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Executive Summary

The Big Brothers Big Sisters Consortium for Eastern Iowa is an alliance of 8 BBBS affiliates providing mentoring services for at-risk youth in 58 counties across the state. We will engage AmeriCorps members to create a new mentoring initiative, "Life Navigators," targeting disadvantaged youth at risk to leave school without a diploma. Members will identify these youth, engage volunteers, and provide these volunteers with specialized training and support to improve the youths' academic success.

Rationale and Approach

A. PROBLEM

According to state statistics, approximately 7,200 students in the state will drop out of Iowa high schools this year. The counties in the service territory covered by our 8 Consortium agencies are responsible for 69% of these dropouts. There are 4 counties in our service region (Black Hawk, Linn, Polk, and Scott) that together are responsible for 41% of the dropouts in the state of Iowa each year. (Source: Iowa Department of Education)

This issue is of particular importance in Cedar Rapids, where the dropout rate has doubled in the past five years, from 2.7% in 2004 to 5.6% in 2009. More than 1,000 students drop out of school in Polk County each year. In 2008-9, Davenport had the third lowest graduation rate of any school district in the state. In that year, 29.79% of students failed to graduate from Davenport high schools. This is more than double the state average of 12.79%.

Educators agree that any intervention aimed at reducing dropout rates must begin early in the child's academic career. According to a study by Stanford University's Hoover Institution: "There is a limited

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window of time in which to prevent reading difficulties and promote reading achievement; for most children what happens (or doesn't happen) from infancy through age 9 is critical. By third grade, reading struggles are strongly linked to later school difficulties, as well as behavioral problems, depression, and dysfunctional and/or negative peer relationships. What's more, research indicates that 74 percent of children whose reading skills are less than sufficient by third grade have a drastically reduced likelihood of graduating from high school."

This finding is made even more alarming by the fact that low-income students consistently score lower than their medium- and high-income peers on reading comprehension tests. In Cedar Rapids, for example, 46% of third-graders in the free and reduced lunch program failed to meet basic reading competencies, compared to only 16% of students who did not qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Low-income students score lower on basic skills tests, which make them more likely to drop out of school, which reduces their future earning potential. This perpetuates the cycle of generational poverty.

Another group that is disproportionately represented among high school dropouts in Iowa are minorities. According to the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, while Iowa has the highest graduation rate in the nation, they also have one of the highest disparities in the graduation rates of minorities compared to Caucasians. An African-American student is only 60% as likely to graduate, and a Hispanic student only 63% as likely to graduate, as their Caucasian peers.

B. SOLUTION: AMERICORPS MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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The Big Brothers Big Sisters Consortium for Eastern Iowa is made up of 8 affiliate agencies of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America organization. Our 8 agencies cover 58 counties, serving 73% of the children in the entire state: BBBS of the Mississippi Valley (fiscal agent and administrator), BBBS of Cedar Rapids, BBBS of Central Iowa, BBBS of Clinton, BBBS of Johnson County, BBBS of Northeast Iowa, BBBS of Muscatine County, and Heart of Iowa BBBS.

In our original AmeriCorps grant through the Iowa Commission for Volunteer Service (2008-2011), our members had one main service activity: volunteer engagement. Our members were charged with recruiting 250 new volunteers each year to serve as mentors in our program.

To date, our members have outperformed this goal by 290%, finding mentors for 1,405 children across the state of Iowa during the first two years of our three-year grant. Our 35 AmeriCorps members have engaged 1,405 new volunteers in community service, who have in turn contributed 57,600 hours of service to the children of Iowa. These statistics indicate the effectiveness of our Consortium program specifically, but also of the AmeriCorps initiative in general.

In light of the statistics in the "Problem" section above, we would like to, in the second three-year term of our grant, create a new, targeted mentoring initiative called "Life Navigators," in which our AmeriCorps team will specifically seek out and provide mentors for youth who have been identified as being at risk for dropping out of school. The goal of this program will be to improve the children's commitment to academics and their academic performance through their mentoring experience.

Our AmeriCorps members will be charged with identifying disadvantaged youth throughout Iowa,

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using CNCS's definition. Specifically, our members will seek out youth who are (a) economically disadvantaged, and (b) are at risk to leave school without a diploma.

We will define "economically disadvantaged" according to the poverty line threshold set by the U. S. Census Bureau. We will define youth who are "at risk to leave school without a diploma" if they meet any of the following criteria:

- * Low reading comprehension scores
- * Unsatisfactory academic performance
- * High absentee rates
- * A history of delinquency or behavioral issues

Because minorities in Iowa are much more likely to drop out of school than their Caucasian peers, a priority for our AmeriCorps members will be to identify minorities who meet these criteria.

BBBS collects income and race data for all families as part of our standard mentee enrollment process. We collect data on students' reading comprehension, academic records, absenteeism, and behavioral issues directly from the schools.

Mentoring is an effective intervention when it comes to improving academic success. For example, our 2010 annual outcomes-assessment agency review showed that, of the children mentored through our program:

- * 68% improved in course grades, with 27% improving in 3 classes or more
- * 97% improved or maintained a positive attitude towards school
- * 84% of youth showed improvements in one or more academic skills (use of school resources, academic performance, school preparedness, class participation or class behavior).

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A 2009 national study of the long-term impact of youth mentoring, conducted by Harris Interactive, revealed that adults who were mentored as children are 75% more likely than their peers to earn a 4-year college degree. The past mentees who were part of this study confirmed the impact that youth mentoring had on their academic success.

* 77% said that they did better in school because of their mentor

* 52% said that their mentor kept them from dropping out of school

* 65% said that their mentor helped them reach a higher level of education than they thought possible.

Although the mentoring relationships created by our members will adhere to BBBS of America standards of effective practice, serving this population will require four additional functions that are beyond our agencies' standard staff duties. We will require the service of AmeriCorps members to complete these additional functions in order to make Life Navigators possible:

1. Identification of youth. Children are referred to our organization using a broad range of general risk criteria. For Life Navigators, we specifically seek out and engage youth who fit the definition of "at risk to leave school without a diploma," above, and to provide those youth with a support framework to improve their academic performance and socialization.

This will require our members to coordinate with the superintendants, principals, and counselors at each school district in their service regions, coming up with a unique set of procedures for each district by which children are identified, enrolled, and tracked. In seeking out economically disadvantaged students, our members will focus on the Title I schools in our region.

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The members will be required to maintain contact with these school officials throughout the year in order to facilitate the collection of performance measure data on mentored children and coordination of quality supports for the matches, including enhanced communication and coordination between the educator, parent, and mentor.

In addition, we will need members to help coordinate BBBS services with existing community interventions, including statewide initiatives such as Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates and local initiatives such as Davenport's Weed and Seed crime-prevention program. The members would serve as a liaison for BBBS, providing us with another conduit for identifying at-risk youth and engaging them in our program.

2. Engagement of new volunteers. One of the greatest strengths of the mentoring process is the role modeling that our mentors offer to at-risk youth. To serve a population of youth at risk to leave school without a diploma, we will want to match them with mentors who can model professionalism and the benefits of a good education.

To achieve this, our members will focus on recruiting mentors through local corporate, service, retiree, and governmental organizations. Our AmeriCorps members will build relationships with local businesses and professional societies, stressing the importance of dropout prevention not only to the individual youths but to the community as a whole. During the Consortium's first 3-year grant term, our members created several such partnerships, including major nationally-known corporations such as Deere & Company, Monsanto, and Rockwell Collins.

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Our members will also serve on community partnership committees to connect mentoring to other local programs and resources.

Finally, because minorities in Iowa are at higher risk of dropping out of school than their Caucasian peers, a priority of this initiative will be for our AmeriCorps members to target minorities for volunteer recruitment. Strategies would include partnership-building with local minority action groups, fraternities and sororities, affinity groups, social organizations, and congregations. To assist in this, a program priority will be to enroll members who are fluent in a second language.

3. Specialized mentor training. In addition the standard mentor training modules developed by BBBS of America, our volunteers will need to be knowledgeable on the factors that cause a student to leave school without a diploma. Our members will facilitate specialized training opportunities on dropout prevention and current educational intervention strategies being implemented by each district and by the state -- for example, the Career Pathways model currently being implemented by the Iowa Department of Education.

BBBS staff will engage outside resources and experts to design the appropriate training modules. The AmeriCorps members will be responsible for coordinating these training sessions and ensuring the volunteers, children, and parents have the tools to aid in the child's progress. Frequency of these trainings will be determined by the number of new volunteers recruited each month.

Academic resource tools will also be made available to mentors, mentees, and parents, including online and in-house resource libraries, special presentations from area experts, and training in diversity (for example, poverty-awareness training by national expert Ruby K. Payne). Members will

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be able to refer stakeholders to these resources to address specific issues that come up during monthly contacts (see below)).

4. Specialized mentor supports. Finally, our AmeriCorps members will develop and execute a comprehensive support system that includes: an academic and match plan, a parent engagement strategy, reference and resource tools for stakeholders, and measurements for performance and enhancement activities. Each Consortium partner will tailor this system of supports to meet the unique needs of the community they serve.

The main component of this support system will be conducted by our members: monthly contact with the mentors, the children, and the children's parents. These contacts will serve multiple purposes.

First, the members will track the strength of the bond between the mentor and child, particularly in the early months of the mentoring relationship, using the "Strength of Relationship" measurement tool developed by BBBS of America. This tool allows us to quantify each stakeholder's feelings about the mentoring relationship. The scoring of this tool will allow the members to see which mentoring relationships are most in danger of dissolving and will even recommend specific interventions to strengthen the bond.

Secondly, the member will ask all contacts (child, mentor, parent) if there are any issues or concerns with the mentoring relationship. This will give our members the opportunity to identify and alleviate small conflicts before they grow into large conflicts that threaten the match. This process will help the mentor and child remain matched for a longer period of time, which in turn will increase the impact that mentoring has in the child's life.

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Third, the member will be available to the mentor to answer questions and reinforce training where needed. Many first-time mentors need this level of personal contact for the first 6 to 12 months of the mentoring relationship. Each mentoring relationship is different, and volunteers often need guidance to help them build lines of communication with their assigned child. This service reduces the number of volunteers who exit the program early.

As another support for our mentor volunteers, our members will create a series of activities to support the mentor relationships. Some of these activities are for the mentors only, including volunteers support groups where new and experienced mentors can meet and compare notes. We also provide a full calendar of fun, educational, and athletic activities each year for the mentor and child to attend together. This not only strengthens the mentor-child bond, but also provides the economically-disadvantaged children in our program with access to experiences their family would not be able to afford on their own.

Summary: All four of these functions (child identification, volunteer engagement, volunteer training, and mentor support) will be necessary to create a broad-reaching and effective program that improves the academic success of the youth served. This makes the program labor- and time-intensive. The Consortium agencies lack the staff to undertake this project while still maintaining ongoing, mainstream mentoring services. It will require the service activities of AmeriCorps members carrying out these specific support functions in order to provide effective services to this at-risk population.

The program also requires a level of flexibility of the members to effectively serve various stakeholders. Some service activities, for example, may include evening and weekend hours. A

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mixture of full- and half-time member slots should allow for this flexibility and offer a broader base of support to our volunteers and clients.

C. AMERICORPS MEMBER SELECTION, TRAINING, AND SUPERVISION

1. Member Selection

Each BBBS agency in the Consortium will recruit their own AmeriCorps members from the communities they serve, so that the members will be able to draw upon their own local experiences and connections in carrying out their service activities.

We will give special consideration to members who were disadvantaged themselves as youth, particularly those who were the first in their family to graduate high school and/or college. These members would not only be able to help other youths achieve these goals, but would also be able to serve as an example for the at-risk youth in Life Navigators.

It is a program priority to increase the ethnic diversity of our AmeriCorps team. This will facilitate increasing the percentage of minorities represented in the children served and new volunteers recruited. To this end, we will begin member recruitment at local minority organizations, including Martin Luther King Centers in Waterloo and Davenport; the African-American Business Association of Des Moines; the Alpha Phi Alpha chapters in Ames, Iowa City, Davenport, and Des Moines; the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce chapters in Davenport and Des Moines; and the League of United Latin American Citizens chapters in Davenport and Des Moines.

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One main source for recruiting members will be current students or recent graduates of their local colleges. The Consortium agencies have been recruiting their members through partnerships with University of Iowa, Iowa State, Drake University, and St. Ambrose University. St. Ambrose University provides a 25% match for the education award of any of their students who serve in our program.

Another source for recruitment will be retired Baby Boomers through partnerships with the Center for Active Seniors and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program. Many school districts in the region have recently had to reduce staff. Life Navigators is an excellent opportunity to engage these professionals in community service that will draw upon their previous experience and relationships.

We will seek out candidates through many venues, including the AmeriCorps online application process, Craig's List, presentations in the community, local job and service fairs, church groups, and word of mouth from existing members.

To fill our AmeriCorps slots, the Consortium will look for candidates with a Bachelor's degree in social services, human resources, education, or a related field. We will also accept undergraduate students in these fields if they have a minimum of 2 years of related work experience. Experience working with youth populations is preferred. The Consortium will be looking for candidates with the ability to relate well in a multicultural environment. All AmeriCorps members must pass criminal and sex offender background checks.

It is BBBS' policy to find the best candidates for any position, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. The Consortium will strive for a team of AmeriCorps members that

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reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.

The slots will be divided up between the 8 Consortium agencies based on three considerations: (1) a demonstration of compelling community need for dropout prevention, (2) a history of cooperation between the Consortium agency and prospective community partners, upon which the members will be able to build new partnerships, and (3) the organizational capacity to oversee the service activities of the number of members requested.

Our estimate at this time is that the majority of these members will be needed in the urban centers of Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, and Iowa City, and we have set the grantee shares for supervisor salaries accordingly. We will readjust these estimates as we get a clearer idea of where program need is the greatest at the start of each new grant year.

The members will be assigned to specific slots based on three considerations: their level of education, their past work experience, and their familiarity with the community to be served.

2. Member Training

At the start of their service, all AmeriCorps members will take part in a day-long orientation training. The morning session will focus on both AmeriCorps policies and procedures (including such subjects as time sheets, prohibited member activities, grievance procedures, and drug and alcohol policies) and BBBS policies (including attendance and punctuality, confidentiality, and the members' responsibilities as mandatory reporters).

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The afternoon session will provide the members with special training in two subjects specific to Life Navigators: poverty awareness and dropout prevention. These trainings will not only prepare the members to carry out their service to at-risk youths in the Life Navigators, but will also prepare them to provide poverty awareness and dropout prevention training to the mentor volunteers in the program.

After this orientation session, AmeriCorps members will receive on-site training in the "Service Delivery Model" which is BBBS of America's standard procedures for youth mentoring. Members will be trained on the entire process of enrolling a child, screening a volunteer, and creating a match. First, he or she will observe the BBBS staff case manager go through this process. Then the AmeriCorps member will go through this process him- or herself, under the direct supervision of the BBBS site supervisor.

Some members will also receive training in specialized areas of focus, determined by their assigned member roles. These trainings could include public speaking, community organizing, public relations and marketing, and counseling.

We will hold additional training sessions for all AmeriCorps members every three months. These sessions will include:

- * citizenship training, featuring reflection pieces on the many ways to make citizenship and public service an expression of your individual relationship with the community.
- * disaster relief training, first aid, and volunteer management
- * "Life After AmeriCorps," including classes on career planning, job interviewing skills, and time management.

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All trainings will be implemented by Program Director Chad Driscoll, drawing upon the assistance and expertise of other community partners.

3. Ethic of Service and Civic Responsibility

In order to encourage an ethic of service and civic responsibility, the Consortium's AmeriCorps members will be expected to take part in several community service projects throughout their term in the program. In the past, our members have helped build houses with Habitat for Humanity, cleaned up the community center for the local chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens, refurbished the offices of the Quad City Ballet, and planted trees in an endangered section of the Mississippi River watershed. We hold a blood drive each November.

In addition to this, an ethic of service and civic responsibility will be a part of the day-to-day service provided by our AmeriCorps team. We will encourage our members to challenge themselves to take on extra service activities. For example, many of our members collect donated gifts for the children in our program each Christmas.

Finally, we will encourage our members to become mentors in one of our mentoring environments themselves. When our members have done so in the past, it has not only added a new dimension to their AmeriCorps service but it has enhanced their understanding of our program and its impact in a child's life.

In regular meetings with the Program Director, and at their three annual service evaluations (see "Member Supervision," below), each AmeriCorps member will be asked to discuss how their

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understanding of their role as citizens has impacted the services they have performed for AmeriCorps and BBBS. In addition, the AmeriCorps members' three annual service reviews will provide them with a structured opportunity to reflect back on and learn from their year of service.

4. Member Supervision

Program Director Chad Driscoll will oversee the AmeriCorps program. Half of his time will be spent administering the Consortium program, and the other 50% will be spent administering BBBS of the Mississippi Valley's other AmeriCorps program in the state of Illinois.

In their day-to-day service activities, all AmeriCorps members will operate under the direct supervision of the Executive Directors and/or Site Supervisors of their agencies, all of whom supervised AmeriCorps members in our 2008-11 AmeriCorps program.

At the start of each new program year, Driscoll meets with staff members from all 8 Consortium agencies for a supervisor training. This not only reinforces past trainings but also provides an official venue for passing on updates to AmeriCorps regulations and program design.

Throughout the year, Driscoll will stay in contact with staff at all sites where AmeriCorps members have been placed. He will also send out regular email communications, passing on any news or directives from CNCS. He will visit each program site at least twice a year to speak with both members and supervisors. These activities will facilitate communications between all 8 agencies so that the Consortium can operate as a single entity.

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The Consortium Program Director will conduct an individual service review of each AmeriCorps member at three points during the grant year: 90 days after enrollment, halfway through the member contract, and at the end of the contract term. The main purpose for this review is to evaluate the member's success at carrying out his or her assigned service activities. The 90-day review in particular allows the Program Director to gauge any additional training or oversight that the member and/or site supervisor may need to ensure member retention.

D. OUTCOME: PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The following three National Performance Measures will allow us to track the effectiveness of our AmeriCorps team and the Life Navigators program they create.

ED3-A: "Number of disadvantaged youth/mentor matches that are commenced by the AmeriCorps program."

Our members will enroll 250 new youth each year who have been identified as low-income and as being at risk to leave school without a diploma. Our members will recruit 250 specially-skilled and dedicated volunteers to provide enhanced mentoring services for these youth.

Our progress towards this goal will be measured by a review of each agency's case files. All BBBS affiliates compile and report this information to the national office at the end of each month.

ED4-A: "Number of disadvantaged youth/mentor matches that were sustained by the AmeriCorps

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program for at least the required time period."

While Performance Measure ED3-A measures the quantity of youth enrolled and volunteers engaged in Life Navigators, Performance Measure ED4-A will measure the quality of these new mentoring relationships. The mentor selection process, trainings, and supports that our members will provide will, if successful, lead to longer-lasting mentoring relationships, which will have a deeper impact in the lives of the children served.

Our goal will be that 60% (150) of the mentoring relationships created in 2010-11 will still be active at the end of the program year. This goal is higher than BBBS of America's retention rate of 46%.

Our progress towards this goal will be measured by a review of each agency's case files. All BBBS affiliates compile and report this information to the national office at the end of each month.

ED5: "Number of students with improved academic performance."

Although it will be several years before we will be able to determine the percentage of children mentored through Life Navigators who successfully complete high school, this performance measure will allow us to track the short-term academic benefits the children receive from our program.

Our goal is for at least 150 of the 250 children mentored through this program (60%) will show improvement in their course grades each year.

We will track the academic progress of Life Navigators children through a review of student report

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cards and through our own internal outcomes-assessment measurements, including surveys of both the students and their teachers about the students' academic progress and their changing attitudes towards school.

E. VOLUNTEER GENERATION

Three of the four service activities our members will undertake to make Life Navigators possible are volunteer engagement, training, and support. Without these three functions, the agencies lack the capacity to create the Life Navigators program.

To generate volunteers, our members will use a combination of recruitment strategies, including advertising, job fairs, mentor recruitment drives, and partnerships with local organizations. In our first three-year grant term, organization partners included corporations, lodges, service groups, congregations, minority organizations, college campuses, veterans' administrations, and senior centers. Our most successful partnerships have been with local corporations, including Iowa Health Systems, Deere and Company, Monsanto, and Rockwell Collins.

For Life Navigators, our members will seek engagement of diverse volunteers to serve as role models for youths. Diversity includes ethnic, educational, age, and gender. To achieve this, we seek to enroll members from these groups to build help partnerships between BBBS and their diverse populations. In particular, we will seek out Spanish-speaking and African American members to assist in recruitment of minority youth and volunteers.

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After the volunteers have been recruited by our members and then screened by BBBS staff, our AmeriCorps team's main focus will be volunteer support. Our members will carry out several service activities to support the mentors, ensuring that they are sufficiently prepared for the mentoring process and that they remain in their mentoring relationship for a minimum of 12 months, maximizing the impact that their volunteer services has in the child's life.

First, our members will facilitate specialized volunteer trainings in mentoring best practices, dropout prevention strategies, and diversity awareness. These trainings will feature the standard mentor training modules developed by BBBS of America, supplemented by special dropout-prevention trainings designed by local experts and partner organizations.

After the volunteers have been trained and placed with their mentee, the members will maintain monthly contact with them, keeping track of the progress of the mentoring relationship and offering the volunteers the chance to ask questions or discuss any problems that may have arisen. These monthly contacts serve two purposes: to ensure the health of the match, and to ensure the satisfaction of the volunteer.

Finally, our members will facilitate support groups for the mentors, offering them a chance to speak with more experienced volunteers about the mentoring process. These groups help the volunteers from feeling that they are offering their services in a vacuum, showing them instead that their service is part of a larger initiative.

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F. PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Life Navigators will require our members to create and maintain partnerships between BBBS and two different types of community partners.

First of all, our members will be charged with creating open lines of communication between BBBS and officials from each school in our service region. We will require information from the schools to help us identify students who would most greatly benefit from participation in Life Navigators. These partners will also help us track the students' progress and collect performance measure data.

Because each school district has unique rules on confidentiality and outside services within the schools, our members will need to create lines of communication with each district. Our members will then be charged with maintaining this partnership, coordinating with local school officials on child recruitment and mentee outcome tracking.

Secondly, to facilitate volunteer recruitment, our members will be creating working partnerships with local corporations and professional groups. These partnerships are vital to Life Navigators as a reliable source of well-educated working professionals to serve as mentors and role models in the program.

However, this AmeriCorps grant, and the Life Navigators program that the grant will make possible, will help BBBS form community partnerships in a much more meaningful and long-lasting way. Several communities in our service region are already putting together coalitions to combat high dropout rates in the state.

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BBBS of the Mississippi Valley is one of 32 agencies in the "Achieve Quad Cities" alliance, formed in 2009 to create a series of community-based interventions to increase local graduation rates by 5% over the next ten years. BBBS's contribution to this alliance to date has been a mentoring program which engages local at-risk middle-school students in career-engagement activities. The 2010 pilot for program was operated by a single Iowa AmeriCorps member, carrying out the same service activities that our members will need to undertake in order to make Life Navigators possible. This member's service serves as a model for Life Navigators.

BBBS of Clinton has a similar program in the works called "College Pals," in which high school volunteers in the Clinton School District mentor elementary school students who are struggling in school. The program has a double benefit, not only helping the mentees to bring up their grades, but also giving the mentors valuable experience in tutoring and teaching.

BBBS of Cedar Rapids is collaborating with the local Rotary chapter on "Legacy of Learning," in which the local elementary school identifies children struggling with academic and/or emotional problems, and BBBS provides these children with mentors to help them through all seven years of middle and high school. Rotary provides college scholarships for any children who complete this program.

In each of these cases, local entities have identified problems that the youth in their communities struggle with, and they have identified Big Brothers Big Sisters as the solution to those problems. BBBS has worked in partnership with these local entities to adapt the mentoring services we provide to meet the unique community needs that have been identified. This AmeriCorps program will allow us to increase our level of contribution to these efforts statewide.

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G. SUSTAINABILITY

The Consortium has already demonstrated the sustainability of our AmeriCorps program in our first three-year grant term by securing local funders and businesses as sponsors of our program. Last year, for example, we secured funding to cover our agency match from the Community Foundation of the Great River Bend, the Riverboat Development Authority, and Modern Woodmen of America.

We were able to secure these sponsorships for a simple program in support of general youth mentoring services. Now that we plan to direct those services towards a single, more immediate, more impactful community goal, we should be able to secure additional sponsorships, particularly in those communities (Cedar Rapids, Clinton, Davenport) where there are already active dropout-prevention initiatives.

In these key communities, Life Navigators will serve as BBBS's contribution to existing dropout-prevention community initiatives. A three-year grant term will be sufficient to fine-tune Life Navigators and prove its efficacy at helping students achieve academic success. This, along with the support of the other dropout-prevention partners in each community, will facilitate finding local funding sources to replace CNCS funding at the end of the grant term.

More importantly, once we have established the procedures for Life Navigators, we will be able to transport this model into communities that have not yet organized their own dropout-prevention initiatives. This will allow BBBS and the AmeriCorps members who instituted Life Navigators to serve

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as a catalyst for creating new dropout-prevention community organizations across the state.

Organizational Capability

A. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Primary contact for this grant application is Alex Kolker at BBBS of the Mississippi Valley. Secondary contact is Program Director Chad Driscoll.

The eight BBBS agencies of the Consortium have over 150 years of collective experience providing youth mentoring services to the children of Iowa. The program they implement, the Service Delivery Model, is the product of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America's century of experience providing mentors for at-risk youth nationwide.

BBBS of the Mississippi Valley, which will serve as the fiscal agent for the grant, has experience managing multiple federal grants. From 2001 to 2004, the agency was the recipient of a three-year \$219,684 grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. They successfully administered a \$586,777 Department of Education Mentoring Programs grant from 2007 to 2010. They began their first AmeriCorps program in 2006 with a \$390,599 grant from Serve Illinois. The agency is currently administering separate AmeriCorps programs in Iowa and Illinois. BBBS of the Mississippi Valley has administered all of these grants successfully, expending all funds responsibly and achieving all outcome goals to the satisfaction of funding agencies.

The Consortium AmeriCorps program has greatly increased the capacity of our 8 agencies, increasing our number of children served by 1,400 over the last 2 years. Because of this grant, we have been able to provide mentors for hundreds of children in communities that our agencies would not otherwise

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have been able to serve.

Our AmeriCorps program has become fully integrated into our organizational structure. All member activities are overseen by the assigned site supervisors, who in turn report to the Program officers at each agency. These officers answer to the agency Executive Directors, who in turn report to each agency's community board. This integration will allow us to incorporate our members' new Life Navigators program into our existing agency model.

Each of the 8 agencies receives funding from a broad range of local sources, including government and foundation grants, United Way, corporate sponsorships, private donations, and special event revenues. This funding was sufficient for all 8 agencies to supply their portion of the grantee share throughout the first three-year term of the grant.

The combined annual budget of our 8 agencies is \$3.5 million, so a CNCS grant of \$199,500 would equal only 5.6% of our overall revenues.

B. STAFFING

For the purposes of administering this AmeriCorps grant, the Consortium will have the following structure:

BBBS of the Mississippi Valley will serve as the fiscal agent and administrator of the program, acting as the liaison between the ICVS and the 8 Consortium agencies. The agency will:

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- * enroll members
- * maintain paperwork
- * conduct member trainings
- * conduct three annual service reviews for each member
- * ensure compliance of Consortium sites with AmeriCorps regulations
- * submit progress reports

Chad Driscoll, a staff member at BBBS of the Mississippi Valley, will serve as the Program Director, and will be responsible for making sure all the above responsibilities are met. Driscoll began as an AmeriCorps member at BBBS of the Mississippi Valley four years ago. Once his term of service ended, he spent a year as the Special Events Coordinator at our agency, planning six fundraising events each year. We will be relying on his organizational skills and his familiarity with the AmeriCorps program in the carrying out of his duties.

BBBS of the Mississippi Valley Vice President of Administrative Services Jo Ellen Winegar will oversee the financial accounting of the grant. She has served in this capacity for the Consortium for the past two-and-a-half years. Winegar will:

- * draw down and distributing funds
- * collect match funds from Consortium agencies
- * provide living allowances for members
- * submit financial reports
- * facilitate audits

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The Site Supervisor at each agency will have the following responsibilities to the Consortium:

- * recruit and select members
- * serve as the members' direct supervisor
- * approve member hours
- * turn in monthly match and expense reports and electronically file supervisors' timesheets
- * ensure that members comply with all BBBS policies and procedures

The supervisors at each site will be: Bill Dodd in Ames, Kate O'Brien-May in Cedar Rapids, Mick Welding in Clinton, Mike Hemmer and Jeremy Lewis in Clive, Allyson Sedlak in Davenport, Jill Kromminga in Iowa City, Krista Regennitter in Muscatine, Melanie Beath in Marshalltown, Rita Baker in Newton, and Maria Benham in Waterloo.

All of these people have served as site supervisors for our Consortium in the second year of our program except for the Executive Director at BBBS of Clinton, Mick Welding. Welding, however, oversaw AmeriCorps programs at two of his previous jobs: the Sterling Christian School and the Sterling-Rock Falls YMCA.

Each of these staff members will have other BBBS duties beyond member supervision. The amount of time they will need to devote to AmeriCorps will depend on the number of members assigned to each site. Because of this, the supervisors at the larger agencies (BBBS of Cedar Rapids, Central Iowa, and Johnson County) will need to devote a larger percentage of their time to overseeing member service activities.

Narratives

Site Supervisors will oversee the day-to-day service activities of the members, while the Program Director oversees the AmeriCorps program itself, ensuring compliance with CNCS regulations and working to make sure as many members as possible complete their contracts.

This structure provides a system of checks and balances. Each member will have two levels of supervision, their site supervisor and the Consortium Program Director. This provides each member with two recourses for the resolution of conflicts, giving the Consortium two opportunities to resolve issues that would otherwise lead to a member exiting the program early.

Any member who is having a conflict with their BBBS staff supervisor can turn to the Program Director for help to mediate any disagreements. The member's three annual review meetings with the Program Director serve as an opportunity for the member to voice any concerns.

The Program Director will monitor site compliance for the 8 agencies through an annual comprehensive group training session, through quarterly supplemental training sessions for all AmeriCorps members, through bimonthly inspections of all program sites, through three annual service reviews conducted with each individual member, and through a review of the measurable results of the member's service to the Consortium.

D. MULTI-SITE APPLICANT:

The Consortium is a partnership that allows 8 BBBS agencies to share a pool of AmeriCorps members.

Narratives

The Program Director projects how many slots will be assigned to each agency at the start of each program year, based upon each agency's demonstration of community need and the potential for the community partnerships necessary to support a Life Navigators program. This system allows us the flexibility to place members where they will have the greatest impact and to reassess that potential for impact each year.

The potential sites are all current BBBS bases of operations, complete with office space and BBBS staff: Ames, Cedar Rapids, Clinton, Clive, Davenport, Iowa City, Marshalltown, Muscatine, Newton, and Waterloo, Iowa. For Life Navigators, however, it is likely that most members will be placed in the larger urban centers, which have a larger percentage of students who leave school without graduating: Cedar Rapids, Davenport, Des Moines (Clive), and Iowa City.

All the sites listed above have hosted AmeriCorps members (and Site Supervisors) in our first three-year Consortium grant program. All 8 Consortium agencies have already demonstrated the financial capability to support AmeriCorps members in our first three-year grant term.

The Program Director will make at least two visits a year to any Consortium site where an AmeriCorps member is serving, to ensure member satisfaction and monitor member supervision.

E. CURRENT GRANTEES ONLY:

Enrollment: Through our multi-level member recruitment strategies and cooperation between Consortium agencies, our Consortium has achieved 100% enrollment in each of the first two years of

Narratives

our program, and we are well on our way to achieving this same feat in the current program year.

Retention: In our first two years of our current Iowa AmeriCorps grant, one full-time member out of our 10 FTEs members did not complete their contract in 2008-9 and 2 full-time members out of 11 FTEs did not complete their contracts in 2009-10, for a retention rate of 90% and 82% respectively.

Because of the narrower focus of Life Navigators, we hope to engage members who are already dedicated to improving educational outcomes (Masters of Education students, for example, or former school teachers). The results of the members' service activities will be more specific and easier to measure. These personal rewards of service will encourage greater member retention.

Cost per MSY: Because we are asking for an increase in the number of MSYs awarded, we are asking for a cost per MSY \$13,300. This is the national average for AmeriCorps State programs and just slightly higher than the cost per MSY of our current Iowa AmeriCorps grant. Keeping our cost per MSY at this level will continue to encourage local financial support for our AmeriCorps program, particularly as our members begin to have a demonstrable impact in the academic success of at-risk youth in the community.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

A. COST EFFECTIVENESS

CORPORATION COST PER MEMBER SERVICE YEAR: We have requested ICVS's average CNCS share of \$13,300 per MSY. This is the national average for AmeriCorps State programs and just slightly higher than the cost per MSY of our current Iowa AmeriCorps grant.

Narratives

A \$199,500 grant from CNCS will cover only 57% of the costs necessary to institute Life Navigators. The 8 Consortium agencies will cover the remaining 43% through the same sources they used to fund their grantee share in our first three-year Iowa AmeriCorps grant: through local corporate and private sponsors and special event revenue.

In addition, those Consortium agencies which are already partners in a community dropout prevention program (see "Partnerships and Collaborations," above) will receive financial and in-kind support for Life Navigators through these partnerships: Achieve Quad Cities for BBBS of the Mississippi Valley, the Clinton School District for BBBS of Clinton, and Rotary for BBBS of Cedar Rapids.

B. CURRENT GRANTEES ONLY: For the second three-year term of the grant, we are proposing a deeper impact of our program by focusing on providing mentoring for youth determined to be at extraordinary risk. It will require a greater number of AmeriCorps members to sufficiently serve this population, but thanks to a greater level of community support for dropout-prevention programming we will not need to ask for an increased CNCS share per MSY.

D. BUDGET ADEQUACY: In order to create a targeted program to provide specialized mentoring services to youth at risk to leave school without a diploma, we will need to engage the services of a team of AmeriCorps members to carry out 4 support functions that are outside BBBS standards of practice.

Narratives

Although we propose to serve fewer children in our second three-year grant term than our AmeriCorps team has served in our current grant term, our members will seek out those youth in greatest need and providing them with additional services outside BBBS standards of practice to help them achieve academic success.

To achieve this, we will need to secure additional MSYs for our program. However, because of the existing support for dropout-prevention in several of our communities, we will be able to supply the match funds for these additional MSYs without asking for an increase in our per-MSY CNCS share.

Although we are increasing our number of MSYs, we will no longer (as we did during our first three-year grant term) be dividing any FTEs into quarter- or minimum-time slots. As such, this increase in MSYs will not mean a significant increase in the number of members our Program Director will be supervising. We are confident that our Program Director will be able to continue to oversee both the Consortium's Iowa AmeriCorps grant and BBBS of the Mississippi Valley's Illinois AmeriCorps grant simultaneously.

Sharing the costs of a Program Director with BBBS of the Mississippi Valley's Illinois grant is a cost-effective way to be able to dedicate a staff position to the management of both programs.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

We will evaluate the effectiveness of the service activities of our AmeriCorps members by tracking three key metrics:

- * Number of new mentoring relationships created
- * Duration of mentoring relationships (which indicates the quality of the enrollment and support processes)

Narratives

* Youth outcomes, including academic performance and social development.

We will report these findings based on the results of the various outcomes-assessment tools used by each of the Consortium agencies. Some agencies are administering the Program Outcome-based Evaluation survey, while other agencies are part of the pilot project administering the Youth Outcome Survey. Both of these tools were designed by BBBS of America.

Although the methods of the surveys differ, they track many of the same indices. For the evaluation of our Consortium program, we will be focusing on the educational outcomes:

* Percentage of mentored youth who have improved in their attitudes towards school

* Percentage of mentored youth who have improved in their school grades

Finally, we will evaluate our AmeriCorps program by tracking member enrollment and retention, as tracked in our member service files.

We will report all of these figures, covering the entire three-year term of our grant, in the fall of 2011.

Amendment Justification

n/a

Clarification Summary

** Clarification Summary #2 (4 May 11) **

BUDGET

1. "Please include the purpose of member travel (Section I. C) in the budget."

Narratives

2. "Please include the explanation of the \$15/person training costs (Section I. G) in the budget."
3. "Please include cost allocation information (Section I. I) in the budget."

We have made all of the requested changes.

CLARIFICATION SUMMARY

1. "Please verify that your program checks the statewide criminal history registry, in addition to conducting FBI fingerprint checks and a check of the National Sex Offender Public Registry for all members and grant-funded staff with recurring access to vulnerable populations."

Criminal history background checks will be conducted on all members, the program director and site supervisors in accordance with CNCS requirements. Background checks will include the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation, the National Sex Offender registry, and FBI fingerprint check, as appropriate based on federal requirements.

2. "Please explain whether College PALS also served disadvantaged youth at risk of dropping out of school. If so, what is the value-add of the mentors from Life Navigators being professionals from the community representing all career pathways as compared to the mentors from College Pals not having that characteristic."

There are several significant differences between College PALS and Life Navigators.

- a) College PALS is only for youth interested in a field in agriculture. Life Navigators can assist at-risk

Narratives

youth interested in a wide variety of career pathways, or even youth who wish to explore multiple career fields at once.

b) The "mentoring" for College PALS most often includes trading of emails, tours of campus, and classroom presentations. The Life Navigators mentoring will be actual one-on-one time that the mentor and child spend together, building a personal relationship and pursuing whatever activities they choose. This personal relationship not only helps steer the child into a career path, but also helps build the child's self-confidence and self-motivation.

c) The mentors in the Life Navigators are working professionals in the student's chosen career field, meaning that they have a much clearer idea of the skills the child will need to enter that field themselves. They can also better instruct the youth on soft skills such as office etiquette and appropriate modes of dress. Finally, they have access to a working business in the student's career field, meaning that the student can explore the many different jobs within that corporate structure and they can see actual projects underway and the machinery and planning necessary to complete them.

3. "The response about extra service activities does not satisfactorily address how the program will ensure that extra service activities are within the scope of the grant and within the supervision structure of the program. What is the value to your program of members conducting outside service activities? Please explain how many hours members spend in these outside service activities. Does the program assist members in identifying organizations and activities to ensure that they address compelling needs and are allowable for AmeriCorps service? How are these activities overseen to ensure compliance?"

Narratives

We require each of our members to take part in at least two community service projects (beyond their service activities on behalf of BBBS) each year. We offer projects on "Make a Difference" Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, National Youth Service Day, and Iowa Shelter Day.

We have also had members create projects based on needs they have personally seen in the community, which are vetted by the BBBS AmeriCorps Program Director, and which all members are invited to take part in. One member organized a river cleanup project. Another organized a "Toys for Tots" Christmas drive.

All member community service projects are carried out under the review and supervision of the Program Director, who ensures that the projects address compelling needs and are allowable for AmeriCorps service.

We have included this requirement for our members as part of their citizenship training for their AmeriCorps service. It promotes a sense of volunteerism among the members and also spreads the impact of our program into the community. Finally, we have found that these community service projects are excellent team-building exercise which strengthen the bond between the members enrolled in our program.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

1. "Please change the MSY assigned to the education focus area from 15 to 10.48 in the performance measure section of the application."

Narratives

2. "Please add the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in the instrument field of the intermediate outcome in the performance measure section of the narrative."

We have made both of these changes in the eGrants system.

3. In the clarification summary field, please explain whether you will be able to get Iowa Test of Basic Skills results in math and literacy from the schools for the youth served.

We will attempt to retrieve the ITBS scores in two ways: (1) directly from the school districts, and (2) directly from the students themselves.

We have devised this double system because there are some school districts in our territory who are reluctant to share their test scores with third-party agencies because of confidentiality regulations.

However, by seeking out these test scores from both sources at once, we are confident that we will collect scores from a vast majority of the students served in the Life Navigators program each year.

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** Clarification Summary #1 (25 Apr 11) **

BUDGET CLARIFICATIONS:

Narratives

1. "Please revise your budget to equal the funding and MSY amount listed above."

We have changed the distribution of the AmeriCorps slots to 8 full-time, 4 half-time, 1 quarter-time, and 1 minimum-time, which equals 10.48 MSYs. We have adjusted all other budget items to suit this smaller number of members.

1. C. "Please provide the purpose for member travel."

The purpose for member travel is to allow members to visit various service sites and volunteer recruitment opportunities throughout the agencies' service regions. Several of the consortium partners provide mentoring services across multiple counties, requiring a small but regular amount of travel to create and/or maintain mentoring programs in these remote sites.

1. E. "Please move costs that are not consumable materials and supplies to Section I.I"

We moved \$2,150 of non-consumable material costs (Communications, Copier Fees, Postage, and Management Information Systems) to Budget Section I.I -- "Other Program Operating Costs."

1. E. "Please provide cost allocation information for costs that are charged to more than this grant."

All cost allocations for line items that are charged to more than this grant (i.e.: Communications, Postage, MIS) are calculated by a shared cost-allocation plan we developed with the assistance of the Iowa Commission for Volunteer Service. Under this plan, we budget 20% of these costs specifically to supporting our administration and support of the AmeriCorps program.

Narratives

1. G. "Please explain what the \$15/person training cost covers."

The \$15 per-person training costs cover training materials and guest speakers for our training programs.

I. I. "Please move the criminal history check costs from Section F to Section I."

We have moved the Criminal Background Check line-items from Section F to Section I.

I. I. "Please verify that all grant-funded staff have already receive a criminal history check."

In compliance with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America policy and the requirements of our organization-wide liability insurance, all Big Brothers Big Sisters staff must complete a criminal history check (including the National Sex Offender Registry and an FBI fingerprint check) before they are allowed to work with the children served by our agency. This includes all supervisor staff listed in Section I of the Consortium budget.

PROGRAMMATIC CLARIFICATIONS:

1. "Please confirm your desired grant award start date and member enrollment period start date."

Narratives

We would like the grant award start date to be August 1st, 2011, and our member enrollment start date to be September 1, 2011.

2. "Criminal history checks must be conducted on all members, employees, or other individuals who receive a salary, education award, living allowance, stipend or similar payment from the grant."

In compliance with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America policy and the requirements of our organization-wide liability insurance, our AmeriCorps members and all supervisory and non-supervisory staff must complete a criminal history check (including the State and National Sex Offender Registries and an FBI fingerprint check) before they are allowed to work with the children served by our agency.

3. "Please explain whether this project would serve some or all of the 58 counties in the region."

At the present time, the eight consortium agencies provide direct services to one-third (18 of the 58) counties in their service regions. However, BBBS of Clinton, BBBS of Johnson County, and BBBS of Central Iowa are actively expanding to serve the remaining counties in their respective regions. BBBS of Central Iowa, for example, opened two new satellite offices during the first three-year grant term, expanding their services into Story and Jasper Counties. This capacity-building was made possible in part to the AmeriCorps volunteers who helped recruit volunteers and maintain mentoring relationships in those new communities.

4. "Please clarify the grade levels of the children that will be mentored."

Narratives

BBBS mentoring services are provided to youths between the ages of 6 and 17, inclusive, which covers the 1st through 12th grade levels.

5. "Please clarify the role of BBBS's Life Navigator program in lieu of already-existing dropout prevention."

Mentoring is a cornerstone element of any comprehensive dropout-prevention strategy. Mentors assist with agency access and facilitate family engagement and follow-through due to their one-to-one relationship with the child. Because the services that our mentors provide are one-to-one, they are better able track the child's individual progress, noting unique issues which may be overlooked in a classroom setting or group intervention. The AmeriCorps members who oversee each mentoring relationship will be able to collect this sort of information during their monthly contact with the mentor volunteers and then pass that information on to the students' school or dropout-prevention program.

In this way, the Life Navigators program will supplement existing dropout-prevention strategies (both within and outside the school district), by providing an extra level of service to the at-risk youth, and by providing a personal, one-on-one point of contact between the youth and other community services.

We note that Life Navigators is similar to existing programs such as College Pals, but differs in that our mentors are working professionals from the community representing all career pathways.

6. "Please verify that the personnel included in the budget from the 8 consortium agencies will be the

Narratives

site supervisors for members; some of the listed personnel have titles that are not explained in the application narrative."

We have allowed each Consortium partner to select the staff members who will supervise AmeriCorps members. Several of these agencies (most notably BBBS of Clinton and BBBS of Muscatine County) are small operations with only one to three staff members. This requires these staff members to undertake a variety of job duties, and therefore their job titles are not representative of everything that each of them is responsible for. This is also true of the site supervisors at the Newton and Ames sites, which are satellite offices of BBBS of Central Iowa.

In any case, the Consortium respects the right of each of the partner agencies to decide for themselves who would best serve as the AmeriCorps members' supervisors. BBBS of the Mississippi Valley trains and evaluates the performance of these site supervisors on a regular basis to ensure that they are fulfilling their assigned responsibilities.

7. "The application indicates that members will be assigned to specific slots based on their level of education, work experience, and familiarity with the community served. Please explain how the various member roles are different."

Our AmeriCorps members will carry out two sets of service activities: (1) the recruitment of working professionals in the community to serve as mentors in the Life Navigators program, and (2) the creation and maintenance of Life Navigators mentoring relationships.

We will assign the volunteer-recruitment service activities to member candidates who demonstrate

Narratives

strong public speaking skills, confidence, self-possession, and a professional demeanor. Familiarity with the business and government bodies of the community and experience in marketing or community action would also be helpful. These skills are vital in recruiting the working professionals who will serve as mentors in the Life Navigators program.

We will assign the mentoring oversight service activities to member candidates with social service or counseling experience or training and an empathetic manner. These skills are vital in gaining the trust of the at-risk youth served by our program.

8. "Please explain why AmeriCorps members would be assigned to serve on community partnership committees or to help coordinate BBBS services not directly connected to the mentoring project, such as Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates and the Weed and Seed crime-prevention program."

Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates is itself a dropout-prevention program. Assigning AmeriCorps members to facilitate a partnership between Life Navigators and IJAG will allow the members to (1) offer our mentoring services to a population of students who have been identified as being at risk for dropping out of school, and (2) finding ways in which one-to-one youth mentoring could supplement the other dropout-prevention services that IJAG is providing for these students.

In the same way, we know that high-school dropouts are more likely to take part in criminal activities. The Life Navigators program, therefore, would be a useful crime-prevention strategy for the Weed and Seed program. One of the missions of Weed and Seed is to connect families to local services and we would like the Life Navigators program to be one of the services that Weed and Seed staff can recommend to families who would benefit from it.

Narratives

9. "Please explain the roles of staff and volunteers that would serve alongside members and how will you avoid member duplication of these roles."

The purpose of our proposed AmeriCorps proposal is to create a new, targeted initiative that does not currently exist in our Consortium: the Life Navigators program.

Our AmeriCorps members will be responsible solely for those mentoring relationships that involve youth who BBBS has identified as being at risk for dropping out of school, as defined in the "AMERICORPS MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES" section of the narrative, and in recruiting and providing specialized training for the community professionals who will serve as mentors in the Life Navigators program.

In contrast, the Consortium members' existing staff will maintain our regular caseload, and create new mentoring relationships for children who have signed up for our services but who are not found to be at risk for dropping out of school.

We estimate that one-quarter of the new mentoring relationships created during each year of the grant term will be assigned to the Life Navigators program.

10. "The application indicates that the program will encourage members to challenge themselves to take on extra service activities. How will you ensure that extra service activities are within the scope of the grant and within the supervision structure of the program."

Narratives

In the past, those members who have chosen to take on extra service activities have organized and supervised community service projects, including cleaning up a local homeless shelter, planting trees in the Mississippi River watershed, and collecting toys as Christmas presents for low-income youth. The support of our agencies and AmeriCorps alums, along with the donated service of their fellow AmeriCorps members, make these community service projects possible.

Taking part in service activities outside the main activities of their AmeriCorps contract is one of the requirements of AmeriCorps service.

11. "Please provide a plan to improve member retention."

We have two strategies to improve member retention.

First of all, with each year of our AmeriCorps program, we have developed a clearer idea of (1) what qualities we are looking for in our AmeriCorps volunteers, making them suitable for the service activities we will assign them, and (2) a better sense of whether a candidate is truly committed to the contractual obligations of AmeriCorps service. We have a better understanding, for example, of the difference in time commitment between a full-time and half-time AmeriCorps contract, and of the difficulties that past AmeriCorps members have had juggling their service commitments with other life factors such as family, school, or work. We will apply this experience and these new skills to our member-recruitment strategies in order to enroll the best candidates into our program.

Secondly, we continue to fine-tune our Consortium Director's site supervision, both by increasing the number of visits to each site each year, but also increasing the number of factors by which he will

Narratives

evaluate each site during each visit. These new factors include the members' views of his or her working relationships with staff supervisors, his or her issues scheduling service and/or staying on track to complete contracted service hours, and his or her overall commitment to the BBBS mission. Tracking these factors will allow the Director to identify small conflicts before they threaten any member completing his or her term of service.

12. "Please describe the organization's management and oversight (board or executives) structure to provide leadership and guidance on the project."

The day-to-day operations of each Consortium agency are overseen by an Executive Director. This person will be responsible for supervising those staff members who are supervising AmeriCorps members.

Each agency's mission and programming is driven by the decisions of a Board of Directors of community volunteers. Each of the Boards of the eight Consortium agencies has approved their agency's membership in the Consortium and will ensure that their agency fulfills its duties as a Consortium partner.

Finally, the Consortium Director is responsible for coordinating the AmeriCorps program across all eight agencies, ensuring that the program is administered equitably across the state and that all CNCS regulations are adhered to.

Narratives

PERFORMANCE MEASURE CLARIFICATIONS:

1. "The National Performance Measure Pilot Background Document indicates that for measure ED3A AND ED4A the standard for economically disadvantaged is eligibility for free or reduced school lunch."

We have changed our performance measure language to adhere to this requirement.

2. "The National Performance Measure Pilot Background Document indicates that academic achievement must be measured using a standardized instrument to assess literacy and/or math."

In accordance with this requirement, we will use the students' scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills standardized tests as a measure of their academic improvement.

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 10.47

Service Categories

Other Education

National Performance Measures

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

One-to-one youth mentoring has been shown to improve the child's attitude towards school, to increase student grades, and to encourage high school completion.

We will use scores on the Iowa Test for Basic Skills standardized test to track the academic progress of the students served by the Life Navigators program.

Result: Output

Result.

Our goal will be that 60% of the mentoring relationships created in 2010-11 will still be active at the end of the program year.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) ED4A: Youth/mentor matches sustained.

Target :Our goal will be that 60% of the mentoring relationships created in 2010-11 will still be active at the end of the program year.

Target Value: 150

Instruments: Our progress towards this goal will be measured by a review of each agency's case files.

PM Statement: Our goal will be that 60% of the mentoring relationships created in 2010-11 will still be active at the end of the program year.

Result: Output

Result.

Our AmeriCorps members will be responsible for recruiting at least 250 new mentor volunteers each year and placing them in mentoring relationships with youth identified as being at risk to leave school without a diploma.

Indicator: ED3A: Youth/mentor matches started.

Target :Our AmeriCorps members will be responsible for recruiting at least 250 new mentor volunteers each year and placing them in mentoring relationships with youth identified as being at risk to leave school without a diploma.

Target Value: 250

Instruments: Our progress towards this goal will be measured by a review of each agency's case files.

PM Statement: Our AmeriCorps members will be responsible for recruiting at least 250 new mentor volunteers each year and placing them in mentoring relationships with youth identified as being at risk to leave school without a diploma.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Our goal will be that 60% of the children mentored in 2010-11 will improve in their academic performance.

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

National Performance Measures

Result.

Target :Our goal will be that 60% of the children mentored in 2010-11 will improve in their academic performance.

Target Value: 150

Instruments: We will use scores on the Iowa Test for Basic Skills standardized test to track the academic progress of the students served by the Life Navigators program.

PM Statement: Our goal will be that 60% of the children mentored in 2010-11 will improve in their academic performance.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Sent

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable