

## PART I - FACE SHEET

<b>APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE</b>		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction	
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to conform to the Corporation's eGrants System)			
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):		3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:  07-DEC-10	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:
2b. APPLICATION ID:  11AC122959		4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER:  09ACHWV0010002
<b>5. APPLICATION INFORMATION</b>			
LEGAL NAME: West Virginia University Research Corp.  DUNS NUMBER: 191510239		NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes):  NAME: Susan Gamble  TELEPHONE NUMBER: (304) 255-9375  FAX NUMBER:  INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: skgamble@mail.wvu.edu	
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 886 Chestnut Ridge Road PO Box 6845 Morgantown WV 26506 - 6845 County:			
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):  550665758		7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Higher Education Organization - State Controlled  7b. 4-year college	
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box).  <input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>  A. AUGMENTATION        B. BUDGET REVISION  C. NO COST EXTENSION    D. OTHER (specify below):		9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: <b>Corporation for National and Community Service</b>	
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER:94.006 10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps State		11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Energy Express AmeriCorps	
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Various sites throughout WV. 42 counties.		11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):	
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 11/01/11      END DATE: 10/31/12		14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <u>WV 00</u> b.Program <u>WV 001</u>	
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: <u>2</u>		16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?  <input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON:  DATE:  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372	
a. FEDERAL	\$ 1,404,500.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
b. APPLICANT	\$ 1,027,201.00		
c. STATE	\$ 0.00		
d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00		
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00		
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00		
g. TOTAL	\$ 2,431,701.00		
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: Alan B. Martin		b. TITLE: Secretary, WVU Research Corporation	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (304)-293-3998
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:			e. DATE SIGNED: 12/07/10

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### Executive Summary

Energy Express is a research based summer reading and nutrition program for children in West Virginia. AmeriCorps members engaged as mentors serve with children. They eat breakfast and lunch served family-style, and engage in reading-related activities that make reading meaningful. AmeriCorps members serving as community coordinators train and supervise volunteers who support children's learning. Evaluation results show the typical summer slide is halted and children's reading scores increase.

### Rationale and Approach

#### a. Problem

Energy Express promotes the school success of school-aged children living in low-income and rural West Virginia (WV) communities by maintaining their nutritional status and reading achievement during the summer. The program reverses this well documented "summer slide" of poor children. Children who do not receive support during the summer fall behind their more advantaged peers, and without school breakfast and lunch, poor children lose ground nutritionally.

America's Forgotten Children: Child Poverty in Rural America (Nadel & Sagawa, 2002) contends that poor, rural communities are falling behind as they lack the people, skills, and money to break the cycle of poverty. West Virginia is a poor, rural state. 22.8% of West Virginia's children live in poverty; 10.7% of the state's children live in extreme poverty, compared to 7.8% of the nation's children (Children's Defense Fund, 2008).

WV is a region where rural poverty is "most persistent." There are areas where families have lived in poverty for decades and the child poverty level is two to three times the national average. 2006 data indicates that 52.5% of the state's children in grades K-12 have been approved for free or reduced-price school meals, a 6.3% increase from 2000 and well above the national rate of 28.0%. In 2008, WV ranked

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44th on measures indicating children's well-being. (West Virginia Kids Count Data Book, 2008). All Energy Express sites are located in school communities with a free and reduced-price meal eligibility above 50%. In 2009, a total of 71 (out of 76) sites had eligibility rates of 70-100%.

Energy Express addresses children's reading achievement and nutritional status during the summer; these have been identified through numerous studies as major issues of poor children. Energy Express uses both direct service and capacity-building strategies to address these compelling community needs. For decades studies have shown that the "summer slide" has predictable, negative consequences for poor children. The seminal research on the subject indicates that low-income students lose more than two months in reading achievement over the summer months, while their middle-class peers make slight gains (Cooper, 1996). When this pattern continues throughout the elementary school years, lower income youth fall more than 2 ½ years behind their more affluent peers by the end of 5th grade. Two-thirds of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities. As a result, low-income youth are less likely to graduate from high school or enter college (Alexander et al, 2007).

Malnutrition compromises children's health, cognitive development and educational attainment. Hungry children perform well below their peers in school. Many children are at risk during the summer when poor families have no additional resources. A family must provide 10 additional meals each week for each school-age child. As a result, the nutritional status of these children declines in the summer, and they return to school less healthy. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) sponsors a child nutrition program to provide breakfast and lunch during the school year. Before Energy Express, WV had few sponsors for the USDA Summer Food Service Program. Recent research indicates most children--particularly children at high risk of obesity--gain weight more rapidly when they are out of school during summer break (Von Hippel et al, 2007).

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In order to reverse the "summer slide" and to keep children healthy, Energy Express supports WV communities that identify summer learning and nutritional loss as detrimental to their children's school success, have at least 50% of children eligible for free or reduced priced meals, and a local infrastructure that can raise 30% of the site costs and implement the program.

With the addition of ARRA funding in 2009, Energy Express placed 533 members at 83 sites during the summer. The targeted number of sites proposed in this grant is 80. It will require more than the 492 member slots currently allocated to Energy Express to provide services at these sites. Therefore, we are proposing 500 AmeriCorps Members, an increase of 8 additional minimum-time slots.

Citations:

Alexander, K., Entwisle, D., and Olson, L. (2007). Lasting consequences of the summer learning gap. *American Sociological Review*, 72, 167-180.

Children's Defense Fund. Children in the States Factsheets. Retrieved from <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/state-datarepository/cits/children-in-the-states-2008-all.pdf>.

Cooper, H., Nye, B., Charlton, K., Lindsay, J., & Greathouse, S. (1996). The effects of summer vacation on achievement test scores: A narrative and meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research*, 66, 227-268.

Nadel, W. & Sagawa, S. (2002). America's forgotten children: Child poverty in rural America (Save The Children Report). Retrieved May 1, 2006 from [http://www.savethechildren.org/afc/afc\\_pdf\\_02.shtml](http://www.savethechildren.org/afc/afc_pdf_02.shtml).

Von Hippel, P.T., Powell, B., Downey, D.B., and Rowland, N. (2007) "The effect of school on overweight in childhood: Gains in children's body mass index during the school year and during summer vacation." *American Journal of Public Health*, 97(4), 796-802.

West Virginia Kids Count Data Book, 2008.

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### b. Solution: AmeriCorps Member Roles and Responsibilities

AmeriCorps Members' (ACMs) summer service is focused on three major activities: (1) providing reading-related activities; (2) facilitating nutritious family style meals; and (3) recruiting family and community members to assist with these activities. Sites follow the Energy Express research-based program model:

- \* Reading in a print-rich environment
- \* Nutritious meals served family-style
- \* Small groups
- \* Cooperative environment
- \* Family and community involvement
- \* Ethic of service and civic responsibility
- \* Collaboration

ACMs serve a minimum of 300 hours in low-income rural community sites located across the state. Most Energy Express sites are in public schools; several are in churches or community centers. A professional educator serving as a Site Supervisor (SS) supervises ACMs. Each site serves between 32-64 children, entering 1st through 6th grades. To increase children's reading scores, ACMs serving as mentors work with groups of 8 children using a place-based curriculum that encourages reading. The curriculum follows 6 weekly themes focused on the child and the people and places to which the child is connected: Myself, Family, Friends, Homeplace, Community, and Making My World a Better Place. Mentors guide children through enriching integrated book-based experiences that make reading meaningful -- writing and performing plays, reading aloud, creating books, and reading with a volunteer for 20 minutes each day. Creative and exciting art activities help make reading come alive. Each week every child receives a free theme-based book to take home and keep. Children are divided into younger

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(grades 1-3) and older groups (grades 4-6). During Making My World a Better Place week, children do a community service project, such as reading to nursing home residents or writing and recording public service announcements about reading.

Energy Express uses research-based strategies in phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension and aligns with the West Virginia content standards and objectives. Results are well-documented. Using a stratified random sample and matched pair design, children demonstrate significant increases on three subtests (letter/word identification, fluency, and passage comprehension) and broad reading scores of the Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement. Unlike traditional tutoring (a tutor instructs an individual child in specific skills), Energy Express uses enrichment activities and provides lots of opportunities to practice reading and writing. This approach prevents the typical "summer slide."

Small groups facilitate the development of strong connections and bonds between ACMs and children which is important for at-risk children. The small group of children works together as a team in a cooperative environment. Individual achievements are not highlighted; rather it is the accomplishments of the group that are celebrated.

AC (AmeriCorps) mentors and children share breakfast and lunch served family-style. These nutritious meals become important experiences as children learn to make choices, assume responsibility, cooperate and engage in conversation. The atmosphere is relaxed and inviting. Meals provide 58% of daily nutritional requirements to children who would otherwise do without. This service activity helps maintain children's nutritional status during the summer.

At each site, one to two members serve as Community Coordinators (CCs). They are responsible for

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managing the program's volunteer component. They recruit community volunteers including preteens and teens, family members of participating children, members of civic and faith-based organizations, stakeholders, and others. To ensure safety, CCs screen potential volunteers using policies developed by Energy Express and WV University (WVU). They orient volunteers on program policies and procedures and provide training, particularly in one-on-one shared reading strategies. They schedule, supervise, and recognize volunteers. For younger volunteers, CCs plan special projects (i.e., a puppet show for the children), share meals, complete a community service project, and engage in reflection. Two AC CCs are placed at sites having a large number of preteen and teens.

The first two weeks of service include AmeriCorps orientation, pre-service training, site preparation, family visits, and recruiting volunteers. During the six weeks with children, members maintain contact with families and the community, continue on-going training and reflection, and complete a visible community service project. Since Energy Express is a summer program, the 300 hour minimum time service assignment spanning eight weeks is in perfect alignment with the program design and activities. 500 summer slots (106 FTEs) will be dispersed across the state in 80 low-income communities.

An ACM's typical day (on site at least 6 hours):

8:30-9:00 a.m.: Site team meets, reviews daily activity plans and volunteer needs, prepares for the day, and welcomes children, families, and volunteers.

9:00-9:30 a.m.: ACMs engage in family-style breakfast (mentors with their groups of 8 children and CCs with pre-teen and teen volunteers).

9:30-12:00 p.m.: Mentors lead their groups of children in welcoming activities. Mentors and children create a print-rich, art-rich environment within a place-based curriculum that follows weekly themes.

Daily activities include read aloud, art, writing, drama, cooperative recreation, and one-on-one reading. CCs recruit orient, train, assign tasks, and supervise to support volunteers as they read with children or

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perform other needed tasks. CCs engage in public relation efforts including open house events.

12:00-12:30 pm: Family style lunch with children and volunteers

12:30-2:30pm: Site team says good-byes to children, families, and volunteers. Departure times vary depending on bus schedules and may take up to 45 minutes. During this time, ACMs engage children in recreation, including cooperative activities, until they depart. Once children are gone, the site team meets to plan, problem-solve, complete paperwork, receive additional training, plan for site team community service projects, and engage in reflection activities. ACMs maintain contact with children's families through home visits, phone calls, newsletters, notes, and special program activities. They preview potential read aloud books, prepare and gather materials, and prepare activity plans. CCs keep in touch with volunteers through thank you notes, phone calls, and recognition activities; recruit new volunteers; and engage in public relation efforts for the site. The ACMs partner with a faith- or community-based organization to plan, implement, and evaluate their own service project based on identified community needs.

On evenings and weekends, ACMs continue their service assignment responsibilities and go to the library, gather found objects, and continue community service.

Energy Express is a stand-alone AmeriCorps program based entirely on AmeriCorps service activities; AmeriCorps Members do not displace any staff. The site application process requires that community collaboratives assess the need for Energy Express, the existence of other summer learning programs, and assurance that there is no duplication of effort.

### c. AmeriCorps Member Selection, Training and Supervision

With an excellent track record in recruiting and placing a large number of ACMs, Energy Express, will recruit 500 ACMs for the summers of 2011, 2012, and 2013. The Energy Express recruitment strategy is a collaborative effort involving numerous organizations on both the state and local levels. Statewide,



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Energy Express seeks the expertise and assistance of Volunteer WV and the WVUES recruitment office. Locally, the county contact enlists the support and involvement of the county collaborative and others. All 55 county WVU Extension offices, all county contacts, and all WV colleges and universities receive recruitment materials, including press releases. Staff or AC alums make visits to colleges in WV and adjoining states to promote the program through class presentations, summer job fairs, and booths and displays in busy areas. All majors are recruited and encouraged to apply. A partnership with WV Campus Compact, a consortium of WV higher education institutions that promote service and civic engagement, enables Energy Express to connect with college students who have strong histories of service. Special attention is given to minority student offices and disabilities services offices. Some local collaboratives make visits to high school guidance counselors. Energy Express has a presence on numerous social networking sites such as Facebook. All current program information is posted on MyAmeriCorps and all online applications are considered. Energy Express has an impressive record of recruiting and placing the number of ACMs requested by local communities.

Members typically are from the local communities. Those serving as mentors are college students or college bound high school seniors; CCs represent a wide range of community membership. ACMs represent the diversity within local communities. Energy Express strives to engage members of different racial and ethnic minorities. WVU, as an equal opportunity employer, follows fair and equitable hiring practices and is committed to making reasonable accommodations for ACMs with disabilities. WVU requires that the extension agent in each county oversees the selection process. Training sessions are held each February. The state office sends screened applications which meet the requirements for completeness and minimum qualifications to each county. ACMs are then selected at the local level by a committee appointed by the county collaborative. The local process includes an initial screening, interviews using standard questions, and reference checks. Criminal background and National Sex Offender Public Registry checks are handled by the state Energy Express office.

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An ACM serving as a mentor must meet minimum qualifications outlined by AC, be at least 18 years old, and a full-time college student or college bound graduating high school senior. An ACM serving as a CC must meet the same minimum qualifications with the exception of the college requirement. Energy Express ACMs exhibit the following characteristics: commitment to community service; self-motivated, energetic and flexible; effective communicators; ability to work cooperatively with others; and emotional maturity. It is most desirable if Energy Express ACMs serving as CCs have knowledge of the community and experience working with teens and the ACMs serving as mentors have experience working with children.

Site supervisors play a major role in ensuring ACMs complete their term of services. They meet on a daily basis, conduct mid-term assessments to establish continuous improvement goals and make weekly reviews of service hour timesheets to ensure ACMs are on track to earn a minimum 300 hours. ACMs complete an assessment of the SS. Member satisfaction is assessed on the member exit form.

Member development objectives foster civic responsibility and increase the skills of members through well-designed training, reflection, service experiences and supervision. Six to nine ACMs are supervised by SSs who are classroom or Title I teachers or elementary school principals. The first step in Member Development is to train supervisors during two and one-half days in the spring and additional sessions at the statewide training in June. Training topics include: AmeriCorps, member supervision, EE program model, and accountability. SSs have access to materials on the web, print materials and DVDs.

The first two days of service are On-Site Training which provides an understanding of the program and its guidelines, orientation to the site and community, and identification of community needs as a basis for a service project. On the first day of service, using a training outline developed by the state office, SSs

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train on AmeriCorps, including prohibited activities, and assist with completion of required paperwork. In counties with more than one site, some of this training is done with multiple sites in attendance. County contacts train Members in social justice, sexual harassment, professionalism, and child abuse and neglect.

A three day Statewide Training seeks to motivate ACMs for service commitment and to provide initial program training. Training topics include guidance; family visits; creating a print-rich and art-rich environment; facilitating family-style meals; connecting children, families, and communities; and recruiting, training, and recognizing volunteers. There are sessions on community service projects and reflection.

Statewide training is followed by additional on-site training which provides time for ACMs to make family visits and recruit and train volunteers. Rooms are prepared to welcome children, and reading and writing activities are planned. Community Service Project plans are initiated.

Continued On-Site Training occurs every day of the program, is conducted at each site, and entails specific areas (i.e. writing, read-alouds, guidance techniques, time management, group participation, community building, welcoming volunteers, keeping teen volunteers focused, recognizing volunteer contributions) identified by ACMs and SSs.

Over the past ten years, Energy Express has developed the capacity to provide training and technical assistance to address children's summertime needs. In 2009, the mentor manual was rewritten and retitled, *Making The Connection Between Summer and Learning: A Guide for Energy Express AmeriCorps Mentors*. It includes sections covering all program components. A demonstration DVD, *Connecting Children to Reading*, illustrates basic reading strategies and dictation techniques that ACMs

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and volunteers use with children. Another DVD, Energy Express: Where Breakfast, Lunch and Learning Don't Take a Summer Break, uses actual program footage to illustrate program components. CCs receive a manual that includes sections about recruiting, supervising and recognizing volunteers; publicity; and working with teens. Energy Express central office staff, a WVUES literacy team, Energy Express SSs, and AC alums are well-equipped to provide training and technical assistance.

It is well-understood that all training cannot be 'front-loaded' at a statewide training event. It is essential that training and support continue throughout the program as ACMs work with children and volunteers and become aware of issues in their communities. Training and support is a team effort between the state office and the local community. Second year ACMs are given opportunities for leadership within the site team. This may be one-on-one support or with the group; it may focus on a training topic or a reflection activity. 'Veterans' may assume leadership in coordinating the open house or community service project.

ACMs are under the direct daily supervision of a Site supervisor (SS) who is a well qualified professional educator. The SS ensures that ACMs are implementing the program curriculum and complying with the AmeriCorps and program regulations. All ACM training and development sessions, including reflection, are focused on activities and concepts that support the program objectives. Compliance with rules is ensured through a variety of ways. In the spring, SSs engage in an interactive training session that covers the mission and goals of AC, the code of conduct and AC prohibited activities. The consequences of not complying are heavily emphasized. SSs also receive a policy manual outlining the rules and regulations. ACMs receive sufficient training about AC. ACMs receive the AmeriCorps member handbook outlining expectations of AC and Energy Express with the acceptance packet. Sites submit preliminary community service project plans to the state staff to confirm that the project does not include prohibited activities.

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ACMs and the SS stay in close touch. They have 2 group meetings each day -- in the morning before the program begins and in the afternoon after the program ends. The SS visits each AC mentor's group each day, gives assistance when needed and provides on-site training on a variety of relevant topics. The SS meets with the AC CC to review needs and potential volunteers, discuss public relations, and give other assistance and advice. ACMs take an active role in planning their work and in developing innovative strategies to connect with children and volunteers. The SS guides and empowers the ACMs in their work.

### d. Outcome: Performance Measures

Energy Express focuses on Education, one of the five priorities of the Serve America Act and plans to use standard measures depending on their final determination by CNCS and how they relate to our program. The aligned measure is related to children's literacy.

#### Literacy (aligned measure)

Output: 3200 children entering first through sixth grades will enroll in Energy Express.

Output: 2800 children entering first through sixth grades will complete participation in Energy Express.

Intermediate Outcome: 70% of children will maintain or increase in reading achievement on subtests of the Woodcock Johnson Test of Individual Achievement.

#### Children's Nutrition

Output: 2800 children will be provided breakfast and lunch for 28 days that will provide 58% of daily nutritional requirements as reported by USDA.

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### Volunteers

Output: Volunteers will provide 65,000 hours of service as documented by volunteer logs.

### Member personal efficacy

Intermediate Outcome: 70% of ACMs will maintain or increase their personal efficacy during their service through guided reflection, ongoing training, and supervision from the site supervisor as measured by a pre/post survey.

### Community service projects

Output: ACMs will collaborate with volunteers and community and faith-based organizations to complete 80 community service projects based on community needs.

The long term impact of Energy Express is that children from resource poor communities maintain or increase their reading achievement and receive two nutritious meals a day enabling them to return to school better prepared and healthier in the fall. By not experiencing the typical summer slide, these children are more likely to graduate from high school and pursue higher education.

### e. Volunteer Generation

At each site, one ACM serves as Community Coordinator (CC) to orient, train, assign tasks, and supervise volunteers to read with children and perform other needed tasks. The CC serves as leader of the volunteers; however AC mentors play an active role in recruiting volunteers. The entire team spends time brainstorming potential volunteer pools. Volunteers are often recruited from civic and community organizations, high school groups, faith-based organizations and family connections.

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AC CCs orient volunteers to the site and provide the training necessary for task completion. Especially important are shared reading strategies that are part of the Energy Express curriculum. These strategies are easy to teach, to learn, and to use and are appropriate for all volunteers from preteens to senior volunteers. A best practice of Energy Express is organizing volunteers in teams that rotate from AC mentor group to the next, thereby insuring that each child has 20 minutes of one-on-one reading time each day; valuable practice time is one factor in maintaining or increasing reading scores during the summer.

AC CCs employ numerous strategies to recognize volunteers; their names are displayed on bulletin boards, they are featured in site newsletters and newspaper articles; they receive thank you notes from children as well as the CC. AC CCs engage preteen and teen volunteers in additional activities: dialogue journals, mailboxes with daily communications, group meetings, reflection activities, and community service projects. Many guide their youth volunteers in project development such as a play or puppet show or cooperative recreation for the children. Energy Express has been fortunate to engage an additional ACM as the CC focused on youth at sites with high numbers of teens and preteens. Through this new grant, Energy Express expects to recruit volunteers to provide 60,000 hours of service with an average of 750 hours at each site. Energy Express knows that the energy, time, and expertise of this generation must be harnessed to insure positive and productive experiences for children, teens, and young adult ACMs.

Energy Express engages both episodic and ongoing volunteers within the six week program. There are numerous episodic volunteers who participate in site activities one, two, or three times. Many of these are recruited as "celebrity readers," those stakeholders who read aloud to each AC mentor group of children. This is an ideal way to involve stakeholders in the program and builds commitment and sustainability. Some parents and community members become dedicated to Energy Express and serve

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as ongoing volunteers, serving at the site almost every day. But the majority of the ongoing volunteers are the preteen and teen volunteers. According to a recent study conducted by the WVUES youth literacy team, the preteen and teen volunteers indicated that without the opportunity to volunteer at Energy Express, they would spend their summers watching TV or sleeping because of the lack of other activities in their poor isolated rural communities. They reported that their main reason for participating was to make a difference by helping children with reading. Breakfast and lunch and social interaction are additional benefits for the preteen and teen volunteers.

### f. Partnerships and Collaboration

Notice of the availability of site applications is distributed through WVUES and the state board of education. Prior to hosting an Energy Express site, members of a community identify child hunger and declining reading achievement during the summer as issues affecting the children in their community. The community forms a formal collaborative of at least 5 partners who represent community groups and organizations. Mandatory members include a parent of an Energy Express child, a representative from WVUES, and the school system. Other community partners are site specific and include: community organizations, county and city governments, libraries, faith-based organizations, businesses, national service programs, United Way agencies, family resource networks, and parent and youth organizations. The collaborative then plans the summer program using the Energy Express site application as a guide. They choose the most appropriate location (usually schools, but also churches and community centers), and determine who will take leadership to accomplish the specific tasks, including securing transportation, a summer food service program sponsor, recruiting and enrolling children, ordering supplies, identifying volunteers, and selecting ACMs. The application is reviewed by a state review team and sites are selected based on the documented need, the capacity of the community to acquire the 30% match (an average of \$9709) and implement the program, the site's past performance, and the feasibility of the selected location. Site costs differ according to the number of children served and cost



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of transportation. The local collaborative participates in self-evaluation and outlines continuous improvement goals for the coming year. Collaboratives begin planning for the next summer in late fall. Although individual membership may change, the collaborative is intended to be an ongoing partner to Energy Express throughout the three-year program period. The local collaborative enhances the capacity of organizations to meet the needs of children by sharing human and financial resources.

### g. Sustainability

As an AmeriCorps grantee, Energy Express has a long history of meeting targeted, compelling community needs: statistically significant increases in children's reading, with the average child gaining 3 to 5 months in broad reading (a compilation of 3 subtest scores), and 58% of daily nutritional requirements provided to participants.

Energy Express builds the capacity of individual agencies and organizations through collaboration. Communities are strengthened as groups and organizations, each with few resources, work together collaboratively to solve identified local needs. Agencies with little or no history of working together are now joining forces to meet the needs of children through Energy Express. Some examples of county collaborative members include: boards of education, community action, family resource networks, parks and recreation, and civic organizations. The county collaborative has become a vehicle for developing a sense of local ownership and pride. County collaboratives are responsible for: 1) leveraging 30% of the site costs, 2) selecting and supporting the site team, 3) problem-solving and 4) monitoring. Energy Express is built on diversified and committed funding which helps foster sustainability. In addition to Corporation funds, the program is supported by state agencies (Energy Express is a line-item in the WV State Budget), the state's land-grant university and hundreds of local resources. Documented impact has generated support from these entities. Energy Express has a cadre of volunteers who support the program. Anecdotal reports indicate that some parents begin volunteering at school after an Energy

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Express experience. Volunteers receive training on shared reading strategies that are useful in numerous settings beyond Energy Express sites. From their involvement in community service projects, ACMs become resources and advocates for addressing compelling community needs.

To move toward increased sustainability, the program is committed to: (1) strengthening a statewide advisory board; (2) enlisting a statewide business as a funding partner; (3) strengthening a direct mail campaign to Energy Express AC alums.

### h. Tutoring Programs

N/A

## Organizational Capability

### a. Organizational Background

This current Energy Express application for AmeriCorps funding builds on years of program development, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement. Energy Express is now in its seventeenth year and its fifteenth year supported by AmeriCorps.

Energy Express is a collaborative venture of WVU, several state agencies, and local communities and schools. WVUES serves as the applicant organization and lead agency in administering this program. WVUES has the ability to provide sound program and fiscal oversight. University support units assist with aspects of grant management: human resources, fiscal management, communication, and technology. As the state's land grant university, WVU has a network of faculty-level county extension agents to extend the University into every community in the state. Campus-based state extension specialists link the field staff with the research and knowledge base of the University's academic units. Energy Express has a reputation for excellent multi-site program management. Each county has a contact person (usually the WVU extension agent) who receives training about Energy Express and AC.

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SSs (supervisors of ACMs) receive two and one-half days of training in the spring and additional training at a statewide training in June. Program materials are posted on the web. Three program manuals (a mentor manual, a CC resource notebook and a policy manual) and two videos, all developed by Energy Express, are available.

In late fall each year, local collaboratives submit their applications to host an Energy Express site. The application is reviewed by a state review team and sites are selected based on the documented need, the capacity of the community to acquire the 30% match (an average of \$9709) and implement the program, the site's past performance, and the feasibility of the selected location.

A monitoring checklist of program expectations is used when site staff, local contacts, and collaborative members visit sites. Every new SS and those "veteran SS" needing assistance are visited within the first two weeks of the program. If needed, a subsequent visit is scheduled. The Energy Express staff visit as many other sites as possible within the six week time frame. County contacts visit each site on a weekly basis, and local collaborative members are encouraged to visit. The state staff develops trust with local sites so that problems can be identified and solved.

WVUES has an annual budget of \$34 million and receives federal, state and county funding. Federal and state grants account for \$6 million of the total budget. The total yearly Energy Express budget is more than \$3 million; this includes support from the Corporation for National and Community Service, WVU, USDA's Summer Food Service Program, WV Department of Education and the Arts, and local agencies and organizations including boards of education. Of this amount, approximately \$1,700,000 is from grants, \$1,070,000 is generated at the local level (including SPSF funding), and \$240,000 is in-kind through WVU. Deloitte and Touche Associates conducts an annual audit of WVU's financial accountability.

## Narratives

The Energy Express staff has the expertise and experience to administer federal grants, to follow AC provisions and to meet grant objectives. All staff members are faculty or staff at WVU. The program director has been with Energy Express since its inception in 1994; the AC coordinator has been with the program for 15 years. Specific activities of all staff members with direct responsibility for ACMs are described in the budget narrative. Accounting activities are provided by WVU staff with federal grant experience.

Comprehensive annual evaluations document that Energy Express has an excellent record in meeting programmatic objectives based on community needs and in managing major grant activity. The program evaluation documents consistent results: statistically significant increases in children's reading; 58% of daily nutritional requirements provided to children; statistically significant increases in ACMs personal efficacy; volunteer support and communities working collaboratively to enhance children's learning. Energy Express has an excellent track record in recruiting and placing a large number of ACMs. Members use their educational awards from the National Service Trust. The retention rate is 98%; and 98% of Members are recommended for another term. Excellent training materials have been developed, and a cadre of previous Energy Express SSs and ACMs and the WVUES literacy team assist with planning and training.

Energy Express has the capacity to evaluate activities of the scope and nature which a project of this magnitude and complexity demands. Since the first year of AC funding, university faculty members directed an intensive evaluation that included both summative and formative strategies. For the past 2 years, the evaluation was conducted by Ben Edmonds, Indiana University. All evaluation meets WVU standards for research. Excellent evaluations have given Energy Express statewide recognition and credibility and have allowed the program to leverage funding from other sources, including the state

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legislature.

The impact evaluation of children's reading (finding significant increases in reading comprehension, letter/word identification, and fluency) and Member development (finding significant increases in personal efficacy) has validated Energy Express and its non-traditional approach to reading enrichment delivered by college students. Such analysis is essential to justify what Energy Express does and how it is achieved, to maintain the involvement of our current partners and to support the involvement of even more individuals, agencies, and organizations concerned about WV's children.

In 2009, Energy Express served 2,854 children (attending 15 days or more), distributed 17,124 Take Home books, and served 159,824 nutritious meals. Energy Express had 3833 volunteers; thirty-nine percent were youth volunteers and sixty-one percent were adult volunteers. These volunteers had 66,780 combined hours; forty-one percent of these hours focused primarily on reading and writing.

### b. Staffing

Energy Express is managed through the 4-H Youth Development Unit of the WVUES. The unit administrator supervises the Energy Express program director as well as most the county faculty members serving as county contacts. The unit director is an excellent resource and is especially knowledgeable about county issues, faculty strengths and weaknesses, and problem-solving to insure that statewide programs are implemented in appropriate ways. Numerous WVU and WVUES staff support program planning, implementation and evaluation.

At the local level, sites are supported by county collaboratives comprised of key community stakeholders concerned about children's nutrition and learning. These groups have representatives of the parents of children involved in the program.

## Narratives

Key state staff:

AC Program Director: Doctorate in child development; developed Energy Express in 1994; 15 years national service experience as director of Energy Express; 23 years federal grant management experience; national presentations and publications.

AC Program Coordinator: Master's in public administration. 15 years national service experience, 13 as AmeriCorps coordinator; national presentations and publications.

AC Strengthening Community Coordinator: Master's in social work and public administration. 12 years experience with national service as county contact and community strengthening coordinator; national presentations and publications.

AC Curriculum Specialist: Master's in elementary education and reading. Hired in September 2008; previously served as Energy Express AmeriCorps Member and Energy Express Site Supervisor.

AC Program Manager: Hired in May 2008; previous experience in data management with an emphasis on payroll.

AC Administrative Assistant: Master's in business administration. Hired in February 2008; previous experience in benefits/human resources. Attended the Corporation for National and Community Service 2009 Financial and Grants Management Institute.

Energy Express employs an accountant (not listed in the AmeriCorps budget) with 18 years of experience with WVU. Student assistants and a graduate assistant are hired on a year-to-year basis.

Key local staff:

County contacts: Usually WVU county extension agents; some have been with Energy Express since 1995; others are new.

Site supervisors: Professional educators chosen locally and hired through WVU for 8-week program;

## Narratives

many with years of Energy Express experience, others are new.

c. Multi-state Applicants Only

N/A

d. Multi-state Applicants Only

N/A

e. Current Grantees Only: Enrollment; Retention

For the years of 2008 and 2009, the average enrollment rate was 97%. Prior to the enrollment date on the first day of service, 100% of the ACMs were recruited. However, some had to decline the opportunity due to family issues, school commitments or unforeseen circumstances. In some instances, individuals notified the program the day before the first day of service that they could not serve. The nature of summer programs excludes rolling enrollment. All members must start on the same day which can limit the ability to achieve 100% enrollment. While alternates are chosen in the spring, many have pursued other opportunities by the time the openings are available. To improve, there will be an emphasis on recruiting additional alternates for each site. Once the new term limit rule is enacted, 100% enrollment is even more likely given the number of Energy Express AC alums who want to serve more than two (minimum time) terms.

Energy Express strives for the highest retention rate possible. In 2008 and 2009, for the members enrolled an average of 98% retention was achieved. This is due to the selection process, daily supervision and support, and knowledge that the service is making a difference for children. In 2009, one member left for personal compelling circumstances; two were released using progressive discipline; and two left the program early. The plan for improvement includes continuing to focus on selection of members

## Narratives

'ready to serve" and training SSs to support ACMs. While 100% retention is desirable, we are not willing to sacrifice program expectations or quality. Sites supervisors receive extensive training on member supervision, progressive discipline and coaching. At times, an ACM's behavior interferes with the well-being of children and achieving program objectives despite the SS's best attempt to coach the ACM into reversing negative behaviors and attitudes. Release for cause is sometimes the only viable option. The state office works closely with SSs to use the progressive discipline process appropriately.

### f. Special Circumstances

Energy Express was first piloted in 1994; it received its first AC grant in 1995 to support the 1996 summer program with 80 ACMs. Energy Express currently places 492 members at sites across the state. It is an exemplary AC program and enjoys a national reputation.

Energy Express serves resource-poor communities. Our sites are located in places like Paw Paw, Crum, and Lashmeet-Matoaka-- poor rural communities with few services and a lack of human capital.

Corporate resources simply don't exist. Usually these communities have a store that sells gas and groceries, and that's about it. The few businesses that do exist are repeatedly solicited for donations for school needs or the volunteer fire department.

West Virginia ranked 44th in the nation in 2008 on measures indicating children's well-being. Each of West Virginia's counties is also ranked from 1 through 55 on these measures. Energy Express serves the poorest of the poor. Energy Express has been present in 12 of the 15 lowest-ranked counties during the past three years.

### **Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy**

#### a. Cost Effectiveness

Based on proposed increases in number of members (from 492 to 500 minimum time) and cost per



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member, the proposed budget is only \$92,084 greater than previous budgets. Some line items have changed from previous years in order to accommodate increased costs, simplify accounting procedures, and/or anticipate availability of other funds for certain program requirements. The proposed Corporation cost per member of \$13,250 has been deliberately kept as low as possible. The \$92,084 will be used to partially offset increased costs in two line items: (1) Member Living Allowance and (2) Contractual and Consultant Services for transportation.

1. For a number of years, the living allowance for Energy Express minimum time AmeriCorps Members has been \$1600. In order to keep the living allowance more in line with that of full-time members and to enhance recruiting efforts, we are proposing a living allowance of \$1850. This amount is well-below \$2,502, the prorated amount of .212 (minimum time MSY) x \$11,800 (minimum full-time living allowance). The increase in member living allowance adds \$125,000 to the line item (\$123,000 for current number of 492 members and \$2000 for proposed 8 additional members).

2. In 2009 transporting children to and from Energy Express sites cost more than \$300,000.

Transportation is the single largest cost at Energy Express sites with sites paying as much as \$12,000 for a 6-week summer program. In rural communities, public school busses are generally the only available transportation. State law dictates who is given the job, at what salary and what constitutes a full- versus a half-day.

The transportation costs for some sites are paid through the AmeriCorps grant, some through other grants and some with local funding. Sites anticipate a potential increase of 20% for the summer of 2010 (this would result in an increase to the total Energy Express transportation budget of \$60,000). With rising costs, they are facing more difficulty raising the needed funds to cover this critical site cost. This proposal requests \$32,500 in Corporation funds, an \$11,500 increase from 2010. This, of course, does not meet the total amount needed but is one small step in helping meet increased transportation costs.

Energy Express has a history of obtaining non-federal support from diverse sources. Our largest sum is

## Narratives

\$470,000 in the state budget. Other sources include private foundations, county commissions, businesses, parent/teacher organizations, community action agencies, faith- and communities based groups or sponsor a child campaigns. In-kind commitments from WV University Extension Service remain strong. Energy Express is seen as one of its premier outreach programs that has measurable outcomes to meet identified needs. Funding by the WV Legislature through the Department of Education and the Arts has been in place for the past 11 years. Energy Express has a statewide reputation and legislative support. This funding will remain. Local communities commit to securing 30% of site costs. These funds are generated from a variety of local sources. While definite commitments have not been made for 2011, 2012, or 2013, all match requirements will be met.

b. Current Grantees Only: Increase in match responsibilities in program

While the amount of money from AC has remained the same, program costs have increased due to inflation and services provided; thus, the percentage of federal funding has decreased. In order to streamline accounting procedures as much as possible, WVU has a policy that only required match is identified in grant budgets. Energy Express generates more resources than those identified as match. The amount is close to \$1,000,000 and includes: transportation, books, writing and art supplies, family-style meal supplies, meals for AMCs, children's insurance (secondary accident policy), and local postage.

c. Special Circumstances

N/A

d. Budget Adequacy

West Virginia University and the West Virginia University Research Corporation (the University) assess fringe benefit charges to sponsored agreements by utilizing the federally approved fringe benefit rates. Each year, the University submits a fringe benefit rate proposal to our federal cognizant agency (the

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Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)) and once it is reviewed, the government issues an official rate agreement for use on federal grants and contracts. The Non-Benefits rate being charged for FY 2010 is 8.1% which includes FICA, workers compensation, and unemployment and is broken out as follows:

Social Security/Medicare 7.11%

Worker's Compensation .46%

Unemployment Compensation .53%

Total 8.10%

This rate is calculated on a broad base of employee salaries and also includes adjustments for over-/under-recoveries from previous year fringe rate calculations as approved by DHHS. The Social Security/Medicare percentages do not equal the 7.65% for any of our fringe benefit rate categories because the broad employee base includes individuals who exceed the Social Security cap of \$106,800 for the tax year 2009, non-resident aliens who are exempt from Social Security/Medicare taxes, and employees who are full-time students and exempt from Social Security/Medicare taxes. Each member paid on the AmeriCorps grant that is not exempt from Social Security/Medicare taxes will have the full 7.65% paid on behalf of them from the University. The grant account will be assessed the fringe rate and the actual Social Security/Medicare tax paid (the 7.65%) for each member will be posted to a grant fringe pool separate from the grant account. The actual fringe expenses posted are compared to the fringe rate calculations on an annual basis and any under-/over-recovery is included in the fringe rate calculation submitted to DHHS for the following fiscal year. Fringe benefit charges for benefits eligible personnel are assessed 26% based on the aforementioned agreement with the federal cognizant agency and include FICA, retirement, health insurance, worker's compensation, unemployment insurance, child care, and terminated annual leave pay-out as stated on page 3 of the Colleges and Universities Rate Agreement.

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Based on 17 years of experience, Energy Express believes that the proposed budget is adequate to plan, implement and evaluate a summer program that serves almost 3000 school-aged children and meets the stated performance measures. Energy Express is a no-frills operation. There is no fluff in the budget, and expenditures are closely monitored. While federal AmeriCorps funding is not the sole source of funding, it is the largest sum, and Energy Express depends on these funds to make the world better for children living in poor, rural WV. Other funding sources are secured to match AC funding and to cover expenditures not identified in this budget.

Energy Express is a community program that builds support through collaboration, partnering with faith- and community-based organizations, documenting impact through evaluation, and involving volunteers and other organizations.

The total 2009 budget is about \$3 million: \$1.7 million from grants, \$1.07 million from local sources, and \$240,000 as in-kind from WVU. Almost \$400,000 comes from the federally-funded Summer Food Service Program for children's meals. Sources for match are: program director salary and fringe-WVU; other staff salaries and fringe-WV Education & the Arts and local boards of education; indirect costs - WVU.

Energy Express is a program of enormous magnitude in terms of statewide sites, ACMs, children and volunteers. It requires a staff working year round to meet funding obligations and to maintain the high quality for which it is known. Tasks include analysis of all data for continuous improvement; technical assistance meetings for site applications; review of site applications; technical assistance meetings for selection of ACMs; consultation with WVU units such as legal, human resources, and grant management; arrangements with facilities for meetings and trainings; selecting and ordering take-home books; developing training materials - the list goes on and on!

## Narratives

While definite commitments for 2011 cannot be made at this time, Energy Express has long established funding partners committed to the program. Funding from the legislature has remained in spite of state budget cuts. There is no reason to believe that current funding will not be sustained. WVU has committed to the match included in this proposal.

Each Energy Express site serves between 32-64 children. Given the ambitious performance measures documented, including the number of meals served and a 3-5 month gain in broad reading scores, Energy Express is provided at an extremely low cost. Due to participant gains, schools spend less on remedial instruction when children return to school in the fall. Another significant contribution is the enhanced capacity building of community organizations which can reach more children by working collaboratively.

Energy Express has strived to provide an effective program at a low-cost in order to spread dollars and provide the program to the maximum number of children possible. The statewide program is managed with minimal staff. The program director's salary is provided 100% in-kind from WVU. The program has negotiated an extremely low cost for the purchase of approximately \$20 a set for quality children's literature for the take-home books. At statewide training site supervisors and ACMs stay in dorm rooms, compared to expensive lodging. Our site supervisors' salaries are less than most education professionals working in the summer. The program maximizes the use of technology to lower costs of printing, copying and mailing. In addition, web-based technology is utilized when having sites submit forms and other data.

Some program costs are unavoidable due to the rural, isolated nature of WV. Unlike urban communities, where children can walk or ride public transportation to attend enrichment programs, many areas in

## Narratives

which participants live are remote and difficult to reach. Community collaborative continue to strive to address this financial hurdle. These issues are a reality in successfully reaching children living in the poor and distressed areas of WV.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

Copy of 2009 evaluation sent.

### Amendment Justification

N/A

### Clarification Summary

CLARIFICATION RESPONSE FY10

Clarification Items

1. The proposed project period has been revised to a 12 month period: 11/1/10 to 10/31/11.
2. The 2009 program evaluation has been forwarded to [kmanning@cns.gov](mailto:kmanning@cns.gov)

Performance Measurement

When our proposal was submitted in November 2009, we were working with draft national performance measures and agreed to opt in to the pilot. However, now that we have access to the final measures, it is clear that the measures do not align with a summer only program. We will continue with our standard measures that have been used for a number of years and which are backed by a robust evaluation.

FY10 BUDGET CLARIFICATION RESPONSE

Budget clarifications:

1. Section 1-A: Personnel expenses. The previous AmeriCorps Coordinator, a faculty member with tenure of 15 years, resigned in December 2009. The position has not yet been filled and the University is close to a decision about the status: faculty, faculty-equivalent or classified staff. The salary amount in the budget is an estimate based on a full-time (100% FTE) entry level position.
2. Section1-G: Staff training. No contractors are used to provide training for ACM selections. The

## Narratives

funding covers meals, facility costs, materials, travel for one-day training

3. Section 1-G: Member Training. The language in the budget narrative has been revised to mirror that in the program narrative. Regional reflection and celebration of service event.

4. Section 1-I: Other program operating costs. All 80 site supervisors have criminal history checks either provided by the school system in which they teach or done by Energy Express using funds other than those provided by AmeriCorps.

### YEAR 2 CLARIFICATION RESPONSE (ADDED DECEMBER 6, 2010)

#### 1. Performance Measures

a. Results for the most recent program year (2010) are as follows:

Member Personal Efficacy: For all 18 items on a self-reported pre/post survey, at least 70% of the members serving in mentor positions rated themselves as having maintained or increased in confidence. At least 70% of those serving as community coordinators either maintained or increased in 13 of the 14 items on the self-reported pre/post survey.

Community Service Projects: Members collaborated with volunteers and community and faith-based organizations to complete 96 community service projects.

Children's Nutrition: Breakfast and lunch (which provides 58% of a child's daily nutritional requirements) were provided daily at 78 Energy Express sites to 3483 children. 2693 of those children ate 2 nutritious meals a day for at least 15 days over the summer.

Volunteers: Volunteers provided 58,190 hours of service, with 42% (24,529 hours) of time spent on

## Narratives

one-on-one reading and writing with children.

Children's Literacy: 3483 children entering first through sixth grades enrolled in Energy Express. 2693 children completed Energy Express by attending 15 days or more. 65% of children maintained or showed increases in reading achievement.

There are a number of factors that may have impacted our ability to achieve our performance measure outcomes in 2010. One school system chose to dissolve their Energy Express site the week before the program started. Additionally, there were a couple of days that sites closed because of power outages and floods. Sites were closed for the funeral of Senator Byrd on July 2. An addition, two sites had a 4-day program week instead of a 5-day week due to restrictions placed on them by their board of education. We also instituted a new process for electronic submission of data last year (2009) and continued the process this year. Since the data is now submitted electronically each week, we may be getting more accurate data.

### b. Reading Skills Assessment

To assess maintaining or increasing skills in reading a stratified random sample of 10-12 children from each site is targeted. To ensure the sample is representative of the overall population of Energy Express many factors are considered including gender, free or reduced lunch eligibility, ethnicity, experience in Energy Express and Individualized Education Programs. Results are only included for children who have met minimum attendance requirements, which is 50% of the days the site is open. In the summer of 2010 a total of 495 of these children completed both pre- and post-session measures of reading achievement (measured using three subtests of the Woodcock-Johnson Test of Individual Achievement-III). The results of the sample groups are then aggregated for statewide data.



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### c. Definition of Personal Efficacy

Personal efficacy of ACMs is defined as their confidence or capacity to create a positive change in their communities by promoting the school success of underserved children. Personal efficacy is measured by administering a pre-survey the first day of service and a post-survey the last week of service. ACMs serving as mentors answer questions assessing their confidence level in being able to carry out 18 reading related tasks. ACMs serving as community coordinators answer questions assessing their confidence level in being able to carry out 14 volunteer management related tasks.

### d. Volunteer Hours

Our target value for this performance measure is 60,000 hours of service, which is unchanged from FY10. A typographical error in the narrative (and inconsistencies in the performance measures section) incorrectly identified the target value as 65,000 hours of service.

## 2. Enrollment and Retention

Enrollment: For the program year 2009-2010, of the 492 allotted slots 481 (98%) were enrolled.

Retention: For the program year 2009-2010, of the 481 members enrolled 473 (98%) were retained and completed the program.

## 3. Counties Served

In 2010 Energy Express sites were held in 8 of the 11 West Virginia distressed counties designated by the Appalachian Regional Commission. Sites are not selected based on county statistics, but on whether the specific communities to be served are poor or distressed. Sites for 2012 will be determined early in 2012, prior to the start of the summer program.

## Narratives

Appalachian Regional Commission (2010). ARC-Designated Distressed Counties, Fiscal Year 2010.

Retrieved December 2, 2010 from

[http://www.arc.gov/appalachian\\_region/ARCDesignatedDistressedCountiesFiscalYear2010.asp](http://www.arc.gov/appalachian_region/ARCDesignatedDistressedCountiesFiscalYear2010.asp).

### FY 2011-2012 CLARIFICATION RESPONSE

Our desired grant award start date is 11/1/2011. Our member enrollment date is dependent on the public school calendar, but will be mid June through the end of July. There is no overlap in enrollment periods.

### BUDGET CLARIFICATIONS

Section A -- The Program Director does not use staff time paid by CNCS for fundraising. 5% of the Program Director's time is devoted to non-AmeriCorps activities.

Section G -- See budget narrative. Travel costs never exceed the state rate which is lower than the federal rate.

Section I -- See budget narrative. All AmeriCorps members and program staff will have criminal history check completed which will include an FBI check, state check and NSOPR check.

Telephone/ Conference Calls and postage -- See budget narrative. These costs were estimated based on the previous year's expenditures.

Travel to CNCS sponsored meetings -- See budget narrative. These costs were estimated based on the previous year's cost of attendance of 2 staff members to the Grants and Financial Management Conference. Costs included registration, lodging, meals, and travel.

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### PERFORMANCE MEASURES CLARIFICATIONS

As recommended, the performance measures on Member Efficacy, Community Service Projects, and Volunteers were removed.

The Tutoring and Child Literacy measure was edited. The End Outcome was changed to the intermediate outcome and the Intermediate Outcome was changed to an Output. The indicator was revised to include "maintained and improved reading scores." The reference to writing, art and drama activities in the strategy statement was removed.

Nutrition measure: the WV Department of Education's Office of Child Nutrition oversees the USDA's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) which provides children in Energy Express with 58% of their daily nutritional needs (25% through breakfast and 33% through lunch). Meals must meet the meal patterns established by the SFSP to achieve the 58%. Representatives from the Office of Child Nutrition monitor Energy Express SFSP sites using a lengthy monitoring tool (approximately 20 pages) that looks at all aspects of the SFSP. Adherence to the established meal patterns is one component of the monitoring. Any concerns and compliance steps emanating from the site monitoring visits shared with Energy Express staff. Monitoring reports are housed in the Office of Child Nutrition.

### **Continuation Changes**

Energy Express is applying for continuation funding for the 2nd year of a 3-year grant cycle. The format of the 2011 AmeriCorps State and National Application for Funding contains significant changes from the previous year, including a restructuring of narratives and a decrease in the character count limit. Energy Express AmeriCorps has obtained permission from its Federal Program Officer, through the West Virginia Commission for National and Community Service, to make revisions to the original narratives for the purpose of clarity and consistency with the new application instructions.

## Narratives

There are minimal continuation changes made to the grant application, since Energy Express will not operate under the first year of the grant cycle until the summer of 2011.

### Rationale and Approach

#### d. Outcome: Performance Measures

##### Year 2 Changes:

Volunteer Output: Hours changed from 65,000 to 60,000 for the number of volunteer hours of service as documented by volunteer logs.

### Organizational Capability

#### a. Organizational Background

##### Year 2 Changes:

The program director retired in October 2010. The AmeriCorps Strengthening Community Coordinator is currently serving as interim director. The AmeriCorps coordinator left Energy Express in December 2009. A new AmeriCorps coordinator was hired in June 2010.

The primary contact for this grant application is the interim program director/AmeriCorps Strengthening Community Coordinator. The secondary contact is the Administrative Assistant.

#### b. Staffing

##### Year 2 Changes:

##### Key state staff:

AmeriCorps Program Director: Position currently vacant. Previous program director with 16 years

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national service experience as director of Energy Express retired in October 2010. Position to be posted mid-November 2010. AmeriCorps Strengthening Community Coordinator currently serving as interim AmeriCorps Program Director.

AmeriCorps Program Coordinator: Master's in social work. Hired in June 2010; previously served as Energy Express AmeriCorps member, a trainer, and site monitor. She spent 5 years with the West Virginia University Center for Civic Engagement.

AmeriCorps Strengthening Community Coordinator: Master's in social work and public administration. 12 years experience with national service as county contact and community strengthening coordinator; national presentations and publications.

AmeriCorps Curriculum Specialist: Position currently vacant. Position description to be posted November 2010.

AmeriCorps Program Manager: Hired in May 2008; previous experience in data management with an emphasis on payroll. Attended the Corporation for National and Community Service 2010 Financial and Grants Management Institute.

AmeriCorps Administrative Assistant: Master's in business administration. Hired in February 2008; previous experience in benefits/human resources. Attended the Corporation for National and Community Service 2009 and 2010 Financial and Grants Management Institute.

The Energy Express accounting position is vacant. The financial unit of the West Virginia University 4-H Youth Development Unit is assuming the responsibilities until the position is filled.

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e. Current Grantees: Enrollment; Retention

Year 2 Changes:

Enrollment: For the program year 2009-2010, 481 AmeriCorps members were enrolled. This was 98% of our allotted slots. For program year 2010-2011, it possible that we will come closer to filling 100% of the slots because: (1) Beginning with summer 2011, AmeriCorps alums will be able to return for a third or even a fourth summer with the new changes in the final rule issued by the CNCS as directed by the Serve America Act. This will allow the dedicated and experienced members to return for another summer of service. As a minimum time service program, we have had numerous AmeriCorps members who, after their AmeriCorps experience, are excited about serving their communities. As a result, they are eager to return as Energy Express AmeriCorps members. As a program, we are eager to take advantage of their experience and demonstrated commitment to service. (2) We continue to boost recruitment strategies by enlisting the help of AmeriCorps alums in recruiting across college and university campuses as well as using social media networking sites such as Facebook.

As a summer program with minimum time members, we will probably never achieve 100% enrollment. Each year we have 100% of our slots filled prior to the start of the program, but inevitably somewhere across the state, several individuals drop out. Our members are college students that sometimes get other opportunities (like internships), or family members become ill, or they are offered a job that is too enticing to pass up. A challenge of reaching full enrollment is that the nature of summer programs excludes rolling enrollment. There are a couple of reasons for this: 1) members must start on the first day of service to meet all program requirements and 2) individuals selected who then withdraw right before the program starts cannot be replaced due to the turnaround time of getting necessary selection documents and criminal background checks.

Retention: In the summer of 2010, Energy Express retained 98% of enrolled AmeriCorps members. One

## Narratives

member left after statewide training for a summer employment opportunity; one the third week of the program, one near the end of service to enroll in an educational program; and two members were released for cause. Three remained through the end date but did not complete the 300 hours required to earn an educational award. Site supervisors coached those that did not complete 300 hours and offered suggestions for increasing their hours. The members did not take advantage of this support. While it is a goal to achieve 100% retention of members, we are not willing to sacrifice program expectations or quality. Site supervisors receive extensive training on member supervision and progressive discipline. At times, a supervisor's best attempts at guiding a member into reversing negative behavior and attitudes have little impact and the release for cause is the only viable option to maintain fairness and quality among the team members. The state office works closely with site supervisors about using the progressive discipline process appropriately.

Criminal background checks: We have asked for a waiver from the Corporation for National and Community Service to allow us to use HireRight, Inc., the new vendor chosen by West Virginia University. As part of their comprehensive background check HireRight, Inc. checks the National Sex Offender Public Registry.

### Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

#### d. Budget Adequacy

##### Year 2 Changes:

The Non-Benefits fringe rate for FY 2011 is 7.4%, which includes FICA, worker's compensation, and unemployment and is broken down as follows:

Social Security/Medicare: 6.96%

Worker's Compensation: .20%

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Unemployment Compensation: .24%



## Performance Measures

### SAA Characteristics

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

### Priority Areas

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

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 74.07

### Service Categories

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Tutoring and Child (Elementary) Literacy | Primary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Secondary <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Congregate Meals                         | Primary <input type="checkbox"/>            | Secondary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

## Children's Nutrition

**Service Category:** Congregate Meals

**Measure Category:** Needs and Service Activities

### Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Children will participate in breakfast and lunch provided through USDA's Summer Food Service program.

### Results

**Result: Output**

2800 children will be provided breakfast and lunch for 6 weeks that will provide 58% of daily nutritional requirements.

Indicator: participants

Target: 2800 children will be provided breakfast and lunch for 28 days that will provide 58% of daily nutritional requirements.

Target Value: 2800

Instruments: monitoring reports of USDA

PM Statement: 2800 children will be provided breakfast and lunch for six weeks that will provide 58% of daily nutritional requirements.

Prev. Yrs. Data

## Children's Literacy

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

**Measure Category:** Needs and Service Activities

**Strategy to Achieve Results**

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

Children will participate in one-on-one reading.

**Results**

**Result: Output**

3200 children entering first through sixth grades will enroll in Energy Express.

Indicator: student participants

Target: 3200 children entering first through sixth grades enrolled in Energy Express.

Target Value: 3200

Instruments: Attendance records submitted weekly.

PM Statement: 3200 children entering first through sixth grades will enroll in Energy Express.

Prev. Yrs. Data

**Result: Output**

2800 children entering first through sixth grades will complete participation in Energy Express.

Indicator: student participants

Target: 2800 children entering first through sixth grades attended Energy Express 15 days or more.

Target Value: 2800

Instruments: Attendance records submitted weekly.

PM Statement: 2800 children entering first through sixth grades will complete participation in Energy Express.

Prev. Yrs. Data

**Result: Intermediate Outcome**

70% of children will maintain or increase reading achievement.

Indicator: maintained or improved reading scores

Target: Children will maintain or show increases in reading achievement.

Target Value: 70%

Instruments: Pre- and post-program assessments using 3 subtests (letter/word identification, fluency, and passage comprehension) of the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement.

PM Statement: 70% of children will maintain or increase reading achievement.

Prev. Yrs. Data

## Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Sent

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable