

## PART I - FACE SHEET

<b>APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE</b>		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction														
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to conform to the Corporation's eGrants System)																
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):	3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:  17-JAN-11	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:  N/A														
2b. APPLICATION ID:  11AC122599	4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER:  09ACHWI0010006														
<b>5. APPLICATION INFORMATION</b>																
LEGAL NAME: United Way of Dane County  DUNS NUMBER: 114109788	NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes):  NAME: Karen Dischler TELEPHONE NUMBER: (608) 441-7893 FAX NUMBER: (608) 238-7950 INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: kdischler@schoolsofhope.org															
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 2059 Atwood Avenue Madison WI 53704 - 6608 County: Dane																
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):  390817532	7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit 7b. Service/Civic Organization															
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: <b>Corporation for National and Community Service</b>															
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER:94.006 10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps State	11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Schools of Hope Project															
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc):  Madison, WI Sun Prairie, WI Middleton, WI	11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):															
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 08/15/11      END DATE: 08/14/12	14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="WI 002"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="WI 002"/>															
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; font-size: small;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">a. FEDERAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 344,320.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. APPLICANT</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 345,001.00</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;">\$ 689,321.00</td> </tr> </table>	a. FEDERAL	\$ 344,320.00	b. APPLICANT	\$ 345,001.00	c. STATE	\$ 0.00	d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00	e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00	g. TOTAL	\$ 689,321.00	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	\$ 344,320.00															
b. APPLICANT	\$ 345,001.00															
c. STATE	\$ 0.00															
d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00															
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00															
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00															
g. TOTAL	\$ 689,321.00															
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:  Rick Spiel	b. TITLE:  Executive VP/CFO	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER:  (608) 246-4352														
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:		e. DATE SIGNED:  05/02/11														

## Narratives

### Executive Summary

As the first "Schools of Hope" project, this dynamic partnership of the United Way and area school districts offers academic tutoring and has served as a model for others in the U.S. Its AmeriCorps team annually coordinates over 800 diverse literacy and math tutors who serve more than 5400 students (mostly children of color and those from low-income families) in 38 elementary schools, provides direct tutoring in preK-5 programs, and distributes quality books to actively support home learning.

### Rationale and Approach

#### COMPELLING COMMUNITY NEED

There are four community needs closely linked to long-term academic achievement that we address:

1. FAILURE TO MEET FOURTH-GRADE READING STANDARDS: The results of the last two years of testing data from the Wisconsin Fourth Grade Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKCE) consistently show that approximately 25% of Madison fourth graders score in the minimal and basic range in reading and over 30% score in the minimal and basic range in language arts (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction WINSS Data Analysis). Furthermore, scores in 13 of the 29 Madison elementary schools fell significantly below the district average for "proficient" performance. These schools are among those with the highest percentage of low-income students, who represent 45% to 80% (an average of 68%) of the total student body. Over 3,500 low-income students in pre-kindergarten to fourth grade in Madison have been targeted for this Project. (MMSD Data Profile, 2008-2009).

In Sun Prairie, the gap between students of color and white students scoring proficient or advanced in reading on the 2008 Fourth Grade WKCE test was 16 percentage points. Over the past ten years, the population of students of color has doubled, from 12% to 24%. The low-income population has grown over 50% in that same time, from 14% to 22%. In Verona, the gap in proficient/advanced test scores between students of color and white students is 28%. Over the past ten years the percentage of students

## Narratives

of color has grown from 15% to over 27% of the overall student population. The percentage of low-income students has more than doubled, from 11% to 23% of the student population (DPI WINSS Data Analysis).

2. FAILURE TO MEET KINDERGARTEN READINESS STANDARDS: Longitudinal research on student achievement by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Department of Curriculum and Instruction indicates that children who enter kindergarten without basic readiness skills in early reading and early math continue to lag behind their peers unless intensive and systematic intervention is provided. This research also reveals that as many as one third of students entering kindergarten do not have the necessary academic skills to be successful. The MMSD Research and Evaluation Department, in its assessment of entering kindergarten students, documents a substantial gap in kindergarten readiness that breaks down largely along the lines of family income, race/ethnicity, and English proficiency. On the Spring 2009 Kindergarten Screener, children from families in poverty, children of color, and English language learners scored significantly lower than children from middle-and upper-income families, and English proficient families. The same disparity was demonstrated on the MMSD Primary Language Arts Assessment in the areas of upper and lower case letter identification, hearing sounds in words, phonemic awareness, and concepts about print.

Research from United Way of America indicates that entering kindergarteners from literacy-poor homes have 800 word vocabularies as compared to those from literacy-affluent homes who have 10,000. We also know that the frequency with which a child has encountered a word will affect how quickly he or she can decode it and understand it. Children from middle income families are read to approximately 1000 hours by the time they start kindergarten, while children from lower-income families log 25 hours.

3. HIGH LOW-INCOME LEVELS IN KINDERGARTEN: Low-income children now comprise roughly

## Narratives

50% of all incoming kindergartners in Madison (nearly 1000 of 2000 entering five-year-olds in Fall 2009 are from low-income families). Children from low-income households are likely to have less access to high-quality early childhood education and materials, which we know is integrally important to their success in school and is proven to have a significant impact on kindergarten entry level.

4. LACK OF EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER COORDINATION AT LOCAL SCHOOLS: Due to fiscal limitations, the Madison, Sun Prairie, and Verona school districts cannot provide systematic staff allocation for the function of school volunteer management. Historically, each school created a mechanism for incorporating parent and community volunteers with widely varying levels of actual staff time devoted to this task. Previous to the implementation of the Schools of Hope Project, only eleven of the MMSD district's then 29 elementary schools had an identified person to serve as a contact point for school volunteers, which greatly hindered the effective incorporation of community volunteers.

### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES AND MEMBER ROLES

The Schools of Hope Project will recruit two teams of AmeriCorps members to carry out our Project's goals: 21 full-time members and 28 minimum-time summer members. Our goal of mobilizing community volunteers to boost academic achievement is achieved by 1) coordinating literacy and math tutors in elementary schools and community centers; 2) increasing literacy and math resources in children's homes, and 3) increasing active involvement in the MMSD K-Ready summer program. Building on our past twelve years effectively addressing academic achievement through these strategic interventions, members primarily serve as site volunteer coordinators and are responsible for the recruitment, screening, training, placement, support, evaluation and recognition of community volunteers in accordance with established volunteer management best practices. Members actively incorporate new and experienced volunteers in three Dane County communities serving low-income students who demonstrate the lowest test scores in reading. Each of the 21 full-time members is

## Narratives

assigned primarily as a volunteer coordinator to a maximum of two sites which ensures they have sufficient time to understand local site needs, engage site staff in collaborative activity, and effectively utilize Project resources.

Members are also trained in accordance with tutoring guidelines, perform tutoring services based on site needs and prioritize one-on-one tutoring using research-based methods. Volunteers and members (in their secondary role as tutors) work one-on-one or in small groups using research-based instructional programming under the direction of licensed educational staff. These efforts have been proven effective in helping to decrease the achievement gap between students of color and their white counterparts, and between low-income and middle/upper income students.

During the summer months, the primary activity for all members is to assist with the MMSD K-Ready program. K-Ready was developed to address the academic needs of struggling MMSD students entering kindergarten in the fall. The K-Ready model emphasizes best practices and research-based strategies in student identification, recruitment, academic programming, volunteer support, parent involvement, and logistical issues. Offered to students demonstrating academic needs on the basis of the spring kindergarten screener, it consists of structured academic support and learning activities at MMSD school sites that include large and small group times, center times focused on specific early literacy and early math activities, outside play and snacks, shared reading and independent (one-on-one) reading time. The program is held over six weeks in June and July; morning academic activities are supplemented by structured afternoon recreational programming provided by the Madison School Community Recreation Department.

In advance of the summer session, full-time members help their schools ensure that incoming students get screened at their local elementary, which is a crucial first step in establishing a positive working

## Narratives

relationship between schools and families, making sure that children become comfortable with their new school and promoting access as needed to the K-Ready summer school program. In addition to the incorporation of full- and minimum-time members into the K-Ready classrooms as teacher assistants, efforts are made to support community volunteers, especially bilingual individuals and/or Baby Boomers. All participants are trained jointly with MMSD teachers who lead each classroom, a feature that helps ensure uniformity of instructional practice and cohesiveness among all adults interacting with K-Ready students.

Training is provided for all members during their initial orientation to ensure knowledge of rules on prohibited service activities. Members receive this information in both verbal and written form as part of the Project instructional binder. Ongoing member supervision by staff both onsite and in weekly team meetings ensures compliance. In addition to weekly team meetings, members attend weekly training sessions. These trainings focus on topics critical to the members' school-based responsibilities, required AmeriCorps topics and ongoing member professional development (career and academic planning).

Our members serve in a tutoring program that meets all AmeriCorps requirements as detailed in the Congressional Federal Register. As outlined in memoranda of understanding with the local teachers' union, members are not considered employees of the Local Education Agency or school and do not replace or supplant district employees. Our criteria include the selection of individuals who have at least a high school degree and are provided with specialized high-quality and research-based pre-service and in-service training aligned and consistent with the language arts and math curricula of the districts in which they will carry out their activities. Student progress and student outcomes are assessed by Research and Evaluation staff and based on standardized testing. Our training modules are designed and delivered by certified teaching staffs in these districts as part of a coordinated effort endorsed by the central office administrations of the participating districts. Members and other volunteers are

## Narratives

supervised by local school administrators, staff members and Project coordinators with expertise in academic tutoring. Receiving an AmeriCorps grant allows this project to continue to institutionalize best practices in volunteer management that support academic achievement, and to respond to demographic changes by expanding to additional sites throughout the county.

### MEASUREABLE OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

The Schools of Hope Project is participating in the National Performance Measure Pilot and has selected the Education Corps priority area.

Measure 1: Number of students who start in an AmeriCorps education program

1.A. Target number 400

We will document the number of enrolled kindergarten students who start in the MMSD Summer School Program. Records will be compiled and tracked via school district attendance rosters.

1.B. Target number 1000

We will document the number of K-5 students initially matched with an literacy tutor to receive one-on-one tutoring at least 30 minutes per week (15 minutes for kindergarten). Records will be compiled and tracked via tutoring logs and AmeriCorps member tracking reports.

1.C Target number 2500

We will document the number of K-5 students who start receiving academic support provided by literacy and math tutors. Records will be compiled and tracked via tutoring logs and AmeriCorps member tracking reports.

## Narratives

Measure 2: Number of students who complete participation in an AmeriCorps education program

2.A. Target number 350

We will document the number of enrolled kindergarten students who complete 25 of 29 days in the MMSD Summer School Program. Records will be compiled and tracked via school district attendance rosters.

2.B Target number 750

We will document the number of K-5 students who receive one-on-one literacy tutoring at least 30 minutes per week (15 minutes for kindergarten) for a minimum of 15 sessions. Records will be compiled and tracked via tutoring logs and AmeriCorps member tracking reports.

2.C. Target number 2000

We will document the number of K-5 students who receive academic support provided by literacy and math tutors for a minimum of 15 sessions. Records will be compiled and tracked via tutoring logs and AmeriCorps member progress reports.

Measure 5: Number of students with improved academic performance.

5.A. Target number 300

We will document the number of enrolled kindergarten students who complete 25 of 29 days in the MMSD Summer School Program and demonstrate a 25% improvement in at least three tested readiness areas. Records will be compiled and tracked via school district attendance rosters and pre- and post-test



## Narratives

data measured by the MMSD kindergarten readiness test.

### 5.B. Target number 600

We will document the number of K-5 students who receive one-on-one literacy tutoring at least 30 minutes per week (15 minutes for kindergarten) for a minimum of 15 sessions and demonstrate academic improvement. Records will be compiled and tracked via tutoring logs, AmeriCorps member tracking reports and the standardized test instruments in use in students' districts as approved by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

### 5.C. Target number 1500

We will document the number of K-5 students who receive academic support provided by literacy and math tutors for a minimum of 15 sessions and demonstrate improved academic performance as demonstrated by teacher and staff reports. Records will be compiled and tracked via tutoring logs, AmeriCorps member progress reports and Schools of Hope teacher/staff surveys.

Depending on grade level, the assessments used for these performance measures will include instruments such as the Primary Language Arts Assessment (PLAA), the Primary Math Assessment (PMA), the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKCE), individual student report card grades, and the MMSD Kindergarten Screener. Improved performance will be assessed for core language arts and math indicators as identified by the MMSD Research and Evaluation staff as key markers for academic success, and statistically significant target values for improvement will be established for each instrument. Performance data for participating MMSD students will be accessed and analyzed by Research and Evaluation staff via the online Infinite Campus system. Performance data for other school districts will be accessed and analyzed by district staff assigned to provide this information for the

## Narratives

Schools of Hope Project.

### PLAN FOR SELF ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Continuous program improvement is a deeply embedded value in our Project, and Schools of Hope staff work as a Coordinating Team to ensure that program strengths and weaknesses are reviewed, problem areas are promptly resolved, and systematic feedback is collected from members, school sites and partner organizations. Regular (quarterly) reports which track and evaluate the program are submitted to the state commission and local Schools of Hope Leadership Teams. These include volunteer numbers and hours, student numbers and time tutored, assessment data as appropriate, creation and distribution of additional literacy resources, mini-grants and in-kind donations, staff and volunteer survey data, and Project evaluation reports.

The following mechanisms have evolved to ensure ongoing program improvement and strengthen partnership relationships and members' sense of efficacy in their roles: 1) When a member is placed at a site, Project staff meet with the principal to map out goals and create a "Letter of Agreement" outlining what each partner provides. Follow-up meetings are held as needed throughout the year with the member present to assess progress toward site goals, problem solve any issues, and develop future goals. 2) Project directors hold annual meetings with district staff to assess Project goals and solicit suggestions for improving practices. Annual surveys are collected from site staff and volunteers. 3) Mid-term evaluations for members include an individual meeting with a Project director to assess personal progress, set goals for the remainder of service term, and provide suggestions for program improvement. Additionally, our assistant director conducts an exit interview with each member to assess the quality of his/her experience and discuss suggestions for program improvement. The Coordinating Team (co-directors, assistant director and project assistant) meets weekly to provide

## Narratives

program oversight, create meeting and training agendas, and ensure timely responses to concerns and opportunities. 4) Weekly team meetings with all members and coordinators include a portion of the agenda specifically dedicated to problem solving. 5) Semi-annual retreats include opportunities for members and coordinators to assess Project goals, discuss challenges, and strategize regarding program improvements. 6) Project coordinators are available at any time to meet with individual members or groups of members to discuss concerns, ideas for innovations, or new opportunities.

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Schools of Hope began in 1995 as a civic journalism project of the Wisconsin State Journal and WISC-TV that looked at critical issues in MMSD and prioritized attention on the achievement gap between students of color and their white counterparts which was growing larger. The Team directed its energies toward eliminating this achievement gap for the critical measure of third grade reading, in alignment with the strategic goals of the Madison district. Beginning in 1998, AmeriCorps\*VISTA and AmeriCorps State grants have provided volunteer coordinators in county schools and early childhood programs.

The Schools of Hope Leadership Team and Subcommittee meet regularly throughout the year, receive updates on progress and challenges in the project, oversee focus groups, surveys and networking, and make decisions moving us toward our goals. Members of the Schools of Hope Leadership Team include: United Way, Dane County Executive, Wisconsin State Journal, WISC-TV, Dane County Juvenile Court, Centro Hispano, MMSD Superintendent, parents, teachers, Madison Community Foundation, MMSD Board of Education, Mayor of City of Madison, Urban League of Greater Madison, Madison Teachers, Inc., Madison Jewish Community Council, 100 Black Men of Madison, Inc., University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Education, Madison Area Technical College, and Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce.

## Narratives

Currently, the MMSD Project co-director is actively involved in a number of networking efforts, including 1) the collaborative "KinderReady Program", a partnership of school district, local funders and non-profit agencies (Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, Family Enhancement, Inc.) providing parenting education and pre-kindergarten readiness programming funded by the CUNA Mutual Foundation, and, together with the Project's assistant director, 2) MMSD's "Extended Learning Summer School Advisory Committee," which provides a structured morning academic program for entering kindergartners coupled with an afternoon recreational program that incorporates home learning resources obtained from local donations. The role of project representatives in these programs has been to serve as consultants and planning team members, and to collaborate by ensuring the assistance of members in activities that align with Schools of Hope goals.

### RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS

The Schools of Hope Project partners with multiple national service programs in the area of volunteer management (recruitment, training, recognition and evaluation). Key is our relationship with RSVP of Dane County, a Senior Corps agency funded in part by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). RSVP serves as United Way's lead agency in the Schools of Hope Project, and its mission to provide meaningful volunteer opportunities for seniors leverages hundreds of adult volunteers for the Project. RSVP's large (2000 +) volunteer base, broad community outreach and strategic plan focus on Baby Boomers improves Project visibility and access to this special population, which helps us boost our recruitment success with Baby Boomers and senior volunteers. RSVP also serves as fiscal agent for the project, providing monthly reports to United Way and helping to coordinate extensive county-wide volunteer trainings. All Dane County AmeriCorps and VISTA members serving in a tutoring capacity are invited to attend these trainings to enhance their professional development.

Karen Dischler, our Project Co-Director, has been involved in a variety of national CNCS efforts

## Narratives

involving all three streams of service which benefit the project. She presents workshops for Learn and Serve, AmeriCorps\*State, and RSVP and serves on the statewide national service conference planning team. Karen's cross-stream contacts have resulted in highly successful joint trainings for our AmeriCorps members, citywide service projects, combined volunteer trainings, and media volunteer recruitment efforts. Both co-directors served on an advisory team to develop the EnCorps website resources and contributed extensively with Schools of Hope forms, processes, and tips which are now available nationally for all AmeriCorps programs.

### POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

Since the inception of the Schools of Hope Project, we have successfully replicated key elements of the program such as the recruitment and training of members and volunteers, and the systematic collection and analysis of key evaluation data. The original Schools of Hope model was also replicated and modified to begin the Preschools of Hope Project, and serves as the model for academic tutoring at the secondary level (grades six through twelve) throughout the county. The original programs were also successfully expanded to two additional school districts in the county, Sun Prairie in 2005 and Verona in 2006. These expansions were based on the strong principles of quality volunteer management, alignment with district curricular goals, and accountability that evolved in the course of the AmeriCorps\*VISTA project.

We receive frequent visits and inquiries from other communities in Wisconsin and throughout the United States interested in replicating the program. We regularly share organizational best practices, tutoring handbooks and guidelines, management tools, surveys and evaluation outcomes with school district and United Way staff members. District and program representatives from California, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin have made site visits and/or have engaged in extensive email and phone communications with us, and we continue to

## Narratives

welcome inquiries and opportunities to share our expertise. With funding, strong community support, and a research-based program utilizing established best practices, we see that national replication is happening and are very excited about ongoing opportunities to support the expansion of this model programming.

### Organizational Capability

SOUND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:

ABILITY TO PROVIDE SOUND PROGRAMMATIC AND FISCAL OVERSIGHT

United Way is a community impact organization. By bringing together people, programs and partnerships to meet Dane County's greatest needs, our focus is to build a stronger community for all by identifying, prioritizing and addressing health and human service issues, raising and investing financial and volunteer resources and mobilizing partnerships. We have helped the Dane County, Wisconsin community since 1922. Teaming with partners in the community, we identify the root causes of health and human service problems, work to reduce or eliminate these issues, and ultimately enhance people's lives. Our partnerships include non-profit organizations, the corporate community, local governments, organized labor, and donors.

Volunteers are the driving force behind our work. More than 2,000 community leaders donate their time and talent to our efforts each year. Volunteers are supported by 49 committed staff.

United Way's mission is to unite and focus the community to create measurable results in improving people's lives and strengthening our community. In response to community input and research into our community's most pressing needs, our Vision Council created the "Agenda for Change" that addresses the following goals: - Students of color achieve at the same rate as white students. - Children are cared for and have fun as they become prepared for school. -- People's health issues are identified and treated early. - There is a decrease in homelessness. - Seniors and people with disabilities are able to stay in

## Narratives

their homes. - There is a reduction in violence toward individuals and families. - Non-profit agencies and volunteers are strong partners in achieving measurable results. Community resources (funding, volunteer time, collaborations, and in-kind support) focus around these agenda items to create lasting change in Dane County. Our financial staff currently manage the United Way's organizational revenues of over \$17,000,000 last year and an internal budget of approximately \$3.4 million.

As noted in the "COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT" section in "Rationale and Approach", United Way has a long-standing history of energetic oversight of the Schools of Hope Initiative. Teaming with RSVP strengthens our ability to provide sound programmatic oversight. As our lead agency in this work, RSVP has been providing quality volunteer placement services to volunteers 55 and older for 37 years. RSVP specializes in a personalized approach to placement, care in matching process, effective orientation, and regular follow up after the placement. RSVP's Intergenerational Program annually supports 400 volunteers who serve over 2500 students. The program collaborates with many community entities including MMSD, Sun Prairie Area School District, Verona Area School District, Urban League of Greater Madison, Junior Achievement, schools and public libraries throughout Dane County, neighborhood centers, and foremost United Way.

As the grantee for this project, United Way is recognized as having the capability to manage initiatives such as the AmeriCorps\*VISTA grant, and now the AmeriCorps grant. This enhances the reputation of our organization and helps us obtain other large grants and funding opportunities. We are currently securing significant corporate financial support for countywide endeavors described in our "Agenda for Change." Our track record with the Schools of Hope Projects contributes greatly to our being in a position to leverage community attention and support.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF

## Narratives

Our Board of Directors is actively engaged in decision making on key investments and is consulted on a regular basis with regard to initiative growth and development. Members serve on working committees such as finance, personnel, campaign cabinet and the Community Solution Teams that oversee the investments in community programs and initiatives. At every board meeting there is at least one key discussion on an issue that impacts our ability to deliver on our mission. Board member Reverend Gregory Armstrong chairs the Growing Up Getting Ready Community Solution Team which oversees the current Schools of Hope initiative and decides on the investments that form the community match for this grant. Our President and three key Vice Presidents, including the Senior Vice President of Community Impact, are in constant contact regarding the work of the organization. A management staff meets monthly to discuss the progress and challenges of the organization.

Key program and fiscal positions responsible for proposed program include the following from RSVP: Karen Dischler, Co-Director; Emily Greene, Assistant Director; Mariah Flynn, Project Assistant, and Chris Stevick, Financial Manager. Our program staff person from MMSD is Kathy Price, Co-Director. Together they provide the day-to-day management of the project and serve as project liaisons to other community committees.

Kathy has served as Co-Director for the project since its inception. She has been the MMSD's Partnerships coordinator for 15 years, and is a certified teacher in English as a Second Language, Bilingual Education and Spanish. She has a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction with emphasis on increasing academic achievement of bilingual and low-income students, and is currently pursuing a doctorate in Educational Policy Studies. Kathy's school district responsibilities also include oversight for first-generation college-bound programs and home-school partnerships for bilingual and low-income families.



## Narratives

Karen has been involved with the project since it began, and became a co-director in 2004. She has spent most of her career working in nonprofit organizations and brings a wealth of knowledge about volunteer management systems and nonprofit management. She co-authored a guidebook on school collaboration which is distributed through Learn and Serve and CNCS. She presents workshops at local, state, and national levels on a variety of topics including school collaboration, Baby Boomers, intergenerational programming, and volunteer management. She has served on several national initiatives, such as SaYes, EnCorps, and Temple University's Intergenerational Institute. Karen regularly consults with other agencies as they develop literacy-based school tutoring programs similar to Schools of Hope.

After graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Emily served as an AmeriCorps\*VISTA on the project for two years, as a school-based volunteer coordinator and as the Project's VISTA Leader. She served as the coordinator of the Urban League's Schools of Hope middle school tutoring program, hiring and supervising 15 local school coordinators. She is in her fourth year on the program staff team.

Mariah is also a graduate of University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she earned her degree in Human Development and Family Studies in 2004. She served on the Project for one year as a Preschools of Hope AmeriCorps\*VISTA Volunteer Coordinator and has been in her current capacity for two years.

Chris Stevick is a CPA with a Masters in Professional Accountancy from Indiana University's Kelley School of Business. She works independently as a financial planner and tax preparer. Chris covers all accounting functions required for the Project. Because of her experience in personal financial management consulting, she also provides training for the AmeriCorps members on personal finance and tax issues.

## Narratives

Nick Wood, Assistant Director of Finance, has a Bachelor's degree from UW-Whitewater in Accounting and Finance. Prior to joining United Way he worked as a Senior Associate with a local CPA firm. Nick will take primary responsibility for the financial management of the grant and be supervised by Rick Spiel, the Executive Vice President.

Rick has been with the organization for 27 years and has a history of overseeing the financial aspects of the AmeriCorps grant for the past three years.

Kathy Hubbard, Director of Community Building, has a Masters in Social Work and has been with United Way since 1982. She has been involved with Schools of Hope since its inception. Her responsibility will be to work with the teams of volunteers who oversee the project for United Way. Kathy will also work closely with the Project staff to ensure alignment of Project and overarching community goals.

### PLAN FOR SELF ASSESSMENT OR IMPROVEMENT

United Way has been engaged in strategic planning and quality improvement practices for over twenty years. Every year the organization participates in a strategic planning retreat directed by the Board to review progress towards our "Agenda for Change" and overall mission. Cross-departmental staff teams assess ability to act on mutual goals and objectives. Revisions to existing goals and development of new goals are generated at this time. Following the retreat, each staff member develops personal goals and objectives related to the organizational goals. Review is ongoing, but more formal on a quarterly basis.

Our President's goals are consistent with those of the organization and are reviewed by the Executive Committee annually. Periodically, the organization participates in a national assessment of our progress towards reaching Standards of Excellence established by the network of United Ways nationally. We also

## Narratives

benefit from strong relationships with major corporations who have loaned their management development and training staff to us to help in this area.

### PLAN FOR EFFECTIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

United Way is very fortunate to partner with many area organizations that provide technical assistance for this project. We benefit greatly from a close working relationship over the years with the University of Wisconsin-Madison's School of Education. The two Deans with whom we have collaborated since the mid-1990's have wholeheartedly endorsed our work in addressing academic achievement, and have facilitated our ongoing access to faculty members who have served as consultants and advisors on our projects. We receive significant assistance in the area of program design that incorporates current research, strategies for effectively working with low-income students and students of color, and program evaluation.

At our service sites throughout Dane County, we work closely with central office staff, teachers and administrators who provide significant technical assistance in the area of member and community volunteer training in accordance with current curricular models in the areas of language arts and mathematics. We also utilize district staff members in the design of specialized trainings on educational issues and evaluation strategies.

With our Agency and Volunteer Development Community Solution Team we developed the Volunteer Consulting Service which is a group of nine lead consultants from across disciplines that will offer their services or recruit others from their discipline for various issues that come up for organizations. During the time we were receiving the AmeriCorps\*VISTA grant United Way made dollars available to hire an educational consultant to evaluate the project and its faithful implementation of the original design for tutoring. The results of the evaluation continue to inform the Project.

## Narratives

Both United Way staff and Project staff seek out and attend local and national trainings on non-profit, volunteer and financial management, and work closely with community professionals and UW-Madison faculty who offer pro-bono consulting. The Schools of Hope Subcommittee responds to ongoing professional development needs by regularly scheduling presentations on relevant topics.

### SOUND RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AS AN ORGANIZATION:

#### VOLUNTEER GENERATION AND SUPPORT

In 2008, over 912 leadership volunteers provided more than 72,000 hours to help United Way accomplish the "Agenda for Change." These volunteers serve on our Board of Directors and the seven standing committees that report to the Board. In addition, volunteers serve on the six Community Solution Teams that oversee our work on the "Agenda for Change." They represent all walks of life in our community and are recruited with special attention to diversity in race, geography, age and gender as well as occupation. Our "Agenda for Change" work includes leadership teams that provide guidance and various perspectives towards solutions to community problems. Those leadership groups include the Schools of Hope Leadership Teams in Madison, Sun Prairie and Verona, the Health Council, the Housing in Action Leadership Team, Achievement Connections Leadership Teams in Middleton/Cross Plains and Oregon, and our Volunteer Consulting Service.

Additionally, every year, United Way recruits 28 Loaned Executives who serve for four months as extensions of our Resource Development division conducting fundraising campaigns in companies throughout the community. These individuals are "on loan" from their companies during this period of time. All United Way staff members are trained in volunteer management and are well-versed in how to support the work of these volunteers.

## Narratives

### ORGANIZATIONAL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

United Way of Dane County is recognized as a leader among United Ways nationally in our community impact work. We were named a "Center of Excellence" for the past four years (the only United Way in the country to hold this status for four years) meaning we are a training site for other United Ways. Our President is a lecturer for the LaFollette School of Public Affairs and the School of Social Work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, was named a local Woman of Distinction in 2000, and is on the Board of Directors for American Family Insurance and the United Way of Wisconsin. Our staff member who manages the Agency and Volunteer Development work sits on the Volunteer National Network Council representing Wisconsin and Illinois. Kathy Hubbard, one of the staff for the Project, has been a national trainer for United Way of America. She is also an alumnus of Leadership Greater Madison. Several of our Resource Development staff have been named ambassadors for our Chamber of Commerce and have roles on the board of the local chapter for the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

In 2002 United Way and RSVP received the Wisconsin Community Service Award for cross-stream collaboration given by the Wisconsin State Office for National and Community Service and the Wisconsin State Commission in recognition of our partnership work with the Schools of Hope Project.

### SUCCESS IN SECURING MATCH RESOURCES

The United Way of Dane County has had a history of supporting the Schools of Hope Project over the past 12 years, significantly increasing our support over time. Due to strong community commitment to this project, we have been able to provide over a 50% match, thus greatly exceeding the 24% match that was required. We plan to maintain a 50% match over the course of this next grant, thus meeting a level expected of programs in their tenth year. A significant portion of the match has been cash. In the first year of our AmeriCorps grant we were able to provide a cash match of \$232,000. Last year we increased

## Narratives

the cash match to \$239,949, and also provided over \$133,000 of in-kind support.

### SUCCESS IN SECURING COMMUNITY SUPPORT:

#### COLLABORATION

The collaborations that are integral to this project's success include the local school districts and the media. Through the school districts we gain expert trainers, direct access to the schools, and build strong working relationships with the teachers. Through the media partners we gain access to community-wide distribution of information about volunteer needs and trainings. United Way has numerous other collaborations that work with us in our "Agenda for Change." The Housing in Action Leadership team brings developers, real estate agents, landlords, financial institutions, government and non-profit groups together to work on ending homelessness through the development of affordable housing. Our Health Council collaboration has the CEOs of the major hospitals and health care providers, government and non-profit providers working on ways to ensure health care for residents of our community who do not have health care coverage and use the emergency room as their primary care provider. We have non-profit collaborations we are supporting in the area of child and adult mental health and also in the area of afterschool programming for youth.

#### LOCAL FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

For United Way in general our annual campaign has grown every year. In 1995 when the Schools of Hope was just beginning, our campaign raised approximately \$8 million dollars. In 2009 our campaign is projected to raise \$16,661,000. These donations include corporate gifts, employee campaigns, direct mail and leadership giving. United Way is the primary funder for the Schools of Hope Project. Since 2001 our support has grown from \$30,000 to a projected \$275,000 for 2010. Part of this funding comes from our Women's Initiative which adopted the Schools of Hope project as their fundraising focus. For the past nine years they have provided between \$20,000 and \$30,000 for the project annually.

## Narratives

Additionally, their donors have the option of growing a fund in the United Way Foundation that will eventually benefit this Project. We have been successful in securing financial contributions from the Sun Prairie and Verona school districts in the amount of \$10,000 each annually to support the Project. We secured corporate grants that have purchased equipment or supplies for the project over the years. Our Project has also successfully acquired thousands of donated quality new and used children's books for home distribution.

### WIDE RANGE OF COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

United Way is proud to represent the diversity of our community in our stakeholders of our organization. Represented are the corporate community, labor, government, K-16 educators, faith-based communities, non-profit organizations, retirees, small business, youth and other community members. We maintain this diverse representation as we recruit for board and committee positions. For United Way the most significant change in non-financial support from our community stakeholders has come within the last four or five years as we made our change from being primarily a fundraising/fund distribution organization to a community-impact organization. Our volunteers give us more of their time and expertise as they work year-round to solve community issues. Volunteers also often sit on multiple committees within United Way and represent us on various leadership teams and task forces. Please see the "COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT" section in "Rationale and Approach" for a complete list of Schools of Hope stakeholders.

In addition to their role on the Leadership Team, these stakeholders are asked to help in the recruitment of volunteers by speaking to various organizations or hosting events where we can talk about the Project and the need for volunteers. In all of our communities we have seen a growing interest by the faith community as we partner with local congregations and groups seeking meaningful and effective

## Narratives

volunteer opportunities. With our expansions to Sun Prairie and Verona our community stakeholders have grown to a representation similar to Madison in scope and depth, and we are gratified by the endorsement of universally held community goals and values that their active participation represents.

### Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

COST EFFECTIVENESS:

CORPORATION COST PER MEMBER SERVICE YEAR (MSY)

We are requesting 21 full-time members and 28 minimum-time members at a Corporation Cost Per Member Year of \$12,786. The total Corporation cost is \$344,320. The current proposal builds on the strong partnership relationships established over the course of the past 12 years, and would allow the Project to expand into six additional school sites in response to growing levels of poverty and increases in the population of students of color in our communities.

DIVERSE NON-FEDERAL SUPPORT

The proposed Schools of Hope Project incorporates significant non-federal funding for program implementation and sustainability in the form of the financial contribution made by United Way. The percentage of match far exceeds that required by the Corporation for local dollar support and is a clear indication of the community's significant endorsement of this project. These are largely local community dollars allocated by the agency on the basis of its funding priorities, which prioritize school readiness and academic achievement. Our agency has made a long-time commitment to funding this project, and this priority is broadly endorsed by our Board of Directors.

The Sun Prairie and Verona school districts have also made ongoing commitments to support the work of volunteer coordination through financial contributions as well as in-kind support. Additional support from MMSD comes in the form of substantial in-kind resources provided through supervisory staffing and consulting (including 40% of the MMSD co-director), training expertise, and space for member



## Narratives

offices and training workshops.

### DECREASED RELIANCE ON FEDERAL SUPPORT

Because of the long-term commitments made by these partners, particularly United Way's financial assurances, we are currently providing a dollar match of 50% of the proposed Project's total cost. United Way has guaranteed at least this level of support for the next several years.

### BUDGET ADEQUACY

Our proposed Project's success depends on the incorporation of strong members who enjoy the support, direction and mentorship of skilled coordinators and who can take full advantage of high-quality in-service training and opportunities for professional development. Our staffing and training budgets are designed to maximize such support, and to ensure that members are, therefore, motivated to perform at consistently high levels with the tools they need to accomplish Project goals. Similarly, we seek to provide our community volunteers with ample ongoing training opportunities and on-site support in their work, and have anticipated needed school member assignments on that basis.

All key activities in our program design are supported by specific line items in our budget and demonstrate how we have prioritized support for AmeriCorps members in the allotment of budget dollars in order to help ensure their success at carrying out Project goals. In addition to all the required Member Costs specified by the Corporation, our designated personnel, contracted services, training, supplies, transportation and evaluation expenditures are directly linked to our Project goals of utilizing AmeriCorps members to mobilize volunteers and address the achievement of low-income students and students of color.

Our proposed budget is based on nine years of experience engaging AmeriCorps\*VISTAs and three years

## Narratives

engaging AmeriCorps members in the work of mobilizing and supporting community members to address academic achievement issues. We have successfully leveraged community resources to keep our operational costs as low as possible, and can count on our ongoing working relationships with organizations that provide consulting, training expertise, donations of books and educational materials, and other in-kind contributions to assist us over the course of this grant period. When we calculate the percent of the budget going toward direct support for members through supervision, support, training, professional development, and their living allowances and benefits, we see that it is 97% of our total budget. Additionally, 50% of our current total budget is coming from sources other than the Corporation and serves as a strong indicator of sustainability and our likelihood of continued success at leveraging community dollars and other resources.

### **Evaluation Summary or Plan**

The Schools of Hope Project works closely with research and evaluation staff in all three school districts to ensure that student performance data is systematically tracked and monitored in accordance with our grant performance measures. Additionally, project coordinators conduct annual surveys of teachers, community volunteers and AmeriCorps members in order to assess strengths and build in continuous improvement of program best practices.

Please see the 2008-09 Project Evaluation (sent electronically to the Serve Wisconsin office) for more detailed information from our teacher and volunteer tutor surveys, our K-Ready student pre- and post-test results, and our summer 2009 AmeriCorps member survey.

During the 2010-11 school year, we will be engaging an external reviewer from the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Wisconsin Center on Education Research (WCER) who will coordinate an in-depth, projectwide evaluation. This evaluation will include analysis of the tutoring component ("treatment") at pilot school sites, analysis of participant student performance, feedback from school

## Narratives

district staff (teachers and administrators), feedback from community volunteers tutoring in schools and after-school programs, and feedback from AmeriCorps members who serve both during the academic year and during the summer school period.

The goal of the evaluation will be to identify program strengths and areas for improvement, and to indicate how the former can be expanded and replicated, and how the latter can be addressed through program modifications. The results will be reported in AmeriCorps reports and shared with our participating school districts.

### **Amendment Justification**

N/A

### **Clarification Summary**

FY10 Programmatic Clarification Items:

The recruitment of qualified members and volunteers who reflect our community's ethnic and linguistic diversity is a key priority. We use broad outreach tools in this task: 1) AmeriCorps, United Way, university, Craigslist and Idealist websites; 2) local media (newspapers, magazines, newsletters and radio programs) that serve diverse populations; 3) presentations to university classes, campus career and multicultural centers and clubs, general campus emails, and career fairs, and 4) personal messages from current and former members, school staffs, agency partners and Leadership Team members etc.

FY10 Criminal History Check Requirement:

All Schools of Hope staff were hired prior to 11/23/2007 and personnel policies did not require a criminal history check at that time. Policies are now in place to assure that criminal background checks

## Narratives

will be conducted for any new staff, including a state Criminal Registry Check, National Sex Offender Public Registry check, and Wisconsin Circuit Court Access/CCAP check.

Our project also conducts criminal background checks on all AmeriCorps members, including a state Criminal Registry Check, National Sex Offender Public Registry check, and Wisconsin Circuit Court Access/CCAP check.

### FY10 Performance Measure Clarification:

Please ignore the "Placeholder PM" that is part of this application. It was intended to be temporarily there until the new Performance Measure guidelines were available. However, now we are not able to delete it in the software. CNCS is attempting to fix the problem, but haven't been able to provide a resolution at this time. The new Education National Performance Measures have been entered as numbers 1, 2 and 3, and are the only ones to be considered for this application. Thank you.

### FY10 Budget Clarification:

The Schools of Hope Co-Director is assigned to work 100% of her time with the AmeriCorps program. She has no responsibilities for any RSVP programs. RSVP's partnership arrangement with United Way for this grant provides that all Schools of Hope personnel will be housed at RSVP but their sole responsibility is to the AmeriCorps Schools of Hope Project. There are no RSVP responsibilities associated with any of their positions.

### FY11 Clarification:

## Narratives

1. Grant Award Start Date: 8-15-2011

Member Enrollment Period Start Date: 8-22-2011

2. The Schools of Hope (SOH) Project expanded to the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District (MCPASD) in response to strong community concern regarding the academic achievement gap in that district. The MCPASD has demonstrated a firm commitment to working in partnership with the United Way of Dane County to address student educational objectives. The district has incorporated Schools of Hope resources at the high school level since 2008, and was eager to expand to the elementary level.

The district approached SOH over two years ago to initiate a discussion on possible collaboration, and as the result of an extensive planning process, district administrators and SOH coordinators determined that the strong alignment of district goals and objectives with the resources provided by the SOH Project would be an effective partnership for boosting achievement for students of color and those from low-income families.

Of the two schools that were chosen, Sauk Trail Elementary has a 47% enrollment of students of color and 46% of students are eligible for free/reduced lunch. On the fourth grade standardized reading test (WKCE - Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam) 26% of students considered economically disadvantaged scored minimal or basic as compared to 0% of the non-economically disadvantaged students.

At Northside Elementary, 20% of students are students of color and 15% are eligible for free/reduced lunch. On the fourth grade standardized reading test (WKCE) 43% of students considered economically disadvantaged scored minimal or basic as compared to 7% of the non-economically disadvantaged

## Narratives

students.

As the SOH Project looks to increasing efficiencies in order to serve additional students in need in Dane County, it has prioritized potential new partners based on student demographics and academic performance measures. Assigning the equivalent of one full time AmeriCorps members to serve at these two MCPASD sites allowed the Project to reach prioritized schools that met our criteria. The Project experience after a year of collaboration has proven the effectiveness of this expansion through the community-wide benefit of leveraging volunteer support and building local district capacity.

### Continuation Changes

#### YEAR TWO CONTINUATION CHANGES

The Schools of Hope Project is providing the information below with regard to proposed changes in its continuation grant application. In all cases, the proposed changes reflect our ongoing efforts at continuous improvement in the efficient allocation of Project resources to best meet the academic needs of the low-income children we serve in Dane County. We have reviewed each of these areas with our Serve Wisconsin program officer and have secured his approval.

EXPANSION REQUEST: We are asking to reduce our Full Time Member slots from 21 to 20, and to increase our Minimum Time Members to a total of 40 from 28. We have found that we can adequately cover our academic year responsibilities with 20 Full Time Members, and are hoping to enhance our support for the Madison district's summer pre-kindergarten K-Ready program by increasing our numbers of Minimum Time Members. The K-Ready program has grown from fewer than 100 students to nearly 400 in recent years, and District administrators anticipate continued growth in the program. Our members serve as classroom assistants in this summer school program, and as the number of classrooms and actual class sizes grow, we need to keep pace in order to ensure that students requiring

## Narratives

this additional academic support prior to starting kindergarten can obtain the assistance they need.

As articulated in our grant narrative, the primary activity for all members during the summer is to assist with the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) K-Ready program. K-Ready was developed to address the academic needs of struggling MMSD students entering kindergarten in the fall and is held over six weeks in June and July. The K-Ready model emphasizes best practices and research-based strategies in student identification, recruitment, academic programming, volunteer support, parent involvement, and logistical issues. Offered to students demonstrating academic needs on the basis of the spring kindergarten screener, it consists of structured academic support and learning activities at MMSD school sites that include large and small group times, center times focused on specific early literacy and early math activities, outside play and snacks, shared reading and independent (one-on-one) reading time.

The incorporation of AmeriCorps Schools of Hope members during the summer K-Ready program has proven to be a crucial element of its success. As noted in our performance measures, gains in key academic areas by students who complete the core program consistently exceed 25% in the course of six weeks. Teacher surveys attest to the value that our team members add to this vital pre-kindergarten program. We are eager to continue to partner with K-Ready classroom teachers so that the growing numbers of students of color and those from low-income families get the boost they need to enter kindergarten with needed skills to take full advantage of their academic careers.

In requesting this increase in summer Minimum Time Members, we have carefully assessed our ongoing ability to provide quality training and supervision to our team and to maintain our high expectations in terms of member support. We are very comfortable with our capacity to continue to provide our members with a very successful national service experience and meaningful professional development.

## Narratives

The MSY cost remains the same with this anticipated expansion.

SHIFT IN COUNTY SCHOOLS: Just prior to the start of the 2010-11 school year, one of our partner school districts, the Verona Area School District, informed us that, as the result of systems put in place by our Schools of Hope Project, it was now able to take on responsibility for volunteer management and no longer needed to engage members of our AmeriCorps team. This decision gave us the opportunity to respond to the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District's request to participate in the Schools of Hope program along with our longer-term partners, the Madison Metropolitan School District and the Sun Prairie Area School District. We subsequently re-allocated our member assignments and currently serve two elementary schools in Middleton, Sauk Trail and Northside.

SHIFT IN FISCAL AGENT: In order to more closely align resources with other local agencies providing academic tutoring to underachieving students throughout Dane County, as of 1/1/11 the Schools of Hope Project has been housed with Centro Hispano of Dane County, which serves as its fiscal agent. All previous cross-stream collaborations carried out with former fiscal agent RSVP (including support for RSVP school-based volunteers) remain actively in place.

PROGRAM EVALUATION PLAN: We are proposing to carry out our required program evaluation plan during the 2011-12 school year. Because the timeline for establishing acceptable instruments with which to assess our Project performance measures was delayed, we were unable to proceed with our overall evaluation plan this fall. Conducting our more extensive evaluation in Year Two will also allow us to synchronize our evaluation efforts with K-12 district-wide partnership program evaluation plans, allowing us to maximize the use of both district and external research and evaluation staff, resulting in an overall cost savings for the Project.



## Narratives

ENROLLMENT / RETENTION RATES: For the 2009-10 grant year, our enrollment rate was 100%, which speaks to the high caliber member recruitment and selection process of the Project.

Our retention rate was 97.9%. This was due to the fact that one of our Full Time Members who was serving at two schools left our project in November to accept employment with the Madison school district. By December we had successfully recruited and placed a Half Time Member to work at those two schools and converted the remaining member allocation to two Minimum Time Members in June, 2010. Another factor was that one of our Full Time Members was not eligible for an education award due to previous AmeriCorps and VISTA terms she had completed. These are unusual situations and no plan for improvement is warranted.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES: We met or exceeded five of our six performance measures for 2009-10.

On our "Elementary (K-4) Literacy Tutoring" performance measure, we exceeded both the Output goal (students served - 5,429 vs. target of 4,000) and the Intermediate Outcome (teacher report of positive student gains -- 94% vs. target of 90%). However, our End Outcome fell short. We had aimed for a 2% increase in students scoring proficient or advanced on the 2009-10 Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (the fourth grade state standardized reading test), and this year's scores actually dropped 1% (from 73% to 72%).

This reality highlighted for us two key difficulties in the use of an annual standardized testing measure:

- Annual testing on the fourth grade reading measure compares two separate groups of students and cannot account for the growth in specific students from year to year.

## Narratives

- As articulated in the Amended Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity Addendum, "State standardized tests generally should NOT be used for non-Teacher Corps Programs as it is expected that the child's classroom teacher would have the primary effect on these scores."

As a result, we are in the process of actively researching student assessment / progress monitoring tools on the U.S. Department of Education's National Center on Response to Intervention website as well as consulting with University of Wisconsin-Madison colleagues and school district research and evaluation staff to ensure that the measures we are currently utilizing are those that will offer us the most authentic representation of student academic performance. It is our goal to consistently rely on research-based tools that most accurately reflect student learning.

In the meantime, we are continuing to examine our best practices in tutoring to ensure that we are 1) providing our tutors with quality training and supervisory support; 2) utilizing research-based tutor treatment models, and 3) continuing to work closely with school staff to align our tutoring resources to specific school curricula and programming.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE REMOVAL: We are removing our third Performance Measure, "Academic Support". It was our intent to focus this measure on students who received consistent support from tutors outside of our model (1:1 or 1:2 for 30 minutes at least once a week) in the course of a school year; however, assessing the impact of high mobility rates in a number of our sites would prove to be beyond the scope of any analysis we might attempt. We are further challenged by our reliance on teacher surveys that are not standardized assessment instruments, as these tools do not fall within the guidelines recommended by CNCS. Our core project goals, as evidenced in the work of our AmeriCorps team members, are fully captured in our first two Performance Measures. Additionally, the data we were attempting to collect through the third performance measure is reflected in other sections of our

## Narratives

reporting.

## Performance Measures

### SAA Characteristics

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

### Priority Areas

- |  |                                     |   |                          |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education      |                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Futures                |                          |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i>               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i>                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship |                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans and Military Families |                          |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i>               | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <i>Selected for National Measure</i>                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity      |                                     | <input 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      26.93

### Service Categories

Tutoring and Child (Elementary) Literacy

## National Performance Measures

Priority Area: Education

### Strategy to Achieve Results

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

K-Ready addresses the academic needs of struggling MMSD students enrolled in kindergarten. The K-Ready model emphasizes best practices and research-based strategies in student identification, recruitment, academic programming, volunteer support, parent involvement, and logistical issues. Offered to students demonstrating academic needs on the basis of the spring kindergarten screener, it consists of structured academic support and learning activities at MMSD school sites that include large and small group times, center times focused on specific early literacy and early math activities, outside play and snacks, shared reading and independent (one-on-one) reading time. The program is held over six weeks in June and July; morning academic activities are supplemented by structured afternoon recreational programming provided by the Madison School Community Recreation Department.

### Result: Output

Result.

AmeriCorps members will support early literacy and early math activities in MMSD K-Ready classrooms.

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

Target : Number of children enrolled in K-Ready that will be served by AmeriCorps members

Target Value: 400

Instruments: School district student rosters

PM Statement: AmeriCorps members will provide early literacy and early math support for 400 students enrolled in MMSD K-Ready classrooms.

### Result: Output

Result.

AmeriCorps members will provide early literacy and early math support for students in MMSD K-Ready classrooms.

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

Target : Number of children that completed 25 of 29 days in K-Ready classrooms

Target Value: 350

Instruments: School district student attendance records

PM Statement: AmeriCorps members will provide early literacy and early math support for 350 students who completed 25 of 29 days in K-Ready.

### Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Students participating in MMSD K-Ready Summer School will be better prepared for kindergarten.

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

Target : Students who complete 25 of 29 days in the MMSD K-Ready Summer School Program will demonstrate improvement in at least three readiness areas.

## National Performance Measures

Result.

Target Value: 300

Instruments: MMSD K-Ready Pre- and Post-assessments measured by the MMSD kindergarten readiness test

PM Statement: Students who complete 25 of 29 days in the MMSD K-Ready Summer School Program will demonstrate a 25% improvement in at least three tested readiness areas and thus be better prepared for kindergarten.

### Priority Area: Education

#### Strategy to Achieve Results

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

AmeriCorps members will coordinate a literacy tutoring program that includes systematic recruitment, screening, training, placement, support, evaluation, and recognition of community volunteers who will provide tutoring support for students. Volunteer recruitment efforts will be directed at TV and print media, college campuses, RSVP volunteers, faith-based communities, businesses, organizations, community volunteers, and online volunteer matching. Members and volunteers will perform one-on-one tutoring service based on site needs using research-based methods. Volunteers and members will be provided with quality training by school district staff that reflects current curriculum and best practices. Members will be trained to support their volunteers' ongoing training needs through utilization of Corporation for National and Community Service's training resources, including web-based tutor training, tutoring videos, and online resources.

#### Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Standardized test scores of students receiving one-on-one literacy tutoring will improve.

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

Target : Number of students who received one-on-one literacy tutoring at least 30 minutes per week (15 minutes for kindergarten) for 15 sessions and showed improvement in their standardized test scores.

Target Value: 600

Instruments: Standardized tests administered to targeted students, including pre-tests when provided by the school district.

PM Statement: At least 600 students who received one-on-one literacy tutoring at least 30 minutes per week (15 minutes for kindergarten) for 15 sessions will show improvement in their standardized test scores.

#### Result: Output

Result.

Trained community tutors will provide literacy tutoring based on research-based methods.

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

## National Performance Measures

Result.

Target : Number of students who received one-on-one literacy tutoring at least 30 minutes per week (15 minutes for kindergarten) for 15 sessions by literacy tutors.

Target Value: 750

Instruments: AmeriCorps member tracking records

PM Statement: Trained community tutors will provide 750 teacher-identified students with literacy tutoring at least 30 minutes per week (15 minutes for kindergarten) for 15 sessions using research-based methods.

### Result: Output

Result.

Trained community tutors will provide literacy tutoring based on research-based methods.

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

Target : Number of students selected by teachers and matched with a literacy tutor to receive one-on-one tutoring

Target Value: 1000

Instruments: Tutoring logs

PM Statement: Trained community tutors will be matched with 1000 students to provide literacy tutoring using research-based methods.

## Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Not Applicable

Labor Union Concurrence

Sent