



Engagement. Voice. Success.

**AmeriCorps Promise Fellows
Achieving Academic & Social Success for All Minnesota Youth**

**2012-2013
Host Site Request for Proposals**

APPLICATION DUE Friday, March 2, 2012

Providing the Right Support to the Right Youth at the Right Time



In partnership with:





Engagement. Voice. Success.

AmeriCorps Promise Fellows 2012-2013 Host Site Request for Proposals

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background of the Alliance & AmeriCorps Promise Fellows	3
Program Design: ABC's of Dropout Prevention	5
Eligibility to Host Promise Fellows	9
Host Site Expectations & Commitments	11
Host Site Selection Criteria	16
How to Submit Your Application	16
Application Checklist	17
Complete Application template can be found at:	
www.mnyouth.net	

TIMELINE

Request for Proposals Available	January 18, 2012
Informational Webinar	January 30, 2012 at 2 pm
Proposals postmarked & due to the Alliance	March 2, 2012
Notification of acceptance	Early April
Host sites begin recruitment; compliance due	End of April
Required Supervisor Meeting (regional)	Week of April 30 th
Notify the Alliance of Promise Fellows selection	July 20, 2012
All Promise Fellows begin their year of service	August 15, 2012

Background

THE MINNESOTA ALLIANCE WITH YOUTH

The mission of Minnesota Alliance With Youth (the Alliance) is to ignite the spark in all young people in Minnesota to become actively engaged, develop strong voices, and acquire the skills needed for success in school, work, and life. In order to ensure all youth achieve success in school, work, and life, we focus on four strategies: 1) strengthening youth success in school and learning, 2) increasing youth contribution through service & leadership opportunities, 3) developing and magnifying youth voice, and 4) promoting collaboration and innovation. As a statewide collaboration of existing organizations, the Alliance offers training, resources, support, and AmeriCorps Promise Fellows to communities that share our vision and want to promote positive youth outcomes, including graduation for all.

As Minnesota's leading convener, collaborator and capacity-builder for youth development, the Alliance works with and for youth to ensure that all young people have access to five fundamental resources proven to ensure that youth succeed. Known as the Five Promises, these resources are: caring adults; safe places; a healthy start; effective education; and opportunities to help others. The Alliance is the Minnesota affiliate of the America's Promise Alliance and contributes resources to schools, communities and partner organizations across the state in the form of AmeriCorps Promise Fellows. We have hosted over 500 Fellows during the last 13 years.

The Alliance is a leader in Minnesota's drop-out prevention efforts, working in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education and others to address our drop-out crisis. As a partner of America's Promise, we actively participate in the *Grad Nation* movement and have hosted 21 graduation summits for youth and adults in the past five years at the local, regional, and statewide level. We believe AmeriCorps Promise Fellows are part of Minnesota's long-term strategy to address our graduation crisis by providing research-based supports to students in grades 6-10.

For those communities that have hosted Promise Fellows in the past, you will recognize our continued commitment to strategies such as school-community partnerships, involving volunteers as caring adults in youths' lives, providing high-quality in school and out of school activities, and service-learning, using research-based drop-out prevention strategies.

AMERICORPS

Since its creation, the Alliance has used the strength of AmeriCorps to tackle difficult problems. We secured our first AmeriCorps members in 1998. The corps, which was dedicated to helping every youth reach their full promise, grew steadily over the years and now has 116 members and a statewide presence. Because many schools are under-resourced, AmeriCorps members are uniquely appropriate for addressing the dropout crisis, because of the time and dedication needed to reach youth in need.

AmeriCorps is a national service program funded by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service. Last year in Minnesota, over 1,300 AmeriCorps members served in over 12 programs. The Minnesota Alliance With Youth's AmeriCorps Promise Fellows is one of these programs. AmeriCorps programs in Minnesota are managed by ServeMinnesota, the Minnesota State Commission for national service, which provides partial funding for the program. Visit www.serveminnesota.org or www.americorps.gov for more information.

The Challenge Facing Minnesota

THE UNACCEPTABLE DROP-OUT CRISIS IN MINNESOTA

Minnesota's academic achievement gap has grown to be the largest in the nation. Data from the Minnesota Department of Education show the graduation rate for white students is 82%, but as noted below, is alarmingly lower for students of color and low-income students. The number of white students enrolled in public schools is shrinking, and non-white student enrollment has increased by almost 60% in the past 10 years. If we do not make changes that better serve all students, we will see even greater gaps between those who succeed and thrive, and those youth who are disengaged from school and life.

MORE THAN 18,000 (or 25%) OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS DIDN'T GRADUATE ON TIME

Information by sub-group for most recent year for which there was data (08-09):

1,065 or 41% of American Indian students
1,416 or 68% of Asian American students
2,058 or 45% of Hispanic students
4,071 or 44% of Black students
54% of students who receive free or reduced-price lunch dropped out
8,610 Total for non-White students who dropped out
10,029 Total number of White students who dropped out
18,639 Total number of students who didn't graduate in 2009

THE NEED FOR MULTIFACETED SOLUTIONS

Dropping out of school is a process, not a one-day event, and often has multiple causes. Students leaving high school often cite lack of motivation, boredom, an unchallenging atmosphere, or an

"The Minnesota Department of Education is committed to partnering with others from business, education and community organizations to build on solid research and implement evidence based practices that impact successful school completion. This proposal is an innovative response to address the urgency of the dropout problem in Minnesota. We must all work together to ensure that all Minnesota students graduate from high school and that in this state – even one dropout is too many." ~ Cammy Lehr, Ph.D., Education Specialist, Dropout Prevention, Minnesota Department of Education

overall lack of engagement in school as reasons they dropped out (National High School Center, 2007). Unfortunately, many classroom teachers lack the necessary training, time, and data to monitor how all students are doing from week to week. Students who are struggling may go unnoticed for some time. Historically, extra supports have not been available to students until their trajectory of failure is almost impossible to reverse. This program is designed to do the opposite-intervene as early as possible to greatly increase the chance for success.

The Institute of Education Sciences reported in 2008 that the "greatest success in reducing dropout rates will be achieved where multiple approaches are adopted as part of a comprehensive strategy to increase student engagement." Growth and Justice reports "Rigorous coursework alone will not have the intended effect for those students who are performing at or below proficiency levels. Social supports are often needed, such as tutoring, in-school counseling, and mentoring." (2008). Research by Dr. Robert Balfanz at Johns Hopkins University and

the Philadelphia Education Fund found that a 6th grader with serious difficulties in even one of the early warning sign areas (Attendance, Behavior, & Core Academics) has at least a 75% chance of never finishing high school. The Alliance approach, described in detail below, utilizes the power of AmeriCorps to apply various evidence-based strategies to engage youth and keep them on-track to graduate.

Program Design: A, B, C's of Dropout Prevention

PROVIDING THE RIGHT SUPPORT TO THE RIGHT YOUTH AT THE RIGHT TIME AT THE RIGHT INTENSITY & DURATION

To address the challenges facing MN, the Alliance invests AmeriCorps Promise Fellows in schools and communities to connect high-need youth with critical school and community resources. They make it possible for increasing numbers of schools to implement a **Response To Intervention (RTI)** approach that promotes tiered levels of support matched to student need. RTI is a relatively new approach used in education to identify and address academic and behavioral problems before students struggle, fail and drop out. The RTI approach uses easily accessible data indicators to quickly identify early warning signs of disengagement and identify appropriate and engaging interventions and supports, designed to meet each student's needs. Promise Fellows based at both schools and community programs provide the people power to implement the interventions through the efforts of the Youth Success Team. The **Youth Success Team** is made up of Promise Fellows, Site Supervisors, Site Coordinators, teachers, school social workers, school personnel and community members who use student data to determine appropriate interventions for each youth and monitor participant involvement and improvement over time. Promise Fellows provide the needed capacity to deliver individualized interventions to a core group of youth.

Many future dropouts can be identified as early as sixth grade. Researchers and practitioners know the **Early Warning Indicators** that students are off track to graduate:

- Attendance: high number of absences from school (present less than 80% of the time).
- Behavior: referrals for behavior issues or suspensions.
- Coursework and credit: failing grades in core academic subjects like reading or math, and/or failure to accumulate credits needed to advance and graduate.

AmeriCorps Promise Fellows will make it possible for schools and communities to use RTI to implement effective drop-out prevention strategies that result in higher attendance, fewer behavior problems, and improved academic performance. Each AmeriCorps Promise Fellow will intensively support at least 30 youth in grades 6 - 10 during their year of service (including summer). These 30 youth are the students on the each Fellow's **Focus List**. Promise Fellows will provide or coordinate support interventions for these youth, ultimately helping the youth get back on track to graduate. As youth progress, new youth may be added to the Fellow's Focus List.

According to drop-out prevention research, the following strategies help students improve attendance, behavior, and course performance. Fellows ensure youth on their Focus List:

- Become connected to more caring adults
- Participate in high-quality activities in school and out of school
- Engage in meaningful service

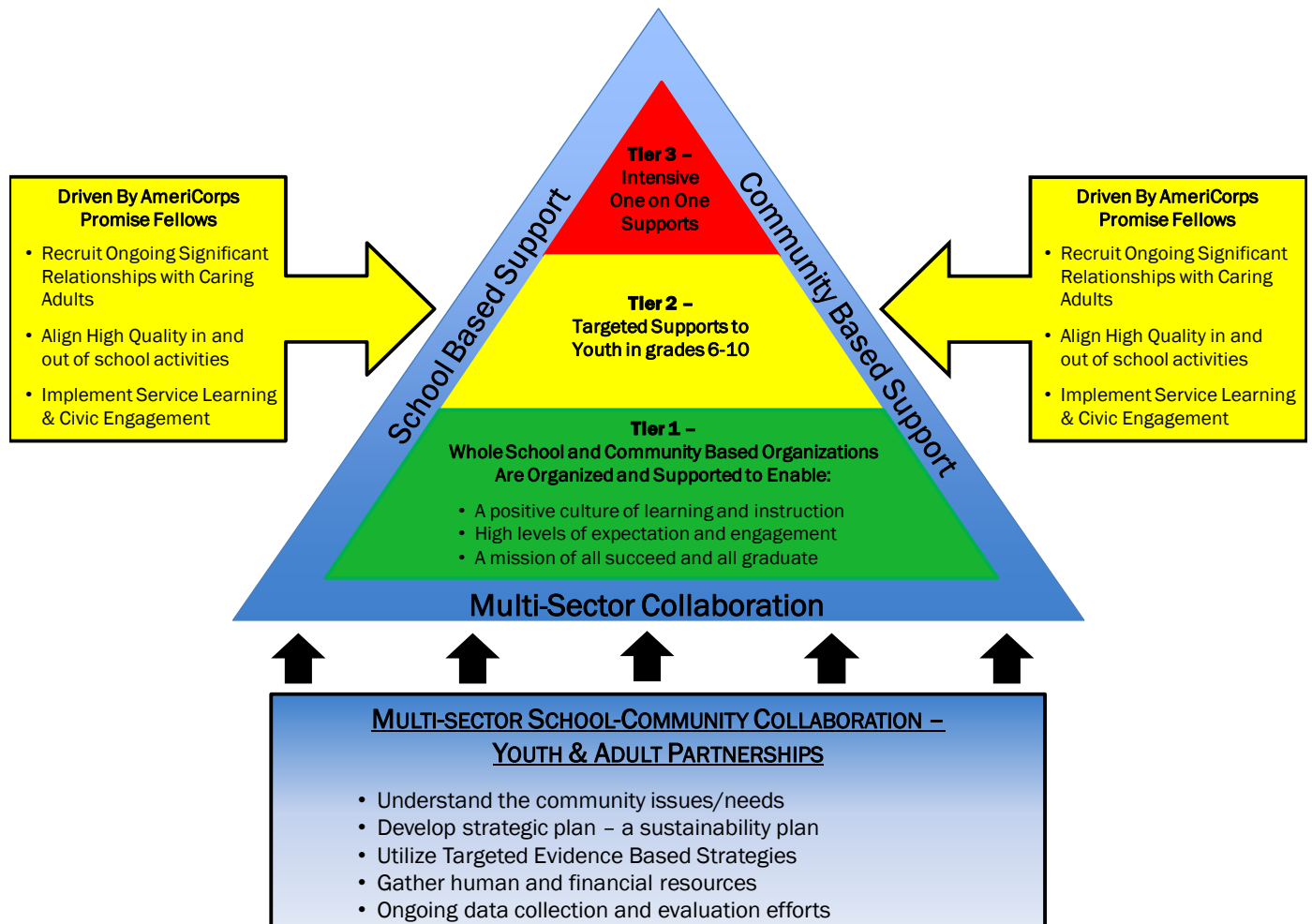
Promise Fellows will arrange for appropriate academic support as needed. The goal is to provide the right support to the right youth at the right time for the right intensity and duration. To help the Promise Fellows successfully reach the youth most in need of extra support, school personnel and community partners on the Youth Success Team will identify the youth on the Focus List based on the Early Warning Indicators (attendance, behavior, course performance) and help design appropriate interventions based on local resources and gaps.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

AmeriCorps Promise Fellows will make it possible for increasing numbers of schools to identify the Early Warning Indicators in youth and implement a Response To Intervention (RTI) approach. Using data indicators, academic and behavioral problems are identified and addressed before students

fail and drop out. Although incredibly effective in preventing students from falling off-track and dropping out, providing RTI supports requires significant people power for effective implementation. AmeriCorps Promise Fellows make it possible for schools and communities to use the RTI framework to implement multiple effective drop-out prevention strategies that result in increased student engagement as evidenced by higher attendance, fewer behavior problems, and improved academic performance. AmeriCorps members ensure students receive a variety of interventions (ex. Caring adults, service learning, etc.) as determined by the Host Site's Youth Success Team. For more information on RTI that is consistent with our approach, review this short article from the National Council on State Legislatures: <http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=21805>.

A key aspect of implementing the RTI approach is having access to student data and information. The ability to review the Early Warning Indicators and youth progress will assist the Youth Success Team in making decisions about what supports should be delivered to which youth participants. All Host Sites – both school and community based organizations are asked to regularly review the Attendance, Behavior, and Coursework data of youth on the Promise Fellow's Focus List. This information is shared with the Alliance using an online data management system called OnCorps. Host Sites will be asked to share and track student progress and complete a formal data sharing agreement with the Alliance. *The diagram below illustrates the Alliance's whole community approach to RTI implementation.*



OUR COMMON STRATEGIES

A multi-faceted problem like dropping out of school requires multi-faceted solutions. Our program uses three research-based strategies common across all sites, but is also flexible and adaptable to local community needs. AmeriCorps Promise Fellows increase the capacity of schools and communities to use the drop-out prevention interventions described below. These strategies are advocated by the National Drop-Out Prevention Center and adopted by the MN Department of Education. To read about these and other strategies, visit: www.dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies

AmeriCorps Promise Fellows will connect every youth on their Focus List with all three of the following support strategies.

CARING ADULTS: Promise Fellows will increase the number of significant, caring adult relationships experienced by youth. Depending on existing structures and programs in a given school or community, a Promise Fellow will create or strengthen opportunities where the Promise Fellows or adult volunteers provide mentoring, academic enrichment, project-based learning, or career advising. Promise Fellows will recruit, train, and/or monitor at least 15 adult volunteers per year. Adult volunteers will invest at least 30 hours per youth per year.

HIGH-QUALITY IN SCHOOL & OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:

Promise Fellows and adult volunteers will also ensure youth spend at least two days per week for at least a total of four hours in high-quality out of school time activities, and at least 12 additional hours per week engaged in high-quality in school activities. Activities may include academic support (such as homework help, study skills practice) along with enrichment activities such as youth service and leadership programs or career and college exploration.

SERVICE-LEARNING: Depending on existing structures and programs in a given community, Fellows will also engage youth in meaningful service-learning or civic engagement activities, for a minimum of 20 hours per youth per year. Promise Fellows will create or strengthen in school service-learning programs, community service clubs, youth voice in community decision-making, or events for National Days of Service, etc.

To summarize the numbers, each Promise Fellow is expected to support a Focus List of 30 youth in Grades 6-10 in finding opportunities to connect with the interventions listed above for a minimum of three months. Each youth is engaged in 16 hours per week of high-quality activities (for example: participate in four hours of out of school enrichment/service-learning/leadership activities and 12 hours of in school activities such as AVID, one to one tutoring, lunchtime mentoring, etc). In addition, each youth will engage in 20 hours of service during the course of the year. Finally, the adult volunteers

The Essentials: What's Required of Each Promise Fellow & Host Site?

Serve at least 30 youth in grades 6-10 which becomes their Focus List

Connect each youth with support & interventions over the course of a week:

- **Mobilize Caring Adults** to be mentors, tutors, college prep coaches, etc.
- **Provide Service-Learning** opportunities & engage youth in at least 20 hours of service during the year
- **Implement high quality in & out of school academic supports** in a variety of settings such as afterschool programs, AVID classes, one to one tutoring, etc. at least 2 days per week

Use data to identify & track progress of youth on their Focus List using Alliance OnCorps system

- **Attendance**
- **Behavior**
- **Course Performance – grades/GPA/NWEA scores**

Meet regularly with Youth Success Team to discuss the progress of youth & determine which interventions should be utilized

Collect Adult Volunteer information including contact information, hours served & activities involved in supporting youth

who are mobilized will each serve at least 30 hours per year supporting and building relationships with youth.

EXAMPLES OF PROMISE FELLOW ACTIVITIES

AmeriCorps Promise Fellows increase the capacity of schools and communities to use the following drop-out prevention interventions: connecting youth with caring adults; involving youth in high-quality in-school and out-of-school activities; and engaging youth in service-learning. Below are examples of the ways Promise Fellows could use these strategies to support youth on their Focus List to get back on track for graduation.

RTI Approach: Early Warning Indicators (ABC's)	Examples of Interventions for Targeted Youth (Focus List)	To deliver these interventions, AmeriCorps members in school & community based settings:
Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide attendance coaching and monitor with phone calls home if youth miss class. • Organize field trips to help make learning more relevant. • Organize an incentive program to help youth to track their progress. • Plan Attendance Breakfasts. • Recognize youth during announcements (once per quarter). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of hours that youth spend in high-quality and engaging activities before, during and/or after school (min. 16 hours per week)
Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a lunchtime mentoring program which focuses on leadership development. • Develop youth ambassador program/youth-led peer mediation program. • Recognize positive behavior at school assemblies. • Organize one time service project for Family Night. • Encourage single school and afterschool culture for rules and expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of significant, caring adult relationships experienced by all youth. Adult volunteers commit to serving at least 30 hours.
Coursework & Academic Support in Core Subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect service projects in afterschool programs to classroom instruction; connect youths with a mentor to help with math and/or reading skills • Incorporate everyday math/reading games into afterschool programming. • Provide individual or small group academic support in the classroom, specifically directed reading interventions or/and corrective math support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage youth in meaningful service-learning or civic engagement activities, for a minimum of 20 hours per youth.

Fellows will also help create a positive environment for graduation through activities based in both schools and community settings such as:

- Creating and distributing certificates for good attendance and recognizing students during announcements at school
- Recognizing positive behavior at school assemblies or at an afterschool site

- Organizing a service project for Family Night
- Reinforcing rules and expectations that are uniformly supported by everyone at school and at a community-based setting (ex. Boys & Girls Club, 4-H club, etc)
- Encouraging participation in afterschool clubs
- Working with teachers, volunteers and students to establish shared expectations posted around school & community settings
- Providing individual or small group ad hoc academic support in the classroom or after-school programs

WHAT MAKES THIS DROP-OUT PREVENTION APPROACH EFFECTIVE?

Most future dropouts can be identified as early as 6th grade. Research by Dr. Robert Balfanz at Johns Hopkins University and the Philadelphia Education Fund found that a 6th grader with serious difficulties in even one of the early warning sign areas has at least a 75% chance of never finishing high school. These researchers conclude that drop-out prevention efforts should be focused in the middle grades to be most effective and employ evidence-based strategies to address the ABC early warning signs of attendance, behavior and competency in reading and math.

"This multi-dimensional model that provides youth the right support at the right time is a fundamental philosophical shift in education.

This philosophy creates individualized learning plans for students at risk of dropping out, which is time-consuming yet absolutely essential for success. We're excited to partner with the Alliance through a program that provides immense promise for the students who need it most. We will accomplish so much more together than the district can on its own."
~Minnesota Superintendent

In addition, the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance at the U.S. Dept. of Education recommends using data to identify students most at risk of dropping out, providing targeted intervention (academic support and enrichment) that improve students' classroom behavior and social skills, and connecting students with adult advocates. The National High School Center concurs, reporting proven dropout prevention programs feature tutoring, community engagement, and adults working with small groups of students.

In our work across the state, community leaders have shared the need for increased capacity to support these multi-faceted drop-out prevention efforts, particularly in under-resourced schools. Dr. Balfanz recommends systematically applying targeted interventions until students are on track,

and using national service such as AmeriCorps to provide the people power for mentoring and tutoring programs. The Alliance is committed to provide "the right support to the right youth at the right time for the right intensity and duration," using the power of AmeriCorps. We collect and analyze student data on attendance, behavioral issues, and academic performance and use the data to determine which students need support. We integrate this data-driven strategy into our program structure, plus we have a successful history of tapping into the power of AmeriCorps to support struggling youth within an expanded web of service through school and community partnerships.

Eligibility to Host Promise Fellows: Host Sites & Host Communities

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

To solve the graduation crisis, entire communities must be engaged. Schools alone cannot provide the multifaceted strategies youth need to thrive. According to the National Drop-Out Prevention Center at Clemson University and the Minnesota Department of Education's Drop-Out Prevention Initiative, school-community collaborations are essential to drop-out prevention. The Alliance is uniquely positioned to implement this holistic approach because of our long-standing tradition and

experience building relationships with multiple groups including schools, community organizations, government, the private sector and youth themselves. Our expanded AmeriCorps initiative enhances communities throughout Minnesota where multiple partners from all sectors are dedicated to ending Minnesota's graduation crisis. Many agree that "it takes a village to raise a child", and we put that directive into action. Our deep and sustainable school-community partnerships increase the number of people, organizations, and resources dedicated to ensuring graduation success for all youth.

DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

In order to host AmeriCorps Promise Fellows (also called AmeriCorps "members"), Host Sites (any school, organization, town, city, or neighborhood in Minnesota) must commit to create or strengthen a sustainable partnership among one or more schools and one or more community organizations. This partnership builds a sustained web of support for youth in schools and communities. Both school personnel and community leaders serve on the Youth Success Team which can include representatives of community organizations, schools, local businesses, faith communities, and/or government that are committed to reviewing data and determining programming needs based on student needs and progress. Youth Success Teams are typically formed with 4-6 members/organizations and meet regularly to plan, brainstorm, and troubleshoot community-wide efforts to support youth. The team can be made up of existing collaborations (e.g., a Community Education Advisory Board, Afterschool Alliance, etc.) or may be new. Please note that applicants will be required to submit letter of support from each organization represented on the Youth Success Team with their completed application.

Each Youth Success Team identifies one key organizational partner who is the lead contact for the Promise Fellows and the Alliance. The lead contact, known as the Host Site, provides ongoing communication and support of the Promise Fellows and intervention efforts. The Host Site also identifies the Site Supervisor and Site Coordinator who provide the day to day oversight, supervision, and data access to the Promise Fellows.

DEFINING LOCAL DROP-OUT PREVENTION NEEDS

Prior to applying to host a Promise Fellow(s), Host Sites should review information and statistics on drop-out prevention and the academic achievement gap within their community, city or neighborhood. Which high schools are struggling with graduation for all youth or sub-groups of youth? Which middle schools feed into these high schools? Which sub-groups of youth and individual youth are showing early warning signs for dropping out: absenteeism, behavior referrals, and difficulty in core academic courses? Visit these websites to learn more:

Minnesota Department of Education:

<http://education.state.mn.us/ReportCard2005/index.do>

School Matters: <http://www.schooldatairect.org/>

"Promise is a powerful word and Promise Fellows are a powerful partnership. We are very pleased to support this partnership on behalf of Minnesota youth. The University of Minnesota believes young people do best when they are surrounded by caring people, constructive places, and challenging possibilities to contribute to their communities. Research shows these are critical for the healthy and successful learning and development of young people. The Minnesota Alliance With Youth creates these in the lives of MN youth through the Promise Fellow partnerships with many communities, schools, and youth organizations, such as 4-H. We hope you will join us and many others in this effort to make a real difference using proven approaches." ~ Dr. Dale Blyth, Associate Dean & Director, University of MN Extension Center for Youth Development

Applicants should devise a local program model that includes the common strategies required by the Alliance (e.g. caring adult relationships, high-quality in school and out of school activities, and

Spotlight on a Host Community: Mounds View/Roseville Schools & Northwest Youth & Family Services

In 2010, Northwest Youth & Family Services (NYFS), a non-profit organization, collaborated with two Mounds View Middle Schools to support youth across their communities. Together, three Promise Fellows provided ongoing support in and out of school to youth who were showing signs of falling behind academically and socially. One Fellow served at the lead Host Site, NYFS and provided afterschool programming which focused on service-learning and leadership development and tutored one day a week at one school. The Two Promise Fellows served at Middle Schools and supported AVID classes and connected youth with tutors-mentors and service-learning opportunities.

Together, youth from all three sites collaborated on a community-wide Health Fair and service project in late April. The Youth Success Team, made up of the three sites, worked together to identify youth to serve and tracked student progress over the year. By committing to regular communication, sharing resources and programming, and having the added capacity of AmeriCorps Promise Fellows, students were served more effectively than if the organizations had attempted the same activities on their own.

service-learning), and apply for one or multiple Fellows within a community to help implement their plans and identify interventions for youth.

WHO CAN APPLY?

There are two avenues for applying to host Promise Fellows:

- As an individual Host Site with one lead host organization who oversees the program with one or more partners (ex. Girl Scouts with 5 School Partners)
- As a Host Community with one lead Host Site who partners with several schools and multiple organizations across a geographic area (ex. Northfield Public Schools & their Healthy Community Initiative)

Sites that have been designated as Priority Schools by the Minnesota Department of Education will be given special consideration. In addition, if your School or District falls into one of the following categories, you are encouraged to apply:

- Receives Integration Revenue
- Has been identified by Minnesota Department of Education as a Racially Identifiable School
- Is in the AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) stage of Corrective Action or higher

HOW MANY FELLOWS CAN BE REQUESTED?

Sites can request multiple Promise Fellows. If your site plans on requesting multiple Promise Fellows, please note in your application how you plan to support Promise Fellows and the reasoning for how hosting more than one Promise Fellow will impact your community and youth. Please note that the cash match of \$6,500 is PER Promise Fellow; therefore if a site requests three Promise Fellows the total cash match would be: \$19,500.

Individual Host Sites

Individual Host Sites refer to a single organization looking to create or strengthen partnerships with one or more schools and one or more community-based organizations to increase the number of youth served. This partnership will serve as the foundation for a Youth Success Team. Fellows will provide integrated wrap-around support to youth both in-school and during out-of-school time whether hosted by a school or community-based organization. The host site designates which

organizations it will be working with and detail what resources will be provided. Individual host sites can request one or multiple Fellows to assist them in strengthening community and school partnerships.

The Alliance works with individual host sites to connect them to larger community-wide collaborations, partners and Host Communities that may further support their efforts at implementing dropout prevention strategies.

Spotlight on a Host Site: Nobles County Integration Collaborative One example of how an individual Host Site strengthened its partnership with a local school partner can be found at the Nobles County Integration Collaborative (NCIC) in Worthington. The Promise Fellow for NCIC provides ongoing academic and social supports to students of color and low-income students in an afterschool setting with the goal to build their engagement in school and the community. Students are supported with a variety of interventions from peer mentoring to college exploration opportunities to tutoring help. The Fellow has built the capacity of the host site/organization and its school and community partners to deliver services and acts as the link between the Youth Success Team members.

Host Communities

Host Communities refers to a cluster of organizations and schools within a neighborhood, town, city, county or region that are ready to create or deepen their school-community partnership through Youth Success Team and intensify their school-reform efforts across the community. They may apply to host clusters of two or more Promise Fellows across several organizations. These organizations and school(s) commit to providing integrated wrap-around support to identified groups of youth. The goal of the Youth Success Team and Host Communities model is to avoid duplication and allow for more effective sharing of information and resources to support youth in and out of school.

Host Site Expectations & Commitments

Host Sites take on a variety of responsibilities when they are selected to host an AmeriCorps Promised Fellow. The Alliance works to support each Host Site and Youth Success Team in meeting the goals of this model. Each Host Site is asked to fulfill the following expectations and commitments:

- Recruit & select their Promise Fellow
- Provide supervision & support of the Promise Fellow
- Ensure Promise Fellow activities align with AmeriCorps & Alliance Goals
- Assist with data collection & reporting requirements
- Actively participate in trainings, meetings, and Site Visits
- Provide Cash Match of \$6,500/Promise Fellow & meet In-Kind Requirements such as providing a desk, phone, computer, mileage, etc.

“Hosting Promise Fellows is a unique opportunity to bring new talent, fresh ideas and energy into your organization. You are supporting a Promise Fellow who has committed to a year of service and that is both a great honor and great responsibility.”

~ Former Promise Fellow Supervisor

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT OF PROMISE FELLOWS

The Alliance provides support to Promise Fellows through monthly trainings, weekly communication via email, site visits, and coaching. Members of the Youth Success Team provide day-to-day supervision of Promise Fellows and provide additional training and evaluation support. Each Host Site and Youth Success Team identifies a Host Site Supervisor and a Site Coordinator.

- Site Supervisor: Acts as the main contact with the Alliance, with the Host Site and the Promise Fellow. He/she provides the day to day oversight of the activities of the Promise Fellow; signs off on evaluation and timesheets; attends all required meetings with the Alliance and identifies additional allies for the Fellow.
- Site Coordinator: Assists the Promise Fellow in accessing and reviewing student data on a regular basis. He/she may convene the Youth Success Team to discuss interventions and students to serve as well.

- Please note, the Site Coordinator and Site Supervisor may be the same person, depending on the Host Site.

Site Supervisors play an important role in ensuring the success of the Promise Fellow's year. The supervisor in most cases must be a full-time employee with available time to effectively supervise and mentor the Promise Fellow. Weekly or bi-weekly meetings with the Promise Fellow are required. The Site Supervisor signs-off on timesheets and progress reports and participates in approximately five meetings during the year related to this program. The Site Supervisor, in collaboration with Site Coordinator and other partners will ensure "layered" supervision and support for the Fellow.

To help Promise Fellows successfully reach the highest risk youth, a Site Coordinator at each participating school will allocate at least 10% of his/her time to coordinate the program. The Site Coordinator will review weekly student data on early warning indicators (less than 80% attendance, one or more behavior referrals, or poor course performance in English or Math) and identify youth who are heading off track. In order to provide the right support to the right youth and the right time, the Site Coordinator and Youth Success Team, consisting of Promise Fellows, Site Supervisor, teachers, school social workers, school personnel and community members will use this data to determine appropriate interventions for each youth and monitor participant involvement and improvement over time. Promise Fellows will provide or coordinate support interventions for at least 30 identified youth, ultimately helping them get back on track to graduate. As youth progress, new youth may be added to a member's Focus List.

For Host Sites that are community-based, it will be necessary to develop a strong, ongoing relationship with a designated school partner who can assist with the reporting and data requirements. The school partner acts as the gatekeeper for this information. For example, in one community, a Fellow serving at the local drop-in afterschool center was able to access the grades and the attendance information on her students because of the relationship established between her Site Supervisor and the assistant principal (who also had a Fellow serving within her building). The Assistant Principal provided access to information for both Fellows and sites and acted as the Site Coordinator for their collaborative's Youth Success Team. Host Sites will be required to complete a Data Sharing Agreement before Promise Fellows can begin serving in August.

PROMISE FELLOW RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The Alliance is dedicated to recruiting a diverse pool of Promise Fellows reflective of the communities in which they serve. Our goal is to assist applicants in finding the best fit between Promise Fellow and Host Site. Fellows are recruited both by their Host Site and the staff of the Alliance. Host Sites are expected to recruit aggressively through their networks and local media. The Alliance staff, in partnership with Host Sites, places ads in major state and national websites, newspapers and works with national AmeriCorps recruiting systems. Sites are required to submit interview questions to ensure that the selection process is fair and equitable for all applicants. Applicants will be screened and interviewed by both the Host Site Supervisor and the Alliance staff before an official offer of service is made.

AmeriCorps Promise Fellows are typically college educated and serve full time for one year, beginning in August. The Alliance provides them with a modest monthly living allowance plus an Education Award of \$5,550 upon successful completion of their term of service.

For basic eligibility, Promise Fellows must be:

- 18 years or older
- A U.S. Citizen or U.S. National or a Lawful Permanent Resident Alien of the United States

- Able to serve in a full-time position (e.g., not a full-time student or working elsewhere full-time)
- Interested in serving youth and the community
- Able to pass a complete background check (including National Sex Offender Registry, State BCA, and FBI fingerprint check) before beginning their term of service

Compensation of Fellows provided by the Alliance: Fellows receive a living allowance of approximately \$450 every two weeks (pretax) provided by the Alliance, health insurance, training/support, and an Education Award of \$5,550 for completing the term of service.

DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

The Alliance is committed to achieving measurable results through clear and consistent data collection, aggregation, and reporting. Host Sites must commit to completing all program evaluation requirements.

Site Coordinators must use or establish a system to review student data on a weekly basis related to attendance, behavior, and course performance. Working in collaboration with Promise Fellows and other school personnel, data is used to determine which students are heading off-track to graduate, which students should receive support (be added to a Promise Fellow's Focus List), and how students who are receiving support are progressing.

Monthly on-line progress reports, entered into the OnCorps system, are due throughout the service year. These are prepared by Fellows in collaboration with their Site Supervisors and Site Coordinators. Tools to prepare these reports will be provided at the start of the program year. Progress Reports ask for the following types of information:

- Summary of youth participation and progress, including ongoing data on attendance, behavior, and academic performance for the Focus List youth;
- Description of activities;
- Description of Fellows' personal and professional development plans and activities;
- Feedback for the Alliance.

Host Site are asked to ensure their data sharing agreements are in place before the Promise Fellow begins serving and that data privacy guidelines are followed throughout the program year.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN TRAININGS, MEETINGS, AND SITE VISITS

To ensure Fellows and Site Supervisors are prepared for all activities during the year and feel connected to the statewide effort to increase graduation success, Promise Fellows, Site Supervisors, and Site Coordinators are required to participate in statewide and regional meetings and training events. The Alliance provides over 90 hours of training to Fellows on key topics. Experts in the fields of education, service, youth development, and community development deliver the workshops along with Alliance staff. Site Supervisors provide additional hours of training customized to the needs of the Host Site and Youth Success Team.

Fellows are required to participate in the following:

- Regional meeting within first two weeks of service (1 day in Fellow's region)
- Pre-Service Institute (2 days in or near the Twin Cities)
- Monthly Training Meetings (1 day each month in Fellow's region)
- Mid-year Training Retreat (1 day in or near the Twin Cities)
- End-of-Year Reflection Retreat (1 day in the Fellow's region)
- At least one Site Visit will take place where Alliance Staff visit the Host Site to meet with the Fellow and Supervisor

- Fellows are encouraged to actively participate and connect with Alliance Staff and other Fellows through blogs, webinars, email, phone calls, and days of service.

Site Supervisors and Site Coordinators are required to participate in the following:

- Site visit to new sites prior to the program year start (April)
- Required Site Supervisor and Site Coordinator Meeting (Week of April 30th, 1 day in their region)
- Supervisors and Site Coordinators attend the first day of the Pre-Service Institute with their Fellows (Fall; 1 day in or near the Twin Cities)
- Supervisors and Site Coordinators attend the Mid-Year Training Retreat with their Fellows (Winter; 1 day in or near the Twin Cities)
- At least one Site Visit will take place where Alliance Staff visit the Host Site & Promise Fellows
- Site Supervisors and Site Coordinators are encouraged to actively participate and connect with Alliance Staff and other Supervisors/Site Coordinators through blogs, webinars, email, phone calls, and days of service.

What Promise Fellows Can and Can't Do

Promise Fellows will follow a pre-determined position description (written by their Host Site) for their year of service. Promise Fellow roles must relate to the design of this program and contribute to achieving the program's goals.

While Promise Fellows provide an exciting opportunity to get additional things done during their year of service, ***Promise Fellows may not do the following:***

- Promise Fellows may not displace other paid staff of the organization;
- Promise Fellows may not perform secretarial functions for other staff;
- Promise Fellows may not lobby politicians or organize voter registration drives;
- Promise Fellows may not attempt to influence legislation;
- Promise Fellows may not organize or engage in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- Promise Fellows may not assist, promote, or deter union organizing;
- Promise Fellows may not engage in activities that have connections to religious instruction, religious proselytizing, or maintenance or construction of facilities that serve a religious purpose.
- Promise Fellows may not provide abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services

These are prohibited activities while Promise Fellows are accruing hours that count towards their living allowance and education award. However, a Promise Fellow can participate in activities of this nature on their own time.

CASH MATCH

Host Sites are required to help offset the cost of the program by providing a cash match of \$6,500 per Fellow. Host Sites can use a variety of sources to pay for the cash match. If federal funds are used as match to cover the cost of the Promise Fellow cash match, the Alliance requires written authorization from the Federal Program Officer giving authorization to use federal dollars as match for another federal program.

For those Host Communities that are working to bring together multiple schools and organizations to host multiple Fellows, the Youth Success Team may collaborate to cover the cost of this payment, but the organization signing the Host Site Application is ultimately responsible for the total payment owed to the Alliance.

The Cash Match is used to cover part of the cost of the Living Allowance, health insurance, administrative costs and training provided to the Promise Fellow. **Because of this, there are no refunds for the Cash Match if a Promise Fellow decides to leave his or her term of service early.**

In addition, starting this year, the full Cash Match will be required to be paid in full at the start of the Program Year (August 15th). However, please note that the Alliance is willing to negotiate this deadline for those Host Sites for which this requirement would be an extreme hardship or preclude them from applying to host an AmeriCorps Promise Fellow. Contact Julie Muklebust, Alliance Business Manager at: julie.muklebust@duluth.k12.mn.us for questions you have about the Cash Match.

IN-KIND REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the cash payment, it is recommended that hosts plan on tapping into an additional \$2,500 to support in-kind requirements. Hosts are required to provide their Fellow(s) with the following:

- personal workstation/desk and office supplies
- resources and materials for programming
- computer with current software and individual email account, access to the internet
- technical support for computer
- telephone with personal voicemail or cell phone
- mileage reimbursement for required trainings
- local travel necessary for conducting service activities
- parking permit or bus pass if necessary

The Alliance provides Promise Fellows with approximately \$450 every two weeks (pre-tax) as a living allowance. This living allowance plus the Fellows' educational award (worth \$5,550), health insurance, workers compensation, FICA, background checks, and much of the Fellows' trainings are paid directly by the Minnesota Alliance With Youth. Fellows will receive their payroll checks directly from the Alliance.

Host Site Selection Criteria

Applications to host a Promise Fellow will be assessed and reviewed by a team of Alliance staff, partners, host sites, youth and former Fellows according to the following criteria:

- Need, as demonstrated by a needs/resources assessment completed by Youth Success Team with clear plans to connect local activities to drop-out prevention and to engage and serve youth who are most at-risk of dropping out.
- Authentic collaboration among members of the Youth Success Team, including both school and community partners, and youth.
- Commitment to youth engagement and youth voice, including youth who are disengaged.
- Commitment to implement the required program model, including mobilizing caring adult volunteers, providing high-quality in-school and out-of-school activities, and service-learning.
- Good fit between the planned roles for the Fellow (as outlined by the Host Site in a draft Position Description) and the goals of the program.
- Identification of a Site Coordinator who can designate at least 10% of her/his time (provided in-kind) to coordinate data collection, meetings, and interventions.
- Assurance that a high quality Site Supervisor will be assigned to each Fellow and ability to provide professional development experiences for the Fellow.

- Commitment by Site Supervisors and Fellows to participate in all required meetings (e.g. Promise Fellow Institute, Training, etc.)
- Ability to pay required cash and in-kind matches.

For Assistance While Preparing Your Application

In order to help schools and community-based organizations collaborate with strong and enthusiastic partners, the Minnesota Alliance With Youth can help connect applicants with existing resources and leaders in any area of the state. It is reasonable that all your questions may not be answered by these guidelines. You are encouraged and welcomed to ask questions during the preparation of your application. ***A Webinar will be held Monday, January 30th at 2 pm to assist organizations in writing the application and to provide technical assistance (RSVP to Melissa Burwell, mburwell@mnyouth.net) if you plan to attend.***

Telephone consultation is available; however, proposal drafts cannot be reviewed. Please feel free to contact Melissa Burwell, Director of Strategic Initiatives, mburwell@mnyouth.net, 651-528-8561 (office) or 612-616-2574 (cell) with any questions.

Submitting Your Application

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION IS A TWO STEP PROCESS:

1. Submit an Online Application (which includes uploading an electronic copy) & complete the online Host Site Contact Information form.

2. Mail One Signed Hardcopy & Three Copies – Postmarked March 2, 2012 to the Alliance which includes ALL completed Attachments (ex. Letters of support in one document)

Applicants MUST complete the online form and upload the completed provided template to submit their application. Your complete application (one signed original, three photocopies, and one uploaded electronic copy) must be **POSTMARKED by Friday, March 2, 2012.** No faxes will be accepted.

Mail Four Copies to:
Melissa Burwell
Minnesota Alliance With Youth
2233 University Avenue West, Suite 235
St. Paul, MN 55114-1643

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Answer all questions using the Application Template provided (can be accessed at www.mnyouth.net), including a Position Description in a Saved Document.
- Complete the online Host Site Contact Information
- Upload your Completed Application online.
- Upload in one file copies of letters of support from each member of the Youth Success Team. Submit hardcopies with the original hard copy of the application.
- Submit one original hardcopy & three copies (4 total) of your application with all attachments ***postmarked by Friday, March 2nd*** to the Alliance Office.