

PART I - FACE SHEET

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction	
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)			
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):		3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE: 24-JAN-11	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:
2b. APPLICATION ID: 11AC124402		4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: 09ACHMN0010006
5. APPLICATION INFORMATION			
LEGAL NAME: Minnesota Education Corps DUNS NUMBER: 962455965		NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Sadiann O'Connor TELEPHONE NUMBER: (651) 251-9100 FAX NUMBER: INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: soconnor@mnedc.org	
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 2400 Park Ave Minneapolis MN 55404 - 3713 County:			
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 272413473		7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit 7b.	
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box). <input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> A. AUGMENTATION B. BUDGET REVISION C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER (specify below):		9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: Corporation for National and Community Service	
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER:94.006 10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps State		11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Minnesota Reading Corps	
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): This grant will target communities in greater Minnesota. Regional hubs are located in: Duluth, Grand Rapids, Moorhead, Rochester, St. Cloud, and Mankato. Counties excluded from this grant are the 9-county Twin Cities metro (Anoka, Carver, Chisag		11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):	
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 08/01/11 END DATE: 07/31/12		14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="MN 005"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="MN 005"/>	
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: <input type="text" value="2"/>		16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?	
a. FEDERAL	\$ 3,575,000.00	<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	
b. APPLICANT	\$ 3,045,956.00		
c. STATE	\$ 0.00		
d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00		
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00		
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00		
g. TOTAL	\$ 6,620,956.00		
17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO			
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: Susan Saunders		b. TITLE:	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (651) 645-2277 204
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:		e. DATE SIGNED: 05/06/11	

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Executive Summary

The vision of Minnesota Reading Corps is that all children will become proficient readers by the end of 3rd grade. Rigorously trained members work with children from age three to grade three who are struggling in reading. Using the latest research on reading interventions and assessment, AmeriCorps members provide tutoring to give students the extra boost they need to become successful readers.

Rationale and Approach

A. Rationale and Approach

INTRODUCTION

The Minnesota Reading Corps is an AmeriCorps literacy tutoring program designed to be a tool that communities and states can utilize to ensure that children become proficient readers by third grade. The Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) originated from the vision of a Minnesota state legislative leader Alice Seagren - who was simultaneously serving as a board member for Minnesota's national service commission (ServeMinnesota) and as chair of the Minnesota House's K-12 finance committee. She was charged in her role as an education policy leader to craft a strategy to tackle the state's persistently high rates of early literacy failure. Education policy leaders had long decried a gap between literacy science and the capacity of Minnesota's schools to effectively use available and proven research and tools to provide struggling young readers the best opportunity, within the shortest amount of time, to secure proficient reading skills. Positioned at the cross-section of national service, academics, the state education system and its practitioners, then-Representative Seagren (currently the state's Education Commissioner) recognized the unique potential for the expandable people power of AmeriCorps (AC) to serve as the heretofore elusive vehicle for implementing the science of how children learn to read on a large and unprecedented scale.

In 2003, the concept successfully attracted state legislative financial support, and the MRC formed as a local pilot literacy initiative in four Head Start programs served by 24 AC members. In 2007, after three

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years of remarkable results, the Governor and the legislature formally identified the MRC as a new state program to promote literacy achievement and approved a separate appropriation of \$2 million to support program expansion to reach 15,000 children age 3 to grade 3 statewide over a two year period. For the 2009-11 biennium, despite severe budget cuts, the state increased its appropriation to \$2.75 million, with a goal of serving as many as 29,000 students. With this application, the Minnesota Reading Corps seeks investment to continue expanding the program across greater MN's six geographical regions where 36,000 "age 3 to grade 3" children are currently on a track of failing to become proficient readers by 3rd grade.

COMPELLING COMMUNITY NEED

Rationale

From preschool through 3rd grade, children learn to read. From 3rd grade forward, students "read to learn." This time-sensitive window presents either an opportunity to build a foundation for a lifetime of education and economic success or puts a child at risk of the lifelong negative consequences associated with illiteracy. Evidence indicates that if children are not proficient readers by the end of 3rd grade, they begin to become "in-school drop outs" as early as 4th grade (Paige, 2005). As noted by MRC's evaluation director, "Once a child starts kindergarten, they have 595 days to learn to read by the end of 3rd grade -- the further behind they are when they start kindergarten, and the longer they stay behind, the greater the odds are that they won't accomplish this goal."

Further, literacy researchers Snow, Burns & Griffin (1998, National Academic Press) concluded that, "A person who is not at least a modestly skilled reader by the end of third grade is quite unlikely to graduate from high school." Consequently, reading failure is also linked to a host of negative social outcomes, including teen pregnancy, substance abuse, delinquency and criminal activity. (Talla, 2003). With research demonstrating that 95% of all children have the capacity to learn to read proficiently, and six years of impressive MRC results backing this finding, we are confident that reducing the likelihood of

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these outcomes is achievable.

Needs Assessment

The MRC identified those children who would benefit most from working with its members by surveying literacy experts and leaders from Pre-K and elementary schools. A key finding was that while large numbers of children do not meet the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA-II) standards for reading proficiency, their scores are not low enough to make them eligible for mandatory assistance from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title I tutors or special education/learning disabilities teachers. Policy analysts and practitioners alike described these children as "falling between the cracks" and typically being assisted only through whatever extra support individual teachers manage to rally or directly provide. Unfortunately, research and testing data confirms that children who start out with substandard literacy skills are unlikely to achieve future reading competency without targeted intervention. "Even with excellent instruction in the early grades, some children fail to make satisfactory progress in reading. Getting back on track will require supplementary individual or small-group intensive instruction that is coordinated with classroom teacher instruction." (Snow, et al, 1998). MRC's study of the issue in Minnesota revealed that the provision of any 'extra help' rarely aligns with an individualized assessment of that child's literacy skills and is almost never accompanied by ongoing progress monitoring to demonstrate whether the interventions provided are working or should be altered.

The MRC has identified its program participants as those children that have the capacity to learn to read at grade level but who experience more prolonged, intense, and often permanent literacy struggles because the educational system is unequipped and almost always under resourced to be able to provide timely and effective data-driven intervention. This is where AC members are a powerfully effective means for meeting the early literacy needs of Minnesota's children. MRC members with intensive

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training in evidence-based interventions are coached by literacy experts to work one-on-one and/or in small groups to isolate children's specific skill challenges and to tailor their tutoring to effectively build the skills needed by each child to become a successful reader. Members are effective because their tutoring is aligned with Curriculum Based Measurement tools that provide ongoing data that tell teachers and literacy coaches whether or not the member interventions are making a difference. MRC was designed from the ground up to bring into educational settings the tools, resources, training, and experience needed to create a delivery system capable of administering evidence-based literacy interventions to address a statewide systemic gap that too often traps capable children who might otherwise experience success.

Documentation

Analysis of the 2009 MCA-II results illustrates the magnitude of need throughout greater Minnesota (the 78 counties that comprise the six geographic regions outside the Twin Cities metro area). 20% - one in five - of the third graders failed to pass the state's reading proficiency exam. Extrapolating this third grade result across the "age 3 to grade 3" range of greater MN students, it is estimated that over 36,000 children within this part of the state are at high risk of failing to become proficient readers by the end of 3rd grade.

This proposal aims to target schools and preschools throughout greater MN with the highest percentage of students who are unlikely to acquire proficient reading skills by the 3rd grade without individualized intervention. For example, two school districts that serve tribal populations have failure rates of 46 and 54% on state proficiency tests. Other examples include four districts located close to food processing plants that largely rely on an immigrant workforce. Increasingly large percentages of children in these communities come from low-income families where English is not the first language. These districts have not yet met this educational challenge and are experiencing 3rd grade literacy failure rates between 26 and 34%.

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With a rapidly diversifying population -- Minnesota's foreign-born immigration rate increased by 138% compared to 57% nationwide between 2001-2007 while its white student enrollment declined by 17% within its rural areas -- towns throughout Minnesota that twenty years ago had almost no children of color are now squarely facing the challenge of addressing one of the nation's largest academic achievement gaps. According to results from the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exam, a national academic scorecard used for 30 years to assess student performance by state, the gap between the scores of white students and students of color (excluding Asian/Pacific Islanders) in Minnesota on the 4th grade reading exam, is far higher than the national average. The average score for white students is 231 compared to an overall average of 201 for Hispanic, Black and American Indian children. The MRC, with its focus on individualized intervention, is poised to play a critical role in supporting schools to respond swiftly to meet the needs of growing student populations who must overcome the multiple academic impacts of limited English, cultural transition, and high poverty rates.

In addition to using historical reading performance on the state's MCA-II exam as a criteria for site selection, the MRC will further prioritize those schools and communities with large and/or growing concentrations of children from low income households (as represented by the percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch) and higher numbers of students of color and limited English proficiency. This rationale is grounded in state assessment data that indicates these two variables are the strongest predictors of low performance on the state reading assessment test, and reinforces the MRC's commitment to helping to close the achievement gap.

MEMBER ACTIVITIES

Through this grant, the MRC will support a total of 194 full-time, 76 part-time, and 44 Education Award AC members who, in turn, will serve a minimum of 8,000 Pre-K through 3rd grade children at risk of literacy failure. The MRC program trains and supports AC members to serve as an extension of the

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literacy instructional team in Pre-K and K-3 classrooms.

*Pre-K Members: 50 FT, 14 PT, and 44 Education Award members will serve in preschool classrooms. Each member will support one class of between 17- 20 children each year. The 44 Education Award members are existing Head Start and other pre-school classroom teachers or paraprofessionals who work daily within their current classroom and invest an additional 3-5 hours a week beyond their standard workday enhancing their classroom skills through MRC coaching and trainings to implement new literacy interventions in their classrooms.

All Pre-K literacy tutor members perform the following specific activities:

- Conduct Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDI) assessments on all children in their classroom 3x/yr (fall, winter, and spring) to identify their literacy skill needs and measure their progress during the year.
- Create literacy-rich environments by integrating additional reading, writing and talking activities into five in-classroom "centers" to make play more meaningful.
- Implement "5-Day Read Alouds" using dialogic reading techniques to expand the children's vocabulary, phonological awareness, and letter knowledge by reading the same book for 5 days.
- Provide tailored relationship-based interventions to small groups of children needing focused time on specific skills such as phonological awareness, vocabulary, alphabetic principles, conversation, and book/print concepts.
- Implement activities to make writing meaningful for young children.

*K-3 Members: 150 FT and 50 PT members will serve within selected elementary schools tutoring K-3 children identified as at risk of not reading proficiently by 3rd grade. Each FT member tutors a total of 25-30, and PT members 15-20, children during the course of the school year.

All K-3 literacy tutor members perform the following activities:

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-Provide a minimum of 60 minutes weekly of individualized research-based literacy interventions to each child in their active caseload.

-Collect weekly progress monitoring data on children being tutored. Children "graduate" from the MRC program on a rolling basis when they demonstrate - through the weekly progress monitoring assessments - that they have acquired the literacy skills to "catch-up" with their grade-level peers. Once exited, they are still assessed for 3 consecutive weeks to ensure that they stay on track with grade-level expectations. If they fall below those levels, they are re-enrolled in active tutoring.

*Volunteer Coordinator (VC): 6 FT members will be placed individually at MRC school sites within each of the 6 regions to build the capacity of multiple sites to manage volunteer tutors by: recruiting and supervising community volunteers; delivering volunteer orientation, training, and recognition; coordinating materials, activities and tutoring logs; and, creating weekly lesson plans to maximize volunteer contributions. VC members also recruit episodic volunteers to participate in events that promote awareness of literacy issues and support MRC sites.

Additionally, all members plan and participate in local service projects advancing literacy; they also each individually design and lead 5 civic engagement activities to develop their own lifelong ethic of service. MRC enforces a specific written non-displacement policy that is included in the site agreement that all sites must sign prior to the program year's start. The MRC also implements a system to ensure that members understand and abide by prohibited service activities rules. The system includes training on prohibitions at the mandatory member orientation. All members sign a contract that outlines rules and prohibitions.

MEASURABLE OUTPUTS and OUTCOMES

The MRC program will address the Corporation's Education priority area and will be using the standard

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performance measures.

2,500 Pre-K students and 5,500 K-3 students will participate in MRC. (National Performance Measure #1)

2,125 Pre-K and 2,750 K-3 students will complete participation in MRC. (National Performance Measure #2)

MRC's outcomes include:

*90% of the 2,500 Pre-K students served will demonstrate improvement in at least three of the five "building block" literacy skills from fall to spring, as measured by the IGDI assessments.

*75% of the 5,500 K-3 students served will demonstrate more than an expected year's worth of growth in their literacy skills, as measured by the grade-specific AIMSweb fluency assessments conducted three times per year.

*80% of the 700 3rd grade students who participate and graduate from the MRC program will demonstrate reading proficiency on Minnesota's MCA-II reading proficiency exam (3rd grade is the first year that students are tested by the state).

EVALUATION TOOLS

MRC uses the following tools to collect data on children's progress:

*Pre-K: The Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) literacy assessments measure literacy outcomes for children ages 3 to 5. Members administer IGDI assessments in the fall, winter, and spring to establish benchmarks and track progress for each student in their classroom. Members consult with Master Coaches (outside literacy experts contracted by the MRC) to analyze the data, make instructional decisions for children needing extra member support, and set classroom goals. Final IGDI scores measure improvement in critical literacy skills and compare each child's results to benchmarks correlated with 3rd grade reading success. The Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation

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(ELLCO) (Smith, et al, 2002) tool is administered in the fall to inventory strengths and areas of need in the MRC members' classroom. Results provide a report about what is needed to design a more literacy-rich classroom. The ELLCO is administered again in the spring to measure member success in implementing improvements such as setting up stations to practice specific literacy skills, adding more books, or more visible literacy props.

*K-3: Members perform benchmark assessments on each child 3x/yr. The general outcome measures contain elements of reading that precede reading connected text named Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) (Good, et al, 2002). In addition, connected text reading is measured by oral reading fluency (R-CBM) for the end of 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades (Fuchs & Deno, 1991). Members also use a weekly progress monitoring system with one-minute standardized measurements. Results are entered into AIMSweb to create performance charts used to fine-tune weekly tutoring interventions.

*Volunteer Mobilization: VCs use sign-in sheets to track weekly and episodic volunteer hours, and input this data into a web based database (OnCorps) with a description of the service provided/number of children served.

SELF-ASSESSMENT and IMPROVEMENT

The MRC ensures a dynamic and effective system of assessment and continuous improvement through the following methodology.

- 1) Site Visits: Regional Coordinators visit each site fall and spring to ensure members and sites are meeting program requirements and members are being supported to succeed.
- 2) Literacy Coaching Sessions: Master Coaches conduct monthly Literacy Coaching Sessions with Internal Coaches and members to discuss caseloads and conduct fidelity checks. Coaches directly observe members performing assessments and interventions, rate consistency with the prescribed

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approach, and provide immediate feedback on member performance.

3) Surveys: Members, Internal Coaches, and Master Coaches are surveyed mid- and end-year to assess program satisfaction, level of support received, and to identify any issues needing attention.

Additionally, members are surveyed after each training session to provide feedback on its quality and effectiveness.

4) Dashboard Reporting: MRC utilizes a web-based "Dashboard Reporting System" that provides a comprehensive monthly "dashboard" to give program managers and coaches real-time performance data at the, site, member and regional levels. This data includes the number of children being served, exited due to demonstrating proficiency, and referred to other services if needed, the amount of tutoring minutes delivered (on average and the percentage of students receiving a threshold number of minutes in that month), fidelity of intervention delivery, number of volunteers recruited and hours served (pulled from On-Corps), and member service hours completed.

5) Formal Evaluation: Evaluation Reports are produced mid- and end-year to identify potential performance gaps and to guide continuous improvement.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Minnesota business community has been particularly concerned about its future workforce and economy as the state faces demographic challenges that are linked with one of the nation's most glaring achievement gaps. Consequently, for the past decade, state business leaders have become catalysts in igniting a statewide public-private movement focused on the urgent need to invest in early education. This effort has been largely inspired by the MN Federal Reserve Bank's lead economist, Art Rolnick, whose research illustrated a substantial economic payback (\$8 return for every \$1 invested) for effective early childhood education. This sense of urgency has led to statewide efforts representing multiple community stakeholders joining to advocate for cost-effective, replicable, and proven interventions to reverse the trend of increasing failure. Examples of these efforts include: MN Business for Early

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Learning, the MN Early Learning Foundation, and localized Early Childhood Coalitions now formed across the entire state.

The MRC remains closely aligned with community literacy needs as the program continues to grow through its six Regional Program Coordinators who engage with a wide and growing array of local partners and individual school districts to ensure that the MRC maximizes rather than duplicates efforts to meet the state's early literacy needs. Further discussion of MRC's community partners throughout greater MN is included in the Stakeholders section.

RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

In addition to the MRC, the Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC) currently manages two other CNCS-funded literacy-focused programs, AC*VISTA and Summer Reads VISTA. AC program staff collaborate and share resources daily, including training, recruitment, management, troubleshooting, and literacy expertise. MLC sponsors 40 AC*VISTA members serving literacy projects statewide in child and adult serving organizations. Joint recruitment efforts are conducted between MRC, AC*VISTA and Summer Reads programs, which attracts more applicants via synchronized outreach and provides them with three national service options, each with its own niche and prospective fit.

MRC also partners with Volunteers of America-MN as part of their CNCS-funded Experience Corps (EC) program. To-date, MRC Volunteer Coordinators have trained EC volunteers in four sites to tutor children using two MRC reading interventions.

The MRC collaborates with all MN AC programs through the annual statewide AmeriCorps MLK Day rally, service project, and mini-conference. MRC sites and/or regions also partner with neighboring AC programs throughout the state on community-wide service projects and training sessions. For example, the MRC partners with Duluth's True North and St. Cloud's MN Math Corps AC programs on multiple joint recruitment and training sessions. True North and MRC also co-host a fall retreat to educate members on how their year of service impacts the Duluth community.

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REPLICATION

MRC offers a cost-effective way for state education systems to deliver individualized and differentiated literacy instruction that is effective and efficient. Last year, MRC staff presented at two national meetings to promote replication: The National Conference on Volunteering and Service and at a national meeting of School Psychologists in Boston. Additionally, staff hosted a site visit for representatives from Texas this January, and the Univ. of Texas-Austin has decided to replicate the MRC model. Two corporate MRC funders, Target and Opus, are particularly interested in the MRC's potential to be replicated on a national scale. Opus Foundation funded ServeMN to partner with the Association for State Commissions to develop an interactive AC*State Program Replication Wiki. The Replication Wiki is designed to help state commissions build learning communities to replicate innovative AC programs across state lines. The Wiki launched this past November and features the MRC as a case study of a successful state program that is ripe for replication.

The MRC is designed to build a seamless system of literacy acquisition from age 3 to grade 3 that is correlated with standardized testing required by the No Child Left Behind Act. Key MRC components are documented for replication, including:

- *Literacy interventions consistent with the "5 Big Ideas of Literacy"
- *A data collection system allowing for statewide aggregation of data and progress monitoring data to inform instruction for individual children
- *A quality control system to ensure implementation fidelity
- *Training modules for members, site supervisors, community volunteers, and families.
- *Brochures and marketing materials
- *A model of creating sustainability through state government and philanthropy

Organizational Capability

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D. Organizational Capacity

*SOUND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving literacy since 1972. At its start, MLC volunteers offered free tutoring for adults struggling with basic reading and writing. Today, the organization reaches nearly 100,000 Minnesotans every year with a full range of literacy service for adults, children and families and capacity-building support for literacy organizations across MN. MLC's programs are carried out by 46 full-time equivalent employees, 657 national service members and hundreds of volunteers. The annual budget is \$11.6 million (92% government grants/contracts, 4% program service fees, 3% corporate and foundation grants, and 1% individual donations and special events). MLC has a long history of successfully managing federal grants and currently manages six federal Corporation for National and Community Service program grants. MLC's programmatic success relies upon sound fiscal management. MLC prepares and maintains all financial reports in conformity with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122 Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations. Audits (Financial Audit and Single Audit) are performed annually by external auditors with no reported audit findings to date.

MULTIPLE SITES

MRC's Site Management plan reflects years of lessons learned about operating effectively across multiple sites. Each MRC site completes an application that outlines how they will fulfill the following:

- 1) Use of a data-based problem solving model of literacy instruction.
- 2) Integration of the AC member with a classroom teacher or staff with reading expertise.
- 3) Identification of teacher(s) who will perform Internal Coach duties, thus decreasing the need for Master Coaches over time.
- 4) Expectation to create a

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literacy rich classroom environment (Pre-K sites only). 5) Process for K-3 children to "graduate" from, and, if necessary, be identified to re-enter the program. 6) Process for identifying students that meet MRC criteria: K-3 students below target scores for their grade level but not receiving additional services such as Special Ed. Pre-K children with assessments indicating they are at 50% of the spring target. 7) Capacity for children to participate in at least 3 tutoring sessions weekly totaling a minimum of 60 minutes. 8) Willingness to include trained community volunteers in the implementation of the MRC model.

The site selection committee includes MRC program and ServeMN staff and Master Coaches who review applications and recommend sites to the Leadership Team. Sites are prioritized according to level of need based on school district MCA II literacy results, poverty levels (as defined by rates of free and reduced lunch), and diversity of student population. Selection criteria include: evidence of ability to provide sufficient member supervision and support, evidence of alignment with and commitment to implement a research/data-based literacy model, and support for community-based member recruitment. Returning sites are evaluated on their past performance based on site visit documentation, database reports, and member, Program Coordinator, and Master Coach surveys. Continuation criteria include: sufficient member caseload, Internal Coach participation in trainings and Master Coach meetings, fidelity in implementing interventions, and member retention and recruitment.

Once the site is accepted, expectations are clearly outlined in a site agreement that the site administrator (Head Start Directors for PreK sites/ School Principals for K-3 sites) and Internal Coach both sign. Beyond the formal agreement, MRC's strategies for ensuring a high level of consistency among the sites in terms of both service quality and connection to the program mission include: 1) 1-day Orientation and 3-day Institute at the outset of the service year builds a common vision and techniques for advancing literacy. 2) MRC program staff visit each site 2x/yr. to assess program implementation and make adjustments as needed. 3) Master Coaches conduct site visits 10x/yr. for 1st year sites, 5x/yr. for 2nd

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year sites, and 2x/yr. for 3rd year sites. These visits support high levels of program fidelity by the members and Internal Coaches; Master Coaches directly observe members work with children, score its quality, and provide feedback to improve their performance. 4) MRC uses its monthly performance web-based "dashboard" data system to report how well sites are meeting targets such as member retention, number of students served, graduation rates, and site staff satisfaction. 5) MRC also uses an intranet website to facilitate member connections across sites and to share best practices.

ADMINISTRATIVE PARTNERS

MLC's 12-member Board, representing organizations within the for-profit, non-profit and public sectors is active in strategic planning, financial oversight, fundraising, and advocacy. 100% of its members contribute financially. Executive Director, Eric Nesheim, a 19-year MLC employee with extensive program and management experience, leads the staff.

Each of the following partner organizations plays a specific lead role to ensure MRC's success:

*ServeMinnesota (Minnesota's Commission for AC state programs) provides policy direction, designs improvements to quality assurance systems, secures the program's financial resources and is accountable to state and private funders for program results.

*The MLC serves as fiscal host, provides recruitment and day-to-day member management, and coordinates the recruitment and selection of Pre-K and K-3 sites.

*St. Croix River Education District provides assessment training and technical assistance and leads the program's annual evaluation.

KEY STAFF

Sheila Piippo (MLC National Service Program Director) has a BA in Psychology and an M.Ed. Sheila has over 15 years of deep experience in school-based programming and youth development. Sheila is now in her 4th year providing leadership and supervision to MRC staff and oversees statewide expansion.

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Deb Holbrook (Fiscal Manager) has a BS in Accounting and 20 years of for-profit and non-profit finance and accounting experience. Deb manages federal, state and foundation grants and provides financial reports. She also prepares work papers and reports annually for both the standard and A-133 federal audits.

Sadie O'Connor (Statewide Program Manager) has a BA in Mass Communications. Sadie has worked with MRC for 5+ years and supervises Regional Program Coordinators and oversees statewide operations. Sadie served for 2 years as an AC member in an early literacy program.

Kate Horst (Pre-K Master Coach Coordinator) has a BA in Elementary Ed., Minor in Early Childhood Ed. & an Early Childhood Family Education License. Kate is the author/trainer of: SEEDS of Emergent Literacy for: 3-5 Educators; Early Literacy for Infant-Toddler Teachers; Early Literacy Coaching; Minor Parents; and Parents.

Cheryl Reid (K-3 Master Coach Coordinator) is a nationally certified School Psychologist working for the Mpls. Public Schools since 1995. She oversees consultation, intervention and assessment for K-3 sites. Cheryl and Kate recruit Master Coaches and match them with members/sites to support appropriate literacy interventions.

Lorien Parsons (Training Coordinator) has a Ph.D.. Lorien co-authored the journal article, Practical Applications of Response-to-Intervention Research. Lorien also consults as a school psychologist for the Mpls. Public Schools.

Anna Peters (Recruitment & Outreach Coordinator) has a BA in Psychology, was an English teacher in Prague and Madrid, and oversees the statewide recruitment plan.

Kerry Bollman (MRC Evaluation Director) has a Masters in School Psychology & is a Nationally Certified School Psychologist, Reading Center Director and Academic Collaborative Planner for the St. Croix River Education District.

MRC Regional Program Coordinators (6 FTE) manage regional operations, including: member and site recruitment and management, and, cultivating community partner relationships. They have 20+ years

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of combined experience in early childhood education and K-12 education, and 11 years of coordinating nonprofit programs.

The MRC has several teams -- each including various staff members above- to enhance decision-making and review program performance:

- * The Leadership Team meets bi-monthly to review program outcomes and to set strategic direction, and meets annually to approve the site selection committee proposal
- * The K-3 and Pre-K Operations Teams meet monthly to review operational performance & problem-solve issues relevant to their responsibilities
- * Training & Development Team designs & conducts MRC training for members and Internal Coaches
- * The Evaluation Team includes nationally regarded practitioners and PhDs in literacy research and assessment who design and manage program evaluation and data analysis

PLAN FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

MLC's current strategic plan runs through 2009-2012. MLC has a strategic goal of invigorating literacy networks throughout MN. Expanding MRC's services in the state will enable MLC to raise awareness about and address literacy needs in more communities throughout greater MN.

Competent, motivated employees are critical to carrying out MLC's mission. To help nurture and retain talent, MLC designed a collaborative performance review process that provides: relevant feedback on past performance; a focus on future performance; and mentoring to encourage professional and organizational growth. MLC's performance review process components are: 1) Job Descriptions 2) Work Plans 3) Informal Performance Reviews 4) Staff Development Plans and 5) Formal Performance Reviews.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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MRC's technical assistance plan addresses needs in three areas: 1) Continual vigilance to ensure literacy interventions reflect the latest research findings and are implemented with fidelity, 2) Implementing quality assurance systems as an early warning system for issues that require attention; and, 3) Managing an HR member recruitment system that efficiently processes over 2000 annual applications. MRC has built "real-time" technical assistance into its program model and meets most T/TA needs through contracting with its Master Coaches. In addition to on-site support, Master Coaches integrate knowledge of front-line challenges into ongoing program-wide training and work with program staff to review survey/evaluation results to identify and address additional T/TA needs. The MRC further enriches training through the community-based expertise of area professionals who largely contribute their time as in-kind support. This year, MRC has also introduced the "Balanced Scorecard" as a tool to maximize the program's use of the comprehensive data provided by our monthly "Dashboard" on-line management system to identify and problem-solve challenges as they are made visible. The Dashboard draws from all MRC data and feedback sources, providing a one-stop information bank that gives ServeMN, MRC program managers, as well as site staff and members, accessible, timely indicators about what is working and what needs adjusting to improve services. In addition, the Dashboard also tracks and integrates objective literacy assessment data to provide "at a glance" impact data about the number of children served, number of children meeting targets, length of time to meet targets, number of volunteers recruited and hours served, and family involvement numbers.

ServeMinnesota's accountant and fiscal officer provides ongoing financial technical assistance to ensure MRC complies with AC guidelines and standard accounting requirements. Please see MRC's Multi-Site Oversight plan for additional details on site orientation, training, and support strategies.

*Sound Record of Accomplishment as an Organization

VOLUNTEER GENERATION AND SUPPORT

MLC's commitment to engaging volunteers in our organizational success began with its founding in

Narratives

1972. MLC currently provides volunteer recruitment, placement and management services to a network of nearly 100 volunteer-based Adult Basic Education and Children's Literacy Programs. MLC's Volunteer Services also provides pre-service and ongoing volunteer training, including: English as a Second Language, children's literacy strategies, Adult Basic Education, and citizenship. MLC also provides in-service workshops, online tutor tips, best practices workbooks, and other resources to support volunteers' one-to-one work with students. MLC attracts volunteers from all backgrounds through strategies including: participation in local/regional cultural festivals and events; publicizing volunteer opportunities in community newspapers statewide; using social networking including blogs, Facebook & Twitter; and, hosting quarterly volunteer/learner movie nights featuring films on the cultural, racial/ethnic and economic issues common to many of its learners. MLC succeeded in providing 2,667 highly trained, well qualified volunteer tutors to its network of children and adult organizations in 2008-09.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

MLC is committed to increasing literacy throughout MN through active community leadership; staff at all levels participate in over 20 boards, committees, or community groups. MLC's executive director is an appointee to the Governor's Workforce Development Council and in this statewide leadership role shares literacy expertise to ensure that more children attain literacy proficiency and that more of Minnesota's adult learners are equipped to pursue job-related goals and to support their children's literacy development. The MN Dept. of Education has selected the MLC to host the statewide Literacy Hotline and Web site, and to be sole provider of technology, training, data collection and management advice for literacy programs using volunteer hours. MLC staff members have been recognized for professional excellence by multiple state and national education organizations, including being named the state's top literacy program for superior program quality and excellent student achievement in 2005. The agency also became MN's first program to receive national accreditation from ProLiteracy America.

Narratives

MATCHING RESOURCES

Because of MRC's focus on results and alignment with the state's vision to eradicate illiteracy we have successfully secured state and private dollars to meet our match requirements over the life of our current 3 year grant. Over the first 6 years, the state contributed \$3.8 million and the private sector \$1,701,000. Our 15 member Business Advisory Committee formed in 2005 has facilitated strong relationships with the philanthropic community with outstanding results. In the past two years alone, MRC's private support grew from \$330,000 in 07-08 to \$751,000 in 08-09. The 2009 legislative session supported the Governor's request to not only continue but to increase an annual appropriation to the MRC from \$1 to \$1.375 million. With the current economic climate and severe state budget shortfalls, this continuation and increase testifies to the strength of MRC outcome data and the unique cost effectiveness and leveraging power of AC. Business leaders are committed to partnering with MRC's private fundraising efforts to raise \$1.5 million annually from the private sector to match state monies to continue to ensure our capacity to meet matching requirements.

*Success in Securing Community Support

COLLABORATION

The MRC has developed two key collaborations that are significantly increasing the statewide reach and quality of its programming

1) The Minnesota Response to Intervention Center (RtI): Viewing the MRC as an integral part of the state's overall strategy for ensuring MN's children become successful readers, the MN State Legislature not only created the MRC as a separate program but has continued to maintain and increase its funding to expand the reach and quality of MRC services. In its 2009 statute appropriating state funds to

Narratives

support statewide MRC programming, the legislature formally recognized the MRC's program design as being aligned with its own statewide efforts to integrate the innovative and growing national RtI method of integrating assessment, intervention, and prevention to maximize student achievement and school staff effectiveness. This new statute codifies the MRC's responsibility to assist the MN State Department of Educ. to integrate RtI into schools across the state by charging the MRC with helping to train teachers at MRC sites to use assessment outcomes to identify and deliver individualized interventions.

2) The MN Head Start Association (MHSA): MRC's collaboration with Head Start has grown from a four-site partnership to a relationship with MHSA that supports the MRC to make annual presentations to Head Start Education Coordinators throughout the state to share results and promote participation in the MRC amongst all their members and sites. MRC education award only members are greatly expanding the capacity of MN Head Start Agencies to meet legislation requirements for pre-school staff education levels while also supporting existing staff to acquire skills to implement research based literacy practices in their classroom.

The MRC has built robust relationships with faith-based organizations, including diverse congregations within every region of the state, that are a leading source of the volunteers, members, and book donations, necessary to make MRC a viable partner in collaborations to elevate literacy rates

LOCAL FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

The MRC funding model includes both state appropriation dollars that are geographically unrestricted as well as private dollars that can be targeted to specific schools and/or geographic communities.

ServeMN has committed to launching the ServeMinnesota Foundation in 2010 for the specific purpose of building the networks necessary to engage hundreds of individuals across MN in the program's financial and programmatic success. The ServeMinnesota Foundation will serve as a vehicle for

Narratives

attracting donors through restricted and unrestricted funds, an annual fund, planned giving opportunities, and an endowment fund. A Minnesota Reading Corps Fund will be established for diversifying and securing financial support at the local level, including allowing for individuals and/or businesses to sponsor classrooms or schools that participate in the MRC

WIDE RANGE OF STAKEHOLDERS

In each of greater MN's six regions targeted by this grant, the MRC's work is aligned with an increasingly diverse group of community stakeholders that over time has grown to include: Head Start Agencies, pre-schools, child care centers, elementary schools, district administrators, civic groups, community agencies, libraries, policy makers, businesses, professionals and retirees, volunteers and families, higher education, service-learning projects, and public health agencies. Regional Coordinators serve on a multitude of local and regional committees and initiatives that share and help further its goal of reaching children early to prevent literacy failure. Examples include: The Greater Mankato Early Learning Initiative; United Way's regional "Success by Six" Advisory Councils, and its new "Ready 4 K" pre-school initiative; United Way's "BORN to Read," "Big Red Bookshelf," and Imagination Library Program; Grand Rapids Project READ and "Invest Early" campaigns; and, the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Early Childhood Alliance. Specific ways in which these partnerships strengthen the MRC include: publicizing and supporting MRC member and volunteer recruitment, providing guest speakers for member trainings, donating training and meeting space, linking members to family involvement resources, supporting book donations, facilitating relations with local press to highlight member service and promote literacy events, and by engaging the MRC in strategic relationships with local educational and public leaders committed to early literacy.

The MRC is also committed to increased collaboration with school staff, administrators and educational leaders across the state and is successfully shifting from a site-by-site approach to engaging entire

Narratives

districts as partners. The MRC is currently operating within multiple elementary schools within the largest school districts within greater MN including St. Cloud/Moorhead, Rochester, Duluth, and Grand Rapids. Superintendents for these districts are working to duplicate the strategy of their colleagues within the metro-area who are collaborating with the MRC to bring its services to every child within their district who needs it. These education leaders have also communicated with the state legislature about the measurable positive impact the MRC is having within their schools and communities.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

E. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

DECREASED RELIANCE ON FEDERAL SUPPORT

Despite MRC's reliance on specialized literacy training and coaching we administer the program at CNCS's allowable cost of \$13,000 average per MSY. Private and state funding allows us to meet the costs of specialized training, on-going coaching and comprehensive evaluation. MRC is on target to continue to meet the increasing match that will be required over the next 3 years.

DIVERSE NON-FEDERAL SUPPORT

The MRC is designed to attract diverse sources of non-federal cash support. To date, 20 private foundations, 10 corporations, and over 20 individuals, have contributed. This is in addition to funding from the state legislature. Systems are in place to expand funding sources and to increase amounts contributed. In addition to cash raised from these sources, MRC service sites contribute a significant in-kind match, including the time of Internal Coaches --estimated at \$3,000 per member.

BUDGET ADEQUACY

MRC's total annual budget is \$6,163,908. This includes a federal share of \$3,575,000 and a grantee share of \$2,588,907.

Narratives

The budget provides adequate support, ensuring the right mix of senior leadership combined with direct service staff to ensure effective program implementation. It also includes carefully crafted estimates of the amount of literacy coaching, training and evaluation that is required to fully implement the MRC model to achieve the desired outcomes for children.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

F. Evaluation Plan

ENHANCED EVALUATION

MRC has made ongoing program assessment and evaluation a cornerstone from the start. Well-vetted tools and systems generate measurable results, track progress, and identify areas for improvement. To ensure objectivity, an external evaluation is conducted every 3rd year with the next external evaluation scheduled for the 09-10 program year.

With 6 years of program implementation experience to draw upon, this fall, the MRC again convened top literacy researchers and program experts to review the evaluation design from the micro level of site implementation, to the macro level of statewide data analysis and reporting. Input from this review validated our existing approach to evaluating student progress and enhanced the design to more effectively measure impact on teacher quality and systems change. This enhanced evaluation design addresses the following key areas:

*The MRC's contribution to the literacy proficiency of the children they serve as measured by 1) the kindergarten readiness of pre-K students, 2) the amount of literacy growth vs. normal, expected growth, and 3) performance on the state 3rd-grade reading test.

*The MRC's impact on the quality of teaching in the state as measured by whether 1) MRC members become licensed classroom teachers post-service, 2) internal coaches improve their intervention skills and techniques as a result of exposure to MRC strategies, 3) Head Start and K-3 classroom teachers at

Narratives

MRC sites strengthen their use of data, differentiated literacy instruction, etc., and 4) principals and/or superintendents report improvement in the quality of teaching as a result of the presence of MRC.

*The degree to which the MRC effectively and consistently implements its key program components, such as the identification of which children receive services, the delivery of training and coaching to the MRC members, and, the degree to which sites adopt a data based problem solving model of literacy instruction for all their students.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

Clarification Response 2011, Part 2

BUDGET Clarification Response 2011, Part 2

Budget Clarification Item

Section 1I: Other

*Please explain how in-kind occupancy cost for classroom tutoring space is calculated.

The in-kind occupancy cost for each site is calculated based on a standard school district formula. Each school district determines their standard occupancy formula and sites submit monthly reports based on their district's formula. The standard rate includes space, computer use, technology, copies, and supplies. In order to include the in-kind occupancy for all 236 sites in this line item, we averaged their standard rates.

FY2011 Clarification Response

Narratives

Start Date and Member Enrollment Period: The start date for the grant is August 1, 2011. The member enrollment period also begins on August 1, 2011.

BUDGET Clarification Items:

*Section 1A: Personnel

In the clarification summary, please provide a breakdown of FTE's for each staff member allocated to the MRC and MRC-metro grants to ensure that no individual's time is allocated more than 100% across both budgets.

Program Directors

1 FTE Program Director- 54% Metro, 46% Greater MN

1 FTE Deputy Director- 25% Metro, 15% Greater MN, 60% Math Corps

Program Managers

1 FTE Metro Region- 100% Metro

1 FTE Central Region- 100% Greater MN

1 FTE Central Region- 10% Greater MN, 90% Math Corps

1 FTE Northwest Region- 100% Greater MN

1 FTE Northcentral Region- 100% Greater MN

1 FTE Southwest Region- 100% Greater MN

Program Coordinators

1 FTE Metro Region- 100% Metro

1 FTE Metro Region- 100% Metro

Narratives

1 FTE Metro Region- 100% Metro

1 FTE Metro Region- 100% Metro

1 FTE Metro Region- 100% Metro

1 FTE Metro Region- 75% Metro, 25% Math Corps

Member Support/Outreach

1 FTE Prgm Asst (Central Region)- 75% Greater MN, 25% Math Corps

1 FTE Member Specialist- 49% Metro, 41% Greater MN, 10% Math Corps

1 FTE Recruitment and Outreach- 49% Metro, 41% Greater MN, 10% Math Corps

Administrative Staff

1 FTE Operations Manager- 47% Metro, 28% Greater MN, 25% Admin

1 FTE Finance Director- 100% Admin

1 FTE Accountant- 100% Admin

1 FTE Executive Director- 100% Admin

.5 FTE HR Director- 100% Admin

* Section 1C: Travel-Clarify who will be attending the statewide institute. New and returning members, internal coaches, staff and master coaches.

Why are 409 rooms needed for 317 members?-Revised in budget narrative

*Sect. 1E: Supplies-Member service gear is budgeted for 349 members but only 317 slots are requested.

Please revise

-Revised in budget narrative

Itemize costs for member file supplies.

Narratives

- retitled member training supplies & revised in budget narrative

Itemize costs for each line item over \$1,000 and provide calculations.

-Revised in budget narrative

Explain ELLCO and Coach bags line item.

-Revised in budget narrative

*Section 1G: Training -Please itemize costs for statewide institute and mid-year conference.

-Revised in budget narrative

For member literacy trainings and supplemental trainings, please specify the number of trainers and the number of days.

-Revised in budget narrative

Member manuals are budgeted for 347 members but only 317 slots are requested. Please revise

-Revised in budget narrative

The supplemental trainings provide professional development in the areas of cultural competency, behavior management, civic engagement and Life After AmeriCorps. These topics are not the direct literacy interventions but are needed to conduct successful tutoring session and a successful completion of the member's year of service.

*Section 1I: Other- Criminal history checks are budgeted for 347 members but only 317 slots are requested. Please revise- Revised in budget narrative

Please provide a breakdown of in-kind occupancy and supply costs.

-Revised in budget narrative

*Section IIB: Member Support Costs- Payroll fees are not allowable under this section. Move to 1I

Narratives

Other.

-Move to 11 completed

PROGRAMMATIC Clarification Items:

Minnesota Reading Corps is working with the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to conduct the FBI fingerprint background check and a state registry check for all staff and AmeriCorps members. The program will conduct the NSOPR for all staff and AmeriCorps members.

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURE CLARIFICATION:

*K-3 Literacy Tutoring-This measure duplicates national measure ED5; however, the targets for this measure are higher than those for the national measure. Please remove this measure. Adjust targets for the national measure or explain why the lower targets are more realistic.

-Applicant is not able to see the duplicate measure. A help request has been submitted to e-grants so that this duplicate measure can be removed. It is our intent to use the national performance measures.

*National Measure ED5- Please explain why fewer than half of students who start the program are expected to complete it.

Reading Corps enrolls elementary-aged students on a rolling basis. As students meet their targets and successfully exit from the program, new students are brought into the program. Therefore, not all students are ready to exit at the end of the program year. In addition, mobility rates and referral to other services impacts the number of students who successfully exit the program.

Narratives

*National Measure ED24- Explain why only 1391 of 2318 students starting the program are expected to complete it.

In the Pre-K program, there needs to be both a fall and spring assessment score in order to measure successful completion of the program. Mobility and absences greatly impacts this number. In addition, the assessment window is only two weeks. If a student is absent and unable to take the assessment the student is not counted as a successful exit from the program even though they may have been served nearly the entire year.

*Pre-K Literacy Tutoring- This measure duplicates national measure ED24; however, the targets for this measure are higher than those for the national measure. Please remove this measure. Adjust targets for the national measure or explain why the lower targets are more realistic.

Applicant is not able to see the duplicate measure. A help request has been submitted to e-grants so that this duplicate measure can be removed. It is our intent to use the national performance measures.

FY 10 CLARIFICATION RESPONSE, Part 2

1. Please clarify that the proposed instrument for measuring academic performance will meet the criteria for the National Performance Measurement Pilot: The instrument has been validated externally on a randomly-selected population of students. If the proposed instrument is a state standardized test, please explain how the program will demonstrate that it has made an impact in addition to gains that could be attributed to classroom instruction.

AIMSweb has been recognized by the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI) by

Narratives

receiving the highest possible rating for predicative validity and reliability. This independent rating is evidence that AIMSweb assessments provide effective, valid and reliable assessments in early literacy and reading. NCRTI's technical review committee evaluated ten progress monitoring tools for grades kindergarten through eight as a part of the organization's review of progress monitoring tools. The review process included three technical review committees of national experts that evaluated the AIMSweb product against evidence standards.

2. ED2 is intended to be an intermediate outcome measure. ED5 is intended to be an end outcome measure. Please realign the measure or clarify why this would not be appropriate.

We received the following instructions from our state commission: To align the measure, applicants should enter ED1 as an output, then ED2 as an output, and finally ED5 as an intermediate outcome.

FY10 CLARIFICATION RESPONSE

Legal Applicant: 10AC109480 Minnesota Literacy Council

Program start and end dates: 08/01/10-7/31/11

FY10 PROGRAMMATIC CLARIFICATION RESPONSE

1. Provide detail on Ed Award Only member activities to include what type of slot the members are filling and the value-added of these members in light of their existing status as head start teachers.

There are 42 full-time Ed Award only slots and 2 part-time Ed Award only slots.

Narratives

The Ed Award only members are responsible for implementing a three-tiered intervention model in their classrooms. This model of instruction is in its infancy stage in the early childhood field, but has proven to be a more effective model of instruction. It requires teachers to change the way they are accustomed to doing lesson plans because the needs of all children are targeted. Lessons are created for large group, small group, or individual tutoring. Classrooms with Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) use monthly progress monitoring assessments to determine how children are progressing in the literacy skills areas. The teacher is trained by MRC to lead the classroom team in using assessment data to determine which children need additional learning activities. This type of differentiated instruction is different from what is occurring in the classrooms without Ed-Award only members and MRC services.

2. Provide information on the Beale codes for the sites where the program will operate to determine rural classification in accordance with the Serve America Act.

The Beale codes for the 240 sites are as follow: 17 sites have a Beale code 9, 7 sites code 8, 34 sites code 7, 49 sites code 6, 14 sites code 5, 12 sites code 4, 51 sites code 3, 22 sites code 2, and 34 sites have a code of 1.

3. Please provide detail on the AmeriCorps VISTA and VISTA Summer Reads program collaborations and how the program ensures non-duplication.

The National Service Program Director is responsible for oversight and strategic direction for all three of the Minnesota Literacy Council's AmeriCorps programs. This allows the organization to strategically place resources across the state. Because MRC is targeting age three-grade three literacy interventions, the AmeriCorps*VISTA program has shifted its focus to target adolescent literacy programs serving students grades 4-12. The VISTA Summer Reads programming is placed in greater Minnesota sites that

Narratives

do not have MRC services to ensure non-duplication of services.

The national service programs meet once a month to discuss program goals, share best practices, and discuss outreach strategies for the upcoming program year. This allows us to determine which areas of the state need AmeriCorps services and which program is the best fit for the sites.

4. Please address all of the Serve America Act requirements of tutoring programs.

Members have a high school diploma-The online application used by Minnesota Reading Corps does not allow anyone without a high school diploma to submit an application. Members must sign an agreement stating that they have earned a high school diploma.

Member Tutor Training that is high quality and research based- The pre-service training provides all members a 3-day intensive training experience to prepare for literacy service activities. MRC Master Coaches, recognized as some of MN's leading literacy experts (with graduate and/or PhD degrees in literacy-related fields) are the primary instructors and also provide the majority of the on-going training.

Consistent with the instructional program of the local agency and with state academic content standards- the curriculum used by MRC is shared with all site applicants through webinars and/or written materials prior to a site being accepted into the program. This allows sites to determine if the MRC program is aligned to the direct instruction occurring in the classroom. In the application, sites describe how MRC aligns with current programming in the school.

The MRC model is consistent with the direction of the Minnesota Department of Education's

Narratives

implementation of the Response to Intervention (RtI) model. The MRC model is also consistent with the Department of Education's expectation of proficiency in reading on the 3rd grade Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment II.

Includes appropriate member supervision by individuals with expertise in tutoring- Internal coaches also participate in the institute to prepare for their supervisory role. In addition to joint training session with members, Internal Coaches learn how to conduct fidelity check to assure member assessment and instruction is done correctly.

Provides specialized pre-service and in-service training consistent with the activities the member will perform- In addition to the pre-service institute describe above. Members attend training monthly to acquire new information, reinforce skills and to connect and learn from each other. Pre-K trainings include: administering child literacy assessments; using data for instruction and forming small groups. K-3 trainings include: AIMSweb (on-line data management system), additional intervention strategies such as Great Leaps, and how to work with challenging behaviors.

5. Provide detail on the five service events as part of the ethic of service program, what the events involve, how they relate to the program, and how members will be supporting these events.

Detail on the ethic of service program:

The ethic of service program engages members in exploring the value of civic responsibility. Minnesota Reading Corps provides training and reflective space for members to consider what is most important to them as a citizen and how they want to make an impact in their community, and then provide the support for members to start getting involved. The goal is that members are engaged in their community in a way that is meaningful to them, which will ultimately be sustainable beyond their year of service.

Narratives

This goal is accomplished through 1) training, 2) doing, and 3) reflecting.

What the events involve:

Members are required to complete five civic activities throughout the year, preferably related to education and / or literacy. The activities fall into one of three categories: 1) volunteer service, 2) grassroots action, or 3) community event. The paragraphs below provide examples of activities that were completed by 2009-10 members for each category.

1) Volunteer Service

"I volunteered for the annual Friends of the Library Book Sale, which raised money to support our local library. I volunteered with a woman who spent 8 years volunteering as a Reading Buddy at one of our local schools. She provided very useful information that I can use as I am starting similar volunteer programs at my schools."

2) Grassroots Action

"I participated in the United Way's "Success by 6" workgroup committee meeting for the Big Red Bookshelf Project, which provides local families (especially low-income, at-risk populations) free access to quality children's books. We discussed an action plan for building and maintaining the program throughout the next 6 months. I will be working to develop the relationship between the program and the Reading Corps school sites I serve."

3) Community Event

"I attended my first official School Board Meeting for Faribault Public Schools. The board focused on several topics but mainly on failing Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Scores for the district. It was very interesting to see how each of the elementary schools placed and where they are at with No Child Left

Narratives

Behind. It sounds like the teachers in the district, as well as myself, have a lot of work to do and a busy school year ahead of us.

How they relate to the program

As a representative of a literacy program, members are encouraged to get involved in projects / events / activities relating to education and / or literacy.

How members will be supporting these events

Members support these events or activities in a variety of ways, depending on the scope of the project / event / activity. Members may initiate and plan their own service project, or may get involved in an existing project. The examples listed above provide an accurate representation of how members support these events.

6. Explain the organization self-assessment and continuous improvement beyond staff performance reviews.

In addition to the staff performance review process, the Minnesota Literacy Council has a yearly agency work plan which is derived from the strategic plan. The work plan is reviewed by the senior leadership team on a monthly basis to monitor progress towards annual goals and determine if course correction is needed.

The agency also tracks progress on a dashboard that captures key performance indicators for all programs. The dashboard reports are presented to the Board of Directors. In the fiscal year 2010-2011 the agency is planning a comprehensive agency-wide organizational assessment.

Narratives

7. When will the external evaluation be complete and forwarded to the Corporation for National and Community Service?

A contract has been established with Wilder Research. The scheduled completion date of the external evaluation is Dec. 15, 2010. The final report will be forwarded to CNCS immediately upon its submission.

FY10 BUDGET CLARIFICATION RESPONSE

1. Please explain the duties of the administrative assistants in support of this grant. Please verify that the fringe benefits calculations are for the MRP staff only and that site supervisors and internal coach fringe is excluded from calculation.

Administrative assistant duties: collect, verify and file all required member documents; manage member health insurance enrollments; coordinate all logistics for all trainings; review member timesheets; verify in-kind reporting from sites; etc. Site supervisors and internal coaches enter their in-kind hours into the OnCorps system. This system asks for a "fully loaded rate" with which to value the in-kind. So since we do not have a salary/fringe break-out for these in-kind amounts, the full amount is entered in the salary section.

2. Please include more detail in your cost calculations for staff and member travel to include number of nights and days for food, hotel costs, etc. Updated in budget narrative.

3. Please explain AmeriCorps Week travel costs including which members will travel and the purpose of the travel.

This is for 60 members in greater MN to travel to the metro area for AmeriCorps Week activities. It assumes 20 hotel rooms will be needed for members traveling more than 2.5 hours each way.

Narratives

4. Please verify that the service gear will include the AmeriCorps logo or that it will be purchased with non-CNCS funds only.

All service gear will include the AmeriCorps logo.

5. Please explain the role of temporary staff listed in F. Contractual and Consultant Services

There is quite a bit of short-term work involved with starting and exiting members. The short-term nature of the work does not warrant hiring year-long staff. We will use a temp service for these short-term staffing needs.

6. Please justify the food costs for staff training.

Since several of the staff live in greater MN, it is more economical to bring them in for an entire day of staff training. Since the training lasts the entire day, food is provided at a cost of \$20/person/day.

7. Please move staff and member training supply costs to the supply category. Done

8. Please justify the food costs for member training. If food is travel-related, move costs to the travel section.

To save costs on mileage and logistics, we provide full-day and half-day trainings instead of several shorter trainings. Due to the length of these trainings, food is provided at a rate of \$20/person for a full-day training and \$10/person for a half-day training.

9. Please move member training travel costs to the travel section. Done

Narratives

10. Please explain volunteer coordinator outreach material costs in the member training section.

Each of the 12 coordinators is given a packet of outreach materials containing business cards, flyers and postcards (\$62.50/ea) that they use for recruiting volunteers.

11. Please move volunteer supplies to the supplies category. Done

12. Please itemize master coaching costs separately. Include information on how many coaches there are and their daily rate.

The number of coaching hours is calculated through the use of a formula that considers how many years the site has had a member, if the master coach or the internal coach is new this year, and how many members the coach is responsible for. Each coach is assigned a number of hours based on this formula. We're assuming approximately 40 coaches, each paid at a rate of \$61.50/hr or \$492/day.

13. Please move training for master coaches to the staff training section. Done.

14. Please move software costs to section. Done.

15. Please move supervisor manuals to the staff training section. Done

16. Please verify that costs do not include the daily/weekly gathering of data to assess progress toward meeting performance measures. They do not.

17. Please add costs for staff criminal history checks or provide an explanation for why they are not included on the budget.

These are included in our Indirect Cost rate.

Narratives

18. Please provide a cost basis/allocation plan for "occupancy/supplies" and "occupancy."

Excerpt from the Cost Policy Statement:

Supplies and Material

To the maximum extent possible, office supplies and materials are charged directly to the program which uses the supplies and materials. Joint costs that are shared between programs are pooled together and allocated back to programs based on the number of hours charged to a particular program or indirect activity on the timesheets.

Occupancy Expenses (Rent, Utilities, Phone)

The lease for MLC's main office space provides for equal monthly payments during the term of the lease.

Utility charges are paid monthly. Phone expense is a flat rate with no additional charges for long distance.

MLC has determined that the most equitable and cost effective way to allocate these costs is based on the number of hours main office staff charged to direct programs and indirect activities on timesheets.

Ex. Monthly rent is \$10,000

Federal programs	Non-Federal Programs	Indirect
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# hours reported	500	750	250
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% of total	33%	50%	17%
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Total Rent	\$3,300	\$5,000	\$1,700
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19. Please provide a more detailed cost calculation for recruitment and postage/printing costs.

Narratives

Changes made in budget narrative

20. Please provide an explanation for Regional Sites costs.

There are a total of six regional sites. Four of these are staffed by employees and two are operated by sub-recipient organizations. The budgets for these two sites are included in Other Program Operating Costs since those costs are not tracked by object code in our accounting system.

21. Sub-recipients are not described in the application narrative. Please explain. The narrative described the six regions but did not detail that two were sub-recipients.

22. Please include health care costs for 100% of full-time members even if some members historically waive the benefits. Corrected in budget narrative

23. Please include in the Source of Funds section all sources of match to support grantee share costs on the budget. Corrected in budget narrative.

Performance Measurement Clarification

Items have been completed. The MSY chart reflects only the AmeriCorps members who will be tutoring children in grades K-3. The remaining MSY's will be doing pre-k literacy tutoring which is not a part of the national performance measure pilot.

Continuation Changes

YEAR 2 CONTINUATION CHANGES

JUSTIFICATION FOR AN INCREASE IN COST PER MSY

Narratives

The increased cost per MSY is a result of the \$300 increase to the minimum living allowance.

RETENTION

We currently have a 96% retention rate in this grant. We have isolated the primary reasons that members exit the program early and are implementing strategies to circumvent these early exits. One of these reasons is that members were unable to complete all of the program requirements (primarily hours) by their end date. One of the strategies we are implementing to address this issue is more closely monitoring member's progress each month. Each month a report is produced that groups members into categories (on target, close to target, and far from target) based on their ability to successfully complete their service hours by their end date. Program staff can then focus their energy into providing the most intense support to members who fall into the "far from target" category. Another reason members were exiting early was due to disciplinary action. One of the strategies being implemented to address this issue is strengthening the relationship and communication between the master coaches (who is a literacy expert that we contract with to regularly visit the site) and program staff to better deal with any issues that arise at the site. We devoted time during our annual All-Staff Meeting in the spring to build these relationships and discuss how communication could be strengthened to better support our sites and members. Master coaches and program staff are working more closely together this year to better support our sites and members.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The targets for the performance measures were adjusted to reflect a change made to the exit criteria for students (effective during 2010-11 program year). As a result of the change in exit criteria, our tutors will provide services to fewer students for a longer period of time.

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"/> |

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 269

Service Categories

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| School Readiness/Head Start/Early Childhood Education | Primary <input type="checkbox"/> | Secondary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Tutoring and Child (Elementary) Literacy | Primary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> |

K-3 Literacy Tutoring

Service Category: Tutoring and Child (Elementary) Literacy

Measure Category: Participant Development

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Members provide a minimum of 60 minutes per week of individualized research-based literacy interventions for each of the children in the program. Members collect weekly fluency measures on the children being tutored. Children "graduate" from the program on a rolling basis when they demonstrate - through the weekly progress monitoring assessments - that they have acquired the literacy skills required to 'catch-up' with their grade-level peers.

Results

Result: Output

Number of students who will start in an AmeriCorps education program.

Indicator: student participants

Target: The number of students who are served by the Minnesota Reading Corps program.

Target Value: 5500

Instruments: AIMsWeb database and OnCorps database tutor logs

PM Statement: 5,500 students will start in an AmeriCorps education program.

Prev. Yrs. Data During the 2008-09 program year, 2,731 students were served in the Minnesota Reading Corps

Result: Output

program.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Number of students who complete participation in an AmeriCorps education program.

Indicator: student participants

Target: Children complete participation from the MRC program when they demonstrate that they have acquired the literacy skills required to catch-up with their grade-level peers.

Target Value: 2750

Instruments: AIMsWeb database and OnCorps database tutor logs

PM Statement: 2,750 students will complete participation in an AmeriCorps education program.

Prev. Yrs. Data During the 2008-09 program year, 1,065 successfully exited from the Minnesota Reading Corps program.

Result: End Outcome

Number of students with improved academic performance

Indicator: improved reading scores

Target: Students will show growth rates that exceed a rate of one year's growth in one year's time.

Target Value: 4125

Instruments: AIMsWeb database and OnCorps database tutor logs

PM Statement: 4,125 students will show improved academic performance.

Prev. Yrs. Data During the 2008-09 program year, 2,051 or 75% of students showed improved academic performance.

Pre-K Literacy Tutoring

Service Category: School Readiness/Head Start/Early Childhood Education

Measure Category: Participant Development

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

AmeriCorps members will work daily in Head Start and pre-school classrooms to build children's literacy skills. Members will use the Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) along with assessments of letter names and letter sounds. These assessments will measure student knowledge in five key literacy areas to monitor students' progress and individualize student instruction.

Results

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Number of students who complete participation in an AmeriCorps education program.

Indicator: student participants

Target: Number of students who have a fall and spring assessment score indicating full participation in the Minnesota Reading Corps program.

2125

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Target Value:

Instruments: OnCorps database, Dabble database, and Individual Growth and Development Indicator assessment tool

PM Statement: 2,125 students will complete participation in an AmeriCorps education program.

Prev. Yrs. Data During the 2008-09 program year, 950 children completed a full year of participation in the Minnesota Reading Corps.

Result: End Outcome

Number of students with improved academic performance

Indicator: student participants

Target: Number of Pre-K children who make growth on 3 out of 5 Individual Growth and Development

Indicators.

Target Value: 2125

Instruments: OnCorps database, Dabble database, and Individual Growth and Development Indicator assessment tool

PM Statement: 2,125 of the Pre-K children served will show improved academic performance.

Prev. Yrs. Data During the 2008-09 program year, 86% of pre-K children served in MRC showed growth on 3 out of 5 Individual Growth and Development Indicators.

Result: Output

Number of students who start in an AmeriCorps education program

Indicator: student participants

Target: The number of children in pre-school classrooms receiving literacy tutoring either in one-to-one, small group, or large group settings.

Target Value: 2500

Instruments: OnCorps database and Dabble database.

PM Statement: 2,500 children will start in an AmeriCorps education program.

Prev. Yrs. Data During the 2008-09 program year, 1,197 children started the Minnesota Reading Corps program.

National Performance Measures

Priority Area: Education

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

Service Category: Tutoring and Child (Elementary) Literacy

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Members provide a minimum of 60 minutes per week of individualized research-based literacy interventions for each of the children in the program. Members collect weekly fluency measures on the children being tutored. Children "graduate" from the program on a rolling basis when they demonstrate - through the weekly progress monitoring assessments - that they have acquired the literacy skills required to 'catch-up' with their grade-level peers.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

The number of students with improved academic performance.

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

Target : Students will show growth rates that exceed a rate of year's growth in one year's time.

Target Value: 2988

Instruments: AIMSweb database and OnCorps database

PM Statement: 2988 students will have improved academic process by having growth rates that exceed a rate of year's growth in one year's time.

Result: Output

Result.

4,725 K-3 students will receive a minimum of 60 minutes weekly of individualized research-based literacy interventions.

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

Target : The number of students who will start the AmeriCorps education program.

Target Value: 4725

Instruments: AIMSweb database and OnCorps database tutor logs.

PM Statement: 4,725 students will start in an AmeriCorps education program.

Result: Output

Result.

The number of students who complete the AmeriCorps education program.

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

Target : Students complete participation from the MRC program when they demonstrate that they have scored 3-5 data points above their aim line on the AIMSweb weekly progress monitoring assessments and have reached the next benchmark target.

Target Value: 2126

Instruments: AIMSweb database and OnCorps database tutor logs

PM Statement: 2,126 students will complete participation in an AmeriCorps education program.

National Performance Measures

Priority Area: Education

Performance Measure Title: PreK Literacy

Service Category: School Readiness/Head Start/Early Childhood Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

AmeriCorps members will serve daily in Head Start and pre-school classrooms to build children's literacy skills.

Members will use the Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) along with assessments of letter names and letter sounds. These assessments will measure student knowledge in five key literacy areas to monitor students' progress and readiness for kindergarten.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

The number of children who demonstrate gains in school readiness in terms of literacy skills.

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

Target : 1182 children demonstrate gains in school readiness in terms of literacy skills.

Target Value: 1182

Instruments: Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs), AIMSweb Letter Sounds and Letter Names

PM Statement: 1182 Pre-K children will make growth (on 2 out of 3 measures for 3-year-olds and 3 out of 5 measures for 4-year-olds) on the Individual Growth and Development Indicators.

Result: Output

Result.

The number of children who start in an AmeriCorps early childhood education program

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

Target : 2,318 PreK students will start in an AmeriCorps early childhood education program.

Target Value: 2318

Instruments: OnCorps (online database) Tutors Logs

PM Statement: 2,318 students will start in an AmeriCorps early childhood education program.

Result: Output

Result.

The number of children who complete participation in an AmeriCorps early childhood education program.

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

Target : 1,391 children will complete participation in an AmeriCorps early childhood education program.

Target Value: 1391

Instruments: OnCorps (online database) Tutor Logs

PM Statement: 1,391 students have a fall and spring assessment score (on three measures for 3-year-olds and five measures for 4-year-olds) indicating full participation in the AmeriCorps early childhood education program.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Already on File at CNCS

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable