



## Narratives

### Executive Summary

#### Summary

#### AmeriCorps National Grant Proposal

PROGRAM TITLE: BLACKFEET HOUSING AUTHORITY AMERICORPS PROJECT

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: The project will focus on planning a successful project for a future Opportunity grant. The program will be staffed by a Project Coordinator, who is responsible for planning activities for the Ameri-Corp Grant, assessing volunteer strengths, and collecting statistical data. The Coordinator will work closely with Blackfeet Housing and other community service organizations to determine which areas of the community would benefit from having AmeriCorp volunteers. An Assistant will be hired to carry out office duties as required.

The planning grant will allow the Blackfeet Tribe and Blackfeet Housing to do the following:

- \* Contract necessary consultants to assist with the planning process and identify projects.
- \* Compile community needs-related information to assist with designing the program.
- \* Complete an organizational/community needs assessment.
- \* Develop community partnerships to help support the AmeriCorps Project

### Rationale and Approach

I. Rationale and Approach/Program Design A. Need/Problem Identification The Blackfeet Indian Reservation, located in Northwestern Montana is comprised of 1.5 million acres. The reservation encompasses much of Glacier County and the northwestern portion of Pondera County. The Blackfeet is the largest of Montana's Tribes and is bordered on Canada to the north and Glacier National Park to the west. The reservation has a total enrollment of 16,400 with 8,942 members living on the reservation. The unemployment rate of the Blackfeet Reservation averages roughly 65% (BIA Labor Force Report 2010). The reservation's economy centers on agriculture. Browning is the center of the

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reservation's tribal government and the hub of reservation. The reservations' continuing high poverty rates (34%) are driven by a number of factors, not at least of which is the lack of private-sector activity and jobs. The Blackfeet Reservation can be best described as "government-dependent". While there are many programs for residents to take advantage of, few participate. Whether this is due to lack of interest or the failure of the programs to reach the people is not known. The housing situation on the reservation can only be described as "desperate". There is a severe shortage of housing on the Blackfeet Indian reservation. In 2008 it was estimated that there were at least 150 families considered homeless (BIA Housing Inventory 2008). Currently the Blackfeet Indian Housing Authority manages a total of 984 housing units (BHA Annual Plan). Of that number, 653 are low rent projects with 100% of the families occupying them live well below the U.S. Poverty level (BHA Occupancy).

Overcrowding is a constant problem in the majority of homes on the reservation. It is not at all unusual to find a single family home occupied by two elders, their married daughter and her husband, one or two families of married grandchildren and three or four great grandchildren. This results in 10 or 12 people living in a house that is built to house a maximum of four to six family members (BHA Occupancy). Because the reservation lacks adequate affordable housing, many newly married couples find themselves living with their parents or other relatives, simply because they have no other place to go. The simple lack of privacy places a strain on Tribal marriages, it makes it hard for children to study, it leads to bouts of arguing within the family, it leads to the passage of illnesses from one family member to the next and it gives everyone a general feeling of being trapped. Furthermore, many of the adults are unemployed and feel a sense of helplessness. All of these factors have contributed to our high rates of domestic violence, increased alcoholism, high drop out rates, child abuse problems, low educational achievement by our children, couples marrying at a younger age, a general breakdown of the family unit, and crime. Many of the homes have plumbing problems, lack good working furnaces, leaky roofs and poor windows. Thus, the homes are often very cold in the winter and extremely hot in

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the summer. This results in high heating and cooling bills, which adds an additional strain on the already strapped family budget. In turn it creates even more tension in the home. The extreme situation in which our families live, leave little reason to pay attention to minor repairs, up keep, and landscaping of their homes. The tenants simply learn to survive and forget about the rest. Presently, the tribe has approximately 653 HUD financed rental units which are in need of repairs of some type. The BHA Maintenance team, who consistently receives inadequate funding to properly keep up the homes, finds themselves repairing only the most severe homes. This leaves little time for preventive maintenance, minor repairs, landscaping, and homeowner training. The un-served units continue to become more and more dilapidated until the families are moved to another unit until major repairs can be made. (BHA Maintenance) Many of the families do what they can, but have too little money to fund the repairs themselves. The fostering of economic development and housing systems for the Blackfeet Reservation continues to be one of the tribe's major goals. The Blackfeet Indian Reservation's present economic development systems are limited to providing the majority of its residents with a substandard quality of living. Added to the limited economic resources, the population continues to increase, the birth rate is also increasing, the emigration rate is decreasing yet the services necessary to meet the growing needs of the population continues to decrease as well. (2010 CEDS Blackfeet Tribe) The reservations' poverty rate is significantly higher than neighboring rural counties that are at 13% (U.S Census). The factors driving the high poverty rates are lack of private sector jobs, housing stress, education, declining tribal government, and high unemployment. The private sector needs to have an organization that includes volunteer service as well as public organizations in order to be successful in building the community and its residents. By committing to an "AmeriCorps Planning Grant" the project can be developed for youth and young adults to assist themselves and their families to strengthen their own communities and the local economy while improving their living conditions. B. Mission, Goals, Objectives for Program MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of

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our BHA AmeriCorps planning project is to build a volunteer program that focuses on traditional learning, economic self sufficiency, social and life skill building activities for the restoration of reservation communities and each individual's dignity, self-respect and hope. GOALS: 1. To develop resources within reservation communities to improve the living conditions of families in housing projects. 2. Create an effective system that will empower future Service members to participate in improving their neighborhoods. 3. Identify potential volunteers who will benefit from becoming a service volunteer. 4. Develop an action plan for the project that will ensure program success. 5. Target organizations that have a need for community service to assist with program development. 6. Train staff members in effective program management by attending AmeriCorp sponsored training for planning programs. C. Project Description Our qualified Project Coordinator will carry out the community based planning program. This program would begin July 1, 2011 or when funding is received and continue for a 12 month period. The proposed program will work in conjunction, compliment, and enhance existing community service organizations. This program will complete a needs assessment of all community service organizations and directors to evaluate the needs of the community and low income housing tenants. Once the needs assessment is complete, the coordinator will begin development of the action plan to carry out the project. Our existing Occupancy Department will play an integral role in the development of the program by identifying potential volunteers and the needs of the communities/projects they live in. In addition to the Occupancy counselors, the Project Coordinator will work closely with the Director of the Tribes' Blackfeet Manpower One Stop Center on program development and to assist with identifying potential volunteers. The One Stop Center manages programs such as TANF, WIA, Youth Build, SWAP, Healthy Marriage, Casey Life Skills, and other programs designed to assist individuals and families. The Coordinator will also have the responsibility for community networking by establishing working relationships with area employers, businesses, and community members. Training of potential staff

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members will be developed during the planning phase of this AmeriCorp project. The project Coordinator will attend AmeriCorp sponsored training and identify potential training required for other staff members. Upon completion of the planning phase of this project, Blackfeet Housing will apply for a full AmeriCorp Volunteer Project.

Specific tasks for this planning grant will include:

- \* Begin project planning by defining community service organizations and potential partners.
- \* Identify the tools and materials the project will require (ex. needs assessment, etc)
- \* Recruit local organizations to participate in community improvement.
- \* Hold community meetings to gain input from entire community.
- \* Brief support organizations on all aspects of the project and involve them in planning and preparation.
- \* Begin planning volunteer recruitment.
- \* Create the first draft of the project plan
- \* Develop a PR/media plan.
- \* Complete Program evaluation.

Expected Project Outcomes: The final outcome of this proposed program is: to have a fully developed AmeriCorp Project that is ready for execution once funding is secured; to identify specific community needs and projects; to identify potential participants that will benefit from becoming a volunteer.

### Organizational Capability

#### II. Organizational Capacity

##### A. Management Structure

The AmeriCorps Planning grant will be managed by Blackfeet Housing Authority. The Housing Authority is under the Direction of Mr. Chancey Kittson. Blackfeet Housing is governed by a Board of Directors who is managed by the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council. The AmeriCorp Project staff

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(Project Coordinator and Project Assistant) will be placed in the Occupancy Department at Blackfeet Housing. Blackfeet Housing has eight departments including, Administration, Finance, Development, Environment, Occupancy, Security, Maintenance, and Renovation. Blackfeet Housing has successfully managed several federal grants each year. The Finance Department at Housing is an award winning department, winning awards from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban development for their excellent ability to manage several grants at one time. The finance department of Blackfeet Housing administers grants following processes required by OMB Circulars A-87 and A-133, 2 CFR part 225 and the Federal Acquisition Regulations.

### B. Administrative Capability

#### 1. Managerial

Chancey Kittson has been the Executive Director of Blackfeet Housing Authority since October of 2010. He is a graduate of the University of Montana and holds a Bachelors of Science Degree in Business Administration. He has extensive experience in residential construction. Having worked as a carpenter, welder, construction project manager, carpenter foreman, and a Credit Loan Officer, Mr. Kittson has all the relevant experience to manage a project such as Rural Innovation Fund Project. In his term as Executive Director, Mr. Kittson has reduced the administrative budget, reorganized staff and departments to make a more effective and motivated team, has developed MOA's with Tribal TANF, BIA, I.H.S. and the Blackfeet Tribe to collect delinquent accounts via direct deposit to BHA. He has taken a proactive approach to solving the housing problems for the Blackfeet Tribe and is evident in the progress made to date.

Dr. Dorothy Still Smoking has six years experience in her present capacity as Community and Economic Developer with Blackfeet Housing Authority. In this capacity, she is responsible to increase economic opportunities through activities that improve the community climate and quality of live for

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residents on the Blackfeet Reservation. In short she secures funding, develops and designs programs that will benefit the Blackfeet Communities. The projects include neighborhood revitalization, youth development and leadership, job training & job development, conducting needs assessments, improve and construct community facilities. Her more recent accomplishments for Blackfeet Housing Authority is the Kanaitapiwa For Profit Corporation and the Blackfeet Tenant Community Development Corporation, a non profit corporation. She has secured funding for Strategic Prevention Framework-State Incentive Grant, Rural Housing & Economic Development, Gang Resistance Education & Training, and USDA Community Facilities Grant.

Rose Bull Child -- Rose has worked for BHA in the capacity of Occupancy Specialist for the past 25 years. She is well acquainted with the tenants of the housing projects. Her expertise in the area of neighborhood development and sustainability will greatly enhance the project and its' service members.

2. Financial Opal Boggs has extensive experience in finance. Having financially managed several large businesses in the area including Town Pump Food Stores, Opal has worked for the Blackfeet Tribe in federal grants management and has worked in the Blackfeet Housing Finance Office for the past six years.

The above individuals will be responsible for assisting in the administration of the project. The Project Coordinator and Project Assistant will be under the direct supervision of Chancey Kittson. Dr. Still Smoking, Rose Bull Child and Opal Boggs will serve as the steering committee for the entire project. The project staff will be subject to rules and regulations governing the Blackfeet Tribe and its' subsidiaries.

### Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy



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### A. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

The Blackfeet Housing AmeriCorp project will take place on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation located in Glacier County Montana. The reservation is a rural area and is considered one of the poorest communities in the State of Montana. The resource-poor reservation is not served by corporate or philanthropic resources other than a few religious organizations. The unemployment rate of the Blackfeet Reservation averages roughly 65% (BIA Labor Force Report 2010). The reservation's economy centers on agriculture. Browning is the center of the reservation's tribal government and the hub of reservation. The reservations' continuing high poverty rates (35%) are driven by a number of factors, not at least of which is the lack of private-sector activity and jobs. The Blackfeet Reservation can be best described as "government-dependent". U.S. Census and State data is as follows:

Local Poverty Rate - Target Area (Census 2000): 35.44%

County trend - Individuals below poverty level, percent, 2000 27.3%

Persons below poverty level, percent, 2008 25.5%

National Poverty Rate

The national average for poverty in 2000 was 12.16%.

Unemployment for the target area Local Unemployment rate

Local Unemployment Rate - Target Area: 10.44%

BIA Labor Force Report (2010) 69%

This planning project will focus on residents living in Low Income housing projects where the housing situation on the reservation can only be described as "desperate". There is a severe shortage of housing

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on the Blackfeet Indian reservation. In 2008 it was estimated that there were at least 150 families considered homeless (BIA Housing Inventory 2008). Currently the Blackfeet Indian Housing Authority manages a total of 984 housing units (BHA Annual Plan). Of that number, 653 are low rent projects with 100% of the families occupying them live well below the U.S. Poverty level (BHA Occupancy).

The following budget has been designed to be a cost-effective program by utilizing many tribal resources to implement, leverage, and sustain the program. The funds from the AmeriCorp Program (\$50,000) will be used entirely for salaries and fringe benefits. Blackfeet Housing Authority will match the AmeriCorps funds by providing administrative and operating costs. By committing to these costs the project will be assured of being sustained at the highest level possible. Blackfeet Housing has committed to providing office space, phone, utilities, office equipment, office furniture, and travel/training costs.

B. Budget Year 1 Project Coordinator 30,000

Assistant 15,000

Fringe Benefits 5,000

Total \$ 50,000

C. Budget Justification

1. Project Coordinator per BHA Salary Scale: \$30,000 (1.0 FTE)

2. Project Assistant per BHA Salary Scale: \$15,000 (.75 FTE)

3. Fringe Benefits:

Workers Compensation -- 1.47% and, Social Security -- 6.20%, Medicare -- 1.45%,

Unemployment Insurance -- 2.00%,

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Total Fringe Benefits = \$6,000

D. In-Kind Contribution - Source: Blackfeet Housing, Blackfeet Tribe

1. BHA Director -- Project Oversight
2. Blackfeet Tribe -- Waive 15.04% IDC for this project.

TOTAL IN KIND CONTRIBUTION \$7,520

E. Non-Federal Cash Contribution - Source: Blackfeet Housing

Travel - \$3,500

Consumable Office Supplies - \$1,500

Local Travel - \$2,785

Computer 2 @ \$1,250 ea - \$2,500

Printer 2 @ \$250 ea - \$500

Utilities - \$1,200

Telephone - \$1,500

Internet Service - \$600

TOTAL CASH CONTRIBUTION \$14,085

The Blackfeet Housing Authority will pay for required travel and training sponsored by AmeriCorp for the Project Coordinator and Project Assistant. Other costs paid by Blackfeet Housing will include Office Supplies, Local Travel (Gasoline, Vehicles), computers, printers, utilities, telephone, Internet service, and office space.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

EVALUATION PLAN

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An advisory board of 5 designees from Blackfeet Housing, Blackfeet Tribe, and other Community Service Organizations will serve as advisers for the project. To measure impacts of the AmeriCorp Planning Project, evaluators (Both External and Internal) will use formative and summative evaluation methods, including process evaluation at midpoint and at the completion of the project. The project will be evaluated each month during the 12 month grant period using data to assess the effectiveness of the project at each point. A formal evaluation will be done annually. In addition, a process evaluation will be conducted midpoint to measure progress and suggest alternatives. A summative evaluation will be conducted at the end of the project.

### Amendment Justification

This is a new application and does not require an amendment.

### Clarification Summary

The Blackfeet Housing Authority will advertise the positions on Tuesday, July 5, 2011. The ads will run for two weeks. On the following Monday the applicants will be screened and a person selected for each position the following week. Once the people are hired for the Project Coordinator and Assistant, Marilyn Parsons will go over the goals and objectives of the planning grant, the duties of each individual, introduce them to the AmeriCorp contacts, and hold initial conference calls to the funding agency. Marilyn Parsons will be available to the newly hired staff and AmeriCorp for as long as required to insure successful progression of the project.

Budget Justification - Source: AmeriCorps

1. Project Coordinator per BHA Salary Scale: \$30,000 (1.0 FTE)
2. Project Assistant per BHA Salary Scale: \$15,000 (.75 FTE)
3. Fringe Benefits:

Workers Compensation -- 1.47% and, Social Security -- 6.20%, Medicare -- 1.45%,

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Unemployment Insurance -- 2.00%,

Total Fringe Benefits = \$6,000

TOTAL REQUEST \$50,000

In-Kind Contribution - Source: Blackfeet Housing, Blackfeet Tribe

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### 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"/> Environmental Stewardship            |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <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"/> Veterans and Military Families       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other                     |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Services                    |   |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |   |

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 0

#### Service Categories

Community Revitalization/Improvement Primary  Secondary

### Planning Grant Measure

**Service Category:** Community Revitalization/Improvement

**Measure Category:** Not Applicable

#### Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Plan AmeriCorps Program and gain capacity to apply successfully for an AmeriCorps operational grant.

## Required Documents

**Document Name**

**Status**

Evaluation

Not Applicable

Federally Approved Indirect Cost Agreement

Sent

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable