COMMUNITY CONNECTORS
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Application Template

Application Section I: Community Connectors Program Description

1. The target population is students grades 5-12. Identify the grade level or levels at each school that your program will be targeting. Programs may serve students in one or more grade levels.

   iCARE (Creating Authentic Relational Energy) will target Akron Public Schools students starting in the 5th and 6th grades through its core one-to-one mentoring program. There are currently 4,904 APS students enrolled in these grades in 39 school buildings. Additional students in higher grades will also receive 1:1 and group mentoring through contractual agreements with community organizations.

2. Provide the number of youth in each grade level and at each school your program proposes to serve.

   The iCARE partnership proposes to serve at least 100 5th- and 6th-grade students from 39 Akron Public Schools in Year 1 of the program. In Year 2 the previous year's participants will be served again in their new grades, along with an additional 100 5th- and 6th-graders. Year 3 will repeat the pattern from Year 2, retaining all previous students and adding new 5th- and 6th-graders and new mentors. In total, 300 or more individual students will benefit from this part of iCARE during the period of the grant. The participants will increase by 100 or more each year until Year 8, at which time the original 5th-graders will graduate from high school and the numbers will stabilize. In addition, beginning in Year 1 iCARE will reach a projected 100–125 APS high-school students under Tier III services through community partnerships. This includes 1:1 and group mentoring.

   At this writing, there are 4,904 students in the 5th and 6th grades in 39 APS school buildings: Barber Community Learning Center (73), Bettes CLC (33), Betty Jane CLC (55), Bridges Learning Center (21), Case Elementary School (58), Crouse CLC (115), David Hill CLC (77), Findley CLC (60), Firestone Park Elementary School (65), Forest Hill CLC (55), Glover CLC (48), Harris Elementary School (47), Hatton CLC (72), Helen Arnold CLC (82), Hyre CLC (255), Innes CLC (87), Jennings CLC (190), Kent Middle School (149), King CLC (46), Lawndale Elementary School (22), Leggett CLC (60), Litchfield Middle School (169), Mason CLC (81), McEbright CLC (48), Miller South School of the Visual and Performing Arts (213), National Inventors Hall of Fame STEM School (294), Pfeiffer Elementary School (23), Portage Path CLC (54), Resnik CLC (54), Rimer CLC (41), Ritzman CLC (56), Robinson CLC (59), Sam Salem CLC (48), Schumacher CLC (120), Seiberling Elementary School (111), Smith Elementary School (22), Voris CLC (54), and Windermere CLC (50).

3. Select one: Which of the following best describes the proposed project? Select one.
   - A. ☒ Totally new program developed by this organization
   - B. ☐ Replication of an existing model in use by others
   - Please provide the name of this model.
   - C. ☐ Expansion of an existing program within the applicant organization
   - D. ☐ Extension of an existing program to a new setting

   Over the years Akron Public Schools (APS) has played host to several mentoring organizations, but until now this has been neither targeted nor a district-wide effort. (See Question 7.) In 2014, a primary iCARE partner, the MAN-UP Movement, piloted a 1:1 school-based mentoring initiative for 14 4th- and 5th-grade boys in APS's McEbright and Lawndale Elementary Schools; this is showing early success and increased interest by students' families and prospective mentors. Several APS administrators mentor students through this pilot. Two other iCARE partners, Love Akron Network and Summit Education Initiative (SEI),

have together "adopted" a third school, Findley CLC, where they work with 3rd-graders on reading skills, assist in classrooms in multiple grades once a week, and provide uniforms and coats to students in need. SEI also coordinates and facilitates activities for a county-based initiative, the Ready High School Network; this group of high school educators and leaders is using SEI's predictive modeling to develop highly effective interventions that support their important Cradle to Career continuum work.

Lead applicant Charisma Community Connections' Fame Fathers is a successful, acclaimed initiative that teaches young Summit County men to be responsible, nurturing fathers. Charisma has extensive experience mobilizing volunteers and managing grants to support community programs, including teen-focused risk prevention initiatives. As iCARE's core nonprofit partner, the ADM Board of Summit County will provide financial support and opportunities for deep engagement with community organizations providing key student/youth services; its network of experts will provide important support for several of this grant's core focuses. iCARE's other primary partners offer a variety of counseling and tutoring programs through their respective churches and agencies, focusing mainly on young men of high-school age. iCARE draws from all of these existing programs but is itself entirely new.

4. Please describe your project. How will it address each of the five Community Connectors core principles and what outcomes will you use to measure success.

Akron-based iCARE is a targeted, school-based mentoring program devised by a well-matched (and growing) set of partners: the faith-based MAN-UP Movement, Love Akron Network, Charisma Community Connections, and Excellence, Motivation, Success (EMS, made up of leading area churches, government agencies, and others); the County of Summit Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Board**;** the nonprofit Summit Education Initiative (SEI), a research-driven data-collection agency; corporate partners SD Myers and others*;* and the educational district whose students will benefit, Akron Public Schools. iCARE is open to all interested APS 5th- and 6th-grade students, and counselors and teachers will assist with identifying those children in greatest need (based on attendance, academics, and behavior indicators).

As described below, iCARE will work toward Community Connectors' five core concepts and its own three student-based goals (improved academic progress/achievement, improved behavior, and decreased absenteeism) using a combination of 1:1 mentoring relationships, individual and group activities, career exploration and team-building exercises. Aggressive mentor recruitment for Tier I (1:1) services will result in at least 100 individual mentor/mentee pairs working together for a minimum of 25–30 weeks during the first school year of the grant period and an additional 100 each year thereafter. The students to be served the first year will be recommended for the program by their teachers, principals, building administrators or counselors; in future years, as awareness for the program grows, parent requests will also be taken into account. Mentor–mentee pairs will meet for an hour once a week during the school day.

To ensure uninterrupted programming, during the summer months 18 high-school students will participate in group mentoring activities (Tier II) featuring sponsored field trips or presentations, each focused on the core concepts, career exploration, and self-reflection. They will also gain mentoring skills and support coordination of Tier I student activities during each of six summer sessions. The corporate/business partners will lead targeted presentations and discussions summer sessions and throughout each program year, offering expertise, field trips to business sites and more. The mentors will also be available to their mentees via the electronic system and will regularly send them encouraging messages.

In addition to the elementary-school program, iCARE will serve at least 100 at-risk teenagers (in Tier III) annually by contracting with community-based groups to provide 1:1 and group mentoring after school. (This number may increase depending on the number of contractual partners and program focus.) The teen programming will focus on the Community Connectors core principles but include life-skills training and programs to steer them away from alcohol, drugs, and other destructive behavior.

iCARE mentors will meet CC's core expectation of ***setting goals to be prepared for 21st-century careers*** by conducting 1:1 discussions of job options at five or more of their weekly meetings each year. Students will take a career interests survey developed by partner SEI, the results of which will form the basis for discussion of different careers and the skills and background each requires. Mentors will be

trained to focus mentees' attention on soft career skills, such as attendance and academics, which will lead to later success. The summer sessions will include presentations by Summit County workers with interesting jobs, such as a firefighter, helicopter pilot, or hospital radiology technician.

The entire iCARE program is focused on CC's goals of ***building character*** and ***developing pathways to achievement***. iCARE will enrich its participants' lives by pairing them with responsible adults with whom they can build and sustain a positive relationship based on commitment and the drive to succeed. Mentors will be trained to remember at all times that these children look up to them and take them as role models. Their conversations will stress the importance of kindness, determination and personal responsibility. While mentors will not provide academic tutoring, if a student asks for more help or the mentor sees academic warning signs, he or she will notify the school that a tutor is needed.

In ***building resiliency***, mentors will assess their mentees' existing characteristics, both positive and negative, and turn them to the students' advantage. If a child comes across as aggressive, for example, the iCARE mentor might use the power of suggestion to gradually steer him or her toward protecting weaker students from bullies. A distracted child might be encouraged to approach problems in hands-on, creative ways. Mentors will also be trained to teach coping skills to children experiencing difficulties and life challenges. Partners Jonathan Greer of the MAN-UP Movement and Andrew Ziccardi of APS are Certified Trainers of Nan Henderson's Resiliency in Action program, used to build and further develop children's existing resiliency skills.

All children start out ***believing in a positive future*** until discouraging experiences convince them otherwise; after that they may become pessimistic or stop trying to better themselves. A committed, sustained positive relationship can restore this belief or assist them to retain it. iCARE's mentors will receive cultural competency training based on the work of Ruby Payne. This "Bridges Out of Poverty" training will help them to understand the characteristics of different social classes and the barriers they face so they may be mindful of their mentees' needs. Between having sustained relationships with an understanding adult over several years, receiving frequent and consistent verbal encouragement, and having progress explained positively to their families and teachers by their mentors, iCARE student participants will acquire new tools and have every reason to face the future with confidence.

Academic progress, behavior and attendance will be measured quantitatively as described in Question 13. Akron Public Schools will host a secure program website within its own: iCARE partners are designing a specialized portal and mobile-friendly platform that will allow a) mentors to upload information about their sessions, including notes and volunteer/dosage time, b) Summit Educational Initiative to collect student and mentor data for evaluation, and c) the program team to notify mentors about their schedules and provide them with tips to enhance their skills. The partners, led by SEI, will also collect qualitative evidence in the form of mentor and teacher anecdotes, surveys that track students' attitudes toward home and school, and statements by the mentees themselves.

5. Please describe the specific activities your program will conduct.

During the school year, 5th- and 6th-grade Tier I core mentoring will take place on a 1:1 basis at lunchtime or during special periods such as study halls. Depending on the individual school's resources and the weather, meetings will occur in the library, another designated room, or a space as free of distraction and comfortable for the student as possible. Sessions will be partially topic-driven, based on the Community Connectors core principles, but will focus initially on developing the relationship. Mentors will offer encouragement and positive interaction, help students learn organizational and planning skills that will aid with schoolwork and other tasks, and impart life skills ranging from deciphering a bus schedule to keeping a checkbook.

High-school participants, meanwhile, will receive varied types of iCARE mentoring. The majority (Tier III) will meet weekly in small groups for facilitated discussion about the CC core concepts, problems faced by today's teenagers, educational and career options, emotional well-being, organizational/planning/advanced life skills, and the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. These sessions will be hosted by community-based youth-service organizations associated with the iCARE partners. In Tier II, two students from each of APS's nine high schools (identified by Charisma and APS counselors or school administrators) will be selected to work alongside the project director and summer youth coordinator to help

plan, implement and support the summer group mentoring sessions: engaging and keeping Tier I elementary-school students on task, supporting the facilitators and summer coordinator, helping with conflict resolution, and maintaining program communication with students' parents. These "leaders in training" will attend a training retreat with the program team prior to the first summer session. During the following school year, those who are about to graduate from high school will identify, sign on, and train their own replacements.

At the start of each school year, the Tier I mentors and mentees will attend an overnight orientation and team-building retreat at the YMCA's Camp Y-Noah. Once the pairs have begun to bond in their individual mentoring sessions, the iCARE partners will begin bringing them together in small groups for periodic evening/weekend activities, e.g. visiting speakers, leadership development, and improving communication skills. Each activity will feature an element focused on one of the five Community Connectors core principles. In January, for National Mentoring Month, iCARE will treat participants to a recreational field trip. (At this writing the plan is to travel by bus to Cleveland for an afternoon at the Great Lakes Science Center or Crawford Auto-Aviation Museum and/or a Cavaliers basketball game.) iCARE will also host a larger Mentoring Month event for mentors, mentees and their families, school liaisons, teachers, counselors and partners/partner affiliates to build awareness for the program, share testimonial stories and celebrate the powerful impact of mentoring. At the end of the school year iCARE will host a celebratory recognition dinner at an area church for student participants, their immediate families, mentors and all partners.

As noted above, in each of six weeks during the summer, student participants and as many of their mentors as possible will gather for half-day group mentoring sessions that blend career-related topics and exercises, games, or discussions centered around one of the Community Connectors core concepts. Presentations by area organizations (e.g. Alchemy, Inc. or Junior Achievement) and iCARE's corporate/business partners will highlight 21st-century skill-building and career opportunities and other topics related to the grant's core principles. Summer sessions will be implemented by a coordinator and lead school-based mentors with support from the aforementioned second- and third-year high-school students who have been trained for roles as peer mentors.

6. Discuss how the program will utilize best practices to ensure program success. Are there successful mentor programs after which you will model your program? Please name the program and describe what makes it successful.

The iCARE partners have designed this program using several key resources, including the MAN-UP Movement's pilot mentoring guidelines, *The ABCs of School Mentoring*, a 2007 publication of the Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence (GWU) and the National Mentoring Center at Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, and *How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using the Elements of Effective Practice*, from the National Mentoring Partnership. The partners have followed *ABC*'s recommendations and created iCARE as a school-based initiative with very specific guidelines relating to evaluation. It will be highly structured and not a tutoring program. It will use a referral system of teachers, counselors, and building administrators to recommend students who need help but who might otherwise be overlooked. As guided by the project partners, the mentoring relationship will benefit both the students and the adults who mentor them. The NMP guide is serving as a model for developing program operation tools, such as training agendas, volunteer logs, parent notification letters and permission slips, and guidelines for mentor background checks.

Akron Public Schools is currently involved in a three-year process of implementing Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) in all of its schools. This behavior modification program is not designed as a mentoring tool specifically, however several of its core practices can be easily transferred from the classroom to 1:1 or group mentoring settings, including helping students build on existing personality and character traits in positive ways and holding both students and mentors to expectations that will lead to increased student success in school, career and life. As in PBIS and in support of that important district focus, the iCARE partners will set benchmarks at the start, collect and evaluate a variety of quantitative data, adapt the program according to the results, and record qualitative results from sources such as student surveys developed and piloted by partner SEI in 2013–14. Skills that students learn through iCARE will, like those imparted through PBIS work, be transferrable to the classroom, workplace, family relations, home environment, and community.

Brigham Young University's Positive Behavior Support Initiative follows a similar line to that of PBIS, but emphasizes the need for adult understanding of the difficulties faced by today's children and their coping mechanisms. Both the MAN-UP Movement and APS have used PBSI's recommendations for school-based mentoring and effective intervention with at-risk students, and the current pilot partnership has integrated them into iCARE. All mentors will receive cultural competency training through the Bridges Out of Poverty method, which teaches understanding of social class and awareness of potential barriers to success by asking trainees to consider situations from multiple viewpoints. APS's partner representative is a certified trainer and will conduct those sessions in one-one or group settings as needed throughout the grant period (and beyond). iCARE will also make use of PBSI's suggested sources for mentor recruitment and modify its application and screening document templates and surveys to fit the Akron area specifically.

7. Describe your organization's previous experience with this type of program OR a program of a similar scale, including previous evaluations, size and duration of previously implemented programs, goals, and outcomes.

Although Akron Public Schools does not itself offer formal mentoring, it hosts and oversees mentoring by outside groups who must follow its guidelines and work toward APS's three goals of academics, attendance and relationship skill-building. In recent years Big Brothers Big Sisters of Summit, Medina and Stark Counties and the Akron/Kent chapter of Sigma Pi Phi have mentored APS students on a short-term basis with after-school and group activities. Beyond general improvement, positive interactions, and structure offered during key out-of-school time, no formal goals or specific outcomes were pursued during programming. In late 2014 MAN-UP, one of the current project's partners, began mentoring in two Akron Public Schools, and earlier the same year the Love Akron Network and Summit Education Initiative joined forces to "adopt" an elementary school as mentors. APS offers a quasi-mentoring program called CTAG (Closing the Achievement Gap), which provides linkage coordinators for at-risk 9th-graders and wrap-around supports such as tutoring. To date, this program has resulted in improvements in grades, attendance, behavior incidents, transition to 10th grade and graduation rates; the model is recognized at the State level and identified as a best practice.

Charisma Community Connection's Bridges program provides life-skills mentors to students about to age out of the foster-care system; its Student Training Officer Mentoring Program pairs middle- and high-school students with officers from Akron's police, fire, and sheriff's departments. Its Fame Fathers program is geared more toward adult men but also teaches teenaged fathers how to accept responsibility for their new families. Volunteers from the seven EMS churches provide older students with tutoring and group mentoring. All of the faith-based organizations' existing programs not tied to the public schools have a religious focus: their iCARE mentoring will take an equally positive approach but follow Community Connectors' requirements.

8. What will make this collaboration successful? What will the indicator(s) of success be for this collaboration?

The iCARE partnership will be successful because (a) its partner members are experts in their field, (b) most of them have worked together in various combinations on current or past successful projects; (c) they have a genuine affection and concern for the young people of Akron, (d) their mentoring plan includes proven tactics for reaching and impacting students of both middle- and high-school age, and (e) the network of iCARE partners will grow exponentially throughout the grant period, adding more related expertise, skills, contacts and community vision to keep the program healthy and sustained throughout and beyond the grant period.

Through partner SEI, the iCARE program will collect student data tied to academics, behavior and attendance and analyze aggregate findings by school and classroom and at the individual (student) level. Improvements to these quantitative measures will demonstrate iCARE's positive effect on students. However, the partner organizations will know they have *genuinely* succeeded when student begin making comments similar to those Jonathan Greer receives through MAN-UP. One of his 5th-graders recently wrote that after experiencing the program, his life's goals had changed and that he wanted to "grow up and go to college. The NFL or NBA is now a backup plan. If I don't go into pro sports I will move on with life, get my education and love myself."

Application Section II: Program Management

9. Leadership Team: The leadership team should be comprised of no less than one member of each partnering organization. Please provide a brief bio of each leadership team member, including a brief description of the team member's passion for the program and interest in working with young people. Bios should also include:
    - Name and title
    - Responsibilities for this grant project. (Percent of time should be included in the budget document.)
    - Qualifications
    - Prior relevant experience

Except for Project Director Jonathan Greer and Summit Education Initiative representatives, all program leaders are contributing 100% of their time in-kind, to ensure the widespread and long-term success of the iCARE Mentoring program. All of the partner organizations will a) actively support iCARE efforts during the grant period in numerous ways, and b) serve on an iCARE advisory committee that will meet monthly during Year 1 and quarterly thereafter. All key leadership team members will contribute an estimated 120 hours a year or more to this project, with more hours contributed from the APS district's Andrew Ziccardi, who will provide additional support and time through his mentor training work and coordination with individual schools.

Gerald Craig (Executive Director, County of Summit Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services Board) joined the Board in 2007 and assumed his current role in 2011. He was previously associate director at Community Support Services, where he worked for 19 years and was involved in housing development, homeless outreach, and assertive community treatment with serious and persistent mental illnesses. In these capacities he has worked extensively with youth and families. Mr. Craig earned a B.A.S.W. from the University of Akron and an M.S. in Social Administration from CWRU's Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences. A licensed independent social worker, he holds a certificate from the Ohio CDC Association in Affordable Housing Development. He has volunteered with the local Continuum of Care and served on the Boards of Legacy III, a transitional housing program for women in recovery, The ARC of Summit & Portage Counties, and Community AIDS Network.

Matthew Deevers (Senior Research Associate, Summit Education Initiative) began his career as a high school English teacher and assistant principal. Later, he played a leadership role in several northeast Ohio school districts as a director of curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development. He earned a Ph.D. in Urban Education from Cleveland State University in 2010 and two years later joined SEI. A specialist in learning theories, motivation, program development and program evaluation, he has been involved in educational policy initiatives throughout his career. With Derran Wimers, below, he will oversee collection and evaluation of data for the iCARE partnership during the three-year grant period and beyond.

Mark Ford (Executive Director, Love Akron Network) has served as pastor at Assembly of God churches in Butler, Missouri and Marion and Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio and as Vice President of Development and College Advancement at Zion Bible College in Barrington, Rhode Island. He assumed the leadership of Love Akron Network in 2005. He has a B.A. from Central Bible College. Rev. Ford will support mentor recruitment and corporate partnership work for the iCARE project.

Jonathan Greer (Founder, the MAN-UP Movement), a Buchtel High school graduate, is returning to the Akron schools to support its students through this project. He is an ordained minister and case manager at Pastoral Counseling of Summit County. His faith-based organization uses woodworking and mentorship to teach small groups of elementary- and middle-school boys what it takes to be caring, well-rounded responsible men. As Project Director, he will oversee all iCARE program activities, supervise mentor training and advising, pair mentors and students and, help to plan orientation retreat, National Mentoring Month and summer activities. At this writing MAN-UP is set to become iCARE's host organization after the three-year grant period ends.

Scott Myers (CEO, SD Myers Corporation) has been with the company since 1982. This company rooted in Christian values serves the power/electrical industry through high-end industrial transformer products and maintenance. Mr. Myers is currently working with mission-driven social entrepreneurs to build impactful organizations. He has served on the boards of Love Akron Network, OPEN M Ministries, Pastoral Counseling Services and Spring Garden Waldorf School.

Eugene Norris II (Sr. Pastor, Mountain of the Lord Fellowship; CEO, Charisma Community Connections), a former Akron paramedic, attended Rhema Bible College and Zoe University. He has led congregations for more than 13 years in the Cleveland and Akron area. In addition, he administers energy-efficiency programs in over 30 Ohio counties and is involved in multiple community and economic development programs benefiting the U.S. and the continent of Africa. He hosts the Trinity Broadcasting Television Network's weekly *Joy in Our Town* program and frequently guest-hosts *Praise the Lord*. Pastor Norris has years of experience managing large federal, state and local government grants and will serve as fiscal agent for the iCARE program. He will help also plan and organize high school mentoring and contractual community partnerships, secure corporate partnerships and actively recruit mentors from his congregation.

David Parker II (Sr Pastor, Zion Apostolic Faith Church) is a minister, teacher, business professional, author, musician and motivational speaker. He has had a 20-year career in banking and financial services with First Merit, KeyCorp and JPMorgan Chase; he accepted the call to pastor Zion, his home church, in 2010. He has a B.S. in Management from Malone University. He oversees EMS (Excellence, Motivation, Success), a new collaboration among seven Akron-area churches and public officials that works to improve the community and the futures of young people of high-school age: its congregations and members are expected to provide a substantial number of iCARE's mentors, help identify corporate philanthropic support and broaden the overall community network and iCARE awareness. Pastor Parker will play a leadership role in mentor recruitment and training and work to obtain financial support for the program from the business community.

Dan Rambler (Director of Student Support Services and Security, APS) oversees the district's School Resource Officer, Security and Safety Departments, discipline hearings, alternative programming, Central Registration and Open Enrollment, Athletics, and Project R.I.S.E. He earned his Bachelor's degree in Education from the University of Akron and his Master's in Educational Administration from the University of Cincinnati. He is a graduate of the Child Family Leadership Exchange and serves on the City of Akron's Opiate Task Force, Methamphetamine Task Force, and Child Fatality Review Board. He will assign program liaisons at each APS school and align district resources to meet iCARE's goals and fidelity.

Derran K. Wimer (Executive Director, Summit Education Initiative) took his current position in 2011 after 32 years as a public-school science/biology teacher, high-school assistant principal and principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. He served in Summit County, Ohio at both Copley Fairlawn City Schools and Twinsburg City Schools and in Cuyahoga County at the Berea City Schools. He is a graduate of Allegheny College with a B.S. in Biology and an M.A. in Education, with postgraduate work at the University of Akron. With Matt Deevers, he will oversee the collection and evaluation of iCARE program data.

Andrew Ziccardi (District School Climate Coordinator, APS) joined the district in 2001. He has a B.S. from Kent State University and a B.S. and M.A. in Education from the University of Akron. He previously worked in health care and community mental health with a variety of special populations. Mr. Ziccardi began teaching at the elementary school level but has spent the majority of his career in middle school and with alternative education programs. He has served as a Dean of Students and middle school assistant principal and has held his current position since early 2014. Among other duties, he will be the liaison between the individual APS schools and the iCARE mentors and will conduct the "Building Character" mentor training session and co-direct "Building Resiliency." He is a certified Bridges Out of Poverty trainer and will provide that training for mentors.

10. A timeline of all major activities must be provided. Assessment, planning and initial training must be completed by September 7, 2015. Services must begin by September 7, 2015.

YEAR 1 (from notification of grant to August 2016):

►April 2015: Continuous mentor recruitment begins. APS identifies program liaisons for each school building. iCARE partners continue to solicit and confirm grant matching funds from the community.

►May–June 2015: Background checks of potential mentors. Identification of 100 5th- and 6th-grade students and 100–125 high-schoolers by teachers, principals, counselors, and early-stage community partners. Creation of written and web collateral. Parent information meeting and collection of permission slips.

►July–August 2015: Training for mentor resource pool. (Repeated monthly as new mentors recruited.)

►September 2015: Mentor retreat camp for more in-depth training. APS provides SEI with benchmark attendance, behavior, and academic data. Additional students identified to participate.

►October 2015: Mandatory parent and guardian orientation/welcome dinner. Initial attitude assessment survey completed by student participants.

►October 2015 – June 2016: Weekly school-day mentoring for elementary-school students at lunch time or during special periods. Mentoring programs for high-school students begin as partnerships form, and Tier III group mentoring begins after school. Monthly mentor training focusing on CC' five core principles.

►November 2015: APS provides SEI with attendance, behavior and academic data for October. Program director collects meeting information and student observations from mentors and passes them on to SEI. SEI creates October evaluation. (Continues on a monthly basis.)

►January 2016: Recreational group activity for mentor-mentee pairs in celebration of National Mentoring Month, such as a professional basketball game, a stage play or the Great Lakes Science Center in Cleveland. First National Mentoring month community event is implemented.

►May 2016: End-of-school-year attitude survey completed by student participants. Mentors identify two students from each APS high school to be leaders in training. Teachers and counselors identify 100 more rising 5th- and 6th-graders and 100–125 more high-school students for the Year 2 program.

►Late May/early June 2016: Recognition banquet for student participants, mentors, and students' families.

►June 2016: Three-day training retreat for Tier II high-school students assisting with summer programs.

►June–August 2016: Two-hour group mentoring programs on odd Tuesdays, sponsored in turn by each partner. Two-hour debriefing session for adult and teen mentors on even Tuesdays, during which they discuss the following week's programming and call or visit students' parents to update them. Partners review the year's progress and revise iCARE as necessary.

YEAR 2 (September 2016 to August 2017):

►Unless otherwise mentioned, same schedule as Year 1, with the previous year's students served in their new grades and another 100 mentors and 5th- and 6th-grade students added.

►September: Previous year's mentor-mentee pairs begin their weekly meetings.

►October: Mandatory orientation/welcome dinner for new participants' parents and guardians.

►October: New mentor-mentee partners begin weekly meetings.

►November: Weekend retreat for mentors and mentees at the Akron YMCA's Camp Y-Noah.

YEAR 3 (September 2017 to August 2018):

►Unless otherwise mentioned, same schedule as Year 2, with the previous year's students served in their new grades and another 100 mentors and 5th- and 6th-grade students added.

►Fall: Project partners begin seeking formal corporate sponsorship and foundation grants for post-grant continuation of iCARE.

►Institution of adult-supervised, teen-led mentoring groups.

BEYOND THE GRANT PERIOD:

►Adoption of iCARE as a program of one of the 501(c)(3) faith-based partners, with continued work by all other project partners.

►Continuation of existing mentor-mentee partnerships until students graduate from high school. At that time, Year 9, the number of participants should stabilize.

►Continued application for financial support from outside sources.

11. Describe the implementation process for reaching the following milestones:

    a. Screening, orientation, supporting, and monitoring process for mentors and other personnel working directly with youth;
    b. Identification and intake process for mentees;
    c. The means by which you will involve families of youth in your program; ongoing training of mentors throughout the life of the program, including topics and frequency;
    d. Assessing fiscal accountability and faithful implementation of project plans; and
    e. Any other critical information you would want the Community Connectors team to know.

a. The iCARE partners will develop recruitment collateral (e.g. posters, brochures) to be made available at partner sites and community locations, and will publicize the program on social media and through its website. Representatives will present in person to employees at corporate/business locations throughout Akron and staff tables at APS and Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority events, as well as other public youth- and teen-focused gatherings such as the Lock 3 Summer Arts Experience, Summit for Kids, and Akron Peacemakers. Mentors will be recruited from the partner organizations and the churches affiliated with the faith-based organizations, as well as from the community at large. (The publicity surrounding this prominent grant should simplify the recruitment process.) The partner organizations will interview prospective mentors and send those who qualify for background screening by the Summit County Education Service Center or Akron Public Schools.

Initial training for the first group of mentors will take place in July, August and early September of 2015. These sessions will focus on relationship-building in general and the specific topics of (1) understanding the mentor-mentee relationship; (2) rules of confidentiality; (3) mandated reporting; (4) cultural competency; (5) conduct; (6) paperwork; (7) effective communication; (8) role-playing scenarios; (9) requirements; and (10) how to mentor. iCARE's project partners will be available throughout the school year and summer to advise any mentors who have questions or need additional support.

b. During the grant period, all students in target grades 5 and 6 will be invited to participate; counselors and teachers will receive orientation focused on referring students with behavioral, attendance and/or academic problems and others at risk for these issues in later years without immediate intervention. After the first year, the program will also accept applications from students' parents or guardians. APS will publicize iCARE to parents through its new parent engagement program, YOU…Your Child's First Teacher, and the district's liaison with the city's Housing Authority will arrange for a literature table for project partners at AMHA events. The program partners plan to expand iCARE over time to include every 5th- and 6th-grade student in the Akron Public Schools and to advance year by year into higher grades.

c. Parents and guardians of participants will attend an orientation session before iCARE mentoring begins, and individual and group orientations will be offered as needed, at times convenient for the parents/guardians. Jonathan Greer and Andrew Ziccardi will be available to answer questions about the program throughout the year. The iCARE partners will send participants' families quarterly reports containing reader-friendly explanations of the data evaluations conducted by SEI and notes on their children provided by the mentors. For National Mentoring Month and near the end of the school year, events and activities, including a promotion/recognition ceremony, will be held for mentored students and their families, and as part of the summer group activities iCARE will seek sponsorship for a family day picnic with activities for participating students, their families and the mentors.

The basic training described in (a) will be repeated monthly through December for new mentors. It will then be recorded and made available online in mobile-friendly format. The following January–May, the partners will provide mandatory training for all its mentors in each of the five Community Connectors goals at partner churches in different parts of Akron. The "Believing in a Positive Future" session will include Bridges Out of Poverty, an empathy training and response program already provided to APS staff members and volunteers. Trainings will be offered monthly for groups, or individually if needed. Training information will be distributed through the partner organizations and made available online.

d. The applicant organization, Charisma Community Connections, will be the fiscal manager for the Community Connectors grant. Pastor Eugene Norris and his team have extensive experience managing large government grants and community/youth/family engagement programs. The program partners and iCARE advisory committee will meet monthly for at least the first year, to review iCARE's progress and discuss adjustments to programming and tactics. Andrew Ziccardi's office at APS will provide SEI with attendance, academic and disciplinary figures for participating students each month. Jonathan Greer will be responsible for ensuring that students and mentors receive survey forms and providing them to SEI, and Dan Rambler's office will do the same for teachers.

e. The program partners will utilize an innovative way of tracking and capturing social-emotional data, mentor attendance and quality of work. iCARE will use Web services to create a mobile-friendly website with login capabilities for mentors, school liaisons, parents and administrators to schedule and confirm trainings, record responses to mentor sessions, access training information and tools/tips and documents to ensure quality of work, coordinate proper matches for mentors and mentees at all schools in the district, confirm attendance at trainings, and solicit more mentors. The site will include a database that syncs with SEI's evaluation processes to ensure secure electronic filing and data collection.

iCARE's program partners have received recent positive exposure in the local press. The Akron *Beacon Journal* profiled program director Jonathan Greer's work in the Akron Public Schools in December. EMS's work was described in an *ABJ* article just days ago, and an adjacent piece covered its projects with SEI.

12. Describe how each applicant partner plans to contribute to the overall program plan including, but not limited to, time contribution, personnel contribution, monetary contribution, shared responsibilities, use of facilities, etc. Complete the Roles and Responsibilities worksheet attachment.

All iCARE partners will assist with program awareness and mentor recruitment, and will make themselves available to answer questions from mentors, school staff, potential partners, donors and parents. As shown on the attached Roles and Responsibilities worksheet, this summarizes partner inputs:

► The MAN-UP Movement will provide Mr. Greer's expertise as project manager, youth and pastoral counseling advisor and expert mentor/mentee trainer.

► Charisma Community Connections: see R&R form.

► The EMS churches and representative organizations and leaders will recruit mentors, contribute space available for iCARE events, identify corporate partners, speak on iCARE's behalf, lend support for programming through speaker presentations and much more.

► The County of Summit Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Board: see R&R form.

► Akron Public Schools: see R&R form.

► Lead corporate partner SD Myers (see R&R form), with other confirmed partners P.J. Testa Builders and Akron Children's Hospital and potential partners including Goodyear, FirstEnergy and First Merit Bank, will allow iCARE to recruit mentors from their employee bases and support it financially**.**

► SEI collects, processes, and evaluates educational data to determine district, school, classroom and individual student progress and help build predictive models to support development of meaningful interventions. As an iCARE partner, it will do all the evaluation work, contribute $7,500 of the $20,000 total cost of data collection and evaluation over three years, and allow use of its proprietary career and other surveys by the program.

Application Section III: Evaluation Plan

13. The evaluation plan is intended to provide lead organizations with a framework that will ensure the program is on track to positively impact the lives of students and identify needs for additional support when challenges arise. Each evaluation plan must list the scope of work and describe the following:

a. Plans for keeping records of mentor contact hours, unduplicated count of students served each month, mentor training hours, etc. for ongoing reporting;

b. Gathering of data to measure progress of program towards meeting the selected goals;

c. Projected indicators of success; and

d. Anticipated barriers to successful evaluation including data collection and measurement of progress toward outcomes.

a) The iCARE project partners will keep hard-copy and electronic records of persons attending training sessions and special events. Because mentoring takes place during the school day and the mentors will sign in and out of the buildings, APS will be able to track mentor and student participation on an ongoing basis. SEI will create data tables that will repopulate as new information is added. It will also maintain the records of its proprietary Career Inventory Survey to be administered to students during the mentoring process.

Upon successfully completing training, each mentor will create an iCARE mentor account in a web-based database. These accounts will allow for tracking of initial and subsequent training hours. School counselor accounts will be created for the lead point of contact in each participating school. Student accounts will be created in the same database after parent authorization. The iCARE administrator will assign mentors to students using the database. After each mentoring event, mentors will complete a brief web-based submission form to verify the session occurred, to rate its quality and the student's attitude, and to enter notes to be shared with school counselors. All submission forms will include a date stamp as a means to track mentoring events for each student. Because individual students will be linked directly with their mentors in the database, each event record in the system will represent an unduplicated count of services provided. This web-based database will the main system for certifying mentors, enrolling students, verifying mentoring sessions and supporting communication between mentors and school counselors in the iCARE mentoring program. The system will, by nature, provide "dosage" measures for students in the mentoring program, so that total mentoring hours and hours for each student can be calculated monthly.

b) SEI and APS will establish and maintain a system for gathering and reporting on student progress across a variety of academic indicators collected and stored within the district's student information system. SEI and APS have an existing relationship to conduct education research to measure the effectiveness of curricula and programs; this allows SEI to act as an intermediary between the district and program providers while maintaining student privacy. At the end of each month, SEI will share data comparing the academic progress of mentored students to that of non-participants. Results will be aggregated at the grade level within each school to protect student identity, but will be disaggregated by race and gender to support targeted interventions and support. Indicators will include Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test scores and performance levels (intensive, targeted, universal) in reading and math after fall and spring administrations; mean grade point average from the most recent grading period; cumulative absences for the school year; discipline referrals; and end-of-year state accountability tests (PARCC) in reading and mathematics. Semi-annually, SEI will report on mentored students' social-emotional progress and/or stability based on results from the district administration of the Youth View™ survey. Particular attention will be paid to their sense of self-efficacy, school value, mastery orientation, future self and college identity.

c) At the beginning of Year 1, the iCARE team will set program baselines that reflect APS academic, behavioral, and attendance rates at the end of the current (2014–15) school year. In 2013–14 daily attendance in the schools listed in question 2, above, ranged from 91.64 to 96.04 percent. Individual buildings' Achievement Performance Index rankings included no Fs, but also no As: Most schools earned an overall grade of C or D. With as many as 200 behavioral incidents during the year in some buildings, Akron had the highest suspension rate of any district in the state. Starting with up-to-date figures for the 2014–15 school year, SEI and the rest of the iCARE team will track these statistics on a month-to-month basis, comparing students receiving mentoring with those who do not, and adjust the program as needed to obtain maximal positive results. They expect the 2015–16 figures to show noticeable improvements in all three measured areas.

One measure of success will be for mentored students to meet or exceed the levels of their non-mentored peers (by gender and/or race) in academic performance (test scores) academic achievement (GPA), academic behavior (discipline referrals, attendance) and social-emotional development (Youth View™). Another is for mentored students to meet or exceed the performance, achievement, behavioral and social-

emotional outcomes of a typical APS student, regardless of gender or race. The final indicator of success for the project is for mentored students to meet or exceed the performance, achievement, behavioral and motivational outcomes of a typical public school student in Summit County, regardless of district of residence.

The outcome indicators for the iCARE Mentoring program include academic performance (test scores); academic achievement (grade point average); academic behaviors (discipline referrals and attendance); and positive aspirations for the future and positive academic motivation (measured using semi-annual Youth View™ surveys). Success on each indicator will be evaluated by the extent to which students participating in the iCARE Mentoring program improve their performance relative to school building, district, county and state (where available) averages on each outcome indicator.

d) The evaluation stage of this project has been planned thoroughly and will be the responsibility of people and organizations with extensive experience. The only potential barrier to successful evaluation surrounds SEI's ability to collect attendance, grade point average, and discipline data from APS's student information system. SEI will meet with the district's student information team to better understand how to extract this data without disrupting district practices. The existing partnership between Summit Education Initiative and Akron Public Schools has established a strong foundation to support this work. Over the past three academic years, SEI has analyzed trends in student academic performance (test scores) for APS. They will build on that existing foundation to include the measures of academic achievement (grades) and behaviors (discipline referrals, attendance). the district has provided and will continue to provide technical assistance and training to SEI researchers as needed in order to guarantee that successful evaluation can occur.

14. Applicants are to complete the program model.

See attached.

Application Section IV: Sustainability

15. Describe how you plan to maintain the program after the grant funding period. Include a discussion about financial sustainability and sustainability of the partnership commitment. Applicants are not required to include cash as part of their local contributions; however, funding sustainability is critical to the Community Connectors program. Applicants that show the potential for funding sustainability will be given preference in application scoring.

The Summit County ADM Board and iCARE's early corporate partners have already committed to a long-term relationship that includes financial support. If all matching funds are successfully secured the program will sustain through at least Year 4 if not Year 5, and efforts to secure ongoing support will continue. The iCARE team foresees growing enthusiasm for their project in the Akron/Summit County business and philanthropic communities after the Community Connectors grant is announced. Long before the three-year grant period ends, one of the faith-based partner organizations with 501(c)(3) status will adopt iCARE as one of its own formal programs and the team will begin seeking ongoing corporate sponsors and foundation grants.

Application Section V: Program Budget

16. Complete the budget form attachment and justify each of the budget items by creating a budget justification.

See budget and budget narrative, attached.

By clicking this box, ☒ *I (Insert Name) _Pastor Eugene Norris__ agree, on behalf of this applicant, and any or all identified partners, that this application and all supporting documents contain information approved by a relevant executive board or its equivalent.*