

Narratives

Executive Summary

Ready to Learn Providence will implement an Education & Healthy Futures model with members that support children's school readiness via literacy programs in various early education settings as well as members who will conduct developmental screenings for young children and deliver community activities such as health education workshops for families. Children will complete a high-quality early education programs and children also will participate in health education activities.

Rationale and Approach

A. PROBLEM

Education experts have elevated the issue of third-grade reading scores as a key milestone and predictor for long-term student achievement. Research shows that by third grade, children must have the literacy skills needed to make the critical transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" (Armbruster, Putting Reading First, 2010). In fact, when children enter fourth grade without those skills, they find themselves in a major academic deficit, often to the point where they rarely make a full recovery (Burns, Griffin & Snow, Preventing Reading Difficulties, 1999).

Today, many policy circles focus on improving third-grade reading. Universal to these discussions is the need for our country to invest greater resources in early education and school readiness activities. Experts agree that preventing early reading failure is a much more preferable strategy to intensive remediation efforts after the fact. And while early literacy skills are critical benchmarks for entering kindergarten, research has also shown that a child's physical and mental health must be on equal footing among the metrics used to assess school readiness (Currie, Future of Children, 2005).

The findings that correlate school readiness to educational achievement are sobering to Providence --

Narratives

a city that faces serious challenges in preparing its youngest children. Like many cities, Providence's school readiness challenges are reflected in child-distress indicators such as poverty, the educational attainment of mothers, and the number of English Language Learners.

Data show that 36% of Providence children live in poverty, 36% are born to mothers who have dropped out of school, and 25% of households do not speak English (American Community Survey, 2006). Perhaps most alarming is how much poorer families have become in recent years. In 1990, Providence was ranked 25th in terms of child poverty. By 2000, we were 3rd the largest increase of any city in the country (Child Defense Fund, 2004).

Researchers have shown that poverty is a reliable predictor for determining school readiness, and Providence has evidence to support those findings (Magnuson, Inequality in School Readiness, 2004). According to data from the Providence School District, only 30% of kindergartners entering school in 2009 scored at or above the baseline on the DIBELS assessment -- a snapshot of literacy skills considered obligatory for beginning formal schooling. Research also shows that a student's ability to make up academic ground in the early elementary years is also difficult. As an example, only 47% of Providence's third-grade students -- those that entered kindergarten in 2006 -- scored at a level of proficient on the 2009 NECAP literacy assessment.

Faced with these realities, Providence is intensifying its commitment to early education -- a decision motivated by research showing the impacts that investments in early education can have. To centralize strategies, stakeholders in the city have organized around Ready to Learn Providence (R2LP) a coalition with a vision that all children in Providence will enter school healthy and ready to learn.

Narratives

Since its inception in 2003, R2LP has provided high-quality professional development to providers to improve the quality of educational experiences for preschoolers. We have fostered social networks among early education providers, librarians, health-care professionals, and parents; begun operating a pre-K classroom where educators can observe best practices; and have conducted research showing the impact that R2LP programs are having on children's school readiness.

In the past 7 years, R2LP activities have focused on advancing children's early literacy skills, expanding training opportunities to an underserved population of providers, promoting children's transition to kindergarten, and strengthening the collaborations between families, educators, and the community.

To date, R2LP has made measurable progress toward our vision. We have worked with the early education community to improve the school readiness status of 10,000 children. We have made targeted investments in the professional development of 1,500 early childhood educators who have participated in 83,000 hours of coursework resulting in 1,500 college-credits awarded. R2LP has also mobilized an early education community of 3,000 through partnerships with educators, colleges, and libraries. We have empirical evidence -- using rigorous evaluation techniques -- which demonstrate how children involved with R2LP are 50% likelier to arrive in kindergarten with age-appropriate literacy skills than their non-R2LP affiliated peers (R2LP, 2010).

A major strategy to achieve these outcomes has been our R2LP AmeriCorps (AC) program. Launched in 2005 and infused into every component of our initiative, R2LP's AC members improve the quality of early education for children at risk of early learning failure. Members also enhance the quality of

Narratives

early childhood settings and build the capacity of libraries to engage non-English speaking families and the home-based providers who often care for their children. Through AmeriCorps, R2LP has expanded the number of children it serves, while providing more individual support to children and families.

After six years, AmeriCorps has become a central strategy within R2LP to achieve our outcomes and make progress on our vision. To that end, R2LP seeks another 3-year grant to continue our early education activities. In addition, we are proposing to add a Healthy Futures component to our model to ensure that children can achieve the health milestones needed to arrive in school ready to learn.

Families in Providence are linguistically isolated from the health system, especially in the areas of preventative care (Link & Mokhad, Linguistic Isolation and Participation in Public Health, 2006). Thousands of children lack medical homes and only seek out medical care in dire circumstances. This lack of focus on prevention is reflected in data showing that 1,186 Providence children under age 5 are currently diagnosed as lead poisoned (RI Dept. of Health, 2010), that 40% of children under five have untreated tooth decay (How Ready is Providence, 2008), and that 25% of Providence kindergartners are considered obese a rate that exceeds the national average by 48% (Ogden, CDC, 2008).

R2LP's request for AmeriCorps resources comes on the heels of our \$4 million Early Reading First grant from the U.S. Department of Education which features our AmeriCorps model. Our request also comes at a time in which R2LP is working with the United Way and the state's new Early Learning Council to increase the number of early education settings that are considered to be high-quality. And finally, our model comes in response to a request from the RI Dept. of Health to expand community-based efforts that explicit connect health education and school readiness. The RI Dept. of Health has

Narratives

long praised R2LP and its AC model for its ability to engage families that have been isolated from traditional outreach efforts.

B. SOLUTION: MEMBER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

R2LP is proposing a program for 35 MSYs to further our efforts to improve the school readiness status for children. The roles and responsibilities among members described in this section build upon relationships that R2LP has created in the community. R2LP anticipates that the vast majority of our slots will be for full-time members, but we are open to having other types of slots to accommodate individuals with disabilities who are eager to provide public service and support the needs of their community.

R2LP has designed a model that includes four "cohorts". As reflected in this section, R2LP will continue to focus on children's social, emotional, and intellectual development as well as supporting early learning institutions to help them meet the needs of children. In addition, we will expand our model to include a focus on the physical and mental wellness of children by combining AC resources with established nutrition, home-visiting, and health outreach programs.

Cohort 1: Our largest cohort includes placing 21 members in preschool classrooms in 12 center-based early education programs. Five of these sites will be where R2LP is operating its Early Reading First program -- a multi-year and intensive intervention to provide the early literacy skills that children need to develop prior to receiving formal reading instruction. The other seven centers will be early education settings affiliated with Rhode Island's BrightStars initiative. BrightStars is the state's new quality rating system for early education programs. The voluntary system informs consumers about

Narratives

levels of quality within programs (from one to five stars) using a variety of nationally recognized characteristics.

Working under the guidance of highly skilled center directors, these 19 members will serve as Early Literacy Activity Coordinators designing and leading classroom activities for 3 and 4 year-old children that elevates the importance of early childhood literacy. A key role of these members will be to work with center-based staff to develop strategies that extend literacy activities from the classroom into homes.

This cohort of members will receive training in early literacy and work with classroom staff to implement curricular activities that encourage children to experiment with early reading activities. Center-based staff and members will create an action plan to elevate the importance of literacy throughout the curriculum. Members will rotate through classrooms to facilitate and support each teacher's early literacy activities. Children will notice a significant change in how their classrooms look and the activities available to them. Age-appropriate books will be more readily available, thanks to book centers in classrooms and lending libraries in the centers, which will be designed and managed by members. More opportunities for children to practice early writing and reading skills will be present in learning and play activities -- which members will design in collaboration with classroom staff.

Cohort 2: This component will involve placing five members at Providence Public Library branches. As reflected in our evaluation, members at library branches over the past six years have made significant progress engaging child care providers and nontraditional users of the library. This is especially the case among home-based child care providers. Despite this progress, there is more work to be done to ensure that library branches have the capacity to serve the city's low-income families

Narratives

adequately.

As with our current model, members will function as Early Literacy Outreach Aides. Members will implement a series of outreach strategies to increase library usage among families and family child care providers -- including efforts by members to visit family child care providers directly in their homes. Members will work with library staff to co-facilitate the Cradles to Crayons program a nine-week series of parent-child workshops offered throughout the year. Each week, a community resource specialist covers topics such as the importance of play or speech development. The forum is question and answer, and the sessions end with a librarian who models reading aloud. Books for children are also distributed.

In addition to supporting young children and families, AC members will also to distribute Learning and Reading Kits (LARK Kits) to early education providers. Available through branches, LARK Kits are built around a curricular theme and include ten books and other support materials such as puppets, games, and props. Members will work to promote and demonstrate LARK Kits to providers who participate in Cradles to Crayons and attend other events and conferences. Members will measure the impact of their efforts by tracking Literacy Kit check-outs and by interviewing educators about how they use the kits.

Cohort 3: This cohort of four members will be assigned to R2LP. Two members will work on transition-to-kindergarten activities and one will support El Club de Proveedoras Infantil de Rhode Island.

A cornerstone of R2LP's work over the past 7 years has been our partnership with the Providence

Narratives

School District to help families prepare for their child's transition to kindergarten. Under the leadership of the R2LP Director of Educational Partnerships, two members will take a leadership role in planning transition-to-kindergarten activities within the community. Members will also work with preschool teachers to collect information on hundreds of incoming children via the R2LP Child Information Sheet, which collects data that is provided to kindergarten teachers to help them understand the types of preschool experiences children have had.

R2LP's will also dedicate one service member to supporting El Club de Proveedoras Infantil de Rhode Island, a professional club of 190 Spanish-speaking home-based early childhood educators that meet regularly to receive training on a range of best practices in early childhood education. Home-based programs led by Spanish speakers provide care to half of our city's children but have limited access to professional networking and training opportunities outside of El Club.

Club activities are coordinated by a team of elected officers who coordinate the group's activities as volunteers; they establish a professional development agenda and bring it to fruition. The AC member assigned to support the Club assists in planning efforts -- coordinating workshops, hosting meetings, taking notes, and documenting volunteer hours.

Cohort 4: This cohort of six members will be the new Healthy Futures corps. Among the members receiving health assignments, three will support Project LAUNCH (Linking Action for the Unmet Needs of Children), an initiative of the RI Dept. of Health that works to increase developmental screenings and improve health-care access for high-risk children. Project LAUNCH began as a coordinated effort between state health officials and the community elevate the importance of mental health education among families with young children. State resources for LAUNCH are modest, and

Narratives

the Dept. has embraced AmeriCorps as a strategy to increase its capacity -- particularly around outreach to Spanish-speaking families. One member will be placed at Hasbro Children's hospital, while two others will be placed neighborhood health clinics where they will walk parents through developmental screening protocols for their children and connect families to a range of community health resources, and review materials related to lead poisoning prevention, nutrition, physical activity, and indoor air quality.

Three other health members will work in WIC offices to raise awareness about health resources available to families and establish a dialogue among families and caregivers about the health issues facing children. Members will develop a series of culturally-relevant health workshops on nutrition, physical activity, and access delivered in partnership with Head Start and home-visiting programs.

C. MEMBER SELECTION, TRAINING, & SUPERVISION

Member Selection

R2LP has a strong track record for recruiting members that possess the skills, motivation, and diversity consistent with the member assignments outlined above. In the last six years, our recruitment has always yielded a greater number of candidates than we have allotted slots for -- enabling us to select applicants who are a good fit for the program. In 2010, we received 169 applications for 35 slots.

As with all R2LP activities, we have sought an AmeriCorps membership with characteristics and backgrounds reflective of the community we serve. Our members include families with young

Narratives

children, single-parent households, immigrant professionals, recent college grads, and older adults.

Due to the large number of Latino families that have migrated to Providence, Spanish-speaking families are a high-priority constituency to be served in our model. As a result, R2LP ensures that we have many bilingual members -- including native Spanish speakers in the process of developing English skills. R2LP makes the application process and training available in Spanish, which has resulted in the enrollment of immigrant professionals, such as dentists, psychologists, and attorneys.

R2LP uses several approaches to recruit members, interviews on Spanish-language radio, presentations to faith-based organizations, and job fairs. We also recruit through the Web using the AmeriCorps recruiting system and local list-serves. R2LP also has a major Facebook presence and experience using social media as a communication resource.

Given the rigor of our training and type of service that members perform, R2LP seeks to enroll members with post-secondary experience and makes a concentrated effort to recruit from local colleges. Approximately 18% of our membership comes from recent college graduates who are motivated by the opportunity for service and the ability to leverage funds to support their education goals. R2LP is optimistic that the addition of health-specific slots will attract recent graduates in the community health field who are looking for experience prior to transitioning into their careers or attending graduate school.

R2LP shares CNCS's passion to integrate the knowledge and experience of older adults into the AmeriCorps. Over the past six years, we have had eight members over the age of 55 participate in our program. R2LP is fortunate enough to have several staff members with more than 25 years of work

Narratives

experience -- and we believe this is a key factor in being able to recruit and support older members.

Throughout the program year, R2LP takes intentional steps for rewarding our members for their service and assessing satisfaction. We have weekly meetings to discuss issues ranging from logistics to relationships. Staff is always available to respond to member issues as they occur. Each member completes a mid-year and end-of-year evaluation gauging what worked and why.

R2LP makes an effort to build camaraderie among members as well as between members and staff. R2LP designs events to bring members together with staff. Retreats and community celebrations also help cement the bond between members and between members and staff.

Member recognition is also a high priority. R2LP's training prepares members for service and acknowledges their efforts by awarding up to nine college credits at no charge to the member.

Overall, R2LP has the skills and procedures in place to recruit and recognize our members -- processes that are reflected in a retention rate ranging from 86% to 100% and the fact that nearly 50% of members in a given year reapply to our program for a second year of service.

Member Training

AC members participate in 4 weeks of pre-service orientation -- designed to provide them with the programmatic and community information needed for a successful transition into their sites. Pre-service training is framed by the four themes: 1) getting to know R2LP, 2) learning about each other, 3) understanding the community's needs, and 4) meeting the prospective service sites.

Narratives

R2LP's pre-serving training curriculum includes an overview of AmeriCorps' goals in the areas of public service. Our curriculum begins with an orientation of the R2LP initiative, including a review of our vision, our structure, and an overview of our current projects.

Members are oriented to the local early education system and health structures available to young families. R2LP staff and guest speakers introduce members to the RI Early Learning Standards, the types of community resources for young families, strategies for working with children, and methods of gathering assessment data.

In addition to a variety of team-building, diversity trainings, and conflict resolution activities, orientation provides members the opportunity to visit each of the sites and meet with supervisors. This direct exposure to the locations and opportunities in which AC members will provide their service is critical in creating successful placements.

Our orientation curriculum also includes introductory sessions to the rigorous coursework that members will complete as part of their in-service training. Through the entire service year, R2LP members complete two college-level courses aimed at supporting their service. These courses include Mind in the Making (about children's social and emotional development) and How Ready is Providence (a course to gain an understanding of community needs).

Mind in the Making is an initiative developed by the Families and Work Institute. The purpose of the program is to share the science of early learning with all those who care about children's learning and development. How Ready is Providence is a customized course designed by R2LP staff to examine the school readiness indicators. The course shows AC members how to use data to guide their work. Both

Narratives

courses are available for college credit to members through a partnership with the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI).

Our education AC members (Cohorts 1-3) will also complete HeadsUp! Reading as part of their member training. HeadsUp! Reading is a nationally-recognized training developed by the National Head Start Association that connects early childhood educators with the latest research on how young children learn to read and write. Meanwhile, our health members (Cohort 4) will receive more training related to community health needs, including Unnatural Causes a curriculum that explores the racial and socioeconomic inequalities in health.

In addition to the month-long pre-service that prepares our members to transition into their sites, members also receive a wide-range of additional knowledge as part of our in-service training, which occurs every Monday during the service year. Speakers come to R2LP to share their professional skills and insight on a variety of topics. These include: mandatory reporting for child abuse, choosing quality children's literature, facilitating child discussions, and post-service job searching.

Fostering civic responsibility is a major part of member training. R2LP takes steps to enhance our training curriculum in ways that provide our members with a deeper understanding of the socio-economic inequities that exist in our city. Our approach goes beyond information sharing to include actionable strategies that members can apply during their service and beyond. Whether it is learning about early education policy in a context within which providers operate or delving into discussions about critical issues such as access to public health, members will become knowledgeable citizens who will be energized to take an active role in civic issues.

Narratives

R2LP uses evaluation forms from trainings and the results from end-of-the-year member surveys to gather data about members' opinions about service and civic responsibility. As is evident by our retention rates and the percentage of members who renew for a second year of service, and the evaluation report included in our proposal, member training activities are a cornerstone of our model.

Member Supervision

After six years, R2LP understands the critical role that host-site supervisors play in creating a meaningful experience for members. Every member will have an identified supervisor who will provide quality support and guidance throughout their service term. Supervisors may be a preschool teacher, librarian, health worker, or R2LP staff member depending upon assignment.

In the spring prior to each year, AC staff meet with host sites to identify individual supervisors. AC staff use the quality of the potential supervisor as a key element in our site-selection process. Once sites are selected, R2LP uses subsequent interviews and questionnaires to match members with service sites. Skill sets, work styles, and language capacity are key variables in making these matches.

R2LP places a high priority on cultivating relationships between members and service-site supervisors. In addition to the high levels of informal interaction that occur, supervisors meet regularly with members to discuss progress on tasks and connect with AC staff as needed (weekly during the first 4 months and bi-weekly thereafter). It is through these actions that members receive support throughout their service.

R2LP appreciates that most site-supervisors participate in our AC program as an addition to other

Narratives

responsibilities. As a result, R2LP is committed to providing them with the training and support they need to support and coach members. R2LP conducts a pre-assignment orientation for host-site supervisors and ongoing communication (meetings & conference calls) -- thus providing them with the opportunity to come together and share ideas. R2LP staff also communicates frequently with site-supervisors via emails to provide information and discuss strategies regarding member oversight.

D. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Since 2004, R2LP has been a state leader in terms of the data it collects in conjunction with its AC program. Members collect reams of data in the form of literacy logs, new library cards issued, and Child Information Sheets collected. This information not only measures productivity among members but also indicates progress toward our goals. To date, R2LP has reached 90% of the outputs and intermediate outcomes we have committed to achieving.

As CNCS moves toward national performance measures (NPM), R2LP is pleased to embrace these metrics. Attached to our proposal are four sets of NPMs -- one in Education, one in Healthy Futures, and two in Opportunity. These measures represent the framework for the overall change we expect to see by the end of our 3-year grant: that is, members contribute to a measurable increase in the number of children who arrive in school healthy and ready to learn, while improving their own capacity to make contributions to civil society after their service is complete.

Quantifying the effect of our program will occur through a variety of indicators. From an education perspective, outcomes (over three years) will include 1,600 children who complete an AmeriCorps early childhood education program that is high quality (ED-21 & ED-22), 1,360 children who

Narratives

demonstrate age-appropriate social and emotional skills (ED-23) and 1,360 who demonstrate age-appropriate literacy skills (ED-24). From a Healthy Futures perspective, the primary outcome will include a 1,500 participating in health education programs. And, from an Opportunity perspective, outcomes will include the 60 (unduplicated) economically disadvantaged and unemployed members who gain employment following their service (O-15), and 55 (unduplicated) members without a college degree that complete a college course within one year after finishing AC service (O-17).

R2LP will use several methods to assess impact on an annual basis. Measuring our education-related outcomes will occur through a combination of formative and instrument-based assessments that members and/or host-site staff conduct on children in early education settings. Number of children completing high-quality early education programs will be calculated by host sites. Number of children demonstrating age-appropriate social and emotional skills will be determined using formative checklists derived from the Social and Emotional Domains associated with the RI Early Learning Standards. The number of children demonstrating age-appropriate literacy skills will also be determined using formative checklists derived from the Literacy Domains associated with the RI Early Learning Standards as well performance on age-appropriate assessments such as the PPVT and PALS Pre-K.

Healthy Futures outcomes will be determined by data that members self-report, which will be confirmed by participation that R2LP receives via a data-sharing agreement with RI Dept. of Health. In terms of Opportunity metrics, R2LP staff will collect self-reported data from members related to post-service employment and college courses completed. In addition to collecting NPM data, R2LP will continue to collect information on other types of outputs and outcomes to monitor member productivity, such as literacy activities completed at sites, attendance at library workshops, new

Narratives

programs that complete the BrightStars process, and number of volunteer hours leveraged. R2LP has the management systems in place to collect this information for annual and three-year presentation to CNCS.

R2LP carefully considered several factors in determining our performance measurement targets. These include our understanding of how much AmeriCorps can accomplish in such a short period of service, the dynamics of the education and community health landscape that exist in our community, and the efforts and resource strain associated with collecting information on a highly mobile population.

In terms of our education targets, R2LP considered the uncertainty of funding in the early education system in connection with measure ED-22 and enrollment levels and churning that exist within Providence's early education system in connection with measures ED-23 and ED-24. In terms of health targets, R2LP considered the difficulty and privacy concerns in tracking down health education program participants. In terms of our opportunity targets, R2LP considered our success in providing college-level coursework to members as part of our training in connection with O-17 as well as the high re-enrollment rate of our AC members and low job market conditions in the state in connection with O-15.

E. VOLUNTEER GENERATION

In each program year, R2LP is committed to recruiting 25 volunteers to help us achieve our outcomes. Based on past experience, the vast majority of volunteer hours will occur within activities associated with El Club de Proveedoras Infantil de Rhode Island a professional club of home-based

Narratives

early childhood educators that meet regularly to receive training on a range of best practices in early childhood education. In the last two years, R2LP has leveraged more than 1,500 volunteer hours to support Club activities with each volunteer averaging 50-60 hours.

This approach to focus our volunteer activities on a single project is informed by our years of experience. Initially, R2LP tried to coordinate volunteer activities for all of our host-sites with limited success. Some of our sites such as the Library already had established volunteer networks, while other host-sites had such differing protocols regarding volunteers that it became an inefficient use of member time. This said, R2LP does anticipate that our Healthy Futures activities may yield a new cohort of volunteer opportunities via health fairs and other community-based workshops. To test this idea, R2LP will recruit volunteers through the new School of Public Health at Brown University and via Facebook.

F. PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

As a community coalition committed to systems change, R2LP recognizes the role that strong partners play in achieving objectives. A key component of such collaboration is establishing mutual benefit within project activities, and R2LP has taken steps in our model to ensure that host sites reap as much value from the AmeriCorps experience as do our members.

Some key stakeholders essential to the success of our model include our Early Reading First sites, the Providence Public Library, the Providence School District, BrightStars, CCRI, and the RI Dept. of Health. Our Early Reading First sites will benefit from members placed in early education classrooms leading to improved child outcomes, the library will benefit from having members located in branches

Narratives

leading to more lending activity among young families and child care providers, and the school district will benefit from our transition to kindergarten activities that lead to better coordination between the early childhood and elementary education communities. Through our model, BrightStars will see their participating programs make strides in improving their program quality, while the RI Dept. of Health will see an increase in the number children screened and served through their Project LAUNCH initiative.

Naturally, R2LP has collaborated with our partners to scope out their respective roles in our model. Each is already engaged in some type of R2LP activity (AmeriCorps or other) -- an outcome that will translate into a seamless implementation of activities. Given the short turnaround time from grant announcement to project start up, R2LP will act proactively and convene stakeholders in the spring to set the stage for full implementation in August.

G. SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is an issue that is always at the forefront of R2LP's planning. When the community first envisioned a school readiness initiative back in 2002, the idea was that R2LP would focus on activities designed to build the capacity of the existing early learning community and not create duplicative services.

In taking this approach, R2LP has sought change to systems in ways that if our initiative ceased to exist today that the impacts of our investment would continue to be felt in the community. Our partnerships with the library, school district, the early childhood community, and health centers embody this approach. Rather than simply provide new resources with no plan for replenishment,

Narratives

R2LP focuses our investments in the areas of training, materials, and other strategies that enrich the capacity of our partners.

In terms of project sustainability, R2LP has made substantial strides to expand our stakeholder base -- leveraging funds from the United Way and the RI Dept. of Health and significant in-kind contributions from the library. Through these partners, we are prepared to meet the challenge of greater levels of match required as a Year 8-10 grantee. While we plan to continue our AmeriCorps activities beyond 2014 and feel confident in the government's pledge to invest more educational resources in children age birth to five, we are equally committed to pursuing alternative strategies that will help the community institutionalize the types of services received through AmeriCorps. Over the past three years, R2LP has phased out four federally-funded projects, in which many of the activities have continued via local resources. As a result, we know that transition is possible.

One advantage that R2LP has when it comes to the issue of sustainability is the quality of our evaluation data. Given the experimental nature of work and the level of research-grade data, we are optimistic that our results will help make a case for support at the state level and from the national philanthropic community -- two sources of revenue that are underrepresented in R2LP's funding portfolio.

I. MULTI-SITE PROGRAMS ONLY

As stated above, our proposed service sites include neighborhood branches within the Providence Public Library, R2LP Early Reading First sites (Children's Friend, YMCA, Roger Williams Day Care, Pawtucket Day, Progreso Latino), and Project LAUNCH host sites.

Narratives

R2LP has selected these sites because of their track record of service to the community and the alignment between their missions and the core attributes of AmeriCorps. These sites possess quality leadership, a desire to support innovation, and a commitment to support distressed communities. R2LP also has prior experience with many of our sites. For example R2LP has placed more than 50 members at the library since 2005. R2LP has contractual agreements with Early Reading First sites, which includes resources for materials and mentors totaling \$500,000.

As part of our selection criteria, R2LP assesses the programmatic and financial capacities of sites to ensure that members will have a positive experience. Our achievement in this regard is best noted by the fact that despite the recession and its impact on nonprofits, R2LP has never had a site terminate its commitment to a member due to financial and/or programmatic stress.

K. CURRENT GRANTEES ONLY

In terms of last year's program, R2LP enrolled 34 of 35 slots (97%). The one slot unfilled was due to a 2nd-year member who was scheduled to enroll following a maternity leave; however health circumstances made this too difficult and by the time the decision not to enroll was finalized, our program was already into its second month of operation.

Retention for last year's program was 85% a rate that has at the low-end of the range for R2LP over the past six years. Because of R2LP's commitment to enroll a corps that is reflective of the community we serve, R2LP knows that a small portion of members will be unable to overcome the economic and social barriers needed to complete their service. Members who exit the program

Narratives

struggle with severe financial hardship, which has resulted in them needing to pursue full-time jobs. Others have found themselves in unhealthy relationships, which have resulted in the need to relocate to be closer to family members. That said, R2LP staff know how identify the attributes among prospective members that produce the highest retention rate possible and the resources to help members achieve success.

Organizational Capability

A. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

R2LP is a program of The Providence Plan (ProvPlan) a nonprofit with a mission to improve the economic and social well-being of Providence and its neighborhoods. ProvPlan was created in 1992 as a joint effort of the City of Providence and the State of Rhode Island to promote better collaboration between government, the private sector, and community-based organizations.

ProvPlan is best described as a Think and Do Tank, a term that seeks to capture the dual nature of the work it performs. A portion of the activity -- the thinking -- is dedicated to providing policy makers and community organizations with access to reliable, timely data and information. The other half -- the doing -- is engaged in developing and implementing programs designed to fulfill unmet needs in the community. By combining "think" and "do" ProvPlan has a demonstrated capacity to solve problems.

In terms of the organizational structure, ProvPlan operates five distinct, yet often overlapping, initiatives: the Information Group, New Roots, Building Futures, YouthBuild, and Ready to Learn. The programs operate under the ProvPlan umbrella, which allows for powerful peer learning and tremendous efficiencies. Each of these initiatives seek to create systemic change by forging public and

Narratives

private partnerships and designing innovative models rooted in best practices. ProvPlan serves as the organizational home for these initiatives, yet each creates their own identity and "brand" within the community.

In our 18 years of operation, ProvPlan has established a solid track record for operating community-based initiatives and providing sound administrative support for projects. For this proposal, ProvPlan Executive Director Pat McGuigan will serve as the primary contact and R2LP Director Leslie Gell the secondary contact. These individuals, along with the ProvPlan Deputy Director and Finance Director, will play a critical role in supporting our program via leadership, fundraising, accounting, and administrative services.

The ProvPlan Board is also an important resource to our project. The board consists of government and community leaders that include state agency directors, city hall leaders, and senior management from Brown University. Providence's new mayor, Angel Taveras, was a past board member and understands the vital role that AC member play in meeting the needs of distressed communities.

ProvPlan's current budget is \$8.2 million that is made up of resources from 68 different grants. Major categories of revenue include federal funds (including \$2.2 million from the Department of Labor and \$1.5 million from Department of Education), private foundation resources (\$300k from the United Way and \$450k from the Annie E. Casey Foundation), and state contracts (including \$650k from the Dept. of Education and \$150k from the Dept. of Health).

ProvPlan has experience managing federal projects. In addition to this AC program, ProvPlan has received 22 federal grants since 2004 totaling \$31 million, including \$5.8 million in Recovery

Narratives

resources. ProvPlan has received \$2.9 million in funding from CNCS over the last five years \$2.4 million for R2LP and \$500,000 via pass through from YouthBuild USA for our YouthBuild program. CNCS funds represent 7% of our FY 2011 budget.

ProvPlan is committed to the highest standards of fiscal control. An independent auditor examines our financial books each year. The findings of these OMB A-133 audits demonstrate that ProvPlan has the fiscal capacity to ensure prudent use, proper disbursement, and accurate accounting of funds. The reports also conclude that our financial systems fully meet the federal requirements for grants management.

In addition to this proposal, the ProvPlan's New Roots initiative is also submitting an AmeriCorps proposal, as a first-time applicant. New Roots provides training and technical assistance to the state's nonprofit sector to improve life for people in Rhode Island. Since 2005, New Roots has helped hundreds of organizations improve their capacity, skills and resources that turn passion and ideas into action. The New Roots proposal, which will harness the experience and lessons learned from R2LP will include 12 full-time members who will partner with community health centers and grassroots organizations to increase the number of residents (especially veterans) that gain access to health insurance and other public benefits for which they are eligible (heating assistance, child care, earned income tax credits, etc.). New Roots has structured its model to ensure that low-income residents are ready, willing, and able to leverage the benefits and opportunities that federal health care reform will provide between now and 2014.

B. STAFFING

Narratives

R2LP will dedicate two staff to operate our program --Nazly Guzmán (director) and Magda Ortiz (assistant director). Nazly has been with our AmeriCorps program since its inception in 2005 -- starting as assistant director, becoming co-director in 2007, and assuming full director responsibilities in 2008. Magda joined R2LP in 2006. She began as an administrative assistant, but was quickly promoted to a most suitable position working on R2LP's Early Educator Professional Development grant. Magda's talents made her the obvious choice to fill the AmeriCorps assistant director position vacancy in 2008.

As director, Nazly provides leadership and day-to-day support for the recruitment, screening, and placement of members. She is responsible for the delivery of pre-service orientation and in-service training for members, managing host-sites relationships, and working in collaboration with Serve Rhode Island. As a former AmeriCorps member in Vermont, Nazly understands the value of public service. She is a gifted mentor, manager, and trainer whose leadership style and bilingual skills resonate with our members. Nazly is also regarded as one of the state's Latina leaders and has been involved in numerous community-based initiatives design to engage Latinas in matters of social reform.

As assistant director, Magda focuses on AC internal systems and program management activities. She is responsible for managing member files, monitoring member service hours, tracking outcomes, and trouble-shooting the "issues of the day". Magda also plays a major role in training -- coordinating activities and serving as facilitator for HeadsUp! Reading and Mind in the Making. Prior to joining R2LP, Magda worked in community development in the Bronx for 10 years, where she provided case management services for individuals in need of job development skills and child support enforcement. Her business administration degree and bilingual fluency makes her a tremendous asset to our

Narratives

program.

Two other R2LP staff, while not charged directly to the grant, will play key roles in our program -- Leslie Gell and Katie Murray. As the R2LP Director, Leslie supervises Nazly and functions as the individual responsible for the delivery of our model. Leslie has been the director of R2LP since in 2008, has more than 25 years of early childhood and adult education experience -- a perfect blend to support our AC program. Katie Murray serves as the R2LP Director of Data and Evaluation and plays a supportive role to Nazly and Magda. Katie's database expertise helps program staff manage and track member service hours, while her skills in designing qualitative evaluation measures translate into detailed data in support of our performance management outcomes.

In terms of fiscal, monitoring and compliance, both Nazly and Leslie work with Chuck Denno (ProvPlan Director of Finance) to ensure that all functions and systems operate smoothly. With a six-year track record of success, R2LP and ProvPlan have demonstrated a capacity to operate a high-quality program that aligns with federal regulations and protocols. Overall, R2LP and ProvPlan are confident that we have assembled a team capable of delivering on the activities and outcomes outlined in this application.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

A. COST EFFECTIVENESS

R2LP has designed a budget of \$802,600 for our program. The CNCS Cost per MSY is \$13,300.

ProvPlan is committed to leveraging as much non-federal as possible to support its operations, including its AC program. Over the past six years, we have secured \$1 million from private-sector

Narratives

resources for R2LP. Funds have come from national sources such as the Annie E. Casey Foundation and local sources such as the United Way and the RI Dept. of Education.

ProvPlan has a small, but successful development staff that possesses a deep knowledge of R2LP and the types of funders who are likely to support national service activities. Local philanthropy has declined as the Rhode Island economy has sank significantly in recent years, but R2LP is optimistic that innovative partnerships and proven models like ours will still attract resources.

In terms of the non-CNCS support, R2LP has identified six sources that will make up the \$337,100 of required as matching funds. To date, \$267,100 has been committed, leaving only \$80,000 as our target. Our largest source of non-CNCS funding (\$116,507) is a U.S. Department of Education discretionary grant under the Early Reading First program. AmeriCorps resources are specifically identified in the project activities as a cost-effective strategy to achieve program outcomes. Non-federal sources include the Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation (\$25,000 - target), the United Way of RI (\$25,000 - target), and the RI Dept. of Health (\$40,000 -- 50% committed and 50% pending). Brown Rudnick and the United Way have supported our AmeriCorps program for many years. Both of these entities award grants on an annual basis, and thus while we have not yet secured support for 2011-2012, it is reasonable to conclude that these organizations will continue to support our AC activities. Also, the commitment from RI Dept. of Health -- despite severe limitations on state resources -- is a testament to the important value the state feels that our program can play in creating a Healthy Future for children living in distressed communities. Finally, ProvPlan will provide \$98,593 in in-kind administrative resources through indirect cost methods.

Narratives

B. CURRENT GRANTEES ONLY

Per CNCS's requirements, R2LP will increasing the matching share from 42% to 46% in the first year of award and eventually to 50% in Year 9. This increase represents a \$60,000 increase between years one and year and additional \$69,000 increase by year 3. These increases will be met by R2LP providing a greater share of members costs as well as increases that will occur in staffing, transportation, contractual, and college-credit costs.

D. BUDGET ADEQUACY

R2LP is confident that our budget is adequate to delivery project outcomes. Our confidence is rooted in the strength of our sites, the skills and experience of our staff, and the support ProvPlan and R2LP provide.

Our model includes two full-time staff. Our past experience has shown that this staffing level is sufficient to support a 35-member corps. As with previous years, we anticipate that other R2LP leadership, operations, and evaluation staff will be involved in the program, yet not charge their time to the grant.

In terms of costs, our set asides for supplies are essential for members who are placed in fiscally fragile service sites with little funding available. The funds we have set aside for translation are consistent with our training and the reality that many of our members need language-support services to keep pace. College credit funds are also important in that our members are able to get up to nine college credits for their service in addition to their education award.

Narratives

The funds set aside for member costs are consistent with what other AC programs provide. However, given that fact the stipends represents the sole source of income for nearly 65% of our members, R2LP takes steps to raise additional funds to provide emergency assistance to members in need of money for food, utility bills, rent, etc. This reality is one that R2LP has had to encounter on numerous occasions in each of our program years.

As stated above, ProvPlan will contribute \$98,593 of in-kind resources. Funds represent physical costs at R2LP, which includes training space and work areas for members. In addition, ProvPlan provides IT, finance, and development support well in excess of the administrative funds leveraged.

Overall, the budget we have designed is congruent with the goals and objectives we have established for our program, and the sources of non-CNCS funding that we have earmarked to support the model are reasonable and adequate.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

Attached with our proposal is an evaluation of the Ready to Learn Providence AmeriCorps activities to date. Below, we have included an abstract of our evaluation report.

EVALUATION ABSTRACT

This evaluation report answers key questions about the impact of the AmeriCorps program hosted at Ready to Learn Providence (R2LP) since 2005. In total, 143 AmeriCorps members have contributed more than 265,000 hours of service at community based child care programs, Head Start classrooms, home-based child care providers and public libraries throughout greater Providence. Their service has

Narratives

provided direct support to hundreds of staff members employed at these locations and thousands of children receiving educational services and in so doing they have played an integral role in realizing R2LP's vision that all children in Providence enter school healthy and ready to learn.

The evaluation, which consisted of analysis of R2LP's AmeriCorps program data, program and outcome data generated by other R2LP programs of which members are a part, and secondary analysis of data from the Providence Public School District (PPSD), sought to answer the following questions:

- a) What has been the impact of AmeriCorps members' service at their partner sites?
- b) To what extent have R2LP's AmeriCorps members promoted the school readiness of children in Providence?
- c) How have AmeriCorps members themselves been changed by their service with the R2LP program?

In general, findings from the evaluation provide evidence that R2LP's AmeriCorps program has had a positive impact on the partner sites where members are placed, the school readiness of children living in Providence and beyond, and AmeriCorps members themselves.

Analysis of multiple years of member performance evaluations by site supervisors reveals that, overall, supervisors held very positive views of member performance. Fifty percent (50%) of supervisors reporting performance that exceeded their expectations and an additional 41% had their performance

Narratives

expectations met. Member impact on partner sites was also inferred using teacher observation data collected as part of a cluster randomized trial of an R2LP early literacy intervention in which AmeriCorps members played a significant role. Data were collected for treatment and control early childhood educator participants (Head Start, center-based and home-based providers) at pre- and post- observation occasions in 2007-08 and 2008-09. Analyses found statistically significant differences between treatment and control participants in learning environments and literacy-related instructional practices after involvement in the program. AmeriCorps members played a supporting role in this intervention by serving in all learning environments, bringing books, creating learning materials and leading early literacy activities for the children in these settings.

Data to support the conclusion of R2LP's positive impact on children, with assistance from AmeriCorps members, were drawn from secondary analysis of data from PPSD. The local school district assesses the early literacy skills of children in kindergarten through third grade at multiple times each year by administering the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) (Good & Kaminski, 2002). Analyses of the DIBELS performance based on whether the child had participated in an R2LP early literacy intervention prior to transitioning to kindergarten revealed that R2LP kindergartners achieved higher rates of grade-level performance on DIBELS measures than their non-R2LP peers. These benchmark performance findings were consistent across the three years of data available for analysis. The role of AmeriCorps members in helping to support the early literacy work of R2LP that resulted in these positive impacts on children entering kindergarten in Providence cannot be underestimated. Since September 2008 members documented nearly 150,000 literacy interactions with children at sites throughout Providence, interactions that included reading more 10,000 books and engaging in other child-friendly activities such as songs, rhymes and word plays.

Narratives

Finally, the third question of impact on members themselves was found to be positive based on several data sources including anonymous member feedback and a description of their future plans. All members reported high satisfaction (response of "excellent" or "good") in six areas of their experience including overall program quality, quality of courses and trainings, and the program's usefulness to their work with young children. Additionally, of members who concluded their service years in June 2009 and June 2010, 45% reported that they expected to enter the field of early childhood education, either by entering the workforce or pursuing secondary education.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

Desired grant award start date and member enrollment period start date. Both dates are August, 1, 2011.

Detailed plan to improve retention. In an effort to improve our overall retention rate, R2LP will enroll a higher ratio of returning AmeriCorps members in our program for the upcoming cycle. Data over the past five years indicate that return members have a lower attrition rate than first-year members. R2LP will also maintain a "bench" of past AmeriCorps members who are not selected for this year's program, but express an interest in returning should a slot open up early in the program year. Through a combination of these strategies, our retention rates are likely to improve.

Matching Funds. The budget has been modified so that the overall matching funds in the budget worksheet reflect the totals associated with the matching funds table (\$337,100 or 42%). The only remaining items within the to-be raised category are \$20,000 from the RI Dept. of Health and \$25,000 from Brown Rudnick. R2LP has already met with Health officials and there is an emerging

Narratives

consensus that the Dept. will be able to increase their match commitment once R2LP receives confirmation of an award from CNCS. The Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation has invited an application for funding with a deadline of May 16. R2LP has developed a series of alternative match requests with the Hasbro Charitable Foundation and others should these pending requests not coming through.

Department of Education confirmation. The R2LP AmeriCorps activities are an approved project activity in our Early Reading First project narrative and budget (with line-items). This year will represent a third year in which we have used this matching fund source for AmeriCorps. The enabling legislation from Early Reading First (Title 1, Part B, subpart 2 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as amended) allows for these funds to be used as matching funds to other federal grants.

Criminal checks: As reflected in our budget narrative, criminal history checks will be conducted on all members, employees or other individuals who receive a salary, education award, living allowance, stipend or similar payment from the grant, regardless of whether these costs are coming from federal or non-federal share. Criminal history background checks will include a search of statewide criminal history repositories and the National Sex Offender Public Website for all members and employees as described above. The process will also include a Criminal History Record Information (FBI check) for all members and employees with recurring access to vulnerable populations. The Providence Police Department has provided the latter referenced fingerprinting at no charge in recent years, and it is expected that this will continue through this grant.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Performance Measures

SAA Characteristics

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

Priority Areas

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Healthy Futures |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans and Military Families | <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 35

Service Categories

School Readiness/Head Start/Early Childhood Education

Health Screening

National Performance Measures

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Many children in Providence do not arrive in school with the early literacy skills needed to make a successful transition into kindergarten and beyond. This is evidenced by that fact that 70% of the city's children entering kindergarten in Fall 2009 did not meet national, research-based early literacy benchmarks. R2LP is implementing a variety of strategies to improve children's social, emotional, and academic preparedness. One key area is to increase the number of early literacy activities that are offered in early care and education settings. Providers, in both center-based settings and home-based settings, do not always know the most appropriate ways to design early literacy activities. They often need assistance in developing print-rich environments, designing activities that are age-appropriate, and/or integrating early literacy activities into their existing curriculum.

Twenty-one AmeriCorps members, working in early childhood education service settings, will participate in ongoing early childhood development and early literacy training over the course of the service year. HeadsUp! Reading will provide an introduction to the underpinnings of early literacy. Additional trainings will, respectively, provide grounding in children's social and emotional well-being and an understanding of the broader community needs in Providence. R2LP staff will work with members and their supervisors to implement early literacy activities that build upon and enhance the center's current efforts. Throughout the service year, members will work to support service site staff to implement age-appropriate early literacy activities and to develop print rich environments and book centers at service sites. They will promote the capacity of families to enhance their children's early literacy skills and social and emotional development in age-appropriate ways at home. Through these activities, host sites where AmeriCorps members are placed will achieve key benchmarks as defined by the Rhode Island BrightStars, thus enabling them to state that they operate a high quality program.

Result: Output

Result.

Pre-K students will attend an early childhood education program (center-based or home-based) where an R2LP AmeriCorps member will play a key role in the delivery of program services. Students attending these programs will receive high-quality instruction in early literacy skills and social and emotional development.

Indicator: ED20: Children starting in an early childhood education program.

Target :Number of students who enroll early childhood education settings in which an R2LP AmeriCorps

National Performance Measures

Result.

member is located.

Target Value: 667

Instruments: Attendance and enrollment logs will be maintained by host-sites and data will be provided to R2LP and entered into a database by assigned members and R2LP program staff.

PM Statement: In Year 1, R2LP AmeriCorps members will provide meaningful instruction, family-engagement supports, and transition-to-kindergarten activities in settings in which 667 children will enroll. AmeriCorps members will provide literacy support services, lead classroom activities, and work directly with families to focus on children's successful transition to kindergarten and beyond.

Result: Output

Result.

R2LP AmeriCorps members will be placed only in early childhood education settings that have been evaluated by BrightStars and federal Head Start performance standards. Through this ranking, all students that complete an early childhood education program year as described in output 2 will be deemed to have accessed a high-quality program.

Indicator: ED22: Children accessing high quality early childhood education programs.

Target :Number of students who complete early childhood education settings in which an R2LP

AmeriCorps member is located ; based on the data collected from Outputs 1 & 2 (ED 20, ED 21).

Target Value: 500

Instruments: Attendance and enrollment logs will be maintained by host-sites and data will be provided to R2LP and entered into a database by assigned members and R2LP program staff.

PM Statement: In Year 1, 500 children will complete an AmeriCorps sponsored early childhood education program. Because members will be placed in high-quality early childhood education settings ; as measured by participation in the Rhode Island BrightStars initiative, all of the students that achieve the output associated with ED 21 will also achieve the outcome associated with ED 22.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

R2LP AmeriCorps members placed in early childhood education settings will focus a significant portion of their activities on early literacy activities such as vocabulary, alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness, oral language, print knowledge, and book handling skills. Ninety percent of the children who complete an AmeriCorps early childhood education program will show gains in early literacy as measured by a checklist derived from the Literacy Domains contained within the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards as well as through age-appropriate instrument-based assessments such as the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and the Phonological

National Performance Measures

Result.

Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) Pre-K.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) ED24: Children demonstrating gains in literacy skills.

Target :Number of students who show gains in literacy areas as measured by checklist derived from the Literacy Domains contained within the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards as well as age-appropriate instrument based assessments (PPVT and PALS Pre-K).

Target Value: 453

Instruments: Formative checklists derived from the Literacy Domains contained within the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards as well as instrument based assessments such as PPVT, and PALS PreK.

PM Statement: In Year 1, 453 children will achieve gains in early literacy skills as measured by formative checklists derived from the Literacy Domains contained within the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards as well as through age-appropriate instrument-based assessments such as the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) Pre-K. The Rhode Island standards represent the collection of best practices from around the country regarding the skills and attributes that young children need to arrive in kindergarten ready to learn, whereas PPVT and PALS Pre-K are considered reliable and valid research tools to measure children's emerging literacy skills.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

R2LP AmeriCorps members placed in early childhood education settings will focus a significant portion of their activities on developmental and behavioral domains, such as health and motor development, and social and emotional development. Ninety percent of the children who complete an AmeriCorps early childhood education program will show gains in social and emotional areas as measured by a checklist that is derived from the Social and Emotional Domain contained within the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) ED23: Children demonstrating gains in social and emotional development.

Target :Number of students who show gains in social and emotional areas as measured by the checklist derived from the Social and Emotional Domain contained within the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards.

Target Value: 453

Instruments: Formative checklists derived from the Social and Emotional Domain checklist contained within the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards.

PM Statement: In Year 1, 453 children will achieve gains in social and emotional development as measured by a behavioral checklist derived from the Social and Emotional Domain component of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards. The Rhode Island standards represent the collection of best practices from around the country regarding the skills and attributes that young children need to arrive in kindergarten ready to learn.

Result: Output

Result.

National Performance Measures

Result.

Pre-K students will complete an early childhood education program year (center-based or home-based) where an R2LP AmeriCorps member will play a key role in the delivery of program services. Students attending these programs will receive high-quality instruction in early literacy skills and social and emotional development.

Completion is defined as at least six-months of intervention (per U.S. Dept. of Education standards).

Indicator: (PRIORITY) ED21: Children completing an early childhood education program.

Target :Number of students who complete in early childhood education settings in which an R2LP

AmeriCorps member is located ; based on the data collected from Output 1 (ED 20).

Target Value: 500

Instruments: Attendance and enrollment logs will be maintained by host-sites and data will be provided to R2LP and entered into a database by assigned members and R2LP program staff.

PM Statement: In Year 1, R2LP AmeriCorps members will provide meaningful instruction, family-engagement supports, and transition-to-kindergarten activities in settings in which 500 children will complete. AmeriCorps members will provide literacy support services, lead classroom activities, and work directly with families to focus on children's successful transition to kindergarten and beyond. This 25% attrition rate is consistent with current levels of mobility in urban early childhood education settings in which the presence and then lack of child care subsidies becomes a factor in child attendance.

Priority Area: Healthy Futures

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Providence, Rhode Island has thousands of families who exhibit socioeconomic, geographic, racial, and ethnic health disparities. In order to help reduce their disparities, R2LP AmeriCorps members will provide a variety of health education activities and promotion interventions that improve health status, and helping people understanding the age-appropriate development health milestones for their children.

The primary strategy to provide these health education opportunities is to offer families with young children the opportunity to complete a variety of developmental screenings such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3). Developmental screenings will occur in health clinics, WIC offices, and other community-based agencies that provide health and social services to economically disadvantaged families in need.

AmeriCorps members will use developmental screenings and the family engagement activities that accompany

National Performance Measures

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

these screenings to establish a dialogue about the health issues facing their children and how they can best address these issues to ensure that their children receive access to the services and support systems associated with age-appropriate developmental health.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Families whose children complete developmental health screenings will follow through with some of type of intervention associated with screening findings or enroll in a child development program such as early intervention that is specifically targeted.

Indicator: Family members follow through follow-up action plans

Target :Families who complete developmental health screenings for their children connect their child with a specific and measure child development program and/or service.

Target Value: 75

Instruments: According to data collected by the RI Dept. of Health, 30% of families who complete developmental screenings are referred for follow up services, with about half of those actually seeking services. The Dept. of Health will provide annual data to R2LP regarding the number of families who connect their child with a specific child development program.

PM Statement: In Year 1, 500 families who possess health disparity characteristics and participate in an age-appropriate developmental screenings will receive a detailed report, a list of activities to do with their child, and a follow-up action plan that includes the necessary referrals for additional services. Among these 500 families, it is estimated that 150 will be identified as needing additional services, with 75 of them making the connection to a certified child development program.

Result: Output

Result.

Children with exhibited health disparity characteristics will receive developmental health screenings such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3), which yields an age-appropriate assessment in five developmental domains: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving and personal-social.

Indicator: H4: Clients participating in health education programs.

Target :Number of children with exhibited health disparity characteristics receiving development screening services.

Target Value: 500

Instruments: Screening administration log will be maintained by R2LP AmeriCorps members at their sites and entered into a centralized database at the R2LP offices.

PM Statement: In Year 1, 500 children who are considered to possess health disparity characteristics will receive age-appropriate developmental screenings aimed at providing a benchmark determination of a child's skills within five developmental domains: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving and personal-social. Data collection methodologies and protocols will adhere to developmental health screening standards.

National Performance Measures

Priority Area: Economic Opportunity

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

With an unemployment rate hovering in the mid-teens, residents of Providence (young and old) are struggling to find employment. As a result, many see the opportunity presented through AmeriCorps as a way to provide public service as well as gain relevant skills and training that can position them for future employment. Over the past six years, R2LP has had nearly 20% of members hired by an AmeriCorps R2LP host site following the term of their service. Given this high outcome (just for host sites alone), R2LP is confident that the training and experience we provide our members will lead to a significant number (80%) securing a job during their service or within one year of service completion.

For the purpose of this performance measure, 85 R2LP AmeriCorps members (an unduplicated count that assumes that 20 members enroll for more than one program cycle) that enroll during the three-year period will meet the definition of economically disadvantaged and unemployed as outlined in the national performance measure guidelines. In its six-year history, no AmeriCorps member at R2LP has transitioned directly from a job into our program, and given the current economic climate, we do not expect that to occur during the three-year grant period.

Result: Output

Result.

28 R2LP AmeriCorps members (unduplicated count) in Year 1 will meet the criteria of being economically disadvantaged, unemployed residents and find themselves with an opportunity to use service as a strategy to enter the workforce.

Indicator: O12: Members unemployed prior to service.

Target :Number of AmeriCorps members (unduplicated) who enroll over a three-year period.

Target Value: 28

Instruments: Enrollment logs will be maintained by R2LP AmeriCorps staff.

PM Statement: In Year 1, 28 (unduplicated) R2LP AmeriCorps members that enroll in the program meet the definition of being economically disadvantaged and unemployed and will find themselves with an opportunity to use service as a strategy to reenter the workforce.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Twenty R2LP AmeriCorps members identified in output measure O 12 will secure employment during their term of service or within one year after finishing AmeriCorps.

Indicator: O15: Members that secure employment.

National Performance Measures

Result.

Target :Number of AmeriCorps members who secure employment during their term of service or within one year after finishing AmeriCorps.

Target Value: 20

Instruments: Employment log of members will be maintained by R2LP AmeriCorps staff. In addition, ProvPlan will have access to employment information for members working in Rhode Island via a data-sharing agreement with the RI Department of Labor.

PM Statement: In Year 1, 20 R2LP AmeriCorps members (unduplicated) that enroll in the program will meet the definition of being economically disadvantaged and unemployed and will secure employment during their term of service or within one year after finishing AmeriCorps.

Priority Area: Economic Opportunity

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

With one of the lowest educational attainment rates in the state, Providence struggles to produce the volume of college graduates needed to keep pace with projected workforce demand. While many fields struggle with this lack of college-credentialed individuals, the gaps in early childhood education are among the most startling. Beginning in 2013, Head Start and other early childhood education programs will mandate that teachers and assistant teachers have at least an associates' degree.

Given that most of our members arrive in our program with a high school credential but no college degree, R2LP is committed to helping our members use their service as an opportunity to make progress toward a post-secondary degree. Through a long-standing partnership with the Community College of Rhode Island, R2LP AmeriCorps can earn up to nine college credits by completing extra coursework associated with our three member training courses, including HeadsUp! Reading, Mind in the Making, and How Ready is Providence. Given that the college credit is not awarded until member service ends, our current program delivery strategy fits nicely with this Opportunity National Performance Measure.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Eighteen R2LP AmeriCorps members identified in output measure O 14 will complete a college course within one year after finishing AmeriCorps. The overwhelming majority of these members will complete at least one college course as part of their member training activities, in which the college credit is awarded (at no charge) once the

National Performance Measures

Result.

member's service is complete.

Indicator: O17: Members that complete a college course.

Target : Number of unduplicated AmeriCorps members w ho complete a college course w ithin one year
after finishing AmeriCorps.

Target Value: 18

Instruments: College credits earned among members w ill be maintained by R2LP AmeriCorps staff.

PM Statement: In Year 1, 18 R2LP AmeriCorps members (unduplicated) that enroll in the program w ith a high school credential, but w ithout a college degree w ill complete at least one college course. The overw helming majority of these members w ill complete their college course as part of their member training activities, in w hich the college credit is aw arded (at no charge) once the member's service is complete. Member training course HeadsUp! Reading, Mind in the Making, and How Ready is Providence? are approved courses through the Department of Human Services at the Community College of Rhode Island.

Result: Output

Result.

R2LP AmeriCorps members that begin their service w ith a high school credential, but w ithout a college degree w ill have the opportunity through R2LP AmeriCorps member training to complete at least one college course.

Indicator: O14: Members w ithout degree prior to service.

Target :Number of unduplicated AmeriCorps members w ho begin their service w ith a high school
credential, but not a college degree.

Target Value: 20

Instruments: Enrollment log w ill be maintained by R2LP AmeriCorps staff.

PM Statement: In Year 1, 20 unduplicated AmeriCorps members that enroll in the program w ith a high school credential, but w ithout a college degree w ill have the opportunity through R2LP AmeriCorps member training to complete at least one college course, including HeadsUp! Reading, Mind in the Making, and How Ready is Providence?

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Sent

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable