

Application Section I: Community Connectors Program Description

1. The target population is students grades 5-12. Identify the grade level or levels targeted at each school.

With funding from the Community Connectors grant program, we plan to serve students in grades 6-8 at Heritage Middle School (HMS) in the Painesville City Local School District (District). The District is situated in the City of Painesville, Lake County, which is home to over three times the number of foreign-born residents (13%) than the State average (4%). According to the US Census Bureau, only 79% of Painesville residents have high school diplomas (compared to a state average of 88.5%) and only 14.9% have four-year degrees (compared to the State's 25.2%). Over one-quarter (25.6%) of the City residents are living below the poverty line, nearly twice the State (16%) and National (14.5%) rates.

Consequently, this District has a student poverty rate of 98.3%, the highest in Lake County, and a graduation rate of only 63.2%. Heritage Middle School has a poverty rate of 100%, and has received Fs on its most recent Ohio Department of Education report card in the areas of Achievement Indicators Met, Gap Closing Annual Objectives, and Overall School Progress. Further adding to these adverse statistics, the most recent Lake County Health Department's *2014 Youth Health Status Assessment* devastatingly shows that 29% (41% of females and 18% of males) of Lake County youth reported feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row. All of these indicators put students enrolled in the school at an extreme disadvantage as they march toward high school graduation and into successful futures.

However, we believe that there is amazing potential for these students if they receive adequate structure and support from their school, positive role models, mentors, families, and community members. As noted by Secombe (2002), student disadvantage can provide fertile ground for resiliency development and economic improvement when effective support structures are put into place. Our Community Connectors program proposes to do just that, as you will see in the following sections.

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

Over the three years grant funding period, we plan to serve 90 unduplicated students in total. The students will be 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students enrolled at Heritage Middle School. During Year 1, we will serve 30 sixth grade students. During Year 2, we will continue serving that same cohort of 30 students (now in 7th grade), in addition to 30 new 6th grade students. During Year 3, we will continue serving the same two groups of students (now 7th and 8th graders, respectively), plus a new cohort of 30 6th grade students.

Although we hope to have a high program retention rate year over year, we recognize that many factors may inhibit this (including sports, other extracurricular activities, and the district mobility that is very common in our target population). Thus, if students are unable to return for the second and third years of programming, we will fill their spots with other new students in the same grade. This will ensure that we will have 30 students in each cohort every year, but may increase the number of unduplicated students served over the 3-year grant period.

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

4. Describe your project. How will it address the five core principles and how will you measure success.

The Need

As detailed above, the students we plan to serve are at high risk for academic failure and negative economic mobility. Unfortunately, many do not have the individualized support, structure, and accountability that they need to succeed in school and in life as a whole. Furthermore, their living environments often fail to foster the ambition and goal-setting cultivation that they need to experience bright and hopeful futures. Nonetheless, we firmly believe that all students have the potential to succeed, and it is up to us – as a community – to unearth their potential and give them the

education, challenges, and opportunities they need to lead fulfilling, responsible lives.

With this commitment in the forefront, we started an initiative to find and utilize existing assets in our community to meet the needs of these students, our future. Two of the biggest needs that emerged as we evaluated our community were 1) student mentoring and 2) college and/or career preparedness. Each is described in greater detail below.

Student Mentoring

Many recent studies document the fact that student mentoring can have vast short- and long-term benefits in terms of personal, academic, and professional growth (Rhodes, 2008; Schwartz, S.E., Lowe, S.R., & Rhodes, J.E.; 2012). In fact, individual mentoring programs often been demonstrated to reduce problem behaviors, academic difficulty, and psychological disturbances (Rhodes, 2008). Positive mentoring relationships are beneficial for all sorts of people, but particularly for young people living at-risk (Bruce and Bridgeland, 2014). However, oftentimes, students who could benefit from mentoring the most (e.g., children with incarcerated parents, children with risk factors that jeopardize their pathway toward high school graduation, college or career placement, and life success, etc.) do not have those vital relationships that propel them toward productive adulthood. In fact, at-risk young people who need mentoring the most show the widest mentoring gap in a recent study performed by Bruce and Bridgeland (The Mentoring Effect, 2014).

As shown in the demographics provided above, students in the Painesville City Local School District are prime candidates for structured, targeted, and integrated mentoring support. We are confident that intentional mentoring of students enrolled in our program at Heritage Middle School will give them many of the basic and applied relational skills needed to develop self-confidence and build healthy friendships; the accountability that they need to set and meet short-term goals and pursue long-term goals; and the glimpses and deepening of hope that they need to rise above their current at-risk environments toward excellence.

College and Career Preparedness

Research shows that students need 21st century skills development and leadership training if they are to graduate from high school and college prepared for real-world career or other life paths. However, recent studies find that students are graduating from high school and college unprepared to face the real life struggles they will encounter as adults. In fact, one 2010 study by the American Management Association shares the results from their survey of over 2,000 executives who indicated that many students graduating from school were ill-equipped to meet the challenges that they would face in their careers and lacking in the essential real-world leadership and social skills that they need to move forward. Some of the missing basic and applied skills noted include: oral and written communication; critical thinking; problem solving; professionalism; work ethic; teamwork; collaboration; working in diverse teams; applying technology; leadership; and project management.

One of the leading coalitions for the development of these skills, The National Partnership for 21st Century Skills, which is comprised of educators, policy makers, and others, recommend addressing these deficits by fusing the “three R’s” (reading, writing, and arithmetic) with the “four C’s” (communication, collaboration, critical thinking/problem-solving, and creativity) – each of which relies on personal experience and achievement rather than on general knowledge. The American Management Association recommends such development and training, emphasizing that it is easier for students in their more formative years to develop these skills than it is for experienced workers who already have established work patterns and habits.

Unfortunately, many schools and educators find it difficult to provide such training given funding and curriculum constraints, parent pressure, and standardized testing and the Painesville City Local School District is no exception. This is where our partnership enters the scene. Our program will target at-risk students with an experientially based program that cultivates these very skill sets, opens students’ horizons to the latent assets within their own community, and acts as a catalyst for positive change by better preparing students to live responsible, independent adult lives – regardless of whether they choose to pursue higher education or to immediately enter the workforce.

The Partners

The primary partners are the Lake County YMCA, Painesville Local City School District (specifically Heritage Middle School), the Painesville Area Chamber of Commerce (PACC), Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio (BBBS), the Lake/Geauga Educational Assistance Foundation (LEAF), and Lakeland Community College (LCC).

The Lake County YMCA is a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to strengthening the community by nurturing the potential of kids and teens, promoting healthy living for all, and fostering social responsibility. The Lake County YMCA was formed in 1866 and has a rich history of community impact, now engaging 1 out of every five households across the County.

The YMCA provides a safe, positive environment for children to learn good values, social skills, and behaviors; a place for children and older youth to play, learn who they are and what they can achieve; an avenue for adults to connect with friends and learn how to live healthier lives; and a way for communities to thrive through mutual connection, sharing, and giving. The YMCA's mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. Its impact is felt when an individual makes a healthy choice, when a mentor inspires a child, and when a community comes together for the common good. The YMCA's core values of honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility are a priority in all programs, as well as daily operations.

Painesville Local City School District currently enrolls over 3,000 students and employs approximately 420 administrators, teachers, and support staff to serve the widely diverse students population. The District has one high school, one middle school, and three elementary schools for students within the Painesville City community. The District's mission and vision is to engage all students today for tomorrow's world. Within the District, the Community Connectors grant program will specifically target Heritage Middle School students in grades 6-8. Of the School's 645 enrolled students, 73.8% are minority students and 31.1% have limited English proficiency.

Painesville Area Chamber of Commerce is a voluntary partnership of business and professional people working together to build a healthy economy and improve the quality of life in the Lake County, Ohio and its footprint includes communities of Fairport Harbor, Grand River, City of Painesville, Painesville Township, Concord Township, and Leroy Township. Since 1905, their goal has been to connect local area business and professionals and thereby unite the community in a synergous relationship that mutually benefits the Chamber members and the community as a whole.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio is a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to provide meaningful mentoring experiences for youth living in the region. Its mission is to foster the development of children in reaching their highest potential as responsible and caring adults. BBBS does so by providing high quality volunteer mentoring relationships with a supportive adults, and educational programs supervised by our professional staff. Since its opening in 1993, BBBS has served over 500 children and youth through traditional big-to-little match programs and growing afterschool programs. For BBBS, children have intrinsic value. By recognizing their potential and improving of their lives, BBBS is building a responsible, caring future generation. BBBS is committed to carry out its mission and implement quality programs that provide companionship, friendship and guidance to children, so that they can become confident, competent, and caring individuals. Together with its partners, BBBS is changing what it means to grow up in America.

Lake/Geauga Educational Assistance Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit that connects students to resources that open doors to higher education. LEAF does this by combining the efforts of dedicated teachers, concerned parents, diligent students, and caring communities to get kids to college. It was founded in 1989 by a group of local visionaries who were determined to help create better futures for Lake County Youth (expanding to Geauga County since then) and has given literally thousands of students the vision for further education and successful careers. LEAF provides one-on-one college information sessions, financial aid counseling and workshops, a resource center, scholarship directory and preparation assistance, campus trips and LEAF scholarships. LEAF works closely with local schools to build students' confidence, knock down barriers, find college resources and solutions, and engaged students in their own positive futures. Keeping in mind that college is not for all students, LEAF also provides resources and support for students who prepare for career success through vocational training, certifications, and on-the-job training.

Lakeland Community College was founded in 1967 – the first college in Ohio created by a vote of the people. True to its mission, LCC provides quality learning opportunities to meet the social and economic needs of the community. The college serves more than 13,000 credit and 7,000 noncredit students annually, offering over 150 associate degree and technical certificate programs leading to high demand careers or to 4-year institution transfers. LCC impacts lives through learning by holding fast to its core values of excellence, accessibility, diversity, integrity, innovation, and joy.

The Background

In forming our partnership, the group took an assets-based approach to our Community Connectors program. Thus, along with conducting the needs assessment described above, we also completed a strengths assessment of our organizations to determine the valuable pieces of the puzzle that each partner can bring to the table. Since we had already outlined the needs of the students in our community, our assets survey centered on how each partner could meet the needs presented.

The Lake County YMCA has been providing a Minority Achievers program for the past several years for students enrolled at Painesville's Harvey High School (the high school to which Heritage Middle School students advance). The Minority Achievers program was adapted from the YMCA's national program, and is specifically designed to help

teens set and achieve high educational and professional standards, while exposing them to diverse career options. The module based program uses hands-on activities that help students to develop the self-confidence, motivation, and character that they need to succeed professionally and personally. The Achievers program design will serve as the main building block for the Community Connectors program. Members of the partnership leadership team will adjust the program to provide age-appropriate material for middle schoolers, for example, by eliminating sections about college placement exams and adding sections about how to manage bullying and how to navigate the transition from middle school to high school successfully.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio has a time-tested mentorship model that is being used across the nation to link young people with older people who are ready and willing to speak into their lives and guide them along the challenging pathway to their successful futures. BBBs will contribute their afterschool program model to develop the mentoring piece for this program. The BBBS program model helps grade school children to develop positive attitudes toward school, build self-esteem, and have fun while improving their social skills and natural abilities. Mentors will be recruited from Harvey High School, as well as local business and community members, and will commit to remaining engaged with their mentee throughout the course of the program.

Lake/Geauga Educational Assistance Foundation and Lakeland Community College are both local educational institutions that provide access to local and national resources for students interested in pursuing further education after they graduate from high school. LEAF has facilitated many college preparation workshops, one-on-one counseling sessions, and college tours for students that help broaden their horizons and give them glimpses of hopeful futures. LEAF will train the Program Director in how to utilize these resources to help students in our program, and they will also deliver career exploration activities that will help students to identify possible future careers and conceptualize pathways to achievement. LCC has spent years inspiring students to take control of their futures by developing themselves through further education. LCC will provide college preparedness workshops for students in our program that center on cognitive strategies, content knowledge, attitude and behavior growth, and college knowledge, as well as quarterly tutoring support.

The Painesville Area Chamber of Commerce has extensive background in networking with local business members and government agencies to create a positive economic tone in the community, as well as link community members with businesses who are committed to improving the quality of life in our community. PACC will draw on this strength to help students in our program to gain awareness of the economic opportunities in our local area, as well as the broader regional, state, and national context, for the purpose of giving students hope for their own prosperous futures.

Each of these partners has an intrinsic motivation to develop and support the rising leaders that our program is targeting in the critical turning point of middle school. The Painesville City Local School District is committed to partnering with us and providing valuable in-kind space for our program operations, as well as identifying and encouraging at-risk students to participate in our program.

The Program

As shown above, our Community Connectors program is designed to connect students with nonprofit organizations, school resources, business networks, parents, faith communities, and the wider community as a whole to provide meaningful mentoring opportunities for youth in a very low-performing and low-income school district. In creating these linkages, our program seeks to encourage mentoring opportunities as well as create new pathways for civic engagement that will result in higher educational achievement, higher levels of wellbeing and health, and workforce readiness for our State.

As Community Connectors, one of our main goals is to get students excited about their futures and prepare them with the skills that they need to meet those futures head-on. The program summary below outlines the ways we plan to do so, and includes one-on-one mentoring, college preparedness training, workforce development workshops, community service activities, and social networking with peers and the local business community. Each of these components will strengthen students' non-academic achievement indicators, while giving them the courage, confidence, self-development skills, and socio-emotional intelligence that they need to navigate through middle school, graduate from high school and pursue their future life dreams.

Our partnership is uniquely designed to help expand students' social and human capital asset bases by giving them new support systems (mentors, tutors) and uncovering latent existing ones (e.g., community organizations, businesses). We will show them how to use those assets as they navigate the difficult transitions that they will face as they move from middle to high school, pursue graduation, and go on to meet college and career dreams.

Finally, by providing opportunities for community connectedness with local businesses and community organizations, we will also increase their long-term commitment to the success of our region and state. As a direct result of our work, we expect to see a new generation of young adults emerge, fully equipped to serve as the leaders that Ohio needs to remain competitive in our globalized economy.

This program will operate for the entire 9-month school year, September through May, and will follow the school calendar in taking a summer break before returning for subsequent years of programming in the fall. The program design is a hybrid of several partner agencies' program models, including the YMCA's Minority Achievers program, the BBBS' Youth Afterschool Mentoring program, and LEAF's, LCC's, and PACC's college and workforce preparedness programs.

During the first year of grant funding, we will start small and begin by serving 30 at-risk 6th students at Heritage Middle School, identified by teachers and counselors as needing intentional mentoring and life-skills training for success. Students will participate in our program and will be placed with a one-on-one mentor from Harvey High School or a business or community partner. Each mentor will have completed BBBS mentor training and will be equipped to help their mentee navigate the difficulties of middle school, unfortunately made more complex because of their socio-economic status and other at-risk factors. The program will be held once per week, except during school breaks, during which the Program Director and Mentoring Coordinator will deliver the age-appropriate curriculum (described more fully below) with the help and support of each student's mentor. The curriculum will be complemented by monthly college and career preparedness workshops as well as community service projects and college visits.

During the second year, we will continue working with the same group of students in the 7th grade (80% retention rate goal), replacing any non-returning students with other at-risk students in their grade, in addition to 30 new sixth grade students. All 60 students will be placed with an individual mentor for the year. We hope that many of the original members of the first year's mentoring team will continue to work with their mentee during their second and third years of program involvement. The 6th grade curriculum will remain very similar as in the first year of programming, but will be tweaked based on feedback gained from the first year's final evaluation. We will further expand the curriculum for the 7th grade students, building in additional age-appropriate information, training, and expectations.

During the Year 3, we will continue working with the same groups of students in the 7th and 8th grade respectively (again with an 80% retention rate goal), replacing any non-returning students with other at-risk students in their grade. We will also add 30 new sixth grade students. Each of the 90 students will be placed with an individual mentor for the year. Again, we hope that many of the original mentors will continue to work with their mentees during their second and third years of program involvement. The 6th and 7th grade curriculum will remain very similar to the prior years, but will be tweaked based on the previous year's final evaluation. We will expand the curriculum for the 8th grade students, building in additional age-appropriate information, training, and expectations. The 8th grade students will be placed in a pipeline to high school support program facilitated by the YMCA. All students who complete our 8th grade program will be connected to the Achievers Program already in place at Harvey High School. In this way, we will provide a seamless continuum of support for students as we challenge them to beat the odds and graduate from high school.

As you will see in our sustainability plan below, we plan to continue this Community Connectors partnership beyond the terms of the original three-year grant. We are committed to finding funding commitment from local investors to support our program. We have already developed a fundraising plan to raise matching funds for the program, and will continue to pursue additional dollars to fill the funding gap when Community Connectors grant funds expire.

The Curriculum

Our program curriculum is specifically designed to meet the needs of our students and meeting the grant priorities of goal-setting for 21st century careers, character building, developing pathways to achievement, resiliency-building, and believing in a positive future. Integrated throughout the entire program will be a mentoring component, through which both high school students and community/business leaders will commit to volunteering regularly to do one-on-one mentorship with one of the students in the program.

Priority 1 – Setting Goals to be Prepared for 21st Century Careers: Goal setting is a vital 21st century skills that our students must cultivate to be successful. To help them develop this particular skill, we will teach students the importance of setting goals for the short- and long-term, how to set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely) goals, and how to hold oneself accountable to reach the set goals. By giving students the opportunity to practice their newly developed skills, students begin to set healthy self-management patterns that are

vital if they are to succeed in their studies and further work interests. Through this component of programming, students will set goals with their mentor and be held accountable for their progress toward those goals throughout the year. We will work with our students and mentors to realize that goal-setting goes beyond the pass/fail mindset that we often associate with such activities, but rather, engages them in their own self-directed pursuit of lifelong learning.

Priority 2 – Building Character. A key component our program is character development. We believe that it is essential for students to develop and stick to a strong code of ethics, as well as cultivate vital character traits including grit, perseverance, and self-regulation. We will teach students that incorporating core values such as caring, honesty and responsibility in every aspect of one's life is key to experiencing a positive future. Thus, we will teach students the important of developing these characteristics, as well as practical application skills they will put into play during our program. We will use tools including the Holland Code Self-Directed Survey, the Spider-Web Portal, and the YMCA's Core Values to instill these traits in our students. Mentors will also take the lead in identifying positive character traits in their mentees, as well as areas for growth, in order to show them that someone believes in them and believes that they are capable of more. This focus will help our students to develop the traits and confidence needed to succeed.

Priority 3 – Developing Pathways to Achievement. We firmly believe that students must develop self-efficacy if they are to succeed in school, work, and life as a whole. Our curriculum teaches students that taking personal responsibility for one's own future is the first step to making responsible adult decisions. Thus, we will teach students strategies for managing bullying, substance abuse, depression awareness, risky behaviors, and peer pressure that could impede their success, while teaching them that they have the responsibility and ability to create their own successful futures, regardless of outside circumstances that may deter them. We will also teach students how to regulate themselves – in staying accountable for set goals, in managing tense communication encounters, in deepening their critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills and in developing time management skills

Priority 4 – Resiliency Building. As described above, all of the students that we will serve are living in at-risk environments. Many of these students do not have the networks that their wealthier counterparts can rely upon, including positive adult role models, social support structure (places of worship, community organizations, successful business owners, etc.) Our program will teach students to be confident in themselves and to make good decisions that will put them on the path to successful futures. We will teach them the importance of self-confidence and self-regulation that gives them the drive and the discipline to reach their goals despite the factors that threaten to inhibit them. Incorporating community service opportunities into the program will further strengthen the community bonds that are vital in producing resilient students. Our mentors play an important role in this component as they provide intentional socio-emotional development opportunities for our students.

Priority 5 – Believing in a Positive Future. Our curriculum is also designed to help students envision a positive future for themselves (whether it be in terms of high school graduation, college placement, or workforce entry). We then provide them with the skills that they need to be prosper in their dream futures, including teamwork, communication, critical outside-the-box thinking, and much more. As they engage in these self-development exercises, students will begin to cultivate a positive belief about their future. They will begin to see themselves as the mature, responsible adults that they are becoming. Linking them with college preparation and workforce access opportunities, including college/business visits, and college and career workshops, and older mentors will help to give them the ambition that they need to beginning dreaming and running toward successful futures.

The Goals and Outcomes

The overarching goal of our program is to use mentorship as a tool to help students learn 21st century skills that they need to succeed in middle school, graduate from high school, and to reach their education and career goals. Our evaluation schema to evaluate program success is as follows:

Goal 1: We will help students learn to set goals as they prepare for 21st century careers

1. 85% of students will know how to set SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely) goals upon completion of our programming.
2. 90% of students will work with their mentors to set two short-term goals (e.g., getting a certain grade on an upcoming test) to which their mentors will keep them accountable.
3. 80% of students will work with their mentors to set one longer-term mastery goal (e.g., feeling more confident about their math skills by the end of the year; handling peer pressure better, etc.) with specific short-term steps, to which the mentors will keep them accountable.
4. 85% of students will be able to identify challenges and barriers to meeting their goals and develop strategies for handling each.

Goal 2: We will help students build character for future success.

1. 85% of students will demonstrate growth in their Developmental Assets profile from the beginning of the program to the end.
2. 95% of students will work with their mentor to identify specific positive character traits that they know are needed for success, and work toward developing those traits throughout the course of the program.

Goal 3: We will help students develop and uncover pathways to their own achievement.

1. 80% of students will demonstrate significant growth in their problem-solving skills by the end of the program
2. 90% of students will be able to share at least one strategy for dealing with peer pressure effectively.
3. 90% of students will be able to share at least one strategy for dealing with bullying.
4. 80% of students will work with their mentors to envision a dream job, and outline the steps they will need to take to get there.

Goal 4: We will help students build a sense of resiliency.

1. 100% of students will be placed with an individual mentor who will work with them over the duration of the program to increase their protective factors.
2. 85% of students will demonstrate growth in self-regulation skills
3. 80% of students will demonstrate growth in self-efficacy (taking responsibility for one's own future).

Goal 5: We will help students develop a belief in a positive future.

1. 85% of students will indicate that they have hope for a positive future.
2. 85% of students will share their visions of their own positive futures with their mentors.
3. 80% of students will indicate that they believe that they have value.
4. 80% of students will indicate that they believe that they can have a positive impact in the world.

Goal 6: We will help parents support their children adequately as they navigate the challenges of adolescence and prepare for success as adults.

1. 50% of parents will participate in at least one parent workshop throughout the year.
2. 80% of parents who attend a parent workshop will indicate that the workshop helped them learn how to support their children better.
3. 100% of parents will make written commitments to support and challenge their children to reach their full potential.

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

As described above, we plan to offer a 2-hour afterschool program one day per week for 37 weeks during the 9-month school year. The afterschool program will be comprised of hands-on activities that will help prepare students for 21st century success. Some of the skills that students will develop include goal setting, effective communication, finding and utilizing free resources for academic and life success, interpersonal relationship building, self-regulation, time management, and self-confidence. Each of these skills is targeted to build the character traits and hope that students need, along with the real-world application skills that they must cultivate if they are to lead independent, responsible lives as adults

Each week, students will meet with their mentor to receive tutoring help, complete a brief lesson on a Theme of the Month topic delivered by the Program Director, and build their social and human capital asset base by socializing with peers or networking with guest presenters. Every month, students will also participate in a community service trip to deepen their commitment to civic engagement, or a college or business visit to expand their horizons and give them a glimpse of a hopeful future for their lives. Each of these event will help students visualize potential ways to use their talents and interests to create meaning for their lives.

In recognition of the importance of parent engagement and the role of family in ensuring students success, we will also partner with Heritage Middle School and the School District to provide opportunities for family involvement in our program. At the beginning of the year, we will hold a parent orientation program during which parents will be invited to learn about what their student will do in our program, as well as how they can contribute to their children's success in school and life as a whole. Heritage Middle School will also hold a college and career exploration night for parents during the school year, which we will encourage our parents to attend. The program will help parents learn how pursuing further education through a higher education institute or vocational training is vital in helping their students lead productive and fulfilling adult lives. Finally, we will

offer parents the opportunity to participate in community service activities and college/business visit days as chaperones so that they can further support their children in our program.

6. Discuss how the program will utilize best practices to ensure program success.

Both the BBBS mentoring program and the YMCA Achievers program are based on national models that have been demonstrated to have success in preparing young people to succeed in a rapidly changing, globalized, and fast paced world. Both the YMCA Achievers Program and the BBBS mentoring model incorporate best practices in all programming, including fusing 21st century skills development with real-world application, accountability and loving support from caring mentors, and encouraging a holistic approach to youth development (including academic, socio-emotional, health, and general wellbeing). The BBBS mentoring model has recently been evaluated by several independent evaluators (including the Boston Consulting Group, Harris Interactive, and) have shown that BBBS mentoring has generated tremendous gains in terms of employment, philanthropy, life skills, and general wellbeing. In fact, the Boston Consulting Group found that the social return on investment BBBS mentoring programs was \$18 for every dollar invested, and even higher (\$23) for the most economically disadvantaged participants. BBBS mentees are more likely to be employed full-time, volunteer for community service, donate to charity, pursue healthy lifestyles, self-report financial literacy, become a senior leader in their work environments, and report that they were happy, had made good life choices, and had a strong network of family and friends. All of these indicators demonstrate the success of this model, incorporating collective action to invest in the future of young people in need of guidance.

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 Lake County YMCA has operated a successful Achievers program for high school students for the past few years. The program has been relatively small, with 10-15 participants each year. Although no formal evaluations have been completed to determine significant program outcomes, the YMCA has conducted Development Assets Profiles (DAP) surveys to determine whether students demonstrated growth in terms of positive development assets throughout the program. Every year, the DAP results have shown student growth in terms of these indicators.

BBBS has held mentoring programs since it opened in 1993. Since then, BBBS has served over 500 children and youth through traditional big-to-little match programs and growing afterschool programs. Evaluation of individual mentoring programs throughout Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula Counties have been completed and demonstrate significant student impact in terms of positive mentor-mentee relationships (which often last long past the program duration), student asset development (as measured by DAP surveys), and parent and student satisfaction.

We believe that linking these two core components, and adding the complementary education and career development training provided by the other partners will create a successful, comprehensive youth development program that will make a lasting difference in the lives of the 90 students that this grant funded program will reach.

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

Success for our students comes in many shapes and sizes. Overall, program success looks like students feeling confident about their ability to succeed in life, along with showcasing the practical skill set that accompanies that success, including effective communication, teamwork, goal setting, and time management skills, among others. Mentors and mentees will both report experiencing a positive mentoring relationship, and students will be more fully prepared for success later in life by committing to graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary education or career placement. Furthermore, a pinnacle of success for the partnership will be evidences of a synergous relationship between partners, including the development of a joint fundraising strategy, the incorporation of various program models to create one comprehensive youth development program, and additional joint ventures in the future.

Application Section II: Program Management

9. Leadership Team: Please provide a brief bio of each leadership team member (one from each partner).

Lake County YMCA:

Name and title: Dick Bennett, CEO

Responsibilities: Dick will work to ensure adequate resources, both people and financial, are available to successfully accomplish the YMCA's part of the program.

Qualifications: Dick has strong relationships will all partners, and is actively involved in community development. He is also involved in the delivery of quality results within the YMCA and has a strong team of program, finance and operational professionals that will be available to ensure success.

Prior relevant experience: Dick and the YMCA have successfully received other youth development grants for educational purposes from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, Y-USA, Hershey Foundation, and the Jeanette McIntyre Foundation, all of which have been multi-year grants but the Hershey Foundation grant.

Painesville Area Chamber of Commerce

Name and title: Linda E. Reed, Executive Director

Responsibilities: Linda will connect the Program Director to the local business community with the goal of providing a brighter, more productive future for local youth while adding meaning to their lives

Qualifications: PACC has been in existence since 1905. It has a great working relationship with members and non-members alike, not only within its footprint, but also throughout the County. Linda has been in her position for 10 years, giving her many years to form relationships with the local business community and government leaders.

Prior relevant experience: Linda has served as an ECity Mentor to a local high school student, has helped coordinate manufacturing expos and career fairs for all high schools in the County for the past 3 years, and has a true passion for helping children reach their potential

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio

Name and title: Tia Lawrence, Director of Programs

Responsibilities: Tia will help plan and oversee the mentoring portion of the program.

Qualifications: Tia has a bachelor's degree of sociology from Lake Erie College and worked as a social worker for Geauga County Job and Family Services, as a teaching assistant from Mentor Public Schools, and has worked for BBBS since 2005.

Prior relevant experience: Tia has served as an afterschool program coordinator, director of afterschool programs with BBBS before beginning her current position as director of programs for BBBS. She loves working with students to see the difference and impact that mentoring has on youth.

Lake/Geauga Educational Assistance Foundation

Name and title: Andrea Tracy, Program Director

Responsibilities: Andrea will train the Community Connector's Program Director, serve as part of the advisory committee for the project. She will also create the college and career prep programming and assist in setting up college and business visits

Qualifications: Andrea has an MBA and is certified as a Global Career Development Facilitator through the National Career Development Association. She has worked on multiple Enrollment Services teams at the post-secondary level and has worked with high school students for 17 years to help them navigate financial aid, career selection, college selection, and applications. She is passionate about post-secondary education and assisting students from all socio-economic backgrounds in discovering their educational aspirations.

Prior relevant experience: Andrea has worked in the Financial Aid Offices of Coleman University, Point Loma Nazarene University, and the University of Mount Union, has presented in state conferences, co-chaired college fairs, and served on the board of organizations including Ohio College Access Network, the Ohio Associate of College Admission Counseling and the Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

Painesville Local City School District

Name and title: Dr. Josh Englehart, Assistant Superintendent

Responsibilities: Josh will secure the time and space within the District in order to carry out meetings and activities, as well as serve as the primary point of contact for the District.

Qualifications: Josh holds four degrees in education, including a PhD in Urban Education. He has collaborated on the creation, implementation, and oversight of multiple projects to serve Painesville City students. He has done a great deal of work in the area of connecting schools and families within the District.

Prior relevant experience: Josh has been in the field of education for 16 years, most of which have specifically been in the middle school (ten as a teacher and three as a principal). Through the programming he has led in the district, he has developed relationships with many agencies and organizations within the community, including the partners included in this proposal.

Name and title: Missy DeAngelis

Responsibilities: Missy will oversee the recruitment and identification of target students for the program, as well as facilitate communication between the program and students/families.

Qualifications: Missy has been an administrator in Painesville City since 2005, and has been the principal of

Heritage Middle School for the past 3 years. She is responsible for the management and instructional leadership of nearly 700 students daily. Missy has developed relationships with her students and families and is very in tune with their backgrounds and needs.

Prior relevant experience: Missy has assumed responsibility for numerous special programs within the school, including tutoring and mentoring programs.

Lakeland Community College

Name and title: Dione DeMitro, Director of Student Success

Responsibilities: Dione will coordinate tutoring, site visits, and college readiness presentations, as well as contribute to the development of college readiness modules.

Qualifications: Dione has over 20 years' experience in education: 14 years as a K12 educator and 6 in higher education. She also oversees college credit plus and student support services, including managing the learning center and transition mentors.

Prior relevant experience: Dione has significant experience working with students of all ages, as noted above, and is passionate about giving students the support they need to navigate higher education successfully.

10. *A timeline of all major activities must be provided.*

Year 1: 2015-16

- June: Post job description for the part-time Program Director position (YMCA); accept and review applications (YMCA)
- July: Interview applicants and hire Program Director (Leadership Team)
- August: Train Program Director in curriculum and program model (Leadership Team; all Partners); recruit students (Program Director (PD), District); recruit mentors (BBBS, PACC)
- September: Begin program at Heritage Middle School - Theme of the Month: Team Building and Goal Setting (PD); train mentors and begin mentoring component (Mentoring Coordinator (MC)); conduct pre-program evaluations; start case management files (PD, MC); continue recruiting students (PD, District); continue recruiting mentors (BBBS, PACC); provide a parent engagement orientation program (PD, all Partners)
- October: Continue programming – Theme of the Month: Computer Resources and How They Should Be Used (PD; BBBS); review Q1 grades and provide tailored tutoring (PD, MC, LCC)
- November: Continue programming – Theme of the Month: Building Character and Resiliency (PD, MC); hold a college and career exploration night for parents (District)
- December: Continue programming – Theme of the Month: Healthy Relationships (PD, MC); review Q2 grades and provide tailored tutoring (PD, MC, LCC)
- January: Continue programming – Theme of the Month: Career Exploration (PD, MC, PACC); conduct mid-program evaluations of students, mentors, and parents (PD, MC)
- February: Continue programming – Theme of the Month: Developing Pathways to Achievement (PD, MC)
- March: Continue programming – Theme of the Month: Choices After High School (PD, MC, LEAF);
- April: Continue programming – Theme of the Month: Financial Literacy and Life Choices (PD, MC); review Q3 grades and provide tailored tutoring (PD, MC, LCC)
- May: Continue programming – Theme of the Month: Positive Future and Program Review (PD, MC); conduct final evaluations of students, mentors, and parents (PD, MC);
- June: Analyze evaluation results and compile final report (PD, MC); disseminate results to all partners (YMCA); assess final results and use to plan for Year 2 (Leadership Team, all partners)

Year 2: 2016-17

- July: Ensure Program Director and Mentoring Coordinator are in place (YMCA, BBBS); develop curriculum for new year (PD, MC, Leadership Team)
- August: Complete curriculum development (PD, MC, Leadership Team);
- Sep - May: Deliver programming (PD, MC)
- June: Complete final evaluation and use to plan for Year 3 (PD, MC, all Partners)

Year 3: 2017-18

- July: Ensure Program Director and Mentoring Coordinator are in place (YMCA, BBBS); develop curriculum for new year (PD, MC, Leadership Team)
- August: Complete curriculum development (PD, MC, Leadership Team);
- Sep - May: Deliver programming

June: Complete final evaluation and use to plan for Year 4 (PD, MC, all Partners)

11. Describe the implementation process for Screening, orientation, supporting, and monitoring process for mentors and other personnel working directly with youth; Identification and intake process for mentees; how you will involve families of youth in your program; ongoing training of mentors throughout the program; assessing fiscal accountability and faithful implementation of project plans; and other critical information.

We will use the BBBS tested strategy for recruiting, screening, training, monitoring, and supporting mentors involved in our program. Mentors will be recruited from Harvey High School and other community/business members committed to helping our students reach their full potential. Screenings mandated by law will be completed before they are able to work with youth, and all mentors will complete two BBBS mentor trainings prior to beginning programming. All other staff working with the youth will complete required background checks before programming begins. We will also conduct ongoing monitoring of the mentors (as described more fully below), and provide additional training as needed for all mentors engaged in the program. Mentees will be recruited from Heritage Middle School by teacher referrals and will complete a brief application process.

We plan to engage the families of our students in our programming by providing a kickoff orientation program for all interested family members, as well as encourage further engagement through participation in Heritage Middle School's college and career exploration parent event. We will provide regular opportunities for parent chaperoning on service learning and college/business visit trips, as well as give discounted family members to the YMCA for all families with students retained in the program to encourage family development.

With respect to fiscal accountability and faithful implementation of project plans, we plan to hold a monthly meeting for all partners. During the meetings, we will evaluate our progress toward our goals, get a status update on program activities, and conduct necessary fiscal oversight activities. Each of the partners receiving a portion of grant funding will be considered a sub-recipient of the Lake County YMCA and will invoice the YMCA for goods and services purchased, upon which the YMCA will cut a reimbursement check to that partner.

12. Describe how each applicant partner plans to contribute to the overall program plan.

As detailed above, and more thoroughly in the Roles and Responsibilities worksheet attachment, each of our partners will make specific contributions to the Community Connectors program. The YMCA will provide staffing, supplies, transportation for the program, and will share the responsibility of planning, delivering, and evaluating a quality youth development program (total time commitment approx. 15 hours/week). PACC will help to recruit mentors and provide speakers for career exploration workshops (time commitment of approx. 2 hours/week). BBBS will provide the staffing, mentors, and case management for the mentoring component of the program (10 hours/week). The District will provide in-kind programming space at Heritage Middle School, student recruitment aid, and parent programming (5 hours/week). LEAF will train the Program Director to provide college and career exploration workshops and schedule college visits (4 hours/week). LCC will provide college access workshops and tutors for the program (approx. 1 hour/week). The YMCA, BBBS, and LEAF will work together to complete the program evaluation. All partners will be directly or indirectly engaged in gathering outside funding for the program to meet the matching requirement as well as prepare for long-term sustainability when grant funds expire.

Application Section III: Evaluation Plan

13. The evaluation plan is intended to provide lead organizations with a framework to ensure the program is on track to positively impact students; lives and identify needs for additional support when challenges arise.

For our overall program evaluation, we will take a triangulation approach using qualitative and quantitative assessment data from multiple sources, which we will then compile and analyze together to create a more comprehensive evaluative picture than any one source could provide. To gather the quantitative data, we will use a survey tool designed to measure students' progress with respect to the outcome goals and objective listed above. A portion of this assessment will be the Development Assets Profile tool (DAP). The DAP was developed by the Search Institute and is used identify and evaluate the presence of 40 assets that are demonstrated to be essential building blocks to students' long-term development, including both internal and external assets items such as school engagement, achievement motivation, cultural competence, youth program participation, positive peer influence, and belief that their community values youth. We will administer this comprehensive survey once at the beginning and once at the end of the year to determine student growth over the course of our program.

We will also conduct periodic evaluations of the mentoring component of our program, using data collected from mentors, mentees, and parents throughout the program duration. We will use survey tools developed by BBBS to determine mentor-mentee match success, parent satisfaction, and mentor-mentee engagement. These evaluations will be used to continually assess the strength of the mentoring component of the program and will be used to tailor each student's mentoring experience as needed. The parent engagement data will be gathered at parent engagement events and periodically during the program whenever we make parent contact.

To gather the qualitative data that we will use for the program evaluation, the Program Director and Mentoring Coordinator will work together to manage students' individual case files that will include feedback on student growth gathered from mentors in formal and informal update meetings, grades from student report cards, and notes from program staff about each student's development. The Program Director and Mentoring Coordinator will also keep track of mentor training hours, mentor contact hours, and number of unduplicated students served by the program in a spreadsheet which will be updated weekly to monitor ongoing program progress.

The biggest barrier we expect to encounter in completing a successful evaluation is the accuracy of the data reported by each student. Students often fail to take surveys seriously and thus, may not answer questions accurately, which may affect our overall success indicators. We will address this challenge by talking to students about the importance of answering each question honestly and completely, as well as by using the triangulation approach to make a more comprehensive evaluation of student and program impact.

14. Applicants are to complete the program model.
Please see Program Model attached.

Application Section IV: Sustainability

15. Describe how you plan to maintain the program after the grant funding period.

In developing this partnership, we have simultaneously taken into consideration the long-term sustainability of the program and partnership. Our goal is to create a cohesive pipeline program that supports students from middle school through high school graduation in the Painesville City Local School District by beginning programming with students in the 6th grade through this Community Connectors program, and then placing them in the existing YMCA Achievers program when they transition to high school. The high school program will support them as they pursue high school graduation, and also give them the opportunity to give back by mentoring younger students in the middle school program. This initiative will take the commitment of the original partners, as well as benefit from additional partnerships as the program expands. Each of the current program partners is dedicated to seeing this vision become a reality.

We are privileged to work with volunteer mentors, making this program very cost-effective over the long-term with most major expenses attributed to curriculum development, program delivery, supplies, and transportation. Once the curriculum has been developed over the first three years, this cost will be minimal, leaving us primarily with staffing and program supplies costs remaining to be covered. In terms of hard dollars, the YMCA has committed to provide \$25,000 in matching funds over the 3-year grant term, generated by proceeds from its YMCA Gala. BBBS will provide an additional \$25,000 match over the 3-years using net profits from its Festival of Trees. Lastly, LEAF will contribute \$8,000 in matching funds from revenue received from its Reverse Raffle. The remainder of the match will be provided in-kind through paid volunteer service provision.

We are committed to finding local funding commitment from stakeholders in the foundation, corporate, and individual giving worlds to support our program. By creating intentional, targeted linkages between students in our program, local businesses, and educational partners, we will demonstrate that our program has the ability to add value to both our students and our community partners, making our program a prime candidate for local investment. We are all committed to pursuing additional dollars to fill the funding gap when Community Connectors grant funds expire. Some potential funders include the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, the United Way of Lake County, and the Lake Geauga Fund of The Cleveland Foundation.

Application Section V: Program Budget

16. Complete the budget form attachment and justify each of the budget items.
Please see Program Budget and Justification attached.

By clicking this box, I (Insert Name) Dick Bennett, CEO, Lake County YMCA 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.