

## PART I - FACE SHEET

| <b>APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE</b>   |   | 1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION:<br>Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
|---|---|--|--------------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|-------------------|---------|----------|---------------|--|--|
| Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to conform to the Corporation's eGrants System)   |   |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| 2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):  | 3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:<br><br>05-JAN-11   | STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:<br><br>11AC124719  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| 2b. APPLICATION ID:<br><br>11ES124814   | 4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:   | FEDERAL IDENTIFIER:<br><br>10ESHMA0010001  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| <b>5. APPLICATION INFORMATION</b>   |   |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| LEGAL NAME: South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc.<br><br>DUNS NUMBER: 150685964   | NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes):<br><br>NAME: Kathleen Marx<br><br>TELEPHONE NUMBER: (508) 676-5022 2019<br><br>FAX NUMBER:<br><br>INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: kmarx@sccls.org   |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county):<br>22 Bedford St.<br>P.O. Box 2507<br>Fall River MA 02722 - 2507<br>County:  |   |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| 6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):<br><br>043330208   | 7. TYPE OF APPLICANT:<br>7a. Non-Profit<br><br>7b.  |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| 8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box).<br><br><input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT<br>If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/><br><br>A. AUGMENTATION        B. BUDGET REVISION<br><br>C. NO COST EXTENSION    D. OTHER (specify below):   | 9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY:<br><b>Corporation for National and Community Service</b>   |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| 10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER:94.006<br>10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps Fixed Amount Grant (State)  | 11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT:<br>Massachusetts Legal Assistance for Self-Sufficiency Program  |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| 12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc):<br><br>The Massachusetts Legal Assistance for Self-Sufficiency AmeriCorps Program is a collaboration of legal services organizations representing low-income clients in ever county in the state out of the South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc. administr   | 11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):   |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| 13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 09/01/11      END DATE: 07/31/12  | 14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="MA 004"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="MA 004"/>  |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| 15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: <input type="text" value="2"/>   | 16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?<br><br><input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON:<br><br>DATE:<br><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372 |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; font-size: small;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">a. FEDERAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 364,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. APPLICANT</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. STATE</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d. LOCAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e. OTHER</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f. PROGRAM INCOME</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g. TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 364,000.00</td> </tr> </table> | a. FEDERAL  | \$ 364,000.00  | b. APPLICANT | \$ 0.00 | c. STATE | \$ 0.00 | d. LOCAL | \$ 0.00 | e. OTHER | \$ 0.00 | f. PROGRAM INCOME | \$ 0.00 | g. TOTAL | \$ 364,000.00 | 17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT?<br><input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO |  |
| a. FEDERAL  | \$ 364,000.00   |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| b. APPLICANT  | \$ 0.00   |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| c. STATE  | \$ 0.00   |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| d. LOCAL  | \$ 0.00   |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| e. OTHER  | \$ 0.00   |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| f. PROGRAM INCOME   | \$ 0.00   |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| g. TOTAL  | \$ 364,000.00   |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| 18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.   |   |  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:<br><br>Kathleen Marx  | b. TITLE:<br><br>Program Director   | c. TELEPHONE NUMBER:<br><br>(508) 676-5022 2019  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |
| d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:  |   | e. DATE SIGNED:<br><br>01/05/11  |              |         |          |         |          |         |          |         |                   |         |          |               |  |  |

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### Executive Summary

Massachusetts Legal Assistance for Self-Sufficiency Program places 30 college and law school graduates with an interest in public service law in participating legal services organizations in high need areas throughout the State. Members serve under professional supervision providing legal assistance to low-income people in civil (non-criminal) matters. The program provides critical services to a low-income population while providing members the opportunity to change lives using the law.

### Rationale and Approach

#### A. RATIONALE AND APPROACH

This proposal seeks funding for the MLASSP for years 2010 -- 2013 to recruit, train, and place 28 full-time AmeriCorps members each year with an interest in poverty law and public service in participating partner legal aid organizations throughout Massachusetts. AmeriCorps members will serve under professional legal supervision in providing legal assistance to low-income people in civil (non-criminal) matters in the following 17 Massachusetts partner legal services organizations:

South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc. (Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes, Nantucket, Plymouth Counties);  
New Center for Legal Advocacy, Inc. (Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes, Nantucket, Plymouth Counties);  
Greater Boston Legal Services (Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk Counties); Legal Advocacy Resource Center, Inc. (Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk Counties); Merrimack Valley-North Shore Legal Services, Inc. (Essex, Middlesex Counties); Neighborhood Legal Services, Inc. (Essex, Middlesex Counties); International Institute of Lowell (Essex, Middlesex, Suffolk Counties); International Institute of Boston (Essex, Middlesex, Suffolk Counties); Casa Myrna Vazquez, Inc. (Middlesex County); MetroWest Legal Services (Middlesex, Norfolk Counties); Massachusetts Justice Project (Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden, Worcester Counties); Western Massachusetts Legal Services, Inc. (Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden Counties); Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee (all Massachusetts counties); Center for Law and Education (all Massachusetts counties); Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Inc. (all Massachusetts Counties); Legal Assistance Corporation of Central

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Massachusetts (Worcester County); and Massachusetts Fair Housing Commission (Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden Counties).

The 28 recent college and/or law school graduates will serve with partner legal services organizations across the state, most receiving their principal funding from either the federal Legal Services Corporation or the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (Please see the fiscal section of this proposal for clarification.) The majority of these legal services firms are well-established non-profit organizations governed by volunteer boards of directors with majority lawyer representation and 25 -- 33% stakeholder client representation.

The addition of AmeriCorps members to these legal services offices will accomplish several important objectives: increase the number of low-income people who have access to justice in critical matters, thus stabilizing their families and households; create bridges to diverse communities through outreach; enhance the volunteer activities taking place at these legal services organizations; provide an extraordinary training and career exploration opportunity for recent college or law school graduates; and lay the groundwork for a lifetime of commitment to volunteerism and social justice in participating members.

Members will be exposed to a wide range of legal advocacy activities beginning with initial client contact and eligibility determinations, to case development, negotiation, hearing and appeal. Activities vary by site and include assisting professional staff and local community organizations in providing community outreach and education, and direct representation for qualified low-income citizens. Each member will take on a volunteer project intended to increase their partner site outreach by addressing an identified community need selected by the member with their supervisor and recruiting community volunteers to help address this issue. Performance measures will be reported on a weekly timesheet completed by members and submitted electronically for supervisor approval and program director oversight.

The populations that Massachusetts legal services organizations serve (as do legal services organizations nationally) include low-income wage earners, members (especially children) of single parent families,

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the elderly, the disabled, immigrants and veterans. Legal services organizations prioritize their services based on the needs of their clients which generally fall into one of these categories: housing assistance including landlord/tenant issues and more recently foreclosure defense; government benefit programs (unemployment insurance, social security, Medicare, Medicaid, EAFDC, TANF/Food Stamps, etc.); domestic relations/domestic violence; family law including child custody and child support; legal problems of elders; immigration and education issues; discrimination in education, employment, or housing; and consumer protection.

Regardless of the region (rural or urban) of the state that low-income people inhabit, their legal issues are very similar. The differences relate more to cultural diversity and language barriers than to the specific legal problems they face. The lack of access to competent legal assistance in civil cases can seriously undermine a family's ability to achieve stability and self-sufficiency.

### COMPELLING COMMUNITY NEEDS

The legal problems facing low-income people have been exacerbated in the current recessionary economy with on-going record foreclosures causing both homeowners and renters to lose their homes. An ever-increasing number of middle-class families and individuals are experiencing many of the same problems, are in need of food stamps, housing and health care, and cannot afford legal assistance from the private sector. This puts additional pressure on legal services, which is experiencing its own major cuts in funding resulting in layoffs and reduced capacity to provide services.

In 2007, The Legal Aid Coalition of Southeastern Massachusetts (LACSM), which includes the two principal legal aid providers of civil (non-criminal) legal assistance in this region, South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc. (SCCLS) and The New Center For Legal Advocacy (NCLA), retained the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Center for Policy Analysis to conduct an update of its 2003 Legal Needs Assessment Survey as a component of an in-depth strategic planning process. The goal of the survey was to identify the most critical legal needs of low-income residents in Barnstable, Bristol,

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Dukes, Nantucket, and Plymouth Counties, as well as the towns of Avon and Stoughton in Norfolk County. The results indicate that the most important legal needs among respondents are housing and health care, with employment and education among the top five issues.

The Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC), the largest source for civil legal aid in the Commonwealth, found a sharp increase in housing issues as a result of foreclosures as reported in the "Trends and Challenges" in their FY2009 funding applications. As the primary financial supporter of local civil legal aid programs around the state, MLAC has cut its funding for services by 69 percent over the past two years as a result of \$1.5 million in state budget cuts, while its revenue from lawyers' interest-generating accounts shrunk more than \$12 million because of low interest rates in a very slow real estate and financial market. These cuts come at a time when requests for help with civil legal problems surged by as much as 25 to 40 percent at service agencies across the state, according to a Boston Globe editorial dated Nov. 3, 2009. Paul Willen, senior economist for the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, said foreclosure deeds will likely remain steady for the next few years as people struggle with unemployment and homes worth less than the balance on their mortgage loans.

The Legal Services Corporation's (LSC) September 2009 update of DOCUMENTING THE JUSTICE GAP IN AMERICA: THE CURRENT UNMET CIVIL LEGAL NEEDS OF LOW-INCOME AMERICANS shows a major justice gap exists in our nation, with only a fraction of the civil legal problems experienced by low-income Americans addressed with the help of a private attorney or a legal aid lawyer. Emily Savner, a Research Associate with the Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University School of Law summarized the report in Justice for Half dated 10/01/09 as follows: "New data also indicates that state courts, particularly family and housing courts, are facing increased numbers of unrepresented litigants. Additionally, the number of people in poverty has increased because of the recession and high unemployment rate. Only a fraction of low-income people with legal needs contact legal aid offices at all, and while the Legal Services Corporation reports that half of those seeking help are "served," some receive just advice, not full representation in court. When dealing with

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issues as important as child custody, the loss of one's home, or wage theft, standing alone in a courtroom, without the help of a lawyer, would be unthinkable to people of means, but low-income families are left without other options. There are ten times more private attorneys providing personal legal services to people who can afford it than there are legal aid lawyers serving the poor. And the poor suffer because of it; the report cites a growing body of research demonstrating that those without legal representation fare worse in court.

It is not just the poor who suffer. The court process is slowed and court costs multiply when litigants enter the courthouse without knowledgeable representation. Communities are drained of wealth when neighbors' homes are foreclosed. Consumers lose out when lenders are allowed to continue deceitful practices. And children suffer when family problems go unaddressed."

In addition to dealing with the legal issues stemming from economic hardship, Massachusetts legal services organizations are responding to major population changes stemming from increased diversity and related language problems. For example, SCCLS's law offices in Fall River, Brockton, New Bedford, Taunton, and Hyannis are cognizant of unserved and underserved potential clients including those in the Haitian Creole, Mayan (Guatemalan), Cambodian, Cape Verdean, Portuguese, and Spanish ethnic/language groups. The needs and various problems associated with being disadvantaged are compounded when one has a language barrier, limiting the individual's awareness of educational opportunities, better jobs, adequate housing, medical needs and individual rights. (Immigrants' Assistance Center, New Bedford, [www.immigrantsassistancecenter.com/history.aspx](http://www.immigrantsassistancecenter.com/history.aspx))

The diverse multi-lingual applicants that AmeriCorps attracts have already been of great assistance in creating a bridge to these communities, helping to translate the problems and legal needs of individuals speaking diverse languages. More bilingual volunteer assistance is needed from AmeriCorps advocates who live and serve in these ethnic communities.

### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES AND MEMBER ROLES

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"If I were asked to describe my typical day, the answer would be there is no typical day." Arason Parkman, MLASSP2009, serving at Greater Boston Legal Services

MLASSP is a pre-professional, statewide, AmeriCorps legal services advocacy program designed to assist and support the network of Massachusetts legal services organizations serving low-income populations across the state. The program is uniquely suited for those individuals who are ready to gain first-hand exposure and experience serving in a legal aid organization. The AmeriCorps members selected serve under the supervision of legal professionals (attorneys and paralegals) at one of the 17 partner legal services organizations.

As a full-time AmeriCorps program, MLASSP requires a minimum of 1700 hours per member to successfully complete the service assignment. Member service activities include assisting with client cases from intake through document preparation, research, and the hearing process; supporting direct representation; providing counsel and advice, brief service, and extended representation; and conducting research and preparing white papers to assist public officials in establishing guidelines and regulations that affect low income people. Members also assist in expanding contact with community groups by conducting outreach and community legal education, in addition to supporting volunteer efforts for their site offices.

An experienced legal professional is assigned at each site to supervise and mentor each member according to a service plan delineating the legal assistance, volunteer, and site-specific training activities in which members participate. Following the Orientation and Training Program held in early September, AmeriCorps members, with their legal supervisor at their designated partner site, create the individualized member service plan. The plan is aligned with AmeriCorps guidelines and requirements to ensure that MLASSP and AmeriCorps service requirements are met. Elements of this service plan, signed by both the member and their legal supervisor and approved by the Program Director, include: contact information for both member and partner site; an outline for how members will meet their minimum 1700 hours requirement; project description (member's day-to-day role at their service site);

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individual volunteer project; training, education & supervision plans; and the statewide project. A web-based time management tool and performance measure report developed specifically for MLASSP are used to monitor member's hours and track their progress towards MLASSP objectives.

AmeriCorps rules on prohibited service activities are covered in the member contract, then reviewed and signed at the member and supervisor orientation. Beginning with orientation, the training program includes the distinction between legal advocacy and advice versus legal information. Every effort is made to underscore for members the importance of refraining from providing legal advice and to ensure that members are acutely aware of their role as volunteer advocates. Members and supervisors are reminded of their AmeriCorps role as a volunteer advocate at training events and individually if needed. Site visits and mid- and end-of year evaluations are designed to monitor overall performance including compliance with all AmeriCorps rules and regulations.

Furthermore, members are provided with training specific to their individual service plan and focus area as recommended by their partner site. For example, a member serving in a housing unit that will be supervised/mentored by a housing attorney who will include the member in practice group meetings and recommend trainings for the member to attend, such as workshops on foreclosure defense and landlord tenant issues held by Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education, the courts, or a host of other legal aid partners and community organizations. On the other hand, a member who is on an intake line several hours a day will need training in the issues most commonly asked including housing assistance, government benefit programs (unemployment, social security, food stamps, Medicare, etc.), legal problems of elders, family law, and consumer protection, as well as interviewing techniques and related interpersonal skills.

### MEASURABLE OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Over the past five years and with considerable input from the Massachusetts Service Alliance, MLASSP developed performance measures #1 to #3 listed below with anticipated aggregate outcomes and the



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methods we will use to monitor them. The service provided by MLASSP directly correlates with several of the new national performance measures, with two of the new pilot measures (#4 and #5 below) added for the 2010-2013 funding cycle.

1. Primary Service Activity: MLASSP members will serve low-income clients with civil legal problems by providing, with legal supervision, initial interviews and screening (at least 3,000 cases), counsel and advice or brief service (at least 2,800 cases), and extended representation (at least 700 cases). Case numbers are based on the first four years of MLASSP performance reports with consideration for recent cuts in legal aid staff across the State. The impact of staff cutbacks is forcing legal aid offices to limit the hours for their intake lines. The effect on clients is doubled by further reducing the number of intakes that can be accepted due to the lack of legal staff. Although MLASSP members are able to add efficiency and effectiveness to the remaining staff, as a precautionary measure, MLASSP is reducing the number of targeted intakes and brief services to insure that our performance numbers are both realistic and attainable if this trend continues. Progress in achieving these goals will be recorded on performance measure reports, which are part of the weekly timesheet, prepared by members and approved by the site supervisors.

2. Participant Development: MLASSP members will receive a minimum of 50 hours of training designed specifically for their role as volunteer legal advocates, on volunteerism, and in the principles of AmeriCorps. Additionally, site specific training will be provided to support each member's individual service plans including professional legal workshops, technical training and familiarization with court proceeding and documents. Members will serve under the mentorship of a legal professional at their partner site who will provide guidance and oversight as needed.

3. Community Outputs: Each MLASSP member will dedicate a minimum of 60 hours to a volunteer project designed to extend the outreach of his or her placement site. Members will engage in a variety of volunteer activities including recruitment, writing policies, promoting retention, and training to motivate individuals and groups to donate their time at legal aid organizations. Each member will

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recruit at least 5 volunteers to serve a minimum of 20 hours each in support of partner site volunteer efforts, maintaining a log to record their activities in support of volunteerism and the hours contributed.

The number of hours members spend on the volunteer project, number of volunteers recruited, and hours served by recruited volunteers on the member project are recorded weekly on the timesheet and performance measure report, approved by the supervisor, and submitted to the program director for tracking and reporting.

4. Opportunity National Performance Measure 5: Number of economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, receiving housing placement services. MLASSP members serving at Legal Service Corp. funded intake centers and members serving in the housing unit of a full service agency will assist economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, in finding placement in and maintaining housing. Clients served will be tracked on Legal Files software (or similar) and reported on the performance measure report.

5. Opportunity National Performance Measure 11: Number of economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing. MLASSP members providing housing assistance (intake centers and housing units) will assist economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, in finding placement in and maintaining housing. Clients served will be tracked on Legal Files software (or similar) and reported on the performance measure report.

Each member of MLASSP 2011 will be expected to meet the following objectives (performance measures) based on MLASSPs accomplishments reported in the first four years of funding: 110 matters screened; 100 advice/brief service cases; 25 extended representation cases; attend all MLASSP training and events; undergo 90 hours of legal supervision; and engage in 60 hours of volunteer activities, including the recruitment of 5 volunteers each of whom will donate a minimum of 20 hours of service further enhancing the partner sites outreach.

It should be noted that the number of clients served in the new pilot measures may be clients that are

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typically counted in PM#1 above, but measured for specific service provided (i.e. housing assistance). In addition, some clients may be referred to online videos currently under development by MLASSP with the assistance of numerous legal service professionals, as part of a statewide project to make basic legal information available to illiterate and/or non-English speaking clients. Clients that view videos without any engagement with an individual in person, by phone, etc. will not be counted.

All outcomes will be tracked on the web-based timesheet and performance measure report developed by MLASSP to effectively collect and monitor members' hours and performance measures. The member will complete a report weekly and upon submission an email will automatically be generated informing the supervisor that a timesheet report is ready for approval. The system allows for the MLASSP program director to monitor timesheets from the time they are opened and to generate reports upon request for member record keeping and grant documentation.

### PLAN FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

The impact of this AmeriCorps program on legal services clients in Massachusetts has already proven to be significant. With limited exceptions, partner organizations remain active placement sites with many supervising attorneys participating from year to year. Despite budget cuts, partner sites continue participation in the program, many with the assistance of scholarship funds provided through American Reinvestment and Recovery Act funds (ARRA) and the Massachusetts Bar Foundation, to supplement the partner cash match. SCCLS attorneys volunteer time to plan and implement legal training with the assistance of MLASSP legal supervisors, partner sites, community organizations, and fellow AmeriCorps programs. Collaboration takes place daily with dozens of community organizations that refer clients, join in local coalitions, and ask for technical assistance.

There are a wide range of opportunities for feedback including site visits (with both supervisor and member), supervisor mid- and end-of -year program evaluations, member mid- and end-of-year placement reviews, monthly reflective narratives, monthly training evaluations, and end-of-year essays.

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Site supervisors are required to participate in an orientation held simultaneously with the member orientation. The partner site application asks for program feedback and suggestions for a statewide project focus. Additionally, the partner legal services organizations interview and select the member that they feel will be the best match for their organization and the community they serve. Not only have these partner sites remained with the program through troubling economic times, they have been quick to praise the caliber of the candidates MLASSP recruits.

SCCLS has implemented a new web-based timesheet and performance report to ease the administrative challenge resulting from the collection of timesheets and narratives by fax every week and then manually recording the members time in WBRS, recording performance data in an excel spreadsheet, and maintaining paper copies in the member files. Partner sites report that the efficiency of the new system is a huge improvement in enabling them to monitor and approve member reports. Following some initial hurdles, MLASSP now has a system in place that enables us to collect time and performance records from across the state and produce reports in a timely and efficient way.

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SCCLS and the community-based partner legal services organizations collaborating on this AmeriCorps legal project are active advocates in their communities, receiving input, feedback, and referrals from numerous community organizations, social service agencies, local bar associations, and the courts. The very nature of the services provided require community organizations work together to address the needs of the low-income population served. "Community Lawyering" is the hallmark of this collaborative effort, lessening the growing demand for legal services by teaching the community what more it can do for itself. MLASSP enables overwhelmed legal services organizations the ability to provide community outreach and education events that would not be possible without AmeriCorps support. The additional volunteers that member's recruit for their volunteer projects, further expands the partner sites capacity to provide outreach.

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MLASSP is a collaboration of 17 legal service organizations, numerous community partners, the Massachusetts Service Alliance and AmeriCorps. Additionally, the Massachusetts Bar Foundation continues to be extremely generous in their support, providing both scholarship funding to assist financial strapped legal services organizations with the partner cash match, while donating use of the Massachusetts Bar Association meeting facilities and staff participation in training events. Several partner sites provide the partner cash match through community grants, reflecting the support of these funders in ensuring that the service that AmeriCorps provides through MLASSP is sustained.

### RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS

MLASSP is an active participant in the Massachusetts Service Alliance network of national and state service programs. The program director participates in monthly meetings and conference calls, is a member of the disabilities steering committee, and regularly participates in technical assistance workshops. As a result of the learning teams coordinated by the Massachusetts Service Alliance, MLASSP is in regular communication with other AmeriCorps programs, sharing resources, recruitment, and program management information.

Most members come to MLASSP with extensive service experience and they are encouraged to share their unique skills such as teaching fellow Corps members how to hold a focus group, leading a steering committee, video taping and editing, or talking about life after AmeriCorps. Second year members take on a special role as mentors and peer leaders, assisting with orientation and providing a sense of continuity to the program. Because of the scattered nature of this program, efforts are focused on the statewide project and regional events of an ongoing nature versus a specific service activity requiring travel time and expense. Therefore, MLASSP members are encouraged to participate in Martin L. King Day and AmeriCorps Week service activities with other AmeriCorps programs located in their region of the state.

Now in its fifth year, MLASSP has begun to develop its own alumni network of former members that are

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invited to participate in training activities and volunteer projects when available. The program director is actively involved in South Coast Serves, a regional initiative with the University of Massachusetts and the Greater New Bedford United Way, to coordinate the region's non-profit organizations to maximize our impact and resources. One of the goals of this initiative is to cultivate an awareness of other AmeriCorps members/programs serving in the area and develop a cohesiveness that will help in recruiting members and fostering an AmeriCorps esprit de corps particularly for members placed at scattered sites in Southeastern Massachusetts (such as MLASSP).

### POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

The following is an excerpt from a recent article that MLASSP was invited to write for the winter edition of the The Management Information Exchange (MIE) Journal (a nationally distributed legal services publication) on how MLASSP AmeriCorps support legal services organizations across the State:

"There is no doubt that an AmeriCorps program presents a significant administrative challenge to any organization seeking such funding, but the impact of MLASSP on legal services increases each year as SCCLS and our partner sites adapt to the role of an AmeriCorps volunteer advocate in our organizations. AmeriCorps has raised SCCLS' profile, has served our mission, and brought the organization considerable good will from the communities we serve. Additionally, the AmeriCorps members bring youth, energy, and many talents to both SCCLS and legal services organizations throughout Massachusetts. AmeriCorps funding and support has made this program possible at a time when it is critically needed, and provided Massachusetts legal services organizations a core of volunteer advocates that have leveraged our staff through challenging times."

The intent is to introduce legal service organizations nationally to AmeriCorps and make them aware of how service can support their programs while helping to address national priorities. Those seeking further information are referred to the MLASSP website ([www.mlassp.org](http://www.mlassp.org)) where contact information is provided. Both AmeriCorps and the Massachusetts Service Alliance are highlighted.

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### Organizational Capability

#### D. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

##### SOUND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

SCCLS has been in existence since 1964 (previously the Southeastern Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (SMLAC)), managing a budget of approximately \$3 million from a variety of federal, state and private sources including the Federal Title-III sub-grants, the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC), the Massachusetts Bar Foundation and other sources. SCCLS operates five staffed and equipped law offices in its service area, which include one AmeriCorps member in each office. SCCLS has all the necessary systems to manage the fiscal component of this grant as evidenced by the successful completion of four years as a CNCS recipient and many years as a recipient of other funders.

SCCLS distributes partner site applications to current and prospective program organizations in mid- to late winter to allow SCCLS to begin planning and recruiting for the next program year. The application asks number of member slots requested, contact information for recruitment, ability to meet the partner cash match, and a draft of the service plan for each prospective member. All participating legal service sites are encouraged to seek local funding to assist with the match.

Partner obligations include a \$12,100 cash contribution, \$4,950 in-kind match, suitable space and equipment for the member's use, member supervision, member training to supplement MLASSP training, submission of fiscal and programmatic reports in a timely fashion, and reasonable travel costs to participate in monthly training and AmeriCorps events. Priority is given to partner sites funded through the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation or the federally funded Legal Services Corporation, that have a proven track record of meeting member performance measures, providing professional legal supervision, and positive member feedback. Current partner sites include ten programs funded through the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation and four receiving their primary funding through the Legal Services Corporation.

## Narratives

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND STAFF

SCCLS has a diverse 25 person Board of Directors, a majority of whom are attorneys and at least a quarter of whom are eligible clients drawn from all parts of the SCCLS service area. Attorney Richard McMahon, Executive Director appointed by the Board, oversees 50 SCCLS staff members and numerous pro bono attorneys, legal interns, and office volunteers, serving all of southeastern Massachusetts through our law offices in Brockton, Fall River, New Bedford, Taunton, and Hyannis, and the administrative office in Fall River.

SCCLS Fiscal Officer, Gisele Pappas (B.A. Accounting), is responsible for grant financial management. The full-time Volunteer Coordinator/AmeriCorps Program Director, Kathy Marx, is 95% AmeriCorps grant funded. The Program Director oversees the implementation of MLASSP and coordinates the member activity with the participating statewide partner organizations. Kathy is in her third year as Program Director bringing ten years of experience administering CNCS grants for school-based service-learning. The SCCLS clerical staff supports the MLASSP Program Director with recruitment, recording of timesheets, and other administrative tasks.

The following SCCLS attorneys serve as the training advisory team and, in collaboration with the Program Director and partner site legal professionals, plan and implement the MLASSP training agenda for the service year based on feedback from members and supervisors in previous years.

Deborrah M. Dorman, Esq., South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc., New Bedford, is a graduate of Harvard University and the Georgetown University Law Center. Exposed to advocacy at a young age, while working in Washington, D.C., as an intern, and then employee for the Peace Corps, Attorney Dorman continues to be involved in issues affecting equality and justice, especially involving children and their families. Deborrah has held positions in higher education and the law for the past ten years, joining South Coast Counties Legal Services in 2008.

Weayonnoh Nelson, Esq., South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc., Fall River, received her Juris



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Doctorate degree from the Roger Williams University School of Law in Rhode Island in 2008 and currently serves as a housing attorney and the SCCLS Diversity Coalition leader. As a law student, Weayonnoh served as a Legal Immigration Fellow with the U.S. Human Rights Network advocating for the recognition of the human rights of undocumented immigrants. She has been recognized as an excellent oral advocate and has received several best oralist awards. Weayonnah served as a volunteer with City Year Providence and is a true advocate of national service. This will be Weayonnah's second year as a MLASSP supervisor.

Susan Love, Esq., South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc., Brockton, graduated from Barnard College and Boston University School of Law. Before joining SCCLS Susan was in individual private practice for four years and worked at the Children's Law Center in Lynn focusing on special education cases. Susan has served as a SCCLS staff attorney for the past ten years, focusing on domestic violence/family law and education law. This will be Susan's third year serving as a MLASSP Supervisor.

Brian O'Connor, Esq., South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc., Fall River, graduated from the University of Connecticut with a BA, History, and Franklin Pierce Law Center, JD, Concord, NH. Prior to joining SCCLS in 2005, O'Connor's practice was limited to criminal defense. At SCCLS his title is Senior Attorney, working primarily as a housing attorney. This is Brian's fifth year as a MLASSP Supervisor and his third year as facilitator of the Statewide Advocacy Project.

Janet Donovan, Esq., manages the Legal Advocacy Program at Casa Myrna Vazquez, Inc., a multi-service agency for battered women and their children in Boston. Janet is a graduate of Suffolk University Law School and is a trustee and past president of the Women's Bar Foundation and a recipient of the Women's Bar Association Leila J. Robinson Award and the Pro Bono Publico Award. Before coming to Casa Myrna, Janet was in private practice with a concentration in domestic relations and special education law. This is Janet's fifth year as an MLASSP supervisor.

PLAN FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT OR IMPROVEMENT

## Narratives

The SCCLS Executive Director together with the Board of Directors and fiscal officer ensures sound fiscal management. Each of the legal services organizations conduct a periodic priority setting process that draws upon the opinions of eligible clients residing in the region. Under the new Executive Director, SCCLS is beginning its own priority setting initiative that will assist in long range planning, while the SCCLS fiscal officer is currently working on a cost/benefit analysis for MLASSP to supplement the planning process. Additionally, SCCLS undergoes annual independent financial audits and holds regular leadership team meetings to ensure that the organization is running most effectively. SCCLS's principle source of funding is the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation, with numerous reporting requirements on the efficient use of its funds in providing legal services. In addition, SCCLS and its partners are the recipients of many grants, all with reporting requirements, and most with annual program reviews, to ensure the effective utilization of the funding. Program feedback from our sixteen partner sites, legal supervisors, and members provide continual feedback for self-assessment and improvement.

### PLAN FOR EFFECTIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

SCCLS fiscal officer Gisele Pappas has five years of experience overseeing the financial requirements of an AmeriCorps program including the oversight of 15 to 17 partner sites' financial reporting (including SCCLS). A recent fiscal site visit by the Massachusetts Service Alliance reported sound financial management. MLASSP partner sites have fiscal officers with extensive experience in non-profit financials, including the oversight of numerous federal and community grants. A web-based orientation for fiscal officers new to AmeriCorps is held in the first month of the program including a refresher for experienced staff covering required monthly and quarterly fiscal reports. In addition to developing and monitoring the AmeriCorps budget, the fiscal officer manages the payment of members living allowance and health benefits.

As MLASSP develops into a replicable AmeriCorps program, we begin to utilize our experience by

## Narratives

"paying forward" the support received from AmeriCorps, the Massachusetts Service Alliance, and other more established programs over the past five years. However, continued communications and support regarding changes in national service policies (including the new pilot performance measures) will be imperative to the successful implementation of changes resulting from the Serve America Act.

### SOUND RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AS AN ORGANIZATION

#### VOLUNTEER GENERATION AND SUPPORT

SCCLS, like most legal services organizations, depends on volunteer attorneys and legal interns to assist with the overwhelming demand for legal services. Several SCCLS attorneys are active in the two local law schools (Southern New England School of Law and Roger Williams University Law School) and utilize the interns these schools provide. In addition, the Program Director works closely with the University of Massachusetts School Community Service Learning Program and the United Way to increase volunteerism in the region through a new non-profit initiative - South Coast Serves. SCCLS also recruits interns through the School of Social Work at Bridgewater State College. The Legal Manager at each of the five SCCLS offices is responsible for the oversight of volunteers serving in their office. The 2009-2010 ARRA award allowed for the implementation of a pilot summer corps of five legal interns to provide housing assistance to residents facing foreclosure in New Bedford, Brockton, Fall River and Taunton over a twelve week period in the summer of 2009. Each of these members recruited two volunteers to assist them in distributing brochures and organizing clinics for tenants faced with eviction as a result of foreclosure.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

SCCLS, its staff members, and its legal aid partners have received many awards including an award from the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild in 2007 for their work in assisting victims of immigration raids in New Bedford. SCCLS staff members serve on many community boards

## Narratives

and coalitions throughout the region. Some milestone accomplishments at SCCLS include the following: creation of the State's only legal aid AmeriCorps program; the creation of the first private bar pro bono panel in the region and the first pro se (guided self-help) clinics; the first legal aid program to receive funding from the U.S. Department of Justice's Violence Against Women Office, in a highly competitive process; the highest funding from the Massachusetts Bar Foundation, a competitive process; the highest statewide ranking for its Seniors Law Projects in a survey of Area Agencies on Aging; the creation of the state's only program advocating for children's right to a quality education (and one of the few in the nation); and creation of the state's first regional Diversity Coalition.

Landmark legal victories, include: tenants' right to physical security in public housing (tenants threatened by illegal activities in their rented public housing) - Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court; right to a jury trial in cases brought under the so-called "nuisance" statute applicable to all leased residences - Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court; and a decision that a trial court must establish that parents can work together effectively before awarding joint legal custody of children (trial court reversed for awarding joint custody to hostile parents) -- Massachusetts Appeals Court.

### SUCCESS IN SECURING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Each partner agency is expected to contribute a \$12,100 (down from \$12,500 in 2009-10) cash match per member placement to assist with program costs. In each of the first five years of MLASSP, partner organizations have supported their match through current general funding with additional cash support from the Massachusetts Bar Foundation, who have consistently provided \$50,000 in scholarship funds for smaller agencies that could not afford the match. Unfortunately, statewide budget cuts to legal services resulted in many of our partners being unable to provide the cash match for the current year. ARRA provided \$62,500 in partner matching funds that resulted in seven additional partner sites receiving scholarship assistance and resulted in MLASSP having more partner applications than available member slots.

## Narratives

It should be noted that the Legal Services Corporation (an agency set up by the Federal government to provide legal services for people who cannot afford to pay) funds four of our sixteen partners in this project. The cash match in the grant provided by Legal Services Corporation organizations is used only to support organizational costs deemed allowable by AmeriCorps regulations, and the ratio of match allowed by federal sources is documented as within regulations. (Documentation is enclosed as an attachment in this application.) Several law schools (including Northeastern, Suffolk, Southern New England School of Law, and Western New England College School of Law) and AmeriCorps programs (City Year and Massachusetts Promise Fellows) contribute use of their facilities and numerous legal service organizations and non-profits have donated their time to provide training.

The members serving at legal services sites have contact with community organizations through mutual client advocacy, cross trainings, and provision of technical legal assistance that establishes relationships that can help build capacity for the partner legal services site. The wide variety of community organizations with which legal services interacts provide information about emerging community issues and many prospects for joint efforts to expand services to the community. Service plans require that each member dedicate 60 hours to volunteerism activities, including recruiting legal aid volunteers, screening volunteers, writing policies for a volunteer recruitment program, and activities in furtherance of retention or training of volunteers.

### LOCAL FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

The majority of MLASSP partner sites receive their primary funding through the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation or the Federal Legal Assistance Corporation as well as numerous other state and community grants from organizations such as the Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Homeless Legal Service Project, the United Way, and South Coast Elder Services. AmeriCorps members frequently receive a parking pass or discount from a local vendor, the YMCA provides significant discounts for membership, and many non-profits offer significant discounts to AmeriCorps members for

## Narratives

training and events they host. Many of the partner sites receive grant funding to support the members service activities, including the cash match, and all are encouraged to seek community contributions.

### WIDE RANGE OF COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Legal services agencies are part of a network of community organizations assisting low-income people, with established linkages to a wide variety of organizations including domestic violence shelters, tenant councils, senior centers, homeless shelters, court staff, District Attorneys offices, parent teacher organizations, etc., all of whom help to serve the client community in some capacity. It is crucial for this network of organizations to come together to teach citizens the skills they need to effectively advocate on their own behalf to bring about changes in their communities, thus meeting the needs of the greatest number of low-income clients possible.

SCCLS and partner legal aid program staff serve on a multitude of community coalitions, locally and statewide, giving support and direction to the work at SCCLS and its partners, thereby involving many stakeholders in the work of legal services. The collaboration among SCCLS and its 16 legal aid partners makes this program possible. SCCLS is in regular contact with dozens of community organizations that refer clients, join in local coalitions, and ask for technical assistance. The SCCLS Board of Directors consists of a majority of attorneys, many appointed by local bar associations, and clients appointed by community organizations, as well as appointees of other interested organizations. This is typical of our partner legal services organizations. In turn, SCCLS and partner legal aid program staff serve on a multitude of community coalitions, locally and statewide, giving support and direction to the work at SCCLS and its partners, thereby involving many stakeholders in the work of legal services.

Recent collaborations include participation on the Steering Committee of the Tenancy Preservation Project (TPP) in New Bedford, Brockton and Fall River, which connects troubled tenants with appropriate social services allowing them to maintain their tenancies; Mainspring Coalition, which operates two homeless shelters in Brockton; local offices of the Department of Transitional Assistance;

## Narratives

domestic violence roundtables in Bristol and Plymouth Counties organized by the District Attorneys; 69 Councils on Aging based in the cities and towns in the SCCLS service area; the Community Advisory Boards the Hope House (HIV/AIDS hospice); education outreach with the Coalition Against Poverty, the Cape Verdean Association; and collaboration with a wide variety of statewide legal coalitions on family law, housing, education, the elderly, disabilities, public benefits, and so on. A similar set of collaborations could be sited for each of our 16 partner sites, and speak to the myriad stakeholders invested in MLASSP.

### **Budget/Cost Effectiveness**

#### E. COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY

##### COST EFFECTIVENESS

CNCS costs in the MLASSP budget are targeted to support member costs, their specialized training costs, and the Program Director salary. All other expenses are provided for through partner cash participation and in-kind partner activity. MLASSP partners are funded in a variety of ways: most through the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation, a private organization, and others with some Federal, state and foundation funding sources. Since its inception, the Massachusetts Bar Foundation has also awarded a grant to MLASSP for the partner share of 4 of the 28 members, specifically to assist partners who have limited means of funding. Local support is evident in supplementing the individual sites with smaller donations directly to those program sites. The ratio of grantee support to Corporation cost has always been greater than required, beginning at 55% in the year one, and increasing the grantee share to 65% in year six. This far exceeds the 50% minimum required at Year 10 for all grants, as per the matching requirements published by the Corporation, demonstrating the commitment to and effectiveness of this program. MLASSP has a strong retention rate drawing nearly 100% of our federal award.

##### BUDGET ADEQUACY

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The MLASSP budget is based on the activity of the four prior grant years. AmeriCorps activities and service plans have been carefully developed to provide the most efficient program model for a scattered-site project. Key components include project management, supervision, and specialized training. Travel is estimated for AmeriCorps activities, monthly meetings, and service plan projects. Professional services such as CORI processing and outsourced payroll processing of member stipends are included in the budget based on the most recent activity. AmeriCorps orientation, member gear, and a recognition event are incorporated to solidify the member experience, highlight the Corps affiliation, and enhance AmeriCorps visibility. Partner in-kind costs are estimated at the minimum required by our MLASSP Partner contract; reported costs have always proven to be far greater than budgeted. Some of this partner cost is a result of the higher stipend MLASSP offers its members (\$17,000), allowing them to maintain housing and a vehicle in one of the most expensive real estate markets in the country.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

#### F. EVALUATION SUMMARY OR PLAN

In the fall of 2007, the Massachusetts Service Alliance provided technical assistance to help South Coastal Counties Legal services, Inc. strengthen the member development and site partner management aspects of its MLASSP. The overall purpose of the technical assistance was to address challenges identified in MSA's 2007 MLASSP site visit including orientation, member training and development, service/site partner selection, and orientation and monitoring. Over the past two service years numerous changes have been made to coincide with the consultants recommendations. Of particular significance is the web-based timesheet and performance measure report discussed in the Plan for Self-Assessment and Improvement Section of this proposal.

MLASSP has also raised the overall esprit de corps of this scattered site program by implementing a statewide project (described in detail in the Member Development section), providing consistent program management, regularly scheduled training and events, and a sense of pride and accomplishment in our members. Regular presentations are made to the SCCLS Board of Directors,



## Narratives

beginning with the introduction of new members at an early Board meeting and updates on grant progress. The Program Director is in regular contact by phone, email, and site visits with members and supervisors to seek program input.

The SCCLS Executive Director attends regular meetings of the Massachusetts Legal Service Corporation and the Legal Service Corporation as well as a host of other forums where there are opportunities to obtain feedback from our partner site management. The very nature of this scattered site project is dependent on all of our partners working in sync. This is accomplished through mid- and end of the year evaluations by members and supervisors, an annual partner application that requests suggestions for future trainings and statewide projects, and site visits with members, supervisors, and fiscal officers (when necessary). Members and supervisors attend orientation where together they decide on the statewide project that best meets the current legal needs of our clients. The supervisor break-out session at orientation allows for discussion of any program changes and seeks input into implementation. Supervisors are expected to contribute to one or more monthly trainings and guide the member in the choice of a volunteer project. It is in the mutual interest of all of our partners to share resources whenever possible so that the greatest numbers of eligible low-income residents of Massachusetts receive the legal services they need to achieve self-sufficiency.

### Amendment Justification

N/A

### Clarification Summary

FY10 Clarification Items Response

(1) The application mentions that some of the sites where members would be placed have experienced staffing cut-backs. Would members serve in roles that were filled by staff that were laid off? How will you ensure that members do not occupy such roles?

## Narratives

MLASSP partner agencies that do direct service have collective bargaining agreements that prohibit use of non-union employees to fill union positions. Typically, laid-off staff are at the professional level -- attorneys for the most part -- and AmeriCorps members are not qualified to perform such tasks. Consequently, in most placements, the opportunity for displacement does not exist. The AmeriCorps members support the work of attorneys and, where an attorney has been laid-off, the AmeriCorps role does not change performing work in a supporting role.

Partner sites are reminded throughout the year that AmeriCorps members are not permitted to displace current employees. Most often, partner sites reply that this is not a problem because without AmeriCorps support, the services the member provides simply would not be available, reducing even further the number of low-income people who have access to justice at a time when requests for civil legal help are surging .

(2) Please provide assurances that members will not engage in advocacy related to public policy issues and please remove policy research and advocacy activities from the application.

"Policy research and advocacy activities" removed from the application.

All members and supervisors are made well aware of the AmeriCorps prohibition of lobbying. Members are trained at orientation as to the difference between advocacy and advice, that their role is to advocate for their clients not to advise. MLASSP performance measures call for each member to participate in 25 extended cases under a legal professional, and frequently this means doing legal research in preparation for a case. The AmeriCorps members assist their supervisors by reporting on the issues presented in their individual client representation, as well as on their research and analysis of federal and state laws and policies. The members do not engage in lobbying to change existing state or federal law.

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(3) Many of the activities performed by members, such as giving legal advice, require a high level of training. Please describe how you will ensure that members are suitable and sufficiently trained for this activity

MLASSP seeks highly qualified members with skills relevant to their placement. Members are trained in basic legal advocacy skills at orientation and three overnight retreats held in the first half of the service year. Since service plans vary widely, site specific training is provided to ensure that the member has the skills they need. Most legal service intake/hotlines are not generally manned by attorneys but the person doing the intake serves under the direct supervision on an attorney as a screener to determine the callers eligibility for service and/or provides referrals to where the caller can receive the services they require. Others help to organize community outreach events and/or represent their site at community events.

(4) Please describe how you will ensure that you recruit a diverse corps of members.

Over the past five years MLASSP has a proven history of recruiting a diverse corps that is reflective of the client population that we serve. In 2008-2009 the Massachusetts Service Alliance provided disability funds to make the MLASSP website fully accessible. MLASSP utilizes minority and community publications wherever possible including the minority publication The Banner (Greater Boston) and the ALANA career fair at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and our partner sites typically seek candidates with language skills common to the community they serve. It is the policy of legal service organizations to provide diversity training for all employees and to hire staff representative of the diverse clients we serve.

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(5) Please describe how you will ensure member satisfaction.

Various methods are used to ensure member satisfaction from the time of interview through the EOY celebration including: monthly narratives, site visits, mid- and end-of-year member and supervisor evaluations, and regular phone calls and emails. Additionally, members evaluate monthly trainings and reflect on their service at the Life After AmeriCorps meeting held at the end of their service year.

Member evaluations repeatedly report that members value their AmeriCorps/MLASSP experience. The program is currently in year five with many of our applicants for next year coming from former members, some who are now working in legal services, some who are doing another AmeriCorps program, and some who are currently serving with MLASSP. In two of the past five years (including 2009-2010), seven of our corps members returned for a second year. We are proud of the goodwill that MLASSP has generated among both members and partner sites in a few short years.

(6) Please describe your plan to raise funds beyond what your host sites will provide to support the program.

SCCLS aggressively searches for funding opportunities and makes applications throughout the year, and partner organizations are encouraged to seek sources for the in-kind cash match required to participate in the program. SCCLS is currently in the process of hiring for a new position of Development Director to help raise funds for all SCCLS programs including MLASSP.

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(7) Given that partner organization was able to provide match through Recovery (ARRA) funds, will they be able to generate match once ARRA funds are no longer available?

Many partner organizations have expressed concern with their ability to meet the partner cash match in the current financial climate, but have completed partner applications while digging deep into their resources to make the match and/or applied to community partners for assistance. The program is held in very high esteem with all partner participants and the commitment to MLASSP is demonstrated year after year, including during this time of shrinking resources.

(8) Please confirm that you will provide living allowance (within the allowable range), FICA, workers compensation or accidental death or dismemberment insurance (as required by state law), and health insurance to members.

SCCLS will provide a living allowance of \$17,000, paid on a bi-weekly basis over 11 months of the program, from which statutory deductions for FICA will be made. SCCLS provides worker's compensation insurance through its business owner's policy, plus health and dental coverage through Summit Insurance.

(9) How do you assess the unmet community need of potential partner organizations in your site selection process?

Virtually all of our members are placed at partner sites funded through the Massachusetts Legal

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Assistance Corporation (largest statewide funder of legal services in Massachusetts) or the federal Legal Services Corporation (see clarification in grant). Legal services priorities are determined based on the general needs outlined by the partner sites in their MLAC and LSC funding applications. Additionally, the partner application process includes completion of a member service plan outlining the intended role of the AmeriCorps member at the partner site.

### Criminal History Check Requirement:

The one staff member currently funded through the grant is CORIed. All members are CORIed out of matching funds.

### Performance Measurement:

The applicant selected Priority Area Economic Opportunities and yes for opting in to the performance measure pilot. The primary service activity is legal aid and that is not necessarily specific to housing issues. Can the applicant propose an aligned measure along with the PM pilot measure? Also please ensure the program has a mechanism in place for non duplicating counts of clients.

Housing is a primary focus area for legal services as outlined in all MLASSP grant proposals. MLASSP produced a foreclosure video as a statewide project in 2008-2009 and received ARRA funding for 2009-2010, with a summer program based solely on housing assistance. Housing cases are generally divided into two groups -- those that need legal defense and those that do not and are referred out to other agencies for assistance. Legal services then negotiates what assistance the client will receive with the referral agency (Catholic Charities, Elder Services, etc). In all cases, AmeriCorps members serving in a housing unit will meet with the client and get the necessary information and then proceed under the

## Narratives

direction of a senior housing attorney.

MLASSP will use housing assistance PM5 and PM11. The cases will be measured under our standard performance measures to ensure non-duplication of cases. On the weekly timesheet and performance measure report members enter number of intakes, brief services, and extended services. Following brief and extended cases, a line will be added asking how many of the brief services referred economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, to housing placement services. After the extended cases, a line will be added that asks of the extended cases reported how many of the clients (total members of household) were transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing.

### Continuation Changes

#### NEW PARTNER SITES

2010-2011 saw the addition of four new MLASSP partner organizations and the loss of two partner sites that did not reapply for budgetary reasons. All new sites are highly regarded non-profits providing civil legal services to low-income clients including:

Lutheran Social Services of New England (LSS), Worcester, is one of the largest social service organizations in New England delivering a broad variety of services. The LSS Immigration Legal Assistance Program provides legal assistance to immigrants and refugees in Central Massachusetts applying for citizenship and adjustment of status, asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors, and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and violent crime.

Medical-Legal Partnership | Boston provides direct legal services to low income patients at Boston Medical Center, New England's largest safety net hospital. Close to 70% of BMC's patients are poor, making them particularly vulnerable to the environmental and social stressors that impact health. Medical-legal partnerships integrate lawyers as a vital component of the healthcare team with the goal of ensuring that patients receive assistance with "social determinants of health" including housing,

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education, income supports, family law, and legal status.

Rosie's Place/Shelter Legal Services - Rosie's Place, a sanctuary for poor and homeless women, offers emergency and long-term assistance to women who have nowhere else to turn including on-site legal clinics through Shelter Legal Services. Since 1974, Rosie's Place has evolved from providing meals and shelter to creating permanent solutions through advocacy, education, and affordable housing. The legal clinics at homeless shelters and service centers such as Rosie's Place allow Shelter Legal Services to reach underserved and neglected members of our society who are often reluctant to seek legal help.

Victims Rights Law Center (VRLC), Boston is the first nonprofit law center in the nation solely dedicated to serving the needs of rape and sexual assault victims. Through direct legal services, the staff and pro bono attorneys help restore victims' lives after an attack, ensuring that they may stay in school; protecting their privileged and confidential mental health, medical and education records; preserving their employment; maintaining safe housing; securing or maintaining their immigration status; and swiftly accessing victim compensation and other benefits. VRLC is the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women's primary trainer and technical assistance provider on these matters so that services may be replicated nationally.

### EXPANSION

As a result of the increased recognition of MLASSP and AmeriCorps, SCCLS requests two additional member slots, bringing MLASSP to a 30 member corps. The addition of these two slots will help MLASSP to meet the anticipated demand for AmeriCorps advocates, thereby increasing the number of low-income individuals who have access to justice in critical matters, thus stabilizing their families and households.



## Narratives

On November 19, 2010, Vice-President Biden announced a series of steps designed to help middle class and low-income families secure their legal rights. The outcomes of this middle class task force, co-hosted by the Dept. of Justice's Access to Justice Initiative, include strengthening foreclosure mediation programs, helping veterans secure the legal help they need, and making it easier for workers to find a qualified attorney when they believe their rights have been violated. These are the very issues addressed by MLASSP partner organizations everyday. MLASSP members are trained in mediation (November 2010), observe the use of mediation in housing and family law cases, and are made aware of the potential career opportunity mediation presents for those considering a career in law. Several of our placements in Western and Central Massachusetts focus on unemployment, assisting when a case they are involved in goes to an administrative hearing, many of which do not require the advocate to hold a Juris Doctorate as would a case that goes to trial.

The Vice President's announcement draws further attention to the need for legal advocates to represent low-income clients and provides alternatives that keep people in their homes. Trends in the law such as this have lead current partner sites to indicate an interest in applying for additional placements, while potential new partners have informed SCCLS of their intent to apply as a placement site in the 2011-12 service year.

### JUSTIFICATION

All indicators substantiate the need for additional advocates. A recent analysis, funded by United Way of Greater Attleboro/Taunton, reports legal services tied to housing as one of the highest unmet needs for low-income people living in the service area. A visit to any Housing Court in the region will validate this finding. With the economy restricted, the courts are jammed with pro se litigants. The Legal Aid Coalition of Southeastern Massachusetts (LACSM), which includes the two principal legal aid providers of civil (non-criminal) legal assistance in this region, South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc. and the

## Narratives

New Center for Legal Advocacy, Inc. provided legal services on 2,517 housing related matters from June 2009 to July 2010.

### RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

MLASSP holds a strong record of recruitment and retention of members as described in our initial grant application. In 2009-2010, all 28-member slots were filled with 27 members successfully completing their term of service. The 28th member served the duration of her service but was unable to complete 1700 hours due to a medical issue. All member slots for the 2010-2011 service year are filled.

### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

MLASSP has now placed 150 college and law school graduates at non-profit law firms, providing meaningful opportunity for new lawyers and pre-professionals to develop their skills and experience in legal services programs while giving back to the community. Nine of the current AmeriCorps members are attorneys, most of whom are newly bar-certified, and many of the volunteer advocates possess much-needed language skills, enabling them to create bridges to the diverse communities they serve.

Careful consideration has been given to growing the program. The gradual increase in member slots from 25 in 2005, to 28 in 2008, to 30 in 2011, allows SCCLS to make small adjustments to accommodate growth while maintaining the quality of the program and services provided. The overwhelming demand for legal services has evolved into a statewide restructuring to meet this increased need. The anticipated result is a greater focus on impact work (extended cases) that will serve a greater number of clients and increasing use of technology and community outreach events to more efficiently screen and deliver brief services.

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There are currently approximately 82,000 people on the waiting list for public housing in Massachusetts including many victims of foreclosure. An example of a high impact/extended case in which several MLASSP members are participating is Wattupa, a 100 unit public housing project in Fall River which fell into severe disrepair. The Fall River Housing Authority fought to demolish Wattupa arguing that there was too much public housing in the City, resulting in many single mothers (primarily women of color) with children relocating from Boston and putting additional demands on City services. SCCLS, on behalf of the residents, successfully took the Fall River Housing Authority to court on charges of discrimination. The settlement included the relocation of Watuppa residents into areas of "higher (economic) opportunity" and an agreement by Fall River to replicate the demolished units in designated "opportunity" areas. AmeriCorps members have been instrumental in processing documents, relocating tenants to safe affordable housing, securing financial relocation assistance, and are currently assisting with site determination for the new units. This one (extended) case resulted in 100 families being placed in suitable housing and will impact low-income families in the Fall River area for years to come with the addition of 120 affordable housing units.

### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

MLASSP's contribution to legal services in Massachusetts is significant with the following adjustments to the performance measures reflecting the increased focus on impact work. Primary Service Outcomes (Human Needs) for 2011-2012: Screening -- 3,000 (100 per member); Counsel and Advice or Brief Services -- 2,800 (93 per member); and Extended Services -- 750 (25 per member). Participation in community outreach events will allow members to maintain the current level of intakes and brief services while the addition of 2 member placements increases the number of extended service cases by 50. All other performance measure outcomes will increase in proportion to the increase in the number of members with each member receiving a minimum of 50 hours of training in skills needed to serve as an AmeriCorps legal assistant, 90 hours of professional supervision, and the recruitment of 150 (5 per

## Narratives

member) volunteers who will serve an additional 3,000 hours to further the partner site outreach. The Opportunity Performance Measure on housing assistance is a pilot this service year. Without sufficient results reported to date, the outcomes reflect the addition of 2 member slots only.

### BUDGET

SCCLS is on a fixed grant budget requiring an additional \$26,000 (\$13,000 X 2 MSY) to allow for the addition of two new member slots.

### Continuation Negotiations Summary

South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc. Application ID 11ES124814

### FY11 Continuation Changes

#### Budget Clarification Items

(1) Please revise your budget to equal the funding and MSY amount listed above.

Budget is revised in egrants to reflect the revision in the amount of the grant to \$364,000 for 28 members.

#### Programmatic Clarification Items

No clarification items identified.

#### Performance Measure Clarification Items

Member development measures are removed from the grant application as requested; however, MLASSP will continue to track the number of training hours members receive for our own records since

## Narratives

this is a valuable piece of what attracts members and host sites to our program.

Basic Legal Needs performance measure -- Create an intermediate outcome to accompany the output

An intermediate outcome has been added to the Performance Measure Worksheet as requested. The intermediate outcome: Clinics, workshops and other community outreach events help low-income families, individuals, elders, and veterans get the legal information they need to address pressing legal issues that impact self-sufficiency and family/personal stability.

Volunteerism performance measure is removed from our application as requested, but the program will continue to track the number of volunteers recruited by members for our own program records.

National performance measure #5-- Create an intermediate outcome to accompany the output.

National priority measure number 11 has been added as the intermediate outcome. National measure #5 remains with target of 250 individuals as stated in eGrants with the addition of the following Intermediate Outcome.

PM11 - # of economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing.

Result Statement: 28 AmeriCorps members will provide housing assistance that will allow a minimum of 250 disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, to be transitioned into or maintained in safe, affordable housing.

Target: 250 individuals

Instrument: Performance Measure Report and Legal Files (or similar software used by partner sites)

## Narratives

Performance Measure Statement: 28 AmeriCorps members will provide housing referrals services to 250 disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, which will result in 250 individuals transitioned into or maintain safe, affordable housing.

Important Note: These pilot measure targets are a further breakdown of the Basic Legal Needs provided not in addition to these measures as stated in our grant application. Together the number of brief services and the PM 5 target of 250 will equal the total of 2,600 brief services targeted under Basic Legal Needs. Additionally, the 250 individuals that will be transitioned/maintained in safe affordable housing are a further breakdown of the 700 extended service cases that are targeted in Basic Legal Needs.

## Performance Measures

### SAA Characteristics

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

### Priority Areas

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

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 4.5

### Service Categories

- |                            |   |   |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Housing Placement Services | Primary <input type="checkbox"/>            | Secondary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Other Human Needs          | Primary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Secondary <input type="checkbox"/>            |

### Basic Legal Needs

**Service Category:** Other Human Needs

**Measure Category:** Needs and Service Activities

### Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Members, with the supervision of professional staff, will identify client (individual and group)

problems, formulate legal strategies to address those problems, provide community legal education, and provide direct representation.

**Result: Output**

Low-income individuals in Massachusetts with legal problems affecting family stability or self-

sufficiency receive initial screening, counsel and advice or brief service, or extended representation.

Indicator: # of beneficiaries

Target: Members will provide the following supervised legal services case work as reflected on their

weekly activity logs: Screenings 2,800 cases; Counsel and Advice or Brief Service 2,600

cases; Extended or Impact Case 700.

Target Value: 28

Instruments: Weekly Timesheet and Performance Measure and sign-in sheets

PM Statement: Members will, under attorney supervision, conduct 2,800 intakes, provide advice or brief service in 2,600 cases, and assist with 700 extended cases.

**Result: Output**

Prev. Yrs. Data

**Result: End Outcome**

Low-income clients including families, individuals, elders, and veterans, that may otherwise not have received services, will receive legal assistance and report increased family stability and self-sufficiency as a result of member efforts.

Indicator: 80% Client satisfaction surveys and supervisor mid- and end-of-year evaluations

Target: 80% of client surveys and supervisor evaluations will report that members are providing effective client services under professional legal supervision.

Target Value: 80%

Instruments: mid and end of year supervisor evaluations and member activity logs

PM Statement: Clients receive legal assistance and report increased family stability and/or self-sufficiency as a result of member efforts as reported in client surveys and supervisor evaluations.

Prev. Yrs. Data

**Result: Intermediate Outcome**

Members, under the supervision of a legal professional, conduct clinics, workshops and other community outreach events that help low-income families, individuals, elders, and veterans get the legal information they need to address pressing legal issues that impact self-sufficiency and family/personal stability.

Indicator: Activity logs

Target: 28 AmeriCorps members will assist with the coordination and implementation of at least one local or regional community outreach event that addresses a pressing civil issue in the community they serve.

Target Value: 28

Instruments: Members timesheets and performance measure reports will track clients served on a weekly basis and sign-in sheets, monthly narratives, and evaluations will support these numbers.

PM Statement: 28 AmeriCorps members will assist with the coordination and implementation of at least one local or regional community outreach event that addresses a pressing civil issue in the community they serve, providing clients that may otherwise have not received services the opportunity to get counsel and advice, brief or extended services for pressing legal issues that impact self-sufficiency and family/personal stability.

Prev. Yrs. Data



## National Performance Measures

**Priority Area:** Economic Opportunity

**Performance Measure Title:** National Performance Measure #5

**Service Category:** Housing Placement Services

### Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, will receive the assistance they require to find placement in and maintain housing.

### Result: Output

Result.

250 economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, will be transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) O5: Individuals receiving housing placement services.

Target : 250 economically disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals will receive the legal services they require to be transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing.

Target Value: 250

Instruments: Legal files (software with case records) and weekly performance measure reports.

PM Statement: AmeriCorps members will provide 250 housing referrals that will result in 250 individuals being transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing.

### Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

28 AmeriCorps members will provide housing assistance that will allow a minimum of 250 disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, to be transitioned into or maintained in safe affordable housing.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) O11: Individuals transitioned into housing.

Target : 250 disadvantaged individuals will receive the housing assistance they need to be transitioned into or maintained in safe affordable housing.

Target Value: 250

Instruments: weekly performance measure/activity reports and legal files software

PM Statement: 28 AmeriCorps members will provide housing referral services to 250 disadvantaged individuals, including homeless individuals, which will result in 250 individuals being transitioned into or maintained in safe affordable housing.

## Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Already on File at CNCS

Labor Union Concurrence

Already on File at CNCS