

PART I - FACE SHEET

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE <small>Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)</small>		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction														
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS): 01/25/11	3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:														
2b. APPLICATION ID: 11ED126027	4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY: 01/25/11	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: 10EDHDC002														
5. APPLICATION INFORMATION																
LEGAL NAME: LIFT DUNS NUMBER: 072960318 ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 800 7th Street NW Suite 300 Washington DC 20001 - 3851 County: District of Columbia	NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Tony J Brunswick TELEPHONE NUMBER: (202) 289-1181 FAX NUMBER: INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: tbrunswick@liftcommunities.org															
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 522168409	7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit 7b.															
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box). <input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> A. AUGMENTATION B. BUDGET REVISION C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER (specify below):	9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: Corporation for National and Community Service															
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER:94.006 10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps Fixed Amount Grant	11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: LIFT AmeriCorps*National Direct Program															
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Bronx, NY; Cambridge, MA; Chicago, IL; Evanston, IL; Philadelphia, PA; Somerville, MA; and Washington, DC	11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):															
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 06/18/10 END DATE: 06/17/13	14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="DC 001"/> b.Program <input type="text"/>															
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: <input type="text" value="2"/>	16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS? <input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON: DATE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372															
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">a. FEDERAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 300,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. APPLICANT</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. STATE</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d. LOCAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e. OTHER</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f. PROGRAM INCOME</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g. TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 300,000.00</td> </tr> </table>	a. FEDERAL	\$ 300,000.00	b. APPLICANT	\$ 0.00	c. STATE	\$ 0.00	d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00	e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00	g. TOTAL	\$ 300,000.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
a. FEDERAL	\$ 300,000.00															
b. APPLICANT	\$ 0.00															
c. STATE	\$ 0.00															
d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00															
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00															
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00															
g. TOTAL	\$ 300,000.00															
18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.																
a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Tony J Brunswick	b. TITLE: Vice President	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (202) 289-1181														
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:		e. DATE SIGNED: 05/09/11														

Narratives

Executive Summary

LIFT runs resource centers staffed by trained volunteers in Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC, to serve low-income individuals and families. LIFT clients and volunteers work one-on-one to find jobs, secure stable housing, make ends meet through public benefits and tax credits, and obtain crucial social services. Simultaneously, the LIFT experience pushes volunteers to grapple with our country's most challenging issues related to poverty, race, inequality, and policy.

Rationale and Approach

(Please note, National Student Partnerships legally changed its name to LIFT. Throughout this grant, we will refer to the organization as LIFT, not National Student Partnerships as listed on the grant application. We are in the process of finalizing this name change with the Corporation.)

(1) Compelling Community Need

With poverty levels nearing 15%, a quarter or more of children in urban areas living in poverty, and growing inequity between the rich and poor, America is facing a crisis of opportunity. Nearly 40 million Americans--one in eight individuals--live below the poverty line, which is currently set at \$22,050 per year for a family of four. However, we know solutions exist to reverse this trend. For example, we know a family's purchasing power increases by 40% when they access nutritional subsidies. We know that a child's test scores increase by 2% in math and more than 3.5% in reading when a family's income increases just \$1,000. We know that families with public insurance double the likelihood that they will save for the future. With research demonstrating these solutions, it is a crisis of opportunity that only 7% of families in poverty currently receive all four of the major government benefits available to them. Poverty is a complex and multi-faceted problem and all of its associated issues--unemployment, homelessness, hunger, illiteracy, health problems, and more--are interlinked. Yet our social services system does not reflect this reality. In order to secure needed resources, poor families must navigate

Narratives

highly complex and confusing bureaucracies, making access to basic services and benefits challenging.

Simply put, LIFT eliminates the complexity and confusion for individuals and families struggling with poverty. LIFT is a growing movement to combat poverty and expand opportunity for all people in the United States. LIFT currently runs centers staffed by trained volunteers in Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC, to serve low-income individuals and families. LIFT clients and volunteers work one-on-one to find jobs, secure safe and stable housing, make ends meet through public benefits and tax credits, and obtain quality referrals for services like childcare and healthcare.

Simultaneously, the LIFT experience pushes volunteers to grapple with our country's most challenging issues related to poverty, race, inequality, and policy. Since LIFT's founding, over 5,000 volunteers have served more than 30,000 individuals and families.

The typical LIFT client is unemployed, homeless, without health insurance, and caring for at least one dependent. However, each of the communities in which LIFT operates is unique and has specific needs. Over half of LIFT's offices are located in large urban centers (Bronx, NY; Washington, DC; Chicago, IL; and two offices in North and West Philadelphia, PA). Perhaps most telling about these communities' need for LIFT's services is the number of individuals living in poverty, with 27.1% of Bronx, 19.1% of Washington DC, 21.2% of Chicago, and 23.8% of Philadelphia residents living at or below the poverty line. Per capita incomes in these urban centers range from as low as \$13,959 in the Bronx, NY, to as high as \$28,659 in Washington, DC, where the prevalence of high-salaried jobs often obscures the fact that most residents are struggling every day to support their families with low wage and/or part-time jobs. In addition, these cities were heavily impacted by the current recession. According to the Department of Labor, 13.4% of Bronx, 12.1% of Washington DC, 10.3% of Chicago, and 11.1% of Philadelphia residents are currently unemployed. While these high unemployment numbers are staggering, they do not even take into account the large number of people who are underemployed in part-time positions or those

Narratives

who have taken themselves out of workforce entirely.

LIFT also runs offices in the smaller cities of Cambridge, MA; Somerville, MA; and Evanston, IL, which are located within the Boston and Chicago metropolitan regions respectively. Well-known universities are located in these cities, providing many well-paying jobs to professors and administrators, yet doing little to improve economic conditions right outside their campuses. Median household incomes range from \$46,315 in Somerville to \$69,303 in Evanston, with the average household income in these communities at \$58,025. It is precisely because these averages are so high that social services in these communities are often scarce. In reality, the poverty rate in these communities range from 11 to 13 percent, surprisingly similar to their urban counterparts. For a family of four with an income below \$22,500, just renting a home in these cities becomes unsustainable. Median rental rates range from \$1,200 in Somerville to \$1,400 in Cambridge -- approximately 74 percent of a family's annual income going to rent alone.

(Above data is pulled from the Department of Labor, the United States Census Bureau, and a 2008 First Focus study by Elisabeth Mason, J.D. and Julie Kashen entitled "Out of the Desert: An Integrated Approach to Ending Child Poverty.")

(2) Description of Activities and Member Roles

(NOTE: For the purpose of clarity, "AC members" or "member" refers to the AmeriCorps members hosted by LIFT; "volunteer" refers to LIFT's college student volunteers. These are separate roles.)

With a mission to combat poverty and expand opportunity for all people in the United States, LIFT's

Narratives

model pursues two distinct paths. First, low-income individuals (clients) work with trained volunteers to obtain access to necessities--secure income, housing, health care, and education--that enable families to survive and thrive. LIFT's services are free of cost and without eligibility requirements, ensuring that any individual in need can access resources. Second, LIFT trains a corps of volunteers in a variety of issue areas to prepare them to work within the context of client needs. Their exposure to the challenges presented to low-income families serves as a transformative experience, and LIFT alumni go on to pursue careers across all sectors while becoming lifelong leaders in the effort to eliminate poverty.

LIFT has worked for the past eleven years to address the need in its communities. Partnering with local universities and social service agencies, LIFT has helped more than 30,000 families on their path out of poverty and engaged 5,000 college students in this effort, and the incorporation of AmeriCorps members has been the crucial element to this success. Currently, 19 full-time AmeriCorps members serve at each of LIFT's eight offices (2-3 per office). Not only are they responsible for the daily operation and management of the office, but also for the recruitment, training, and retention of its annual corps of 500 college student volunteers who work one-on-one with clients. In this way, a single AmeriCorps member working with LIFT translates into 25-35 more volunteers serving a community through an extremely intensive and long-term engagement versus a thin, episodic volunteer opportunity. More detail can be found in the "Community Output and Outcomes" section of this grant.

Building off the successes of LIFT's current AmeriCorps program, LIFT's proposed program will leverage AC members to execute an ambitious plan of reaching 100,000 new families with LIFT's services over the next five years, as well as significantly ramping up its volunteer recruitment efforts to answer this mandate to grow. The proposed AmeriCorps program would focus on a "go-deep" strategy in each of LIFT's five regions of operation: Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington DC. With this grant, LIFT will move from 19 full-time AC members to 24 members, allowing the

Narratives

organization to reach more families and engage more volunteers. AmeriCorps members' responsibilities will include:

Work Plan Area 1: Place Clients on a Path Out of Poverty

- * Leverage LIFT's "Path Out of Poverty" model to provide direct client service in the areas of housing, employment, public benefits, and referral services.
- * Maintain proper record keeping, including both paper and electronic records in CORI and LIFT-WIKI, LIFT's online case management tool and resource systems.
- * Garner client feedback through client feedback sessions and client advisory boards in order to strengthen and refine services.
- * Support client outreach efforts including, but not limited to, direct client outreach and strengthening referral partnerships with community based social service organizations.

Work Plan Area 2: Student Volunteer Recruitment, Training, and Support

Student Volunteer Recruitment:

- * Recruit college student volunteers from local university and college campuses by speaking in classes, attending volunteer fairs, and tabling on campus.

Student Volunteer Training:

- * Co-facilitate (with Executive Director and/or Program Manager) New Volunteer Training (NVT) for new student volunteers at the beginning of each semester.
- * Organize and facilitate bi-weekly ongoing training workshops for student volunteers on issue areas such as housing, employment, public benefits, etc.

Student Volunteer Support

Narratives

- * Provide support to college student volunteers in the areas of client service and community partner development.
- * Promote and utilize inter and intra office resources and tools to promote best practice sharing among student volunteers.
- * Support the student Leadership Team (LT)

Work Plan Area 3: Community Partnerships

- * Maintain and develop existing and new partnerships with local universities and community social service agencies.

Work Plan Area 4: Local Office Infrastructure

- * Support local and national performance and evaluation efforts.
- * Participate in local office monthly report preparation.
- * Support local and national press outreach as needed.

LIFT will ensure member compliance with CFR 2520.65 by training all full-time staff members and new AC members on the regulations associated with holding an AmeriCorps position. This training will occur prior to the swearing-in process, and all staff and corps members would be required to sign a form confirming their full understanding of prohibited service activities. Many of LIFT's staff members are former AC members and are well aware of suspicious or prohibited activities. Member actions will be monitored via weekly progress reports and one-on-one supervision with supervisors.

(3) Measurable Outputs and Outcomes

Narratives

LIFT's program will opt into the Opportunity priority area and will be opting into the standard performance measures pilot. The pilot measures LIFT will be opting into are:

- 1.) Number of economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, receiving housing placement services.
- 2.) Number of economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing.

LIFT will track progress against these measures through an online client tracking database and in accordance with the requirements of the pilot program.

(4) Plan for Self-Assessment and Improvement

Ongoing continuous program improvement is extremely important to LIFT. We identify program strengths and weaknesses and gather and provide feedback through several key ways:

- 1.) Client/Community Feedback: LIFT solicits client feedback through two primary avenues: (1) a Client Satisfaction Survey administered and anonymously submitted the third week of each month, and (2) regular Client Feedback Sessions.
- 2.) Community Partner Feedback (including partnering universities and partnering community based organizations): LIFT has established Local Advisory Boards (LAB) in each community for the specific purpose of soliciting ongoing feedback from community partners and to engage partners in program collaboration, strategy, and implementation. These LABs are made of up representatives from our university partners, partnering agencies, and community leaders. The boards typically meet quarterly.
- 3.) Student Volunteer Feedback: LIFT administers a Student Experience Survey (SES) semesterly to garner feedback from its volunteer constituency, and it selects one student from each LIFT region to sit

Narratives

on its National Student Advisory Board (NSAB), which relays feedback directly to the national executive and program staff on a regular basis.

4.) AmeriCorps Member feedback: LIFT garners member feedback and provides members with feedback through: weekly one-on-one supervision, mid-term and exit surveys, weekly and monthly member reports, three national trainings, ongoing local trainings, and 360 performance reviews.

5.) CNCS Feedback: LIFT has fostered a strong partnership with LIFT's CNCS Program Officer and CNCS leadership to ensure ongoing program compliance and improvement. LIFT conducts regular check-ins with its CNCS Program Officer to discuss program challenges or concerns, progress towards performance goals, and ongoing member development.

6.) National Planning Sessions: Three times a year, the local and national staffs gather together to reflect on feedback from stakeholders and to exchange ideas and observations on local programming and partnerships, client and volunteer engagement, and progress towards meeting performance goals.

(5) Community Involvement

LIFT realizes that the causes of poverty are never static and that circumstances for communities and individuals are constantly changing. The structure and ultimate success of LIFT inherently relies on its ability to understand the unique challenges of its respective communities. For this reason, the organization invests a lot of time and effort into build strong relationships with community members, partner organizations, and stakeholders. As outlined above, the Local Advisory Boards, Client Satisfaction Survey, Student Experience Survey, and Client Feedback Sessions are tools LIFT uses to garner feedback on community needs. With this feedback, Executive Directors and AC members align their volunteer trainings to incorporate necessary topics to meet those needs.

Narratives

LIFT is committed to continuing and increasing the involvement of community partners and stakeholders in program development over the next three years:

- * Each local office will be encouraged to expand and enhance their LABs and Client Feedback Sessions.
- * AmeriCorps members will formally observe client meetings and arrange individual meetings with veteran clients to assess their experience with LIFT and feedback about the program.
- * LAB members will continue to play a crucial role in annual local planning sessions.
- * NSAB will continue to communicate the input of student volunteers nationwide.

(6) Relationship with other National and Community Service Programs

LIFT has a long history of closely collaborating with programs supported by the Corporation and State commissions. An essential part of LIFT's model is building strong community partnerships to ensure seamless, non-duplicated services to low-income families and individuals.

Our Philadelphia program demonstrates our commitment to collaboration with Corporation partners. Here is a partial list of current partners in Philadelphia:

- * EducationWorks -- EducationWorks primarily works with children. LIFT supports the parents of those children by assisting with housing searches, food stamp applications, employment searches, and other referral services. Together, the partnership ensures support to the whole family.
- * The Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger (GPCAH) -- LIFT has partnered with their AC team to ensure their clients are aware of LIFT services. LIFT has also advised their staff on volunteer management best practices.
- * Youthbuild (YB) Charter School -- All YB students are part-time AC members, and LIFT helps their members write resumes, search for housing, and apply for public benefits such as EITC and FAFSA.

Narratives

* Project H.O.M.E. (PH) -- LIFT has worked with PH's AC members to support clients on employment searches.

* Global Citizen (GC) -- Global Citizen is one of hubs of civic engagement in the city, and LIFT participates in their service fairs and events.

In addition to similar partnerships in each city, LIFT is also engaged at a strategic level with coalitions and organizations that either directly partner with the Corporation or are supportive of their efforts. A partial list includes: Coalition to Strengthen the Safety Net, ServiceNation, America Forward, Coalition on Human Needs, Half in Ten Campaign, and Voices for National Service.

LIFT is also working with organizations like Jumpstart and Campus Compact on strategies to promote service on college campuses and broaden work study opportunities for students. LIFT is working with City Year on shared, emerging thinking about the multi-generational impact of service and school-based interventions.

LIFT currently receives funding only through AmeriCorps*National Direct. However, LIFT believes there are strong future partnership opportunities with Learn and Serve and programs partnering with Senior Corps.

Consultation with State Commissions

LIFT spoke with each commission directly and emailed each commission the state consultation form. LIFT also offered to host a site visit and meet with each commission in person to discuss LIFT's programs more fully. Four commissions responded saying LIFT met their consultation requirements and successfully completed their consultation process. LIFT did not directly hear back from the Pennsylvania State Commission. LIFT called to verify the forms were received.

Narratives

(7) Potential for Replication

LIFT has rapidly grown over the last 11 years to various types of communities. The combination of college student volunteers, a community in need, supportive community partners, and motivated AmeriCorps members has proven to be a winning formula for struggling communities across the country. For this reason, LIFT's model is highly replicable and can easily be adapted to various types of communities and venues for service. For example, LIFT is currently piloting its model in the context of the education system. At the request of a local charter school serving a low-income DC community, LIFT-DC volunteers provide services for the parents of students three times a week at the school; similar pilots are underway in Chicago in collaboration with Chicago Public Schools.

LIFT's immediate growth priorities are focused on deepening impact in its five existing communities of Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC. Currently, there are one or two LIFT offices in each of those five communities, and LIFT completed a Strategic Plan in October 2009 that outlines benchmarks for service growth and replication. The goal of the plan is to expand to four offices in each community (20 total) by 2015. At that point, the organization will plan for further national growth, which will likely include expansion to new communities.

Organizational Capability

(1) Sound Organizational Structure

History

Kirsten Lodal and Brian Kreiter founded LIFT in the fall of 1998 while students at Yale University. Having been very involved as volunteers in various child services programs, they were struck by the

Narratives

absence of services for the parents of the children in those programs--parents who were often working multiple low-wage jobs, paying their taxes, and sending their kids to school, yet still unable to afford sustained shelter, food, and clothing for their children. They developed the idea of establishing a single center within a neighborhood where families could receive assistance from trained volunteers across a spectrum of social services, including finding jobs, securing housing, obtaining public benefits, and making connections with other social service agencies. Lodal and Kreiter soon discovered that student leaders on college campuses across the country were dialoguing about the same issues related to poverty and opportunity, and eager to get involved. They recruited passionate student leaders to replicate sites around the country, and LIFT now serves thousands of families each year in Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC.

Experience Overseeing Comparable Program

LIFT began its relationship with the AmeriCorps*VISTA program in 2002 when it became clear that a full-time presence was necessary in each office (as opposed to its previous reliance on part-time volunteers for staffing). The VISTA program was the perfect match ideologically, culturally, and operationally, and the relationship with VISTA enabled LIFT to maintain its core value of low-cost service provision that leverages in-kind volunteer support without creating an overhead-heavy infrastructure.

In July 2002, the first class of nine VISTAs entered LIFT's then nine Local Offices. LIFT's VISTA members were given an extra week of pre-service training, intensive supervision from a National Office Program Manager, weekly opportunities to communicate with other VISTAs nationwide, and ongoing opportunities for in-service training both nationally and locally. In the first six months of LIFT's 2002-2003 program year (September 2002-February 2003), LIFT's performance outcomes had already

Narratives

surpassed those of the entire 2001-2002 program year. By the end of that first year, LIFT doubled its client numbers and increased volunteer numbers by 450%. In the period that followed, LIFT's relationship with the VISTA program strengthened to host 18 full-time VISTA members and 30 quarter-time Summer Associates.

Harnessing the momentum of the existing VISTA partnership, LIFT was awarded an AmeriCorps*National Direct grant in 2006, effectively transitioning LIFT from VISTA to National Direct. AC members continue to be the backbone of LIFT's program, as they facilitate the effective day-to-day operation of each LIFT Local Office, provide client service, recruit and train volunteers, develop community partners, and build infrastructural support. Meanwhile, LIFT maintained its relationship with AmeriCorps*VISTA, receiving a second VISTA grant in 2007 for eight members to build LIFT's capacity from the National Office.

The established relationship with the Corporation enabled LIFT as an organization to develop strong oversight and management best practices in relation to AmeriCorps member supervision. Based on key lessons-learned throughout the eight year relationship with the Corporation and its most recent AmeriCorps*National Direct grant, LIFT is well positioned to manage another AmeriCorps*National project.

Over half of LIFT's full-time staff members have served in AmeriCorps programs; five have served with LIFT as AC members. Consequently, LIFT's staff and Board of Directors are deeply aware of the need for comprehensive member training, guidance, and support. LIFT has far exceeded VISTA's and National Direct's requirements for pre-service and in-service training, performance reviews, professional development opportunities, and post-AmeriCorps career support.

Narratives

Capacity to Manage a Federal Grant

Beyond successfully managing three previous grants from the Corporation, including its most recent AmeriCorps*National Direct grant, LIFT has managed five Department of Labor grants and one Department of Education grant, totaling slightly less than \$2,750,000. Consequently, LIFT has put in place necessary internal controls and separation of duties to protect the integrity of its financial systems. LIFT has received both standard and federal A-133 audits since FY2002. All of LIFT's audits have been clean with unqualified opinion. LIFT's A-133 audits have never uncovered any reportable conditions. The Audit Committee of LIFT's Board of Directors meets at least quarterly to review the audited financial statements and to assess audit compliance. LIFT's auditors also conduct compliance assessments each quarter. All audit recommendations are immediately implemented by LIFT's management. LIFT's fiscal operations are managed day-to-day by its Director of Finance, who has passed the CPA exam and has experience with federal grant and contract management through her work at The CNA Corporation as well as an auditor at Ernst and Young.

LIFT retains extremely tight controls on all expenditures. Local offices do not have bank accounts; every financial transaction runs through the National Office. This ensures that all expenditures comply with requirements for documentation and coding. The architecture of LIFT's financial system enables the organization to carefully segment costs by Local Office. All local expenditures are first approved by the appropriate Executive Director, then by the Director of Finance, and finally by the CEO who signs and approves every financial transaction. All LIFT staff, AmeriCorps members, and volunteers are trained carefully in the organization's financial policies and procedures.

Multi-Site Program

Narratives

LIFT has eleven years of experience overseeing a multi-state program. LIFT's programmatic and fiscal oversight is ultimately managed by the organization's National Office. Like other AmeriCorps grantees such as Jumpstart and City Year, LIFT has retained a single 501(c)3 status, and all fiscal administration is overseen centrally. As a result of LIFT's history of multi-state project management and the requirements of past multi-state federal grants, LIFT's procedures for overseeing Local Office operations are well established and documented.

Currently, all sites are managed and led by a Regional Executive Director. Not only is this position directly responsible for supervision of AC members, but also the financial and programmatic health of each office. Through close communication with EDs and established reporting procedures, LIFT's National Office monitors all programmatic and financial data on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. LIFT has two program associates at the national level to specifically monitor programmatic aspects of the organization, and LIFT has a proven track record of success in these areas throughout all of its AmeriCorps grants. On the financial side, EDs work in collaboration with the Director of Finance to monitor expenditures and the Director of Development to build a local fundraising plan. LIFT typically centralizes all of its fundraising to its National Office, but the layering in of Executive Directors in each region has allowed the organization to move more aggressively towards its goal of 100% local sustainability. While each office currently receives a subsidy from the national organization, the average LIFT Local Office is approximately 56% of the way to the goal of self-sufficiency. In Chicago, where an Executive Director has been in place the longest, this number is closer to 84%.

LIFT recognizes the importance of information sharing across its multi-state network for achieving its mission, and the organization has made significant investments in helping to facilitate these connections. First, beginning in its early days before local staffing, volunteers share best practices through LIFT-WIKI--a wiki-based intranet which allows volunteers from across the nation to

Narratives

communicate as if they were in the same room. Student volunteers rely on LIFT-WIKI for a variety of needs, such as sharing latest trends in client populations, posting effective templates and forms for client service, or mobilizing around relevant issues. Second, a program associate in the National Office is specifically focused on program standardization; it is her job to observe what works in each office and make recommendations for network-wide adoption of certain practices. Lastly, LIFT brings together its national and local staffs three times a year for training and reflection, as outlined in "Member Outputs and Outcomes."

LIFT completed a Strategic Plan in October 2009, which outlines its growth plans for the next 5 years. Understanding that the need in its existing communities is great, the organization made the decision to focus on a "go deep" strategy, a strategy that focuses on immediate growth in its 5 existing communities of Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC. Currently, there are one or two LIFT offices in each of those five communities, and the goal of the plan is to expand to four offices in each community (20 total) by 2015. At that point, the organization will embark on further national growth, which will likely include expansion to new communities.

LIFT has developed a "prioritization scorecard" to evaluate potential service sites to ensure that they will have adequate programmatic and financial capabilities. The six key criteria areas of the scorecard are: extent of unmet need (size of current/potential client population, size of current/potential student population, and competitive environment), scaling opportunities (capacity for low-cost scaling and capacity for low-cost expansion), local fundraising potential, partner strength (referral networks, community involvement, and potential university partnerships), leadership and talent (strength of existing leadership and local talent base), and program implementation (program models and program activities). The scorecard ensures that LIFT will incorporate the criteria required by the AmeriCorps regulation 45 CFR § 2522.475 and the special considerations found in 45 CFR § 2522.450.

Narratives

(2) Board of Directors, Administrators, and Staff

LIFT is guided by an 11-member Board of Directors, comprised of LIFT's co-founders and individuals with expertise in finance, law, and program development. Several of LIFT's most important private funders also sit on the Board. The Board meets as a whole quarterly. In the interim, committees conduct regular meetings, such as the Audit and Finance Committee.

LIFT's CEO is one of the organization's two co-founders, Kirsten Lodal. She oversees an executive team, which includes the Director of Finance, the Vice President of Programs, and the Director of Development. The VP of Programs oversees LIFT's regional Executive Directors as well as two associates dedicated to evaluation and standardization of the national program. The Director of Development oversees two development associates and one communications associate as well as consults the regional Executive Directors on their fundraising plans and strategies. In addition, LIFT has an Operations Manager in the National Office who manages all operational matters for the organization, both nationally and locally.

LIFT's Local Offices are presently managed by a regional ED who oversees between one and three full-time AC members and a team of student leaders. All EDs bring unique backgrounds to the organization. For example, LIFT's Chicago ED has a Masters in Social Work and has spent years working directly with low-income populations similar to LIFT's client base; LIFT's Philadelphia ED has an extensive background in volunteer management through work with the Peace Corps; LIFT's Boston ED brings eleven years of local fundraising experience. Individually, LIFT's Executive Directors are well equipped to effectively support AmeriCorps members and run an efficient program. Collectively, LIFT is able to

Narratives

leverage their expertise for the benefit of the whole network.

Over the next five years, LIFT plans to layer in more staff at both the local and national level which will further support AC members and the LIFT model. Key hires at the local level will include a Deputy Executive Director, an Operations Associate, and a Development Associate. In addition, each site will incorporate a Program Manager (goal of four sites per region; 20 total) who will supervise and manage client service and volunteer engagement while serving as direct support for AC members. Key hires at the national level will include an expansion of development, operations, and finance staff to support the growing network as well as a Manager of AmeriCorps to support a strengthened relationship with the Corporation.

(3) Plan for Self-Assessment or Improvement

The National Office undertakes a year-long planning process each May. Each team (Finance and Operations, Program, and Development) creates a balanced scorecard with corresponding quarterly benchmarks. Each team also has direct National Board support to provide oversight, direction, and accountability. LIFT's staff checks in on the progress made toward the plans during staff planning sessions which are held off-site.

Each new staff member participates in 3- and 6-month performance reviews, and all staff members participate in annual performance reviews.

LIFT takes very seriously the notion of feedback loops and the ability to be agile, innovative and creative in meeting the needs of clients, volunteers, and the organization. As referenced earlier, LIFT's staff and

Narratives

AC members gather to engage in planning/strategic sessions throughout the year. The organization prides itself on having a strong culture of ongoing assessment and improvement.

(4) Plan for Effective Technical Assistance

LIFT spends much time training its AC members and volunteers in its financial, technological, and operating systems. LIFT's national program team is highly capable of responding to any technical assistance needs that the AC members and Local Offices have; the primary role of the Executive Director is also to deliver technical assistance and to identify national and local resources to best serve each office. The national program team also has two full-time staff members solely focused on supporting sites with training and technical assistance, curriculum development, and program performance and evaluation.

Given that LIFT already ran a comparable program to the one proposed in this grant, its ability to secure needed financial and programmatic technical assistance has been demonstrated through its high community impact, sound organizational structure, and volunteer retention over the last three years. Ongoing technical assistance related to the new aspects of the AmeriCorps*National Direct Program will be addressed by maintaining strong partnerships with the LIFT's CNCS Program Officer and creating stronger partnerships with other AmeriCorps National*Direct Programs. City Year DC and Public Allies were helpful colleagues during LIFT's last grant period. LIFT also plans to take advantage of CNCS resources via the Resource Center, Conferences, and Days of Service.

(5) Sound Record of Accomplishment as an Organization

Narratives

Volunteer Generation and Support

LIFT's entire model rests on its ability to successfully generate and support an engaged and motivated volunteer base. Therefore, LIFT Local Offices strive to recruit a diverse volunteer base that spans a variety of fields of expertise and strengths, thus allowing each Local Office to maximize the skills of a wide range of volunteers. In addition, students who take on leadership positions with LIFT strive to increase the office's capacity through fundraising, bookkeeping and other financial protocol, regular progress reports, partnership development, advocacy campaigns and volunteer retention strategies.

LIFT's strong history of growth has been a byproduct of the strength of its volunteer recruitment and development efforts. For example, the establishment of LIFT-Somerville was a direct result of the enthusiasm of two students at Tufts University, who were inspired by the success of nearby LIFT-Cambridge to bring LIFT to their campus and community. They, with the support of the National Office and an AmeriCorps member, established a diverse 20 student volunteer base, located cost-free office space, created deep community and university partnerships, and located funding for summer staff and initial office supplies. LIFT-Somerville is now one of the organization's highest performing offices in its network, working with 700 families and engaging 50 Tufts University students each year.

Student volunteers also enable LIFT to increase its capacity to bring new funds into the organization. Volunteers share family and social networks for direct fund solicitation. For example, in the most recent year-end appeal, 13% of the total revenue (approximately \$11,800) came from direct student solicitations of family and friends. While fundraising is not a requirement of service with LIFT, it speaks to the investment volunteers feel towards LIFT's mission. Students also manage small local discretionary budgets and supplement these funds through small-scale local fundraising efforts.

Narratives

In some cases, LIFT has benefited from volunteer support for strategic consultation. For example, LIFT-Chicago partnered with Loyola University-Chicago's Center for Experiential Learning in spring of 2009. Under the supervision of LIFT-Chicago's Executive Director and a Loyola professor, a team of seven undergraduate students spent an entire semester leading an in-depth community mapping project to assess the best neighborhoods and communities for LIFT's model in the context of expansion. Their recommendation at the end of the project has tremendously influenced future expansion plans for LIFT-Chicago and helped to build its capacity as an organization.

Organizational and Community Leadership

LIFT's executive staff, AC members, and volunteers regularly seize opportunities to convey their knowledge of community service to fellow community members through leadership positions on taskforces, coalitions, and community boards. Locally, LIFT establishes partnerships with key community service organizations, which allow AC members to gain critical experience in coordinating and leading community collaboration efforts. Additionally, LIFT volunteers participate in community coalitions that focus on important issues that affect their clients such as housing, tax, and homeless coalitions. For example, LIFT representatives in Philadelphia participate in the Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development; LIFT-Cambridge frequently collaborates with the local Chamber of Commerce. These are but a few examples of the kind of leadership that LIFT Local Office's exhibit in each community.

Nationally, executive officers participate in and maintain relationships with various national service organizations such as ServiceNation, America Forward, Opportunity Nation, and the newly launched Safety Net Coalition to name a few. LIFT's CEO, Kirsten Lodal, has frequently been invited to serve on key panels such as the "Doing Good Is Good for the Recovery" sponsored by the Center for American

Narratives

Progress and "Service as a Solution: Service and the Road to Economic Recovery" sponsored by the National Conference on Volunteering and Service. In 2004, LIFT's co-founders were proud to accept the Jefferson Award for Public Service on behalf of LIFT's VISTAs and student volunteers. Past recipients of the award include Cesar Chavez, Jimmy Carter, Wendy Kopp, Thurgood Marshall, and Alan Khazei. LIFT's VP of Programs, Tony Brunswick, was invited to participate in working groups focused on the implementation of the Serve America Act, as well as the White House briefing on the Office of Social Innovation and the Social Innovation Fund. All members of LIFT's executive staff also sit on the Boards of other non-profits.

LIFT has also received acclamation at the local level. For example, LIFT was honored as a member of Greater DC Cares' Class of Change in 2009. LIFT-DC was presented with the Outstanding Community Partner in Service Award by George Washington University's Office of Community Service to recognize the organization's exemplary work engaging students in the Washington, DC, community. In 2009, LIFT-Somerville was honored by Friends: Voices for Rehabilitation and Recovery in honor of their work with Somerville residents dealing with psychiatric disabilities.

Success in Securing Match Resources

Since the outset of its VISTA partnership, LIFT has had a cost share relationship of as much as 50%. More recently during its current AmeriCorps*National Direct grant, LIFT was able to increase its cost share to 75%, demonstrating an organizational shift away from reliance on federal funds to support its program. LIFT has always fulfilled its cost share requirements with private sources of funding from individuals and, where allowable, foundations and corporations. LIFT has never struggled to meet cost share requirements.

Narratives

(6) Success in Securing Community Support

Collaboration

As outlined in the "Relationship with other National and Community Service Programs" section, LIFT has created numerous collaborations both locally and nationally to enhance its service provision. For example, a long-standing national collaboration with the IRS has resulted in five LIFT offices serving as official Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites this year. As a direct result of this partnership, LIFT helped over 850 clients file their taxes for free in 2009, totaling approximately \$1.1 million in returns and \$325,000 in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

Local Offices depend on a network of mutually beneficial collaborations with established and respected community groups. These groups represent the full range of LIFT's services from employment to housing to legal assistance. Service professionals are eager to form and maintain partnerships due to an appreciation of LIFT's freedom from income and residency requirements, minimal wait time for appointments, ability to supplement the efforts of overworked case managers, and unique service delivery model. In turn, community organizations play a number of roles for LIFT offices. Beyond increasing LIFT's referral capabilities, relevant partners often speak at ongoing training sessions to inform volunteers of their particular area of expertise; topics have ranged from food stamp enrollment to special considerations for clients with mental health issues. Strong partnerships with relevant organizations also provide a window for LIFT to learn of new developments important to the services provided to clients, such as public benefit changes, new housing availability or employment and training opportunities. Additionally, volunteers and members regularly attend and help to organize community-wide coalitions of service providers around such topics as job development, housing and homelessness, public benefit enrollment, and tax assistance.

Narratives

Lastly, all LIFT offices have close relationships with their host universities. In addition to student volunteers, universities are plentiful sources of: professors and staff members to serve as key local advisors and trainers; funding through umbrella student organizations; employment opportunities for LIFT clients; and local press contacts. University partners often assist the organization on a national level as well. For example, Howard University in Washington, DC, hosted LIFT trainings for its AmeriCorps members and summer staff members from 2006-2008. Strong university partnerships increase the quality of services through the high-level training and analysis of professors who often execute volunteer trainings and guide local leaders in their decision-making and analysis efforts. For example, in her role as an advisor for the LIFT Evanston office, a Northwestern University economics professor initiated and executed a long-term client tracking program to analyze LIFT's ability to assist clients over a range of many months.

Local Financial and In-Kind Contributions

All of LIFT's Local Offices receive local financial and in-kind contributions. LIFT believes that local funding and in-kind support demonstrates community investment in the organization's existence and is a crucial barometer of sustainability. The most common kinds of local in-kind support are: office space, office supplies, telephones and internet, non-match work study positions, computers and equipment, food for volunteer trainings, photocopying and printing.

LIFT's national fundraising strategy has increasingly hinged on the establishment of funding relationships with local funding sources, and the incorporation of Executive Directors in the local staffing structure has made local fundraising more achievable. For example, LIFT-Chicago experienced a 69% increase in funding from local sources when it hired its Executive Director. LIFT volunteers

Narratives

conduct on-campus and community-based fundraising events throughout the year and most of LIFT's university partners provide at least small amounts of funding through the student government to support local costs.

In some cases, cities and municipal governments will contract with LIFT for services. For example, the City of Evanston contracted with LIFT to facilitate housing searches and provide financial literacy services to low-income community members through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP), which was funded through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009. This is a new trend for the organization, and one that it will pursue for increased local sustainability.

Wide Range of Community Stakeholders

LIFT's model relies on significant buy-in from multiple community stakeholders. For this reason, LIFT invests much time in developing relationships with universities, businesses, community partners, elected officials, and community members. These individuals are brought together on a Local Advisory Board (LAB). This board serves as the main advisory structure for the Local Office. Typical LAB members include: clinical social workers, employment service providers, representatives from host agencies, leaders of faith-based organizations, advocacy lawyers, housing providers, University administrators and professors, city government representatives, and business professionals.

Each LAB consists of between four and nine members and meets a minimum of three times per year. LAB members meet individually with AC members and volunteers on a regular basis to answer questions, form collaborations and assist with ongoing goals and projects.

Narratives

Local Offices began to develop LABs about eight years ago. Since that time, these boards have continued to grow, but retained many of their original members. Currently, every LIFT office hosts a LAB, and many boards are in the process of actively recruiting new members. It is the responsibility of each region's ED to strategically develop and manage the board with an eye towards local sustainability.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

(1) Cost Effectiveness

LIFT will be opting into the new Fixed-Amount grant pilot program offered by CNCS for this granting period. LIFT requests \$12,500 per full-time MSY.

Diverse Non-Federal Support

At a time when "bang for your buck" has never mattered more, LIFT has demonstrated again and again that it is an incredibly cost-effective program. Currently, the average LIFT office requires approximately \$200,000 to operate for an entire year. Translated differently, it costs LIFT approximately \$250 to lift a person out of poverty so that they can become newly productive members of our society. No other poverty program comes close to producing this result on such a small amount of money; the organization considers its model a bargain.

The sole focus of LIFT's entire development team is to obtain diverse non-federal resources for program implementation and sustainability. Currently, federal sources only compromise 13% of LIFT's annual budget. The remaining amount comes predominately from individuals (43%) and foundations/corporations (43%), which include:

* \$400,000 -- various major donors to the organization (>\$10,000)

* \$350,000 -- annual fundraising events in DC, NYC, and Philadelphia

Narratives

- * \$250,000 -- New Profit, Inc; third installment of a four year commitment
- * \$150,000 -- national annual appeal
- * \$100,000 -- Bank of America; unrestricted
- * \$100,000 -- Robin Hood; restricted to New York/Bronx
- * \$50,000 -- Glenview Capital Management; unrestricted
- * \$50,000 -- Bromely Charitable Trusts; unrestricted
- * \$50,000 -- McCormick Foundation; restricted to Chicago
- * \$30,000 -- The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation; restricted to DC
- * \$30,000 -- JPMorgan Chase; restricted to Chicago
- * \$15,000 -- Prince Charitable Trust; restricted to DC
- * \$10,000 -- Capital Group Companies; restricted to New York/Bronx
- * \$10,000 -- Evanston Community Foundation; restricted to Evanston
- * \$9,000 -- Claneil Foundation; restricted to Philadelphia
- * \$5,000 -- Morningstar Foundation; restricted to DC
- * \$5,000 -- Fannie Mae Foundation; restricted to Chicago
- * \$3,400 -- Kenilworth Union Church; restricted to Evanston
- * \$2,500 -- Beneficial Bank; restricted to Philadelphia
- * \$2,500 -- Wachovia Wells Fargo; restricted to Philadelphia
- * \$2,000 -- Washington Post Foundation; restricted to DC
- * \$2,000 -- Powers Pyles Sutter and Verville LLC; restricted to DC

The organization will look to these and other sources to provide funding for the duration of this grant. In addition, LIFT's leadership and development team is in the midst of executing a \$5 million growth capital campaign to fully execute its 5-year Strategic Plan. Early discussions have made this goal feel achievable, which will further contribute to the capacity and infrastructure of the organization.

Narratives

Decreased Reliance on Federal Support

Since FY'02, LIFT has moved from being over 80% federally funded to 13% federally funded in the current fiscal year. The organization has crafted an aggressive fund development plan that focuses on expanding its formal major donor program, upgrading the scale of nationally-sponsored fundraising events, securing several major national corporate sponsors, and creating funding relationships with local foundations and corporations. LIFT proposes and plans to execute broader reach of its services; specifically, the organization has a plan to grow to serve 100,000 families by 2015. LIFT plans to launch a \$5 million growth capital campaign in 2011, which will allow for early investment in this plan. Little reliance on federal support is envisioned, and LIFT will subsequently increase its share of cost to meet and exceed program goals.

(2) Budget Adequacy

LIFT is requesting \$300,000 for the first year of this grant (24 members at \$12,500 each). This will make up approximately 10% of the anticipated budget for the next fiscal year. Costs that will not be covered by Corporation funding include: staff salaries and benefits, living allowances for AC members, Board of Directors expenses, depreciation expenses, dues and subscriptions, education and training, event expenses, local office development budgets, insurance, licenses and permits, office supplies, postage and delivery, printing and publications, recruitment and advertising, copies and general reproductions, professional development, meetings and strategy sessions, accounting expenses, computer technical support, design expenses, website and database management expenses, payroll service, rent, repairs and maintenance, small equipment purchases, software, telecommunications,

Narratives

travel, utilities, and miscellaneous expenses.

LIFT has a long tradition of budget adequacy to support its program design, activities, and outcomes. Throughout LIFT's previous federal grants (five Department of Labor grants, two AmeriCorps*VISTA grants, an AmeriCorps*National Direct grant, and a Department of Education grant), LIFT has been able to successfully support its programs and achieve LIFT's desired outputs and outcomes linked to supporting families and individuals on a path out of poverty. The organization will look to the revenue sources outlined above as continual sources of income. Many of these have been long-standing funding partners of the organization, and LIFT has no reason to suspect discontinuation. Even six months before the launch of its next fiscal year (FY'11: July 1, 2010--June 30, 2011), LIFT has already secured over \$400,000 for next fiscal year, demonstrating its strength and adequacy as an organization. In addition, LIFT's leadership and development team is in the midst of executing a \$5 million growth capital campaign to fully execute its 5-year Strategic Plan. Early discussions have made this goal feel achievable; the organization is on track to have half of its goal raised by June 2010. LIFT has never been in a stronger position to achieve its budget, and the organization is confident it can adequately support its program throughout the duration of this three-year grant period and beyond.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

Program performance and evaluation is an important aspect of LIFT's program model. LIFT's Evaluation Plan to assess our AmeriCorps program is very similar to our ongoing plan for self assessment and improvement as discussed in the Rational and Approach narrative. LIFT's Evaluation Plan is comprised of following key areas.

* Client/Community Feedback: LIFT will solicit client and community feedback through LIFT's Client Satisfaction Survey (CSS) and through local Client Feedback Sessions. These feedback mechanisms will allow clients and community members to provide direct feedback to LIFT staff on all areas of service delivery and program performance.

Narratives

* Community Partner Feedback (including partnering universities and partnering community based organizations): LIFT will continue soliciting feedback through existing Local Advisory Boards (LAB).

* Student Volunteer Feedback: LIFT will administer its Student Experience Survey (SES) semesterly to garner feedback from its volunteer constituency on overall student experience and program effectiveness. LIFT will also seek feedback from the National Student Advisory Board (NSAB), which directly represents LIFT's student volunteers.

* AmeriCorps Member feedback: LIFT will garner member feedback through several ways: weekly one-on-one supervision, mid-term and exit surveys, weekly and monthly member reports, three national trainings, ongoing local trainings, and 360 performance reviews.

* CNCS Feedback: LIFT will continue to foster a strong partnership with LIFT's CNCS Program Officer and CNCS leadership to ensure ongoing program compliance and improvement. LIFT will conduct regular check-ins with its CNCS Program Officer to discuss program challenges or concerns, progress towards performance goals, and ongoing member development. LIFT will also actively participate in CNCS sponsored trainings, workshops, working groups, and conferences to ensure it is up to date on key CNCS initiatives and opportunities for collaboration with other CNCS programs or partnering agencies.

* National Planning Sessions: LIFT's leadership team will convene the local and national staffs three times a year to reflect on program performance and the feedback provided by all of LIFT's stakeholders. LIFT will use this information to develop strategies to respond to challenges or concerns about performance and build off of LIFT's strengths to ensure ongoing growth and development of LIFT's programs.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

Clarification Items for Continuation:

Narratives

1. Please provide additional information on LIFT's consultation with the DC commission.

>>>LIFT left a message with the DC Commission during the consolation process but was unable to speak with someone directly. As a corrective measure, LIFT reached out to the DC Commission on 4/28/2011 to schedule a call to ensure the Commission is fully aware of LIFT's ongoing programming in DC.

CLARIFICATION ITEMS

Your application is currently under consideration for a grant in the amount of \$300,000 for 24 Full Time Member Service Years (MSYs).

Programmatic Clarification Items

Please make the following changes in the eGrants narrative field labeled "Clarification Summary."

1) Please explain what specific administrative duties members engage in to keep the service centers operational. What are daily operations of centers? What are the members' responsibilities in office management?

*LIFT's community centers are open to client service 40 hours a week, Monday through Friday. We offer occasional weeknight and weekend hours but those times are limited. Our members' administrative duties and office management responsibilities are minor. They help maintain an orderly office space, help coordinate client meetings and student volunteer schedules (which we consider part of their direct service), and support local office monthly performance reports. They do not manage local budgets or finances (though they have input), work with vendors (telecomm, internet providers, etc), or with our property managers. That work is managed by our regional Executive Directors and program

Narratives

staff. Members are responsible, as with full time LIFT staff, to submit timesheets, receipts, and purchase order requests on time. Members will manage office phones from time to time but that responsibility largely falls on the student volunteers and program staff. The bulk of our members work is direct service which is focused on working with LIFT clients and with LIFT student volunteers.

2) Please explain what, if any, direct service activities members engage in during their term of service.

*As outlined in the recompet application, the majority of work LIFT members engage in is direct service (more than 90% of their time). This time is split between working directly with LIFT clients or with LIFT college student volunteers. Members are either working directly one-on-one with LIFT clients to help place them on a path out of poverty or by directly recruiting, training, and supporting LIFT student volunteers to work with LIFT clients. Member work plans focus on 4 areas (additional description in application narrative):

(a) Work Plan Area 1: Place Clients on a Path Out of Poverty. Here members focus their efforts on working one-on-one with clients to help support them in the areas of basic necessities (food, clothing, transportation, obtaining personal identification, etc.), employment/financial stability, housing, education and training, and health care. For example, in assisting a client looking for employment a member might help that client create a resume, cover letter, practice interview skills, enroll in a job training program, and/or assist the client in applying for job openings.

(b) Work Plan Area 2: Student Volunteer Recruitment, Training, and Student Volunteer Support: Here members recruit college student volunteers from local university and college campuses to volunteer in LIFT community centers by speaking in classes, attending volunteer fairs, and tabling on campus. Members co-facilitate student trainings with full-time LIFT program staff, support student volunteers as

Narratives

they work one-on-one with LIFT clients, and provide additional support to clients and volunteers as needed.

(c) Work Plan Area 3: Community Partnerships: Here members work directly with community partners to not only maintain and develop existing partnerships but also to develop new partnerships with universities and community agencies with the aim of strengthening and developing a more seamless network of support for community members in need of services and assistance.

(d) Work Plan Area 4: Local Office Infrastructure: Here members focus more on office management responsibilities by supporting local and national performance and evaluation efforts (by participating in local office monthly report preparation), helping maintain an orderly office, and general office support as needed. This work plan area makes up less than 10% of the members' work.

3) Please define "community expert" in the context it was used in the capacity building section of the application. Who are these people and how were they identified?

We use the term "community expert" simply as a way of talking about professionals working in the social services sector that LIFT works with and/or partners with on a regular basis (e.g. social workers, tax experts, legal clinicians, job placement specialists, financial counselors, mental health professionals, medical professionals, etc.). We identify these individuals through our existing community partnerships, new partnerships, and through clients and community agencies that are referred to us.

4) The additional program expenses were listed in the application, but did not include the actual costs

Narratives

associated with them. Please provide a clearer picture of your share of the cost by including the amount of those expenses.

*LIFT is requesting \$300,000 for the first year of this grant (24 members at \$12,500 each). This will make up approximately 21.4% of the anticipated programmatic budget for the next fiscal year. These are the costs included in our programmatic budget:

\$367,200 -- AmeriCorps member living allowances (9 second year members at \$16.8K each; 15 first year members at \$14.4K each)

\$124,000 -- Background checks, payroll taxes, worker's comp, health/disability insurance for AmeriCorps Members

\$37,000 -- AmeriCorps member training and professional development

\$450,000 -- Program Staff Salaries

\$89,000 -- Background checks, payroll taxes, worker's comp, health/disability insurance for Program Staff

\$333,800 -- Other programmatic operational costs such as supplies, computer tech support, rent, travel, telecommunications, and other miscellaneous program expenses

5) Criminal History Check Requirement: Criminal history checks are required for all grant funded staff and AmeriCorps members. Please verify that you will be including criminal history check costs in your administration of the proposed program for both members and grant funded staff.

*LIFT will be including criminal history check costs in our administration of our proposed program for both members and grant funded staff. (This is now noted in clarification question #4.)

Narratives

Continuation Changes

YEAR 2 Continuation Changes:

LIFT is requesting 7 additional full-time MSY slots for YEAR 2 our grant. This would bring our total MSY allotment up to 31.

Rational and justification for the increase in member slots:

Regional Growth:

As outlined in our original grant application, in July 2010, LIFT launched an exciting 5 Year Strategic Growth plan. In that plan LIFT made the decision to focus on a "go deep" strategy, which focuses on immediate growth in its 5 existing communities of Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC. As part of that plan, by 2015, LIFT looks to grow our presence in each of those five communities by expanding from one or two full time LIFT community centers to four in each region and increase the number of families we serve annually in each region from roughly 1,200 families to 5,000 families. In the first six months of the plan, LIFT has made significant progress. By July 2011, LIFT will have significantly expanded 4 of our current operating sites and successfully launched 3 new sites. LIFT is on target to serve roughly 10,000 families in FY11, which is a 43% increase over FY10.

Meeting the need:

The compelling community need has not changed drastically since we outlined the community need in each of our five regions in the Rational and Approach narrative. With that said, with this year's release of poverty data from the United States Census Bureau, we know that nearly 44 million Americans--one in seven individuals--live below the poverty line, which is currently set at \$22,050 per year for a family of four. Among children, 42 percent live in low-income families and approximately one in every five live

Narratives

in poor families. Teetering on the edge of crisis, low-income families need intense support to secure the necessary employment, services, training, education, and tax credits that will enable them to sustain their families. With unemployment hovering around 10 percent for the past year, more people are facing homelessness and poverty than ever before and LIFT's services have never been more urgently needed. In 2010, LIFT served 7,000 clients, but it has the potential to help thousands more low-income individuals access the services and benefits they need to lift their families out of poverty. Compounding the challenge, the social service sector has experienced severe cuts as federal and state dollars become more difficult to secure and as the philanthropic community struggles to get back to pre-economic crisis giving and funding levels.

Over half of LIFT's offices are located in large urban centers (Bronx, NY; Washington, DC; Chicago, IL; and two offices in North and West Philadelphia, PA). Perhaps most telling about these communities' need for LIFT's services is the number of individuals living in poverty, with 27.1% of Bronx, 19.1% of Washington DC, 21.2% of Chicago, and 23.8% of Philadelphia residents living at or below the poverty line. Per capita incomes in these urban centers range from as low as \$13,959 in the Bronx, NY, to as high as \$28,659 in Washington, DC, where the prevalence of high-salaried jobs often obscures the fact that most residents are struggling every day to support their families with low wage and/or part-time jobs. In addition, these cities were heavily impacted by the current recession. According to the Department of Labor, 13.4% of Bronx, 12.1% of Washington DC, 10.3% of Chicago, and 11.1% of Philadelphia residents are currently unemployed. While these high unemployment numbers are staggering, they do not even take into account the large number of people who are underemployed in part-time positions or those who have taken themselves out of the workforce entirely.

LIFT also runs offices in the smaller cities of Cambridge, MA; Somerville, MA; and Evanston, IL, which are located within the Boston and Chicago metropolitan regions respectively. Well-known universities

Narratives

are located in these cities, providing many high-paying jobs to professors and administrators, yet living conditions are significantly lower for a large portion of the population living around these campuses. Median household incomes range from \$46,315 in Somerville to \$69,303 in Evanston, the average household income in these communities is \$58,025. It is precisely because these averages are so high that social services in these communities are often scarce. In reality, the poverty rate in these communities range from 11 to 13 percent, surprisingly similar to their more urban counterparts. For a family of four with an income below \$22,500, just renting a home in these cities becomes unsustainable. Median rental rates range from \$1,200 in Somerville to \$1,400 in Cambridge -- approximately 74 percent of a family's annual income going to rent alone. (This data is pulled from the Department of Labor, the United States Census Bureau, and a 2008 First Focus study by Elisabeth Mason, J.D. and Julie Kashen entitled "Out of the Desert: An Integrated Approach to Ending Child Poverty.")

Activities of expansion members:

The activities of expansion members will remain identical to current members. Given LIFT's growth, and the ongoing and major need in each community, LIFT would like to place additional members in expanded and recently launched LIFT sites in the five regions outlined in the original grant. The primary emphasis of member activity will remain focused on working one-on-one with low-income residents to find jobs, secure safe and stable housing, make ends meet through public benefits and tax credits, and obtain quality referrals for additional services such as health and child care. Members will also work closely to recruit and train LIFT's volunteer advocates, trained and dedicated college students, to support this effort.

Organizational Capacity to support expansion:

In the past 12 years since its founding, LIFT has proven that it is possible to effectively support low-income clients moving out of poverty, through a low-cost model fueled by the energy of college student

Narratives

volunteers. LIFT believes that a strong local site, deeply rooted in the local community and directly impacting a significant portion of the local low-income population, is critical for combating poverty directly. Given its mission, the immense needs among individuals struggling with poverty, and the long-term need for talent and leadership in combating poverty, LIFT is committed to pushing its impact and the organization forward to the next horizon of growth.

In order to support current and future expansion efforts, LIFT is making an early and significant investment in staffing on the national and regional level -- adding several key positions, which will enhance the organization's capacity to expand in each region and supports its AmeriCorps members. LIFT will hire Program Managers in 2011 that will directly oversee the AmeriCorps members and volunteers at each of its current local offices (Regional Executive Directors currently manage these responsibilities). The Program Managers will be responsible for maximizing office capacity through improving client outreach and service delivery as well as enhanced AC member and student volunteer recruitment, training, and retention. The addition of Program Managers will allow the Executive Director in each region to concentrate more time and effort on local expansion, building strategic relationships with potential programmatic and funding partners in the community. LIFT will also hire Development Associates to provide the Executive Directors with more fundraising support. LIFT believes that these early national and regional hires will serve as key organizational investments -- enabling LIFT to dramatically expand its capacity to serve clients and support LIFT's AmeriCorps program.

On the fundraising and revenue side, the sole focus of LIFT's entire development team is to obtain diverse non-federal resources for program implementation and sustainability. Currently, federal sources only compromise 10% of LIFT's annual budget. The remaining amount comes predominately from individuals (44%) and foundations/corporations (46%). LIFT has demonstrated again and again that it

Narratives

is an incredibly cost-effective program. Currently, the average LIFT office requires approximately \$200,000 to operate for an entire year. Translated differently, it costs LIFT approximately \$250 to lift a person out of poverty so that they can become newly productive members of our society.

LIFT is on track to meet or exceed its FY'11 budgeted revenue goal of \$2.9 million, a 50% increase over the FY'10 budget, while keeping expenses to less than \$2.5 million for the year. LIFT's growth has been aggressive, but well supported by a strong revenue plan. LIFT will be entering FY'12 on solid financial footing continuing to build off of both long standing and new funding partnerships.

Budget changes:

The only change in the continuation budget is in the number of full-time MSYs. By increasing the member MSY allotment to 31, the budget went from \$300,000 to \$387,500. The requested cost per MSY remains the same.

Enrollment and Retention:

LIFT has a strong track record of enrollment and retention. LIFT is on track for 100% enrollment and retention this year and has a 100% enrollment and retention rate in each year of the previous 3 year National Direct grant.

Multi-state Continuations:

LIFT emailed the State Commissions of each state in which LIFT works and notified them that we were submitting the continuation for our program. LIFT also provided the State Commission with a list including contact information of our staff and members. We plan to update this list on an annual basis. Upon invitation, LIFT will fully participate in the State Commission's annual needs assessment and training plan development activities, and in the development of their state service plan, as well as

Narratives

appropriate training and other events. LIFT will include the State Commission on LIFT's mailing list and invite them to appropriate training and other events.

YEAR 2 Continuation Changes End.

Performance Measures

SAA Characteristics

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> AmeriCorps Member Population - None | <input type="checkbox"/> Geographic Focus - Rural |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geographic Focus - Urban | <input type="checkbox"/> Encore Program |

Priority Areas

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

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 24

Service Categories

Other Human Needs

National Performance Measures

Priority Area: Economic Opportunity

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Poverty is a complex and multi-faceted problem and all of its associated issues--unemployment, homelessness, hunger, illiteracy, health problems, and more--are interlinked. Yet our social services system does not reflect this reality. In order to secure needed resources, poor families must navigate highly complex and confusing bureaucracies, making access to basic services and benefits challenging.

Simply put, LIFT eliminates the complexity and confusion for individuals and families struggling with poverty.

With a mission to combat poverty and expand opportunity for all people in the United States, LIFT's model pursues two distinct paths. First, low-income individuals (clients) work with trained volunteers to obtain access to necessities--secure income/employment, housing, health care, and education--that enable families to survive and thrive. LIFT's services are free of cost and without eligibility requirements, ensuring that any individual in need can access resources. Second, LIFT trains a corps of volunteers in a variety of issue areas to prepare them to work within the context of client needs. Their exposure to the challenges presented to low-income families serves as a transformative experience, and LIFT alumni go on to pursue careers across all sectors while becoming lifelong leaders in the effort to eliminate poverty.

LIFT will achieve results specifically in the area of employment by training AC members and LIFT student volunteers to work one-on-one with LIFT clients seeking employment services. Together their work will include, but will not be limited to, creating resumes, developing cover letters, developing job readiness skills (mock interviews, computer literacy, creating email accounts to apply for jobs online) facilitating job searches, setting up and scheduling interviews, referring to job training and placement programs, and screening for and enrolling in employment related public benefit programs. Simultaneously, LIFT will work with clients in other need areas essential to establishing and maintaining employment including basic necessities (food, clothing, transportation, obtaining personal identification, etc.), housing, education and training, and health care.

LIFT has developed an online case management system based on .NET & ASP technology to rigorously track the progress and outcomes of each individual and family seeking support.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

National Performance Measures

Result.

LIFT will help place 400 economically disadvantaged individuals in jobs.

Indicator: O10: Individuals placed in jobs.

Target : Number of unduplicated economically disadvantaged individuals placed in jobs.

Target Value: 400

Instruments: Online case management and client tracking system which will allow LIFT to track the type of job placement services provided and number of jobs secured.

PM Statement: Through one-on-one work with LIFT AC members and LIFT student volunteers, LIFT will help place 400 unduplicated economically disadvantaged individuals in jobs.

Result: Output

Result.

LIFT will provide job placement services to 4500 economically disadvantaged individuals.

Indicator: O3: Individuals receiving job placement services.

Target : Number of unduplicated economically disadvantaged individuals receiving job placement services.

Target Value: 4500

Instruments: Online case management and client tracking system which will allow LIFT to track the type of job placement services provided and number of jobs secured.

PM Statement: Through one-on-one work with LIFT AC members and LIFT student volunteers, LIFT will provide job placement services to at least 4500 unduplicated economically disadvantaged individuals.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Already on File at CNCS

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable