to consider the prompts in advance to prepare for the meeting. The purpose is to check in at mid-year and evaluate how the partnership is working, garner input from both the adviser and the site supervisor on the effectiveness of the program, determine modifications that would help the adviser achieve expected goals/deliverables, give the school representatives and adviser

Narratives

a chance to give feedback, and to make overall program improvements as needed.

A mid-year training session for all advisers in January can be used to assess the overall program to date and to identify areas of outstanding performance and opportunities for improvement. Each evaluation should include discussion of NCAC goal progression and local deliverables and outcomes.

c) In the Clarification narrative field, please confirm your desired grant award start date and member enrollment period start date.

The desired grant award start date will be July 1, 2011. The member enrollment start date will also be July 1, 2011. The grant award and member enrollment will end June 30, 2012.

d) The application narrative includes a reference to a 14% point increase in college-going rates through this program in Providence, RI and rural North Carolina. Please confirm whether the program has been operating in other locations and, if so, what success has been achieved.

The Advising Corps program has been operating in 14 states, including RI, NC, AL, AK, PA, MA, CA, GA, IL, MO, MI, TX, UT, and VA.

We have causal estimates of the program's impact on college enrollment. By comparing college enrollment rates at NCAC schools to neighboring control schools, our evaluation team, led by professors at Stanford University, have estimated the program's impact to be as high as a 14 percentage point increase in some states. There is heterogeneity of this effect across sites, but we are

Narratives

comfortable in concluding the positive impact to be an 8 to 12 percentage point increase in overall college enrollment rates at schools with NCAC advisers.

Performance Measure Clarification Items- Please see the Performance Measure section as well as our comments below.

a) As requested, performance measures ED1, ED2, and ED10 have been combined into one performance measure to meet the alignment requirements of this National Performance Measure.

b) The target values for the grant can be measured in one year, and as such, all values for ED1 and ED2 will apply only to 12th graders. The number of students who will begin the program (ED1) is 12,000. As a whole class treatment, this number represents all seniors. The number of students who will complete the program (ED 2) is 9,600.

c) The target value for (ED2) for the number of students who complete the program is the compliance rate (80% of 12th graders) who complete the college admissions process (application process).

d) The (ED10) number of students entering a post secondary institution target value is determined by the following:

80% compliance/completion rate = 9,600 students

40% average college-going rate before the Advising Corps members service + 14% point increase in college-going due to the member service =5,184 students enrolling in post secondary institutions.

In addition to the National Performance Measurement Requirement,

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the Advising Corps has the following performance measures around college awareness which we would be happy to share with the Corporation:

* Pathways to college

- o identify the key milestones in student's progress toward college in their academic career

- o compares these milestones to see if they align with other national research

- o identify if any "falling off" points exist on the path to college attendance

- o requires student level transcript data (course enrollment, grades, test scores) from high schools

* School culture

- o examine whether NCAC advisers are affecting change in college knowledge and the college-going culture at their schools

- o identify how NCAC advisers engage with students, parents, teachers, and administrators

- o requires survey of NCAC advisers and a separate survey for students in the high school

- o supplemented by school visits at select schools which will include interviews and focus groups

* Advisers/Members

- o examine how participation in the NCAC affects the future education and career trajectories of NCAC advisers

Continuation Changes

N/A

Performance Measures

SAA Characteristics

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

Priority Areas

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

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 86

Service Categories

Secondary Education

National Performance Measures

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Each advising corps site uses a data collection platform, Connect.Edu. Each school year we will upload the name of every student and track our interactions through completion of the school year. We will also survey students at the end of the school year.

Result: Output

Result.

The result of tracking the students who complete our program will be to see how effective our outreach is, to find ways to reach additional students, refine our program model, increase compliance, and track post-high school outcomes.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) ED2: Number of students who complete an AC ED program.

Target :Our target population is first generation, low -income students in the 12th grade.

Target Value: 9600

Instruments: On-line data collection platform- Connect.Edu, tally sheets, intake sheets, and end of year surveys.

PM Statement: Advisers will serve and track students to successful completion of the program which will result in increased college-going and effectiveness of our efforts. We anticipate a 14 percentage point increase in college-going rates from those who complete the program.

Result: Output

Result.

By measuring the number of students entering the program, we will be able to set goals and measure results throughout the year. Measuring the number of students will also allow us to focus on efforts and improve our recruitment and retention strategies.

Indicator: ED1: Students who start in an AC ED program.

Target :Our target population is first generation, low -income students in the 12th grade. As a whole

school treatment, we will enroll every senior and our average compliance/ completion rate is 80%.

Target Value: 12000

Instruments: On-line data collection platform- Connect.Edu, tally sheets, intake sheets, and surveys.

PM Statement: Advisers will enroll and survey students to ensure successful entry into the program which will result in increased college-going and effectiveness of our efforts.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

We will advise students on admission and financial aid practices and track students served after their high school graduation through the National Student Clearinghouse to see their postsecondary matriculation data. We have already secured base line data for partner schools.

Indicator: ED10: Students entering post-secondary institutions.

National Performance Measures

Result.

Target :By providing admissions and financial aid assistance, we will increase the number of high school seniors entering postsecondary institutions. Our target is a 14 percentage point increase at each school we serve.

Target Value: 5184

Instruments: Our data collection platform- Connect.edu, surveys, and the National Student Clearinghouse data which will be analyzed by the evaluation team from Stanford University.

PM Statement: We will increase the number of first generation, low -income students (from underserved high schools) entering higher education and will ensure they matriculate to schools which will serve them well.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Not Applicable

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable