

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.

6-12

2. Provide the number of youth in each grade level and at each school your program proposes to serve.
6th grade - 350 students; 7th grade: 18; 8th grade: 18; ninth grade: 18; tenth grade: 18; eleventh grade: 18; twelfth grade: 18
Year One includes 6-10th grades (422 students); Year Two includes 6-11th (440 students); Year Three includes 6-12th (458 students).

Program is consistent in numbers across all schools with the exception that some schools opt not to participate in the sixth grade programming. Currently four out of six districts have elected to participate in the sixth grade programming.

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

Expansion of an existing program which has adapted best practices in similar programs to work within the context of local assets and needs. This program has been in existence since 2012, and as we have found success, the program has continued to expand. Through this grant we will be able to include a new school district, Leetonia Exempted Village, and enhance support for our existing programming.

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.

The Rural Scholars Program seeks to prepare Columbiana County students for career and post-secondary educational opportunities. Through a combination of individual and group mentoring, we support low income students by offering them community and college-based learning experiences, caring relationships, and academic guidance. Our five primary outcomes, created at the program's inception through consultation with our advisory board and undergraduate mentors, correspond closely with the Community Connectors core principles. Our outcomes are: Successful Students, Engaged Learners, Socially Savvy, Workforce Ready, and Committed to the Community.

1) Setting Goals to be Prepared for 21st Century Careers - Scholars maintain annual "Goal Sheets" with the help of their mentors, setting a combination of long and short-term personal goals which they regularly revisit for reflection and revision, making use of the S.M.A.R.T. approach to goal-setting. We offer bi-annual one-day workshops and weeklong summer workshops exposing Rural Scholars to a wide variety of career and educational pathways. Our business partners and faculty members on the Kent State campuses design engaging, hands-on learning experiences in workplaces, on the landscape, and in the campus laboratories. Past workshops have included visits to manufacturing shops, macroinvertebrate surveys in rivers, tours of forestry operations, catapult-building, cardiology laboratory, visits to chemical processing plants, CAD and 3D printing, air traffic control laboratories, and a tour of a methane powerplant at a landfill. Each year the program mentors offer individualized curriculum at each grade level to keep students focused on developing their career aspirations, recognizing their talents, and pursuing goals.

To measure success, we use pre/post assessments for workshops, career guidance assessments, student projects and presentations developed within the program, and the students' own annual goal-setting sheets.

2) Building Character - In collaboration with our university counselor's office and our faith partners in the community, we offer workshops to support student wellness, character, and leadership. Past workshops have explored tolerance, peer support, and leadership-building. We also emphasize community service. All ninth grade scholars work with their mentors on a yearlong project designing a service contribution they can make in the community and then implementing the plan. Mentors speak weekly with their scholars about character formation as a natural part of their individual meetings with them. Mentors themselves demonstrate strong character through their reliability, their performance as students and professionals, and their care for their scholars.

To measure success, we look at teacher and counselor comments on student behavior, attendance records, community service hours, and quality of program participation.

3) Developing Pathways to Achievement - Rural Scholars receive regular feedback and guidance concerning the educational and career pathways available to them. Mentors advocate for them as needed in the schools to ensure they have access to educational supports and opportunities as appropriate for their individual progress.

Many of our workshops and curricular activities include self-directed problem-solving activities in order to assist Rural Scholars in cultivating persistence, critical thinking, and collaborative reasoning skills in a variety of arenas - scientific, personal decision-making, humanities research, and technological.

To measure problem solving and pursuit of achievement, we evaluate the level of effort and amount of time put into projects, the degree of ambition we see in choosing academic courses and in choosing self-directed projects, and the success of their solutions to problems and tasks.

4) Building Resiliency - Mentors in our program are themselves first-generation college students who come from the communities where they mentor. They understand from their own experience the kinds of challenges that our young scholars face, and from this life experience, as well as from the tools provided by their college education, our mentors can model the kind of resiliency we hope to cultivate in our scholars. Mentors encourage scholars to seek out positive group membership opportunities and cultivate the kinds of emotional and social intelligences they will need to navigate the complicated path out of poverty. In particular, we encourage scholars to form warm, supportive relationships with one another as cohorts traveling together through the program and through their educations.

We measure resiliency by looking at personal choices made by scholars in adverse circumstances, their involvement in extra-curricular and community-based activities, and their degree of engagement in the social life of the program.

5) Believing in a Positive Future. Our mentors as well as many of our faculty and community partners are proof that the future can be positive, even for a young person living in adverse circumstances. Repeatedly our young scholars hear stories in the workshops and in the mentoring sessions of how these adults made choices about their own development and about the opportunities that they found in order to create success stories for themselves. These stories are all different in many respects, but they share in common that their tellers had grit, they stayed positive, and they were willing to see unexpected circumstances as opportunity for growth and change.

We measure positive outlook through the students' goal sheets, the choices they make to prepare themselves for the future, and the degree to which they avail themselves of resources for self-improvement and wellness.

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

Our program conducts activities in four basic areas:

- 1) Individual/small group mentoring which emphasizes formation of personal relationships and addressing individual scholars' academic/social support needs;
- 2) Career exposure and academic workshops on campus and in the community that make the connection between school subjects and future careers in a wide variety of areas;
- 3) Personal growth and development opportunities through service projects conducted with our faith partners and character/leadership workshops conducted with faith, faculty, and business partners;
- 4) Financial literacy/college knowledge programming conducted with all sixth graders in the schools we serve (currently we work with Junior Achievement curriculum).

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.

Our program adapted best practices from a variety of proven models around the country and within Ohio. In particular, we examined programs that address the needs of first-generation college-bound students and rural/Appalachian populations, because this is the profile of children in our county. A 2008 report published by the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs at Ohio University noted that 51% of Appalachian Ohio students attending college are first generation college students, and their findings also suggested that participation during high school in a college access program increased the percentage of first generation students aspiring to attend college immediately after graduation by as much as 8% (Lewis et al., 2008). Other studies note that the matrix of challenges facing these students as they seek to complete degrees or other post-secondary training is weighted differently than the challenges facing students with similar socioeconomic profiles from urban areas, which means that while our program is modeled on some urban college access programs, the implementation and emphasis of best practices may look slightly different for our rural context.

We have focused on four areas of best practice:

- Academic preparedness. We know from the national research that only 17% of students required to enroll in a reading course and 27% of those required to enroll in a math class go on to earn a bachelor's degree (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2010); these numbers are consistent with what we observe on our Columbiana campuses. Programs like federal GEAR-UP and Upward Bound, the University of Kentucky's Robinson Scholars, and University of Wisconsin-Madison's PEOPLE program recognize that enrollment and success in academically challenging courses are key factors in preparing students to go on to post-secondary education, whether in college or technical training.

To address this need we engage scholars in seventh grade, helping them get organized, get tutoring if needed, and communicate with counselors to ensure they are prepared to graduate high school without the need for later remediation.

- Supportive mentoring relationships. The University of Kentucky's Robinson Scholars Program, GEAR UP, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison's PEOPLE program all emphasize research-based best practices in mentoring. This means that mentors share key traits with their mentees (ex: gender, local background, first-generation college students). The best mentoring relationships are also mentee-centered (Karcher et al., 2005), meaning that the mentees' individual needs shape the relationship's content and development. Even our workshops are mentee-centered: our young scholars suggest topics and choose workshops they will attend. In creating the individual mentoring portion of our programming, we drew heavily on the research and recommendations of the National Mentoring Partnership and Dr. Jean Rhodes (2002) who noted that in order for mentoring to result in positive change, programs must screen mentors effectively, ensure that mentors and mentees share interests and experiences, conduct a minimum of six hours of initial training, and conduct on-going training throughout the relationship.

We also recognize that mentoring plays a key role in the success of other best practices. Mentees who are struggling to navigate difficult social and familial environments are less likely to be impacted by academic interventions and hands-on learning experiences. The support of caring adults who can help them with their decision making and ensure they make full use of other services as needed can have a powerful impact in amplifying the effects of academic preparation and hands-on learning.

- Hands-on learning experiences. In addition to leveraging opportunities created by local organizations like the Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition and several of our local STEM academies, we have looked at programs changing education nationally. GEAR-UP programs like the one at Appalachian State University draw upon peer-reviewed educational research that emphasizes the benefits students deriving from hands-on learning experiences. We know that these experiences offer more opportunities for problem-solving and critical thinking and, as students apply knowledge, deep learning is more likely to occur. Appalachian State University's GEAR-UP program shows that the college enrollment rate for their initial cohort was 78%, +23.4% over the baseline from previous years, suggesting that the combination of academic preparation, hands-on problem-solving, and mentoring can have a dramatic impact for these students (Appalachian State GEAR UP Partnership, 2011).

- Family involvement. Research tell us that even students who succeed in high school and are academically prepared may flounder in college and career due to a lack of adequate family support. In fact, low-income rural students are at greater risk of low rates of college enrollment and persistence than low-income urban students (National Student Clearinghouse, 2013) and various studies have traced these results to factors such as the need for students to contribute income to their family economies, a lack of family understanding about what "going to college" means, and student feelings of dislocation in the college environment. Successful programs like Upward Bound, the PEOPLE program, and Robinson Scholars involve families in numerous ways to ensure their students are supported by adults who understand the challenges they are facing.

Family involvement in the Rural Scholars Program includes focus groups to solicit family guidance in program implementation, workshops offered to families on financial literacy and college preparation topics, inclusion of families in volunteering for program events, and frequent exchanges through phone, email, and in person as needed to make sure scholars receive consistent and knowledgeable support on all sides. Both scholars and families will visit college campuses through the Rural Scholars program, including a visit to Youngstown State University and a residential week at Kent State University's Kent campus.

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.

The Rural Scholars Program has been in operation since 2012, and initial data from our oldest cohorts looks promising so far. Some highlights from our most recent Impact Report and current year's data, organized according to Community Connectors' Core Principles, include:

Setting Goals to be prepared for 21st Century Careers:

- 50% of scholars reported a positive change in their attitudes toward manufacturing careers after a workshop at a local manufacturing shop. 75% reported an interest in learning more about careers in manufacturing after the workshop.
- 66% of scholars report positive interest in learning more about chemistry and biology after attending Rural Scholars workshops.
- 3.33 was the average GPA, 8th grade in 2013-2014.
- 2.99 was the average GPA for 7th grade in 2013-2014.
- Average year-to-year change in GPA for 2013-2014: + 0.22
- 72% of ninth grader scholars are enrolled in Accelerated Algebra or Geometry for 2014-2015.

Building Character

- Eighth grade scholars learn about interviewing, public speaking, and business etiquette as part of our Career Explorations curriculum. They learn to shake hands, make eye contact, dress appropriately, use good phone etiquette, and write thank-you notes.
- Scholars committed more than 162 hours of community service through Rural Scholars events at soup kitchens and in wildlife areas during 2013-2014.
- On their own time this summer, eighth and ninth grade scholars committed more than 467 hours of service in their communities.
- Counselors, teachers, and mentors report improved behavior for all scholars identified as at-risk.

Developing Pathways to Achievement

- Ninth grade scholars demonstrated their ability to persist by producing catapults, battery-powered gliders, bricolage machines, and inventions, all of their own design, spending an average of three hours every afternoon at these open-ended and challenging math/design tasks during their summer 2014 Makers and Mechanisms workshop.
- 275 sixth graders participating in our Junior Achievement Economics for Success programming demonstrated a gain of 11% in their knowledge about insurance, credit, and financial planning.

Building a Sense of Resiliency

- Scholars report that the program has changed their understanding of themselves in positive ways, helping them find a supportive peer group and connect to supportive adults at school and in their communities.
- Mentors evaluating ninth grade scholars this year noted patterns of positive decision-making having profoundly positive impacts in the lives of our most at-risk scholars; impacts were most visible in scholars' involvement in extracurricular activities; dramatically improved grades and attendance; and improved security of their home living situations.

Believing in a Positive Future

- Seventh grade scholars create "Visioning Your Future" collages and essays through our mentor-led curriculum each year.
- More than 60 local high school students participated in Justice Talking seminars led by Rural Scholars mentors. These seminars focus on reflecting on community service and the importance of leadership through the lens of literature and art.

Additional experience:

Kent State University's Columbiana Campuses have been guiding nursing students to degree completion through Kent State's most rigorous nursing program with a nearly 100% completion rate for years. The majority of students on our campuses are first-generation college students, so a combination of peer mentoring, faculty mentoring, carefully structured experiential education, and tutoring support has been necessary to achieve this level of success. We have drawn upon the experience of our nursing faculty and students in the creation of the Rural Scholars Program; many of our mentors are nursing students, and nursing faculty contribute to the design of workshops, the selection of mentors, and program guidance.

Recently the Kent campus of our university has begun exploring the possibility of replicating the Rural Scholars Program in order to prepare a more diverse pool of students for enrollment in their own nursing program. Kent State University already has several mentoring models which have been consulted in the development of the Rural Scholars Program; these programs include Student Support Services, Upward Bound, and the Multicultural Center's mentoring programs.

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

We will know this collaboration has been successful by examining the following areas (which are different from the indicators of success for the program itself, described in detail below under Evaluation Plan):

- Successful and regular work of our Assessment Sub-committee in assessing the data from our mentees' across the metrics of our five outcomes.
- Regular and substantive meetings of our Advisory Board (3 times/year).
- Success in recruiting financial support from private and public sources.
- Expansion of our annual Summer Service Challenge and increased efficacy of our ninth grade service project design curriculum.
- Collaboration in expanding our event-based fundraising efforts.

- Ability to expand the program to more school districts in and around Columbiana County.

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

Wendy Pfrenger, Program Director

Primary responsibility for program development and implementation. Supervision and screening of mentors, assessment and review of program data, design of program workshops, recruitment of partners, identification of funding opportunities.

Qualifications and prior experiences include:

- Tutoring Center Coordinator and Rural Scholars Program Coordinator, Kent State University Salem. 2012-present.
- Americorps VISTA, 2011. Researched and created design for the Rural Scholars Program.
- Member, Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition, 2011-present.
- Writing Center Coordinator, University of Connecticut Hartford, 2003-2010. Worked closely with Student Support Services to support students, tutors, and instructors.
- Upward Bound Instructor, University of Connecticut, 2002.
- U.S. Peace Corps, Russian Far East, 1999-2001. Taught English and ecology to middle and high school students.

Steven Cramer, Minister, Trinity Church of East Liverpool and Long's Run Presbyterian Church of Calcutta.

Responsibilities: Steve will work with his congregation to identify age-appropriate service opportunities for Rural Scholars. Additionally, Steve will lead guided reflection for mentors on the value and meaning of their service to the program and the community to deepen their learning.

Qualifications and prior experiences:

- Pastoral Leadership
- Involvement with youth ministry
- Volunteerwork with numerous service organizations in the southern part of the county
- Member, East Liverpool Rotary Club
- Jubilee program for at-risk youth in East Liverpool
- Board Member, Rural Scholars Advisory Board.

Meta Cramer, Minister, First Presbyterian Church of Salem.

Responsibilities: Meta will work with her congregation to identify age-appropriate service opportunities for Rural Scholars. Meta will also lead the young scholars in guided reflection on the value and meaning of their service to the program and the community in order to deepen their understanding of what it means to commit to community.

Qualifications and prior experiences:

- Pastoral leadership
- Involvement with youth ministry
- Volunteerwork with numerous service organizations in the northern part of the county
- Member, Salem Rotary Club
- Board Member, The Rock. The Rock offers recreational activities and ministry for at-risk youth in Salem

- Board Member, Rural Scholars Advisory Board.

Todd Olson, President, BOC Water Hydraulics.

Responsibilities: Todd will host a hands-on workshop for scholars at his manufacturing shop annually, including a shop tour and hydraulics building project. Todd will also provide leadership on the Advisory Board, supply financial support to the program, and recruit other professionals to host workshops and give career interviews to scholars.

Qualifications and prior experiences include:

- Hosting numerous job-shadowing experiences for students and open houses for educators.
- Board Member, Rural Scholars Advisory Board, 2012-present.
- Board Member, Crestview STEM Academy.
- Member, Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition.

Laurie McClellan, Chairman, Consumers National Bank.

Responsibilities: Laurie will work with the CEO of Consumers National Bank and other bank employees to create interactive financial literacy and leadership workshops for Rural Scholars annually. Additionally, she will provide leadership on the Advisory Board, provide financial support to the program, and recruit other professionals to host workshops and give career interviews to scholars.

Qualifications and prior experiences include:

- Board Member, Rural Scholars Advisory Board, 2012-present.
- Board Member, Kent State University Salem Campus Advisory Board.
- Volunteer, Junior Achievement.

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.

June/July 2015 - Summer workshops for seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth grades conducted; summer service challenge events with faith partners conducted; new mentors complete initial screening and training; 2014-2015 program assessment completed.

August 2015 - Full-time Program Coordinator and Part-time Program Administrative Assistant begin work; New mentors begin their training course; plans for fall workshops finalized.

September 2015 - Mentoring in schools begins; Scholars complete initial goal sheets; Fall Advisory Board meeting.

October 2015-November 2015 - Fall workshops run; Planning for FlashDash Obstacle 5K fundraiser begins.

December 2015 - Holiday fundraiser; Holiday potluck for scholars' families; workshop for families; New mentors present their research to the campus and fellow mentors.

January 2016 - High school mid-year evaluations conducted; Mid-year goal sheet updates for all scholars; spring workshop schedule established.

February 2016 - New scholar recruitment begins; New mentor recruitment begins; summer workshop events planned.

March-April 2016 - Winter Advisory Board meeting; spring workshops conducted; Financial literacy workshop training conducted; ninth grade service projects completed.

May 2016 - Financial literacy/college knowledge programming for all sixth graders conducted; Goal sheets for year completed; New Scholars Orientation; FlashDash Obstacle 5K; Eighth graders present career profile presentations to other scholars.

June 2016 - Summer workshops begin; High School end-of-year evaluations completed and shared with scholars; Summer Advisory Board meeting.

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. Mentors are first interviewed and their references checked through an application process. The final candidates submit to federal and state background checks conducted by our Educational Service Center. After this process is complete, they volunteer with the program's summer workshops in a group environment to ensure that their maturity, self-direction, and leadership skills are appropriate for the program's requirements. Typically new mentors volunteer 40-90 hours each that first summer, receiving scholarships in recognition of their academic merit and commitment to community service.

Mentors work with no more than six scholars/year. They meet with their scholars once/week individually and in small groups.

b. Mentees are identified by their schools as candidates for the program based on the following primary criteria: potential to succeed (candidates' grades range from D's to A's, but teachers nominate them based on ability rather than performance); potential to be the first generation in their families to complete a four-year degree; family income that does not exceed 200% of the federal poverty level. Nominees complete applications and essays which are reviewed by program staff before admission. Families must also complete a "Consent and Support" agreement indicating their willingness to participate in the program.

c. Families participate in our New Scholars Orientation as well as various social events throughout the school year. This past year they provided guidance to the program through focus groups. They are also encouraged to attend workshops such as our recent "Financial Literacy for Your College Bound Child" workshop led by Consumers National Bank this fall. Many families volunteer in our fundraising events and contact us frequently with questions or concerns about their children.

New mentors are trained through an upper-level educational psychology course and supervision is shared by school and university personnel. All mentors participate in ongoing professional development meetings and trainings throughout the academic year and summer programming. Past topics have included: Relationship Boundaries; Ethical Dilemmas; Fostering Resiliency in Middle Schoolers; Challenges for College-Bound Appalachian and First Generation Students; Study Skills; Group Leadership; and Navigating Controversial Topics with Young Adolescents.

d. Assessment of fiscal accountability will be managed by our campus business office, our university Office of Sponsored Programs, the KSU Foundation, and our Rural Scholars Advisory Board composed of all partners in our collaboration.

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.
Kent State University's Columbiana campuses will supply the program's leadership, supervision, facilities as needed, and primary monetary and personnel contributions.

Meta Cramer of First Presbyterian Church of Salem and Steve Cramer of Long's Run Presbyterian Church (Calcutta) and Trinity Church (East Liverpool) will provide leadership and connections (through their congregants) with service experiences and structured reflection opportunities for our scholars in all parts of Columbiana County. As faith leaders, they will mentor our mentors and our scholars to be more intentional contributors to the good of the community.

BOC Water Hydraulics will provide leadership on our Advisory Board, financial support, and host an annual workshop at their manufacturing shop led by their employees. Consumers National Bank will provide leadership on our Advisory Board, financial support, and an annual workshop led by their employees on financial literacy. Both of our business partners will assist in recruiting other professionals to host workshops and give career interviews to our scholars.

Each of the school districts involved will provide shared supervision of scholars and mentors, assistance with assessment, advice with regard to program design, and guidance on our Advisory Board.

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. Mentors' contact hours are recorded through the University's employee timecard system, and mentors report number of individual students served directly to the Program Coordinator on a regular basis. Training hours are reported by the Program Coordinator to the campus business office.
- b. Schools share academic, behavior, and attendance data with the program. The program collects pre/post assessments from all workshops. Additionally, scholars' projects and presentations with the program are collected and evaluated as are regular evaluations for all high school students conducted by program staff. In twelfth grade, each scholar will produce an e-portfolio surveying his or her accomplishments, experiences, and progress over the course of the program. This e-portfolio is intended to assist the scholars as they formulate their post-graduation plans and prepare to apply for college.
- c. Indicators of success include the following:
- successful completion of Algebra 1 in eighth grade
 - completion of self-identified goals using the S.M.A.R.T. process
 - persistence in problem-solving activities associated with workshops offered by the program
 - enrollment in Seniors to Sophomores/Dual Enrollment programming for high school juniors and seniors
 - improved attendance
 - completion of responsibilities (homework, paperwork for program, service commitments)

- involvement in extra-curricular activities
- reduction in negative behaviors such as fighting, social withdrawal, and substance abuse
- enrollment in college
- avoidance of enrollment in remedial college courses
- improved self-presentation (tidy appearance, social confidence)
- participation in services and support systems available through the school and the community as needed

14. Applicants are to complete the program model.

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.

We are grateful for the potential this grant might provide in creating a window of time within which we will be able to complete our plan for funding this program sustainably. By providing funds to support high-quality, high-impact programming over the next few years, this grant would make it possible for us to demonstrate a track record of success attractive to other funding sources. From the program's earliest inception, we have had sustainability as a top priority and to date we have over \$128,000 in pledges raised from private, local sources. We continue these efforts and, at the same time, our fundraising events such as the FlashDash Obstacle 5K and Holiday Basket Raffle have demonstrated the willingness of our faculty, staff, and local small businesses to contribute as they are able to this program that they believe in so much.

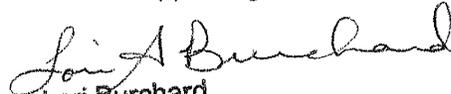
We believe the program will be sustainable after the grant for two reasons. First, the program's costs will be reduced significantly as the scholars enter college in 2018. This is because the scholars will themselves become mentors, reinvesting their energies in the young scholars coming up behind them. Our need to compensate mentors who have not themselves been mentored will phase out over successive years. Currently we pay relatively high wages to our mentors in recognition of their need to support themselves (most are non-traditional students) and the high level of responsibility we ask of them. Beginning in 2018-2019, we will instead pay more standard student wages to our scholars in addition to the last-dollar scholarships they will receive to cover any tuition not covered by Pell Grants. We project that if even 1/3-2/3 of our scholars matriculate to Kent's local campuses for a period of two years, we will have a sufficient number of scholar-mentors to sustain the program at a significantly reduced cost.

Our second reason for believing sustainability will be attainable is that, as the program demonstrates a track-record of success, we will become more attractive to both public and private funding sources. We have already begun building an endowment with sources from provide foundations to ensure the program's future. With the assistance of Community Connectors, we believe we can build upon our existing successes, enhancing our collaborative leadership structure so that the program's diverse array of supports will attract more resources.

Application Section V: Program Budget

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

By clicking this box, I (Insert Name) Lori A. Burchard 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.


Lori Burchard
Director, Sponsored Programs

Kent State University