# APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)

**1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION:**

Application [X]   Non-Construction

| | |
|---|---|
| **2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):** 01/25/11 | **3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:** |
| | **STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:** N/A |
| **2b. APPLICATION ID:** 11ND125513 | **4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:** 01/25/11 |
| | **FEDERAL IDENTIFIER:** 11NDHCA003 |

**5. APPLICATION INFORMATION**

LEGAL NAME:  Reading Partners

DUNS NUMBER:     806237264

ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county):
106 Linden St
Ste 202
Oakland CA 94607 - 2538
County:

NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes):

NAME:  Michael Lombardo

TELEPHONE NUMBER:   (510) 444-9800

FAX NUMBER:

INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS:   michael@readingpartners.org

**6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):**
770568469

**7. TYPE OF APPLICANT:**
7a.  Non-Profit

7b.  Volunteer Management Organization

**8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box).**

[X] NEW          [ ] NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE

[ ] CONTINUATION    [ ] AMENDMENT

If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): [ ] [ ]

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 National

**11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT:**

Reading Partners - 1:1 Literacy Intervention

**11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):**

**12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc):**

CA, NY, Washington, DC

**13. PROPOSED PROJECT:**   START DATE: 08/01/11    END DATE:  07/31/14

**14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF:**    a.Applicant [CA 009]    b.Program [CA 009]

**15. ESTIMATED FUNDING:**   Year #: [1]

| | |
|---|---|
| a. FEDERAL | $   532,000.00 |
| b. APPLICANT | $ 2,058,785.00 |
| c. STATE | $   0.00 |
| d. LOCAL | $   0.00 |
| e. OTHER | $   0.00 |
| f. PROGRAM INCOME | $   0.00 |
| g. TOTAL | $ 2,590,785.00 |

**16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?**

[ ] YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON:

DATE:

[X] NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372

**17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT?**
[ ] YES   if "Yes," attach an explanation.   [X] 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: Michael Lombardo | b. TITLE: CEO | c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (510) 444-9800 |
|---|---|---|
| d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: | | e. DATE SIGNED: 05/09/11 |

# Narratives

**Executive Summary**

Reading Partners' mission is to help children become proficient, lifelong readers by empowering communities to provide individualized instruction with measurable results. To advance this mission, we are requesting 40 members who will operate reading centers at under-resourced elementary schools where trained volunteers provide 1:1 literacy tutoring to struggling readers.

**Rationale and Approach**

a. Problem

Describe the problem(s) you will be working on: Literacy acquisition for children from low-income families is in a state of crisis. According to the US Department of Education's 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 83% of US fourth-graders eligible for free/reduced-price lunch (FRPL; an indicator of poverty) are not reading at a proficient level.

Why did you choose this problem? Without intervention, outcomes for children who fall behind in reading are bleak. Studies have identified what is called the 'Matthew effect': once children fall back, they tend to fall further behind more quickly as time goes by (Stanovich, 1986). Because learning in every subject is tied to reading, researchers have found that third grade reading scores can predict high school graduation rates with 70% accuracy (Barrington, B. & Hendricks B., 1989). There are 7.9 million low-income children from birth to age 8 -- one-fifth of all kids in this age group (US Census Bureau Current Population Survey. http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/epstables). If current trends hold true, 6.6 million of these children (83%) are at increased risk of failing to graduate from high school on time (The Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS Count Special Report 2010. www.annieecasey.org).

# Narratives

Limited literacy early on drastically reduces a child's chance to break the cycle of poverty and frequently leads to dangerous and unhealthy behavior. Children with low academic achievement are 3.1 times more likely to join gangs (Hill, et al, 1999; Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001). Researchers estimate that 35% of academically low-performing children became delinquent compared with only about 20% of academically high-performing children (Maguin & Loeber, 1996). According to a 2004 study conducted by the University of North Carolina, low literacy is also associated with several adverse health outcomes, including increased incidence of chronic illness and less use of preventive health services.

For these reasons, it is critical to connect with struggling readers in grades K-5, when intervention can set them on a path towards success.  AmeriCorps can be an essential tool to solve this problem, as Reading Partners (RP) has shown through its 3 years of experience hosting AmeriCorps members both as a direct CaliforniaVolunteers (CV) grantee and as a host site for other AmeriCorps agencies.

Provide documentation of the extent/severity of the problem in the target community: The table below details the schools RP serves/state/% of students eligible for FRPL/% of 3rd graders eligible for FRPL reading proficiently/ND members we will place at each site under the proposed grant/CV members at site.

Alvarado/CA/43/29/0/1

Andrew Jackson/CA/70/31/1/0

Aspire Junior Collegiate/CA/82/45/1/0

Bayside/CA/91/20/0/1

Belle Haven/CA/87/30/0/1

# Narratives

Berkley Maynard/CA/77/49/0/1

Bret Harte (Sac)/CA/91/46/0/1

Bret Harte (SF)/CA/85/10/0/1

Brightwood/DC/90/20/1/0

C.C. Spaulding/NC/87/26/1/0

Caroline Wenzel/CA/52/34/0/1

Center City Congress Heights/DC/67/19/1/0

Colonial Acres/CA/66/27/1/0

Community Academy PCS - Butler/DC/98/46/1/0

Daniel Webster/CA/89/22/0/1

DC Prep Edgewood Elementary/DC/62/57/1/0

F.C. Joyce/CA/95/34/0/1

F.D. Roosevelt/CA/82/26/0/1

Garfield/CA/62/29/1/0

Hawes/CA/81/25/0/1

Hillcrest/CA/76/22/1/0

Hillside/CA/82/27/0/1

Horace Mann/CA/79/26/0/1

Hyde Leadership Charter/NY/92/32/1/0

International Community School/CA/92/40/0/1

James Madison/CA/82/30/1/0

John Cabrillo/CA/84/18/1/0

Kit Carson/CA/82/31/0/1

Lakewood/NC/87/18/1/0

# Narratives

Lazear/CA/82/22/3/0

Learning Without Limits/CA/78/21/3/0

Leonard Flynn/CA/66/26/3/0

Los Arboles/CA/82/30/0/1

Mariano Castro/CA/51/11/0/1

Moffett/CA/87/17/1/0

Montague/CA/57/13/0/1

Mt. Pleasant/CA/86/29/1/0

Nia CPCS/DC/54/19/1/0

P.S. 4 Duke Ellington/NY/92/37/1/0

P.S. 48 Joseph Drake/NY/83/34/1/0

P.S. 67 Charles Dorsey/NY/97/26/1/0

P.S. 76 Phillip Randolph/NY/79/27/1/0

P.S. 84 Jose De Diego/NY/82/25/1/0

Paul Revere/CA/72/17/1/0

Burnett/CA/98/44/1/0

Riverside/CA/83/33/0/1

Robert F. Kennedy/CA/73/50/0/1

San Mateo Park/CA/40/50/0/1

San Miguel/CA/74/28/1/0

Sanchez/CA/73/0/0/1

Selby Lane/CA/64/31/0/1

Seven Trees/CA/93/24/1/0

Sherman/CA/53/49/0/1

# Narratives

Skycrest/CA/78/19/0/1

Stough/NC/50/63/1/0

Sunnyside/CA/53/46/1/0

Think College Now/92/27/0/1

Thomas Edison/CA/89/11/1/0

Toyon/CA/46/25/1/0

Tyler/DC/71/10/1/0

Washington Accelerated/CA/70/33/0/1

William Green/CA/81/40/0/1

Williamson/CA/79/10/0/1

Y.E. Smith/NC/77/33/1/0


RP Office/ ND members/CV members

DC/2/0

Milpitas/1/1

NY/2/0

Oakland/2/2

SF/1/0

LA/0/1


Describe the target community: RP partners with schools where a high % of students both qualify for FRPL and are not reading at grade level. We focus on students in grades K-5 who are reading 6 months to 2 years below grade level at the time of enrollment, do not participate in special education programs, and have at least basic conversational English.

# Narratives

In 2009-10, the demographic background of RP students was:

* 77% Latino

* 9% African American

* 8% Asian

* 3% Caucasian

* 3% Unknown/Multiple

98% of RP students qualified for FRPL and 58% were English Language Learners, meaning that English is not the primary language at home.

Why did you select this population to be served? For children growing up in low-income communities, strong reading skills are essential to unlock life opportunities and to escape the cycle of poverty and low achievement in school (Duncan, 2009). Yet, despite a decade of reform efforts, only incremental progress has been made in addressing this crisis. From 1998 to 2009, the number of low-income 4th graders reading at or above proficiency has increased by only 4 percentage points, from 13% to 17% (NAEP).

Even these meager gains are now at risk as schools respond to shrinking budgets by increasing class sizes and slashing special programs for struggling students.  Now more than ever, these children need the support of community service organizations to give them the vital reading skills that they will need to succeed.

b. Solution: AmeriCorps Member Roles and Responsibilities

# Narratives

Why are you proposing to use AmeriCorps to solve the identified problem? Research has demonstrated that volunteer driven tutoring programs are a highly effective way to improve reading skills for children in under-resourced public schools. A 2004 study published in the Journal of Educational Psychology authored by Batya Elbaum found that trained, reliable community volunteers were able to provide significant help to struggling readers, and that 2 sessions of 1-on-1 tutoring per week by a trained, supported, and supervised community volunteer can be an effective and affordable alternative for children at risk for reading failure.

Using volunteers to deliver tutoring has not been implemented effectively on a broad scale, however, due to logistical and resource constraints within school districts.  Specifically at the school level, most principals do not have staff with experience in volunteer recruitment and management. Despite a desire to integrate service within the school, volunteer work is often sporadic, disorganized, and out of synch with classroom instruction.

RP's partnership with AmeriCorps fills this gap by providing a solution to schools that enables them to effectively engage volunteers as reading tutors.  Rather than tutoring students themselves, RP AmeriCorps members serve as 'outreach coordinators' (OCs) and 'site coordinators' (SCs) who recruit, train, coach, and manage volunteers providing 1-on-1 instruction to students. Volunteers work with students twice per week, both during the school day and after school, for 45 minutes each session. Tutoring sessions utilize a custom curriculum developed in partnership with the School of Education at Stanford University, specifically designed for use by volunteers. This model allows RP to serve 10 times more students than if members solely tutored.

# Narratives

What will members do? Members will serve as OCs, who recruit volunteers and are based at RP regional offices, and SCs, who work at schools to train, support, and manage volunteers once they have been engaged.

OCs recruit volunteers through a variety of outreach efforts, including partnerships with community groups, use of web-based recruitment tools, grassroots outreach within a school's community, and organizing/participating in volunteer recruitment events.  Once a volunteer has expressed interest in RP, OCs connect them to website an online application and orientation. The OC also sends volunteers background check information (fingerprinting and tuberculosis testing) to complete before visiting the school site.

After completing the application and orientation, the volunteer is passed from the OC to the SC who schedules a 1-on-1 training and screening session. The SC screens the volunteer and provides training to prepare the volunteer to work with a student. After the training, the volunteer is scheduled to begin tutoring once fingerprinting and TB test results have cleared.  The SC then manages the relationship with the volunteer for the duration of his or her service.

Outreach Coordinators

Specifically, OC members will:

* Recruit volunteer tutors for schools in their assigned region

* Maintain relationships with recruitment partners, including high schools, community colleges, universities, corporations, small businesses, service organizations, and other institutions.

* Conduct screenings and criminal background checks to ensure compliance with school district requirements.

# Narratives

* Communicate with volunteers to ensure their satisfaction and create opportunities for volunteer recognition.

OCs work from 9-5, Monday-Friday. They are based out of regional offices but spend much of their time in the community. OCs are trained to use RP's custom database to manage communications with current and potential tutors.

OCs also work with recruitment partners to advertise volunteer opportunities by delivering fliers and attending events. Several times a week OCs go to corporate and community fairs, and visit colleges and universities to recruit volunteers. OCs have the opportunity to form relationships with a variety of people in their community to promote volunteerism.

OCs are directly responsible for all volunteers recruited to serve within our organization. OCs have a direct influence on recruitment and their stewardship is essential to ensuring that volunteers are happy with their experience and return to serve in following years. Once recruitment for the program year is completed, OCs focus on renewing the commitment of current tutors for the following program year.

Site Coordinators

Specifically, SC members will:

* Coordinate tutoring for 30-90 students in grades K-5 at an assigned school site. Multiple SCs are placed at certain sites based on its size, longevity and volunteer needs.

* Support 35-100 volunteers, helping to create a welcoming environment and positive service experience.

# Narratives

* Train, assess, and retrain tutors.

* Facilitate communication and maintain positive relationships between RP, teachers, students' families and community partners.

* Support tutors during sessions by identifying resources and addressing questions and concerns.

* Conference with tutors and teachers to maximize student achievement.

* Implement 'Home Connection' programs to involve parents with RP.

* Hold tutor-training workshops 4 times per year to help tutors interested in gaining a greater understanding of literacy development.

* Recognize volunteers through monthly newsletter spotlights, appreciation events, and personalized thank you notes each semester.

SCs are on-site at schools during tutoring hours: Monday-Thursday from 9-5 with Fridays used for professional development, staff and team meetings, and 'make up' tutoring sessions for absent students.

SCs supervise an average of 8 tutoring sessions per day and each session has an average of 6 student/tutor pairs reading together. During tutoring sessions, SCs sit with tutoring pairs to model reading strategies. SCs also formally observe tutoring sessions, document the student and tutor's strengths and challenges, and then share the feedback with the tutors after the session.

Several times each week SCs will meet with students' classroom teachers to discuss progress and collaborate in the implementation of each student's Individual Reading Plan (IRP). The IRP is crafted at enrollment by the SC and Program Manager (PM) and outlines the strategies that should be used help each child make progress in reading skills. 1 to 2 hours per day are dedicated to tutoring make-up

# Narratives

sessions, to account for absent volunteer tutors or students and to ensure that students are receiving consistent weekly services. Make-up sessions occur approximately 5 times per week and take place when the PM is on-site to manage the other sessions.

There is also 1 hour of preparation time built into each day. During that time SCs review tutor notes, organize curriculum materials, coordinate tutoring schedules with teachers, input student data in the RP database, and respond to tutor emails.

PMs spend one full day a week at each school, observing SCs in action. They provide the SC with feedback and review strengths and challenges at the center. They also review student data, troubleshoot challenges, and engage in ongoing professional development for members. This time is also a valuable opportunity for the PM to mentor the SC by sharing their experience as a seasoned educator and manager.

How many members are you requesting? RP is requesting a total of 50 members. Of these members:

* 42 will serve as SCs

* 8 will serve as OCs

These members will leverage 1,850 volunteers to reach 1,700 students.

RP will also enter the second year of our grant with CV in the 2011-12 school year, through which we have 33 members. Of these members:

* 30 will serve as SCs

* 3 will serve as OCs

# Narratives

These members will leverage 1,650 volunteers to reach 1,500 students.

In total, RP will engage 83 members to reach 3,200 students nationwide.

What types of slots are needed for these members? RP is requesting full-time (1700 hour) slots for all members.

c. AmeriCorps Member Selection, Training, and Supervision

Describe your plans for recruiting members for your program. In our 3 years working with members we have developed successful recruitment strategies that have enabled us to fill and retain 100% of our positions every year:

* Close partnerships with community institutions and other nonprofits: We identify key partners in the communities we serve that can help us promote AmeriCorps opportunities. For example, RP collaborates with Teach for America to recruit candidates who have expressed an interest in education and AmeriCorps service.

* Building a Strong Web Presence: Our website clearly explains how our program works, including a page that describes a "day in the life" of a member, and candidates can submit their applications online. We also post opportunities on numerous websites, including VolunteerMatch, idealist.org, opportunityknocks.org, and websites of our recruitment partners.

# Narratives

* College and university recruitment: RP recruits at local college and university career fairs and posts openings at career centers. Recruiting recent college graduates gives RP a chance to energize young people to enter the field of education and/or service and provide tailored development opportunities to young professionals.

* Converting current tutors: Each year, based on their positive experience as RP tutors, volunteers express interest in SC and OC roles. In 2010-11, 8 out of 33 members started as volunteer tutors and were inspired to pursue an AmeriCorps position with RP.

RP's PMs and Program Directors (PDs) are responsible for interviewing candidates and selecting members to hire. They carefully select members who have shown a dedication to service. They discuss the stipend and set clear expectations with all potential hires.

A successful SC has experience working with elementary school students, teaching, and/or volunteer service. OCs have experience in customer service or community organizing. These candidates thrive in a dynamic and fast-paced environment, have the ability to work in diverse communities, and value teamwork and collaboration with fellow members, staff, and community partners.

Describe how the applicants selected for your program will reflect a diverse member corps. Our AmeriCorps Member Program Manual includes policies and procedures designed to ensure the diversity of all members of the RP team. These include ensuring that outreach activities are equitably distributed among diverse communities, prioritizing recruitment in under-represented communities, utilizing culturally sensitive interview techniques, and highlighting diversity as a core value in communications with potential members.

# Narratives

We recruit diverse members by working with a broad range of partners, including community service organizations, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, student groups, government agencies, and private sector companies.  From February to June we participate in community service and career fairs, emphasizing events that target diverse communities.  We craft recruitment materials to underscore the value we place on diversity and the wide range of our current members' backgrounds.

In 2010-11, the population of our members was composed of the following (more than one response possible):

* 48% Caucasian

* 24% Asian

* 12% African American

* 9% Latino

* 12% Multiple or declined to state

Describe how members will be included from the local communities to be served by your program. During the school year, we encourage our members to promote service opportunities in the communities they serve and make recruitment materials available at all of our program sites (20% of our current members come from the same neighborhoods our programs serve), and as mentioned above, 24% of members were tutors before becoming SCs.

Describe your plan for orienting members to AmeriCorps, the community they are serving, their placement site, and to the service they will perform. RP has developed an extensive training plan to

# Narratives

orient members. Before they recruit or supervise volunteers, members receive 3 weeks (120 hours) of pre-service training consisting of:

I. AmeriCorps Training

Topics covered during RP's AmeriCorps training include member rights and responsibilities, AmeriCorps and history of national service, performance measures, prohibited activities, contracts, timesheets, member handbooks, professional boundaries and confidentiality, and other CNCS-required subjects. Materials include Member Handbooks, timesheets, DVDs, study guides, and hands-on assessment practices. Members will also sign their contracts during this training.

Trainer: Contracted AmeriCorps personnel, RP's AmeriCorps Program Manager (ACPM), PMs

Workshop Example: Member Handbook Review

* Discuss prohibited activities

* Role play situations that relate to prohibited activities

* Reflect and discuss outcomes

II. RP Orientation

During RP Orientation, staff cover topics such as organizational dynamics, literacy and pedagogy, curriculum, student and tutor support, school systems, reading center management, volunteer management, database training, program evaluation, and reading assessments. RP draws from a variety of sources to develop a well-rounded training program. Materials include selected newspaper articles and best practices literature, as well as watch videos and practice with curriculum and assessments.

# Narratives

Trainer: PMs

Workshop Example: Literacy & Pedagogy -- An introduction

* Early Literacy Development (Elementary Benchmarks)

* Our Philosophy: Balanced Literacy (whole language vs. phonics vs. Open Court)

* Introduction to children's literature (authentic texts)

III. Center-based Training

After completing pre-service training at a regional office, members are provided with 1-to-1 coaching and orientation at their school sites. Members review and complete a center setup checklist, make introductions to school staff and conduct meetings with school personnel to discuss the program structure, and review student assessment processes. Members then complete classroom observations, schedule volunteers for orientations, and conduct student assessments. Finally, they schedule tutoring sessions. Members work closely with PMs using assessments, RP curriculum, videos, and checklists to setup their reading center and practice tutoring/assessing students.

Trainer: PMs

Workshop Example: Getting to Know Your School Site

* Create a school organizational chart

* Tour the school facilities

* Schedule introductory meetings with school staff

# Narratives

Describe how you will ensure that training provided to members will prepare members to perform all the activities they will engage in during their term of service: In our 3 years supervising members, RP has learned effective techniques for training members to prepare them for their roles. At the end of each training topic, the trainer checks for understanding from members. We also collect daily evaluations from members to ensure we are communicating effectively and providing relevant information. Our ongoing training, described below, ensures PMs have the opportunity to assess and respond to members' needs.

Describe, as necessary, the ongoing training provided to members throughout their terms. What are the anticipated training topics and the timeline for member training? As tutoring begins at centers, members continue to receive professional development and support at the following times:

1. On-site coaching (weekly): On 1 day each week members will receive on-site support from their PM. PMs will observe the member working with tutors and troubleshoot any issues at the center.

2. Team days (weekly): During team days (held on Fridays), a PM and their members cycle back to topics discussed in the orientation process, and address members' pressing needs. Examples of topics include community collaboration, cultural awareness, and assessment protocols. Members also may spend Fridays on-site, managing student data or handling other site maintenance tasks.

3. Professional Development Days (once monthly; coordinated with Days of National Service): RP holds Professional Development Days for all members once each month. Examples of topics include goal setting and community mapping, curriculum overview and practice, diversity training, CPR certification, and life after AmeriCorps.

# Narratives

4. Management Training Program: 2010-11 is the inaugural year of RP's Management Training Program (MTP). Created specifically for members, the MTP aims to foster transferrable skills and create a strong class of returning members. Members can apply to receive additional monthly trainings that prepare them to advance within the organization. Training topics include Leadership, People Management, and more in-depth education-related training. In 2010-11, 94% of our members applied to participate in the MTP.

In addition to ongoing training, RP provides close support and supervision to members. We have learned that frequent 'face time' is the key to providing a positive experience. SCs work in teams of 3-5 that serve specific communities and are led by PMs. PMs have extensive experience in education and are knowledgeable about the individual schools. Our low SC to PM ratio (4:1, on average) enables us to provide frequent on-site support and guidance to members. This team-oriented approach also facilitates collaboration amongst members. Members check in with PMs daily and report directly to PMs if a problem occurs. PMs also collect timesheets for members and participate in our compliance processes.

OCs work even more closely with RP staff members, typically on a 3:1 ratio. Each OC is directly supervised by a regional lead who will work with members on a daily basis to create and execute outreach plans for specific communities.

We provide additional support by creating opportunities for peer-to-peer mentoring among our members. Members have "peer buddies" they communicate with regularly, and we have an off-site retreat each year and staff meetings at least 4 times per year so that members can share experiences

# Narratives

and best practices.

Demonstrate how you will provide structured opportunities for participants to reflect on and learn from their service in order to promote a lifelong ethic of service and civic responsibility: The topics we select for professional development are used to underscore the importance of service and civic duty. Workshops are designed to create reflection opportunities, support team building, and promote a dedication to service with topics like 'Careers in Public Service.' Our MTP is also designed to expose members to career opportunities in the nonprofit/public service field and prepare them for those roles, energizing them to continue serving their communities once their AmeriCorps term is over. Finally, at the end of each program year, we conduct a reflection exercise that is driven by the results of the program and members' personal experiences.

d. Outcome: Performance Measures

What is the overall change you want to see by the end of the three-year grant cycle? By the end of our three-year grant cycle, we anticipate recruiting 150 members to reach 5,100 students. At least 1,995 of the students we reach will improve academic performance by 1 grade level.

How will you measure impact? As a CV grantee, RP has already opted in to the National Performance Measures for Tutoring (Education Priority Area).

Primary PM: National Performance Measure
42 members will train and support volunteers to provide tutoring. By ensuring that volunteers are well trained, members have a direct impact on the end outcome, which is an increase in reading level

# Narratives

for students served. We will do the following each year:

1. 1,700 students will start our AmeriCorps Education program, as measured by student attendance logs.

2. Of the 1,700 who begin our program, 1,140 will complete participation of the AmeriCorps Education program  (16 hours), as measured by student attendance logs.

3. 65% of 1,025 (665) high-need target students who receive 16 hours of tutoring will increase academic performance by 1 grade level, as measured by RIGBY assessments calibrated to standardized test scores.

PM: Volunteer Recruitment

8 members will recruit volunteers to serve as tutors in local public schools. By reaching out to organizations and individuals to inform them about volunteer opportunities, members can effectively engage citizens in improving the welfare of their local communities.

1. 1,850 volunteers recruited for on-going activities and one-time activities, as measured by volunteer logs.

2. 52,675 volunteer hours logged for on-going activities and one-time activities, as measured by volunteer logs.

3. 85% (1573) of the 1850 volunteers cleared to tutor will complete their commitment of at least 1 hour per week until the end of the semester in which they begin tutoring.

PM: Common Member Development PM: Member Development

RP will provide members with comprehensive training as discussed in our training plan. We will do

# Narratives

the following in our first year of programming:

1. 50 members will participate in 11,000 training hours as measured by training logs.

2. 45 members (90%) will increase by one performance level in any rubric area scored 'below satisfactory' as measured by performance reviews in June vs. September.

How did you determine your performance measure targets? RP has set our targets for student achievement based on 10 years of experience collecting and analyzing data for students participating in our program. Our member development targets have been determined by our previous experience with members, and our volunteer targets are determined by our 3 years of previous experience using OCs to engage community members in service.

Standardized assessment data show that the RP approach to literacy intervention is extremely effective. Last year, 88% of RP students measurably benefited, gaining on average 1.7 months in reading skills for every month spent in the program. Additionally, surveys show that 85% of our volunteers are more interested in issues of public education after their service and 90% state they intend to continue volunteering in the community. Finally, 96% of volunteers reported satisfaction with their RP experience, and 100% of principals & teachers identified RP as a valuable asset to their school.

e. Volunteer Generation

Describe how the proposed program will recruit volunteers to expand the reach/impact in the community: As discussed in 'Solution: AmeriCorps member roles & responsibilities', our full-time

# Narratives

Outreach Managers work with OC members to develop specific volunteer outreach plans for each school, creating partnerships with other organizations in the community. We also canvas neighborhoods and utilize web-based recruitment strategies, including our own website. Year over year, RP retains approximately 70% of its volunteers.

How will volunteers help meet the identified community needs? RP volunteers commit to working 1-on-1 with a student, following a program proven to bring students to grade level in reading ability, thereby meeting the identified community need.

What will be the role(s) of volunteers? Ongoing volunteers serve as tutors in our Reading Centers. One-time volunteer activities may include corporate days of service, community based volunteer call drives, or supporting OCs with targeted outreach projects Volunteers are also financial supporters of our organization: in 2009-10, 60% of them supported RP with a donation of either books or dollars. Finally, RP National and Regional board members are also volunteers, contributing their expertise in business, education, and philanthropy as advisors to RP.

What role will AmeriCorps members have in volunteer recruitment and management?  As described above, OCs and SCs are directly responsible for volunteer recruitment and management. Please see 'What will members do?'

f. Partnerships and Collaboration

Who are your community stakeholders and partners? How are they involved in planning and implementing the proposed program? RP's foremost community stakeholders are the schools we

# Narratives

partner with. We work closely with schools, districts, and teachers, becoming a part of the school community and maintaining close communication with each principal throughout the school year to ensure we achieve our shared goals.

In addition to our school partners, we have numerous other community partners that help to sustain our programs, including:

* Community-based organizations: High schools, colleges and universities are essential volunteer recruitment partners. For example, at Cal State Hayward, college student volunteers can earn work study funds for serving as volunteers.
* Nonprofits: Through our partnerships we share information on best practices and collaborate to promote our mission. Our partnership with Jumpstart led us to operate a pilot collaboration designed to ensure transitions from preschool to kindergarten in areas where our programs overlap.
* Private Foundations: Currently RP receives 46% of its revenue through foundation grants. Foundation supporters play a key role in making program decisions or providing tactical support; in the Bay Area, Tipping Point Community provided a targeted investment for executive coaching.
* Corporations: Accounting for 8% of our revenue, corporations are a major asset to our program providing funding, sponsorships, publicity, and volunteer recruitment channels. We receive match dollars for volunteer time from several large corporations, and companies such as Salesforce.com have partnered with us to host volunteer events for their employees.

g. Sustainability

Outline your plans for ensuring that the impact of your program in the community is sustainable

# Narratives

beyond the presence of federal support: Because RP was in operation for 7 years prior to hosting AmeriCorps members, we are confident in our ability to continue operations even if our federal support is reduced. We have a diverse revenue base, with a growing number of schools directly supporting the program. Corporations, foundations, and individual donors alike also support RP, and we retain over 90% of our funders year over year.

RP also focuses on building community awareness and establishing strong relationships, crucial to sustaining our program. In each community we serve, RP establishes a Regional Board to build connections with local leaders. RP regional board members help with the planning regional growth and assist in efforts to secure local philanthropic support and generate publicity and volunteers. They also play an ongoing role as advocates and ambassadors for RP in their community.

Finally, as a volunteer program, RP makes it easy for community members to invest in their local public schools. Tutors become our biggest advocates as they return to their communities, and bring with them a different perspective on public education system and their role in creating positive change. Each year, roughly 70% of volunteers enroll again to tutor, creating local demand for our services and ensuring its sustainability.

h. Tutoring programs only

If you are proposing to operate a tutoring program, describe how your process complies with AmeriCorps requirements for member tutoring qualifications.

The RP program is compliant with the CNCS guidelines for tutoring programs in the following ways:

# Narratives

1. RP requires that all members have at least a high school diploma or its equivalent and successfully complete a 120 hour training program prior to the start of the program year and regular in-service trainings during the program year.  Community volunteers also undergo a training program that consists of both online and in-school instruction.

2. RP uses the Rigby PM assessment kit to track student progress and measure student outcomes. Students are assessed three times per year and tutors use the data to guide instruction. On a weekly basis, members review tutoring notes and conference with PMs to adapt individual student's intervention plans.

3. For all tutoring, RP uses a highly structured curriculum that is aligned with state content standards. Upon entry into RP, every student is assessed and placed into one of the three curricular programs depending on the student's academic needs and reading skill level.

4. RP's training program is designed by expert educators to prepare tutors and members for their work in reading centers. Training materials are drawn from a variety of sources and clearly articulate best practices and connect to state standards.

5. Members are closely supervised by PMs.  Every PM has a minimum of 5 years of experience in education and either a current teaching credential, or a master's degree in education or higher.

**Organizational Capability**

a. Organizational Background

Identify the primary and secondary contacts for this grant application: Primary: Michael Lombardo, CEO; Secondary: Matt Aguiar, COO.

Describe your organization's prior experience administering AmeriCorps grants or other federal funds:

# Narratives

RP effectively managed members in 08-09 and 09-10 as a host site for 3 different agencies: BAYAC (San Francisco Bay Area), Child Abuse Prevention Council (Sacramento), and Public Allies (Los Angeles). This helped us learn from the experience of some of our founding state's top AmeriCorps programs while also developing our own ability to manage the day-to-day logistics of member placements. Last year, 100% of our members completed their term of service and 67% returned for a second year of service.

In May of 2010, RP secured a $1.5M grant from CV, becoming a direct AmeriCorps program for the first time. We are also continuing to partner as a host-site for other organizations, including Public Allies in Washington DC and BAYAC in California (for VISTA support). After securing the grant from CV, RP hired a full-time AmeriCorps Program Manager (ACPM) who is responsible for handling the logistics and management of the grant and is our primary point of contact for CV.

Describe your organization's experience raising funds to support service activities and initiatives. Please list all sources of organizational funding in this section, and what percent the proposed project represents in your budget: RP has seen incredible fundraising success over the past 5 years, allowing us to grow from serving 3 schools in one region to 38 schools nationwide. In 09-10 RP posted its most successful fundraising year on record, increasing our revenue by 50% and securing 27 grants from new funders. RP ended 2010-11 ahead of budget with revenue diversification strategies in place. The proposed project represents 11% of our 2011-12 operating budget.

If you have received support from CNCS during the last five years, please specify what type of support your received. What percentage of your total funding comes from CNCS? Our 2010-13 grant from CV represents 16% of our FY11 operating budget. Other sources of support in FY11 include foundations

# Narratives

(46%), corporations (8%), individual contributions (7%), in-kind contributions (18%), and fee-for-service revenue (5%).

If you already operate an AmeriCorps program, describe how it is integrated and supported within your organization. Include information explaining your organization's management structure and how the board of directors (if applicable), administrators, and staff members will be used to support your program: Since becoming an AmeriCorps program in May, RP has focused on integrating AC at every level of our organization and providing members with the best support possible. Our ACPM supervises the overall AC program and PMs directly manage members. PMs train and support members as they perform their service within schools and serve as the educational experts at each program site. PMs are supervised by our Regional Program Directors, who report directly to our Chief Operating Officer.

Our COO oversees volunteer recruitment, data collection, and program integration.  We also have a Chief Financial Officer who directs our finance and accounting functions. RP has 3 development staff members responsible for fundraising from public and private sources.

Our CEO, Michael Lombardo, came to RP after five years as a senior administrator at the University of California, Berkeley. During his tenure, he has transformed Reading Partners from a small organization in Silicon Valley with a staff of just 6 employees to the national leader that RP is today, with sites in 19 school districts and a staff of 60.

The Board of Directors provides overall governance of the organization and supports external relations and fundraising, with 100% of directors making personal contributions to the organization each year.

# Narratives

The board also provides strategic support to the CEO, approves and monitors the annual budget, works with staff on long-term planning, and oversees our annual external audit.

b. Staffing

Who will staff the AmeriCorps program and what is their specific role? What is their relevant experience? Responsible for staffing the program are our ACPMs and PMs. Our ACPM, Kristarae Flynn, came to RP after serving as the Director of Community Development at Public Allies, where she supervised AmeriCorps members and partnerships in the San Francisco region. PMs have at least a master's degree in education and a minimum of 5 years of relevant work experience, and have typically worked with members before.

If positions are currently vacant, please describe the desired qualifications for each open position: If awarded, RP will hire an additional ACPM to manage the grant. This person will develop support structures for members and ensure compliance with AmeriCorps rules, regulations, reporting, and training requirements. RP will also hire additional PMs to supervise new sites. In addition to the requirements stated above, PMs have previous experience in urban public schools.

What are your plans for: providing financial and programmatic orientation; training and technical assistance; and monitoring for compliance to your program and service sites? ACPMs will provide orientation, training, and technical assistance to members. They will regularly monitor sites, collect feedback from members, conduct background checks, and provide training and staff development throughout the year. In addition to the on-site program management provided by PMs, ACPMs will visit members on-site at least 3 times per year to check-in and monitor performance.

# Narratives

c. Multi-state Applicants Only

Describe the manner and extent to which you consulted with the State Commission in the states in which you plan to operate. RP completed consultation forms in each state we plan to operate in: DC, CA, NC, and NY. We also had meetings with the DC, CA, and NY commissions.

d. Multi-site applicants only

Identify your proposed member service sites. Please see list in 'Rationale and Approach.'

Describe your process for selecting operating and service sites and ensuring they have adequate programmatic and financial capabilities to succeed: RP works closely with school districts to identify sites in need of our program. Once the district identifies schools, RP interviews principals to find a match. During interviews we discuss space requirements, the "pull out" structure of our program, and existing community involvement. RP expects that schools will establish open lines of communication with our staff, members, and management team. Schools are also responsible for sharing student data so that we can best serve their students. RP ensures that each site has sufficient philanthropic support, and this year 38% of schools are contributing to the cost of running the program; we expect this percentage to increase further in FY12. We have developed strong compliance policies as part of our receipt of public funds that are externally audited each year.

How will your site selection process incorporate the criteria required by AmeriCorps regulations? When selecting sites, RP utilizes an internal rubric as well as the criteria required by AmeriCorps;

# Narratives

many of the factors considered overlap. Our rubric includes an assessment of the school's FRPL % and % of students reading below grade level, as well as ratings for volunteer recruitment feasibility, principal buy-in, and whether or not the school has a space available to host the program.

What are your current or previous programmatic and funding relationships with the sites?  Of the 66 sites we plan to serve for the 2011-12, RP has pre-existing relationships with 55%. Of the new sites, RP has established written agreements with 100%.

e. Current Grantees Only

Enrollment: RP enrolled 100% in our last full year of program operations and has enrolled 100% of slots in the current program year.

Retention: RP retained 100% of members in our last full year of program operation and has retained 100% of members in the current program year.

f. Special Circumstances: Over the past five years, RP has grown from 3 sites in one region to 38 sites in 5 regions. Next year, RP is projecting a total of 66 sites in 7 regions. Our program has proven to be scalable and replicable and we are committed to ensuring we maintain the same level of program quality that has distinguished us. In the year ahead we will invest heavily in additional capacity for program administration, increasing the ratio of support staff to schools and keeping the ratio of PMs to SCs low. We will also continue the ongoing data collection and self-assessment that has kept our program results consistent year after year. Our rapid growth is a testament to the strong demand for our services from the communities we serve. Yet, this demand still far outweighs our ability to meet

# Narratives

it: RP has a "wait list" of 60+ schools that have requested our program. A national partnership with AmeriCorps will be a crucial component in our ability to meet this demand going forward.

**Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy**

Demonstrate how your program has or will obtain diverse non-federal sources for program implementation: RP's organizational budget for FY11 (August 1, 2010 -- July 31, 2011) is $3.5M. Currently, 80% of RP's revenue ($2.8M) comes from private sources. Over the past four years, we have built a solid development team to cultivate these private revenue streams and have shown an ability to growth them significantly.

The key to our ability to develop diverse revenue streams is the ability to manage complex grants and an organization-wide emphasis on measurable results for students. Foundation and corporate funders in particular value a clear demonstration of a return on their investment, which the data-driven RP model delivers. By showing strong results that are backed up by standardized assessments, we are able to engage a diverse group of institutional funders.

Indicate how much funding your program needs from non-Corporation sources to support the project: RP will raise $2,416,597 from private sources to support the project. Our proposed budget for the three-year grant period reflects a 4:1 match of all AmeriCorps funds. These funds will be a combination of private donations and support from school districts.

Indicate the non-corporation resource commitments (in-kind and cash) that you have obtained to date and the sources of these funds: Our largest foundation funders providing match include Tipping Point Community, NewSchools Venture Fund, the Heising-Simons Foundation, the Koret Foundation, and the Heckscher Foundation for Children. Our largest corporate funders include Union Bank,

## Narratives

Symantec, Oracle, and Yahoo!.

Indicate what additional commitments you plan to secure, and how you will secure them: RP has secured approximately $647,500 in in-kind commitments from schools (donated space). While RP will continue to grow its fundraising income, there is also great growth potential in earned revenue. Fee-for-service revenue is already increasing at a much more rapid pace than philanthropic revenue year-over-year, from 5 out of 24 schools participating in 2009-10 (21%) to 14 out of 37 in 2010-11 (38%). Given RP's ability to tap multiple types of fee-for-service revenue, the high level of satisfaction among current principals, and the backlog of demand, continuing to grow our fee-for-service revenue is a top priority.

b. Current grantees only

Describe the extent to which you are increasing your share of costs to meet or exceed program goals, or the extent to which you are proposing deeper impact or broader reach without a commensurate increase in Federal funds. N/A

c. Special circumstances: Cost Effectiveness

We are requesting $13,300 per MSY in order to provide members with a high level of support and adequate salary relative to the cost of living in the communities we serve. In turn, we will use philanthropy to leverage funding and make every dollar count. The following are reasons that we have requested the maximum cost per MSY:

* We provide our members with an unusually high degree of support with a low program manager to

# Narratives

member ratio (1:4 average);

* We are able to serve 34 students per MSY, making our program extremely cost-effective;

* We pay our members more than the minimum living allowance because of the relatively high cost of living in urban areas;

* Since our programs are run in urban areas, the entire cost of doing business is higher; and

* Our programs are heavily leveraged by philanthropy (4:1 match of requested CNCS funds).

d. Budget Adequacy

Discuss the adequacy of your budget to support your program design including how it is sufficient to support your program activities and desired outputs and outcomes. RP has 10 years of experience operating our core program we have developed strong systems for budget development and adherence. These ensure that we have adequately forecasted the expenses necessary to deliver high quality programs that produce our desired outputs.

The first step in guaranteeing the adequacy of our budget is our comprehensive budget development process. This process involves our CEO, COO, and National Board, and begins at the end of the third quarter of our financial year with a line by line review of expenses for the year-to-date and prior year, as well as a revenue forecast for the year ahead. This process was designed to ensure we are at or below budget each month and at the close of the fiscal year -- in our last fiscal year, we were 4% below budget.

Our 10 years of budgeting experience and 3 years of hosting members allows us to project costs accurately and plan accordingly. As the organization grows, it is important that we ensure our core

# Narratives

business operations (accounting, human resources, information technology, etc.) keep pace. In the case of a new funding stream such as AmeriCorps, a specific staff position will be created to manage grant logistics, as noted above. We will also hire additional PMs to supervise members. This staffing increase will ensure we have the employee bandwidth necessary to produce the desired outcomes for children.

Finally, we have crafted our budget with the goal of leveraging CNCS funding as effectively as possible. Our high level of match (4:1) means we are making the best use of CNCS funds and have significant private stakeholders committed to our program.

**Evaluation Summary or Plan**

N/A

**Amendment Justification**

N/A

**Clarification Summary**

(1) Budget Clarification Items

(A) Please revise your budget to equal the funding amount and MSY under consideration.

Reading Partners (RP) has revised the budget to equal 40 MSY.

(B) Section I. A. Personnel Expense

- The Budget identifies one ACPM and the narrative identifies two ACPM, please align the budget with the narrative and correct accordingly.

# Narratives

RP will have two AmeriCorps Program Managers (ACPMs) in FY12: one ACPM will be devoted exclusively to managing RP's contract with CaliforniaVolunteers, and the other will manage RP's contract with national direct (if awarded).

- Clarify the role of the Program Director (PD) which is referenced in the narrative but is not listed in the budget.

This role is reflected in the budget as Regional Director. Regional Directors manage and support Program Managers (who in turn manage and support members) and oversee an RP region of service. This title may change slightly based on leadership in each region, but this person always has significant experience working in urban public schools with vulnerable populations.

- Clarify the role of the two Program Coordinators listed on the budget.

A Program Coordinator oversees a portfolio of 2-3 school sites. They are responsible for the day-to-day management of the member (Site Coordinator (SC)) placed at the site, and spend one full day a week at each school, observing SCs in action. They provide the SC with feedback and review strengths and challenges at the center. They also review student data, troubleshoot challenges, and engage in ongoing professional development for members. The Program Coordinator role is often filled by former AmeriCorps members who have participated in RP's two-year Management Training Program (MTP). The Program Coordinator is junior to the Program Manager (PM) role. PMs oversee 4-5 school sites and hold at least a master's degree in education.

# Narratives

- Clarify the Outreach Manager position as the program narrative indicates plural and the budget has one listed.

Similar to the ACPM role, RP will have two Outreach Managers (OMs) in FY12. The OM reflected in the budget will manage the Outreach Coordinators under our National Direct contract, if awarded.

- Please confirm that the staff members listed as 100% on the AmeriCorps budget are not involved in fundraising or grant writing (including drafting of the AmeriCorps grant proposal).  Additionally, because the Reading Partners is not solely an AmeriCorps program, please confirm that the duties do not include support for programming beyond AmeriCorps.  If necessary, please adjust the time allocated to the AmeriCorps budget for these staff members.

We have adjusted the time for the Regional Director to 80% to allow for any fundraising activities this person may participate in. The duties of the staff listed do not include support for programming beyond AmeriCorps and will work only on the national direct grant.

(C) Section I.C. Staff and Member Travel

- Please include costs for participation in a CNCS sponsored meeting per Application Instructions.

These costs are now reflected in the budget.

- Clarify which are the regional trainings that require airfare for 25 members.

# Narratives

The regional training requiring airfare for members is RP's AmeriCorps Training and Orientation in August, which will be held at RP headquarters in Oakland, CA. Because of our reduced MSY, we have adjusted the number of members requiring airfare to 24. These members will be travelling from New York, Washington, DC, and Los Angeles.

(D) Section I.E. Supplies

- Clarify that the member polo shirts and sweatshirts will display the AmeriCorps logo.

Member polo shirts and sweatshirts display the AmeriCorps logo on the right sleeve.

(E) Section I.H. Evaluation

- Clarify the process involved to validate assessments to better help understand the $22,000 expense.

In the fall of 2009, RP embarked on a 3-year Randomized Control Trial (RCT) in partnership with Deborah Stipek, Dean of the Stanford University School of Education. Over the past two years, Dean Stipek has met regularly with RP to consult on the design of the study, advise us on data collection, and monitor its progress.

The goal of the study is to measure the impact of the RP program. By the end of the 2010-11 school year, RP will have sufficient data to permit rigorous evaluation of the study's research questions, which include:

# Narratives

1. Does the RP Program improve students' reading proficiency, and by how much?

2. How does the rate of improvement vary as a function of time in the RP program?

3. Do the proficiency gains of RP students vary depending on the grade at which they enter the program, and how far below grade level they are reading when they enter?

4. Do the benefits of program participation persist over time (after exit from the program)?

The costs associated with this study, and reflected in the budget, include data aggregation and analysis by Dean Stipek and her graduate students.

(F) Section I. I Other Program Operating Costs

- Explain the rational for 800 people to receive fingerprinting service as the program narrative includes 1,850 volunteers.

RP's volunteer intake process requires that tutors be fingerprinted prior to their placement at a school. Volunteers pay for fingerprinting, and then submit their receipt for reimbursement by RP. Not all volunteers submit for reimbursement, and some volunteers are returning from previous years and don't need fingerprinting, so the number of fingerprinting service expenses is lower than the number of volunteers. The amount reflected in the budget is based on the average percentage from previous years, and has been adjusted to 600 volunteers based on our reduced MSY.

- Clarify the allocation method employed to the estimated expenses associated with rent for 35 classroom spaces.

# Narratives

These estimated expenses are based on actual values from donated classroom in-kind expenses in the 2010-11 school year. The value of the space is determined by the school and updated on an annual basis.

(2) Programmatic Clarification Items

Please make the following change in the Executive Summary Section of the Narrative:

(A) The Executive Summary referenced a specific number of AmeriCorps members.  Please revise the Executive Summary by removing the number of proposed AmeriCorps members.

RP has made this change to the Executive Summary.

(B) Please confirm your desired grant award start date and member enrollment period start date.

Reading Partners' desired grant award start date and member enrollment period start date is 8/1/11.

(C) Please describe your plans for allocating member positions among sites based on the funding amount under consideration.

The reduced number of MSY under consideration will change Reading Partners' allocation plans most significantly in North Carolina. Because of our management structure, it is preferable for Reading Partners not to enroll any national direct members in North Carolina, which would have been a new region of service in 2011-12, rather than a reduced number. Reading Partners will enroll the bulk of

# Narratives

our national direct members in New York, Washington, DC, and in the South Bay and Los Angeles regions of California. We will also enroll members in our San Francisco/East Bay region. The table below details the schools RP will serve with national direct members/% of students eligible for FRPL at the school/% of 3rd graders reading proficiently at the school/# of ND members we will place at each site under the proposed grant:

Washington, DC sites:

Community Academy PCS -- Butler/98/46/1

Center City Congress Heights/67/19/1.5

Brightwood/90/20/1.5

DC Prep Edgewood Elementary/62/57/1

DC Bilingual/71/30/1

Webb Elementary/85/6/1

Los Angeles, CA sites:

Andrew Jackson/70/31/1.5

Washington/70/34/1.5

William Green/81/40/1

FDR/Carson/82/26/1

New York, NY sites:

Achievement First Brownsville/79/30/1

Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter/85/32/1.5

Democracy Prep Harlem/80/35/1.5

# Narratives

PS 154X (Hyatt)/99/25/1

PS 33Q (Funk)/75/55/1

PS 188 (Island School)/91/4/1


South Bay (Santa Clara county), CA sites :

Mt. Pleasant/86/29/1

Horace Mann/79/37/1.5

Horace Cureton/78/39/1.5

Montague/57/27/1

Los Arboles/82/26/1

Robert F. Kennedy/73/53/1


San Francisco/East Bay sites:

Leonard Flynn/66/26/3

Learning Without Limits/78/21/3


Reading Partners Regional Offices (Office/ND members placed):

San Francisco, CA/1

Los Angeles, CA/1

Milpitas, CA/2

New York, NY/2

Washington, DC/2


(D) Your organization already operates an AmeriCorps program in California through the California

# Narratives

Commission, but the narrative does not describe how the funds, activities and management of these two programs will be managed and tracked separately.  Please:

(i.) Explain whether national direct members will be placed at the same, or different, sites as commission-funded members.  AmeriCorps regulations prohibit the Corporation from funding the same project at the same locations through two different grants.

Reading Partners will place national direct members and state commission-funded members at different program sites. As described in the narrative, RP groups members into teams of 3-5 that serve specific communities and are led by Program Managers or Program Coordinators. In addition to placing national direct and commission-funded members at different sites, each team will consist of either solely national direct or CaliforniaVolunteers members. In addition to exclusively national direct members serving in New York and Washington, DC, they will serve in 3 of our 5 California regions: the South Bay, Los Angeles, and San Francisco/East Bay. Members under the CaliforniaVolunteers grant will be placed in the San Francisco/East Bay, Peninsula, and Sacramento regions. We believe this allocation plan will significantly streamline management and reporting, and we have vetted our revised allocation plan with CaliforniaVolunteers .

(ii.) Explain whether national direct members will be carrying out the same, or different, activities as state commission-funded members;

National direct members will be carrying out the same or similar activities as state commission-funded members, but they will be placed at different sites, listed above.

# Narratives

(iii.) Explain whether any staff positions or member supervisors will be working on both the national direct and state commission grants;

Reading Partners has restructured our member allocation plan such every individual member will only work on one grant, and that direct supervisors of members will also only be allocated to one grant.

Two positions listed in the budget (Chief Operating Officer and Regional Director (SF Silicon Valley)) are senior positions filled by individuals who will be managing multiple Program Managers/Coordinators. Therefore, they will be managing member supervisors who may be working on either the national direct or CaliforniaVolunteers grant. We have adjusted their % time on the national direct grant based on their management portfolios. As noted above, all member supervisors will manage members related to only one grant.

(iv.) Explain how you will ensure that data from the national direct members and state commission-funded members will be tracked and aggregated separately, to ensure there is no duplication of reported data.

Reading Partners will use our custom database, called the Student Information System (SIS), to track all data from national direct and state commission-funded members. The SIS enables tracking of individual student data, which can then be directly linked to specific program sites and the individual AmeriCorps members providing services at those sites.  As noted above, the national direct and CaliforniaVolunteers members will be serving different program sites in different regions.

# Narratives

(E) This program currently operates this program in California and Washington, DC.  Please identify how the AmeriCorps program will add value to this existing multi-state program.

A partnership with national direct would add tremendous value to our program. If awarded, RP will be able to deepen our services in existing regions -- serving more students at more sties in California and Washington, DC -- and expand to new states, the next of which will be New York.

While RP could staff program sites in other ways, and has in the past, we have learned that a partnership with AmeriCorps provides us with a tremendous opportunity. With our own contract, we are able to directly recruit mission-driven Americans dedicated to service and eager to work in urban public schools. We also have the flexibility and support we need to provide strong professional development opportunities to members and ensure service is effective. Reading Partners has developed an extensive, ongoing training program, which clearly outlines potential career paths within the organization and ensures strong retention. Reading Partners sees our AmeriCorps members as the future leaders of organization -- and in fact, many current full-time employees were members first -- and a partnership with national direct allows us to directly cultivate and train members for roles of greater leadership and responsibility within RP.

(F) The Executive Summary references students gaining a grade level with 25 hours of tutoring, however, the stated outcomes identify that 16 hours of tutoring will advance the grade level.  As a result of this discrepancy, the dosage required to achieve the desired outcomes is unclear. Clarify the amount of tutoring to be provided to increase the grade level, and edit the Executive Summary and outcomes appropriately.

## Narratives

Reading Partners has edited the Executive Summary and outcomes accordingly. The dosage required to achieve the desired outcome is 16 hours. As stated in our revised Performance Measure, 65% of 777 (505) high-need target students receiving at least 16 hours of tutoring will increase their literacy skills by 1 grade level or more.

(G) Please confirm the selection and qualifications of the volunteer tutors to ensure they have met High School diploma or its equivalent requirements.

Per further clarification from Program Officer Lora Pollari-Welbes, Reading Partners' volunteer tutors do not have to hold high school degrees in order to administer tutoring sessions. While most of our tutors do hold high school degrees, some are current high school students. Reading Partners' high school student tutors undergo a rigorous training to ensure they have the skills necessary to effectively tutor children. Before they begin tutoring, they must complete our New Tutor Orientation (NTO), which instructs them in our methodology and curriculum. They must also take part in a shadow session, wherein they observe a tutoring session firsthand at a school site. Site Coordinators, with the support of their Program Coordinator or Manager, are then responsible for providing ongoing coaching and support to tutor/student pairs and holding quarterly tutor trainings to instruct them in educational best practices.

(H) Please provide additional information related to school partner collaboration including how sites are secured and how they are engaged in the program's development and support.

Reading Partners works closely with school districts and current partners to identify Title I schools in need of the program. Once a school has been identified as a potential partner, we employ an extensive

# Narratives

rubric to assess a school's compatibility with our program model before signing an MOU. This rubric vets factors such as the percentage of students at the school who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch; the school's current leadership; our ability to recruit volunteers and access local philanthropy; the availability of fee-for-service revenue; access to students' state testing data; and whether or not space is available to house our program within the school.

Once a school partner is selected and an MOU has been signed, Reading Partners' staff meets with principals and teachers regularly to ensure successful program integration. Principals and teachers work together to refer the highest-need students to the Reading Partners program, where we assess their current reading level, enroll them in the program, and develop and Individualized Reading Plan (IRP). Over the course of the year, RP continues to meet regularly with school staff to assess student progress and access testing data. We also conduct surveys of teachers and principals throughout the year in order to evaluate the qualitative benefits of our program.

(I) Criminal history checks must be conducted on all members, employees or other individuals who receive a salary, education award, living allowance, stipend or similar payment from the grant, regardless of whether these costs are coming from federal or non-federal share. Criminal history background checks include a search of statewide criminal history repositories and the National Sex Offender Public Website for all members and employees as described above. An FBI check is also required for members, employees or other individuals with recurring access to vulnerable populations. A detailed description of the requirements can be found at: http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/criminal-history.

Please verify that criminal history checks will be conducted on all members, employees and other

# Narratives

individuals as described above. You may revise the budget to include these costs, if necessary but may not exceed the level of funding for which you are under consideration.

Reading Partners will complete FBI background checks on all staff and AmeriCorps members before 8/1/11. Full background checks are completed for members on 8/1/11 and members will not have access to vulnerable populations until their results have cleared. Volunteers participating in the RP program will also undergo criminal background checks as a condition of their service.

(2) Performance Measure Clarification Items

Clarification items for national performance measures reflect our assessment of the following criteria:

- measures align with the need, activities and outcomes described in the narrative,

- outputs and outcomes are correctly aligned as directed in the NOFO background document, and

- measures utilize rigorous methodologies to demonstrate significant impacts.

To ensure that we are capturing significant program impacts, we have requested the removal of applicant development measures that:

- are composed primarily of outputs,

- do not reflect the program's primary member activities, and

- have outcomes that do not capture measurable change, such as changes in attitudes rather than knowledge or behavior, or self-reported outcomes.

Please make the following changes in the Performance Measures fields in eGrants:

(A) Please review all of your performance measures and determine if any changes are needed to reflect the funding and MSY amount specified above. Revise the MSY allocated to Focus Areas. Revise any targets and results in the performance measures in eGrants.

# Narratives

RP has revised our targets and results in the Performance Measures fields.

(B) Member Development:  While we recognize that member development is an essential element of program design, as reflected in the application review criteria, we are not able to aggregate data from applicant-determined member development measures.  For this reason, we are directing applicants to eliminate member development measures from their grant application so they won't be required to report on them to the Corporation.  Applicants whose program design focuses on helping economically disadvantaged members complete their high school education, attend college, and/or obtain employment should consider opting into the national performance measures for member development in the Opportunity Focus Area.

Understandably a grantee may find it valuable for its programs to collect member development data even if these measures are not part of the AmeriCorps grant application and subsequent grant award.  Please consider deleting this measure.

RP has deleted this measure.

(C) Education National Performance Measure:  Please clarify the definition of students who complete the program and have improved performance.  Define in the Strategy and PM Statement how 16 hours of tutoring will increase academic performance by one grade level as the application narrative does not explain how 16 hours of tutoring will result in a 1 year grade level advancement.  The Executive Summary identifies an intervention of 25 hours.  Please align the narrative and the performance measure to reflect a consistent approach in the intervention.

# Narratives

RP has aligned the narrative and the performance measure to be consistent in our desired minimum dosage of 16 hours.

Additional clarification items, 5/9/11:

1) In the Clarification Narrative section, please explain why the Living Allowance provided increased from $15,000 in the original application to $16,000 in the current budget.

Based on our reduced MSY, Reading Partners revised the geographical allocation plan for our members. Members were reallocated, in some cases, to areas with higher costs of living. To allow us to provide an adequate stipend to all members, Reading Partners increased this item in our current budget.

2) In the Clarification Narrative section, please provide the status of any concurrently planned AmeriCorps VISTA members and how their roles are different from the proposed AmeriCorps National members.

Reading Partners has been awarded a VISTA contract and we are planning to recruit 6 VISTA members in the coming year. Of these members, 3 will serve as Community Builders (2 in Los Angeles county, 1 in Yolo county), 2 will serve as Outreach Architects (1 each in Alameda and Santa Clara counties), and 1 will serve as a Development VISTA (in Alameda county).

Community Builder (CB) and Outreach Architect (OA) roles are different from Site Coordinator (SC) and Outreach Coordinator (OC) roles. CB VISTAs will be placed in communities RP is not currently

# Narratives

serving with historically low volunteer rates. Their role will be capacity-building in nature: they will be placed at school sites new to RP for the 2011-12 program year, and their focus will be on building the infrastructure necessary to make the site self-sustaining over the course of a year. Once the site infrastructure is in place, CBs will focus on recruiting volunteers and increasing awareness of our program in the community, building a localized volunteer pipeline. CBs will not only recruit individual volunteers, they will build relationships with community organizations and develop a specific tactical plan for outreach and recruitment, including methods, timelines and benchmarks. They will then integrate these plans into our database for increased efficiencies and access by different users.

At the end of their term, CBs will leave a site start-up handbook in place, including information on the community relationships they have formed and the structure they have instituted at their assigned school. The handbook will ensure their best practices transfer to future site directors after completion of the project.

The OA role is tactically and strategically different from that of national direct members. Instead of recruiting individual volunteers, OAs will be focused on developing relationships with recruitment partners. These may include high schools, community colleges, universities, corporations, small businesses, service organizations, and rotaries. The OA role will allow RP to develop a method for recruiting volunteers in cohorts -- increasing efficiency across the organization.

At the conclusion of their term, OA VISTAs will have developed partnership manuals to pass on, detailing their various community contacts, relationships held, and level of engagement with each for future outreach personnel.

# Narratives

Finally, RP's Development VISTA will perform duties related to private fundraising. They will focus on systematizing and creating efficiencies in our fundraising efforts through various methods. They will draft and finalize RP proposal and report templates that will be used to engage and steward funders and will be sustainable once the VISTA project is complete and replicable and we expand to new sites. They will develop a calendar of events and create templates for event execution. The VISTA will build RP's presence on social networking sites and create a system for updating those sites. Finally, the Development VISTA will perform marketing research and create engaging materials for RP with brand consistent messaging.

3)  In the Performance Measure Section for the Volunteer Recruitment measure:  The Output Statement conflicts with the Target. Please correct the Statement:  Reading Partners will recruit 1,500 volunteers who will serve for 40,775 hours.  The Intermediate Outcome Statement also refers to 1,500 volunteers.  Please align the references to the number of volunteers so it is clear in the Output and Outcome how many volunteers are recruited and serving.

Reading Partners has revised this Performance Measure.

**Continuation Changes**

N/A

# Performance Measures

**SAA Characteristics**

☐ AmeriCorps Member Population - None c     ☐ Geographic Focus - Rural

☒ Geographic Focus - Urban     ☐ Encore Program

**Priority Areas**

☐ Economic Opportunity     ☐ Environmental Stewardship

*Selected for National Measure* ☐     *Selected for National Measure* ☐

☒ Education     ☐ Healthy Futures

*Selected for National Measure* ☒     *Selected for National Measure* ☐

☐ Veterans and Military Familie     ☒ Other

*Selected for National Measure* ☐     *Selected for National Measure* ☐

☐ Disaster Services

*Selected for National Measure* ☐

       Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas     40

**Service Categories**

Elementary Education     Primary ☐    Secondary ☒

Tutoring and Child (Elementary) Literacy     Primary ☒    Secondary ☐

---

### Volunteer Recruitment

**Service Category:** Tutoring and Child (Elementary) Literacy

**Measure Category:** Not Applicable

### Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Members will develop and execute specific volunteer outreach plans for each school site, with seven

categories of recruitment partnerships and activities: 1) high schools; 2) college/university; 3)

business/corporate recruitment; 4) partnership with civic groups & faith-based organizations; 5)

canvassing & neighborhood recruitment; 6) web-based recruitment; 7) public relations & media

activity. Members will also be responsible for conducting grassroots community organizing efforts

such as attending street fairs and volunteer recruitment fairs. Members will help volunteers to

identify matching opportunities for volunteer time. Members will work to convey seriousness of

commitment before potential volunteers become engaged as active tutors. Members will ensure a

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

positive volunteer experience by consistently surveying volunteers and responding to feedback.

Members will plan appreciation events and facilitate opportunities for volunteers to deepen their

relationships with students, members, each other and schools to assure high levels of volunteer

retention. At the conclusion of the school year, Members are responsible for leading efforts to

acknowledge and thank volunteers for their service and to determine who is likely to return for the

following school year.

## Results

**Result: Output**

Community volunteers will be trained and supported to tutor students through use of a structured

curriculum.

| | |
|---|---|
| Indicator: | community volunteers recruited |
| Target: | Reading Partners will recruit 1,400 volunteers who will serve for 40,600 hours. |
| Target Value: | 1400 |
| Instruments: | Members will complete daily volunteer logs to collect data on the number of volunteers recruited and the number of volunteer hours. |
| PM Statement: | Reading Partners will recruit 1,400 volunteers for on-going tutoring. On-going volunteers will serve 40,600 hours. |
| Prev. Yrs. Data: | |

**Result: Intermediate Outcome**

Community volunteers cleared to tutor will show strong dedication to program and cause.

| | |
|---|---|
| Indicator: | Community volunteers retained |
| Target: | 1,190 community volunteers will complete their commitment. |
| Target Value: | 1190 |
| Instruments: | Members will use our Volunteer Management Database to collect data on the volunteers' progress towards completing their commitment. Data will be collected daily and assessed monthly. |
| PM Statement: | 85% (1,190) of the 1,400 volunteers cleared to tutor will complete their commitment of at least 1 hour per week until the end of the semester in which they begin tutoring. |
| Prev. Yrs. Data: | |

# National Performance Measures

**Priority Area:** Education

**Performance Measure Title:** Tutoring

**Service Category:** Tutoring and Child (Elementary) Literacy

## Strategy to Achieve Results

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

33 members will act as Site Coordinators responsible for overseeing all aspects of the one-to-one tutoring program at a school-based reading center. Daily responsibilities include: coordinating volunteer and student schedules; offering daily 1-on-1 coaching to tutors before, after and during each tutoring session; offering assistance to any tutors who are having difficulty working with their student at any given time; providing initial orientation and training, as well as quarterly formal training sessions to volunteers. In addition to daily check-ins with each volunteer at the conclusion of their tutoring session, members also provide direct support during tutoring sessions to ensure high program quality. Members act as liaisons to facilitate communication with and gather feedback from parents, classroom teachers, literacy coaches and specialized educators. Through this collaborative process, members develop individualized tutoring plans for each student in the Reading Partners program, which are shared with volunteers and used for the basis of daily and weekly check-ins with volunteers. Members are on-site for 8 hours per day, overseeing 4-8 sessions that last 45 minutes each. During each session, the member typically oversees 5 tutors working individually with 5 students, resulting in a total average of 20-40 tutors in the center per day. During the time before and after sessions, members have individual conversations with volunteers to offer feedback based on their own observations or those of teachers in order to monitor progress and maintain high program quality for each student. Each tutor records notes and progress at the conclusion of each tutoring session so that members (and tutors) can review them on a weekly basis and offer their own feedback in written form. Members oversee a program that provides curriculum-based tutoring for 90 minutes per week to each student. The Reading Partners curriculum was developed in-house by literacy experts in partnership with the Stanford School of Education, and will increase the literacy skills of 65% of students served by 1 grade level after 16 hours of tutoring.

## Result: Output

Result.

Students will receive literacy tutoring.

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

Target :1290 students will participate in our AmeriCorps Education program.

Target Value:      1290

Instruments: Student attendance log to collect data on number of students in program is completed by members on a daily basis.

# National Performance Measures

Result.

PM Statement: 1290 students (1160 high-need target population, defined as Students at Title I schools in grades K-5 who: 1) are reading six months to two years below grade-level proficiency at the time of enrollment; 2) do not participate in special education programs and 3) have at least basic conversational English) will participate in our AmeriCorps Education program.

## Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Students who receive tutoring will increase their literacy skills.

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

Target :505 high-need target students receiving at least 16 hours of tutoring will increase their literacy

skills by 1 grade level or more.

Target Value: 505

Instruments: Members assess students three times per year using the Rigby PM Ultra Benchmark literacy assessment to collect data on student progress in literacy skills. Rigby assessment results correlate to standardized testing improvement (regression run annually).

PM Statement: 65% of 777 (505) high-need target students receiving at least 16 hours of tutoring will increase their literacy skills by 1 grade level or more.

## Result: Output

Result.

Students will receive literacy tutoring.

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

Target :864 students will complete participation of the AmeriCorps Education program.

Target Value: 864

Instruments: Student attendance log to collect data on number of students in program is completed by members on a daily basis.

PM Statement: Of those students who start the program, 864 (777 high-need target population) - 67% - will complete participation of the AmeriCorps Education program (16 hours).

# Subapplicants

| ID | Organization | Amount Requested | Amount Approved | # FTEs Requested | # FTEs Approved | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Totals: | $0 | $0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | |

# Required Documents

| Document Name | Status |
| --- | --- |
| Federally Approved Indirect Cost Agreement | Not Applicable |
| Labor Union Concurrence | Not Applicable |
| Evaluation | Not Applicable |