COMMUNITY CONNECTORS
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Application Template

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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.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every child has the right to an education that develops their "personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential." According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE) (2011), an estimated 1.3 million American high school students drop out every year; a disproportionate number of whom are youth of color. A high dropout rate weakens the community, diminishes the pool of qualified people from diverse backgrounds who will enter the workforce, and cripples economic productivity. Our goal is to continue educating students, creating pathways and opportunities that equip our children to become knowledgeable, responsible, socially skilled, healthy, caring, and contributing citizens. TOP-A, is an intensified, replication of our highly successful Pathways to Central Ohio Engineering Program. Our program modifications include engaging younger youth who have demonstrated an interest, aptitude, and commitment to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math).

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

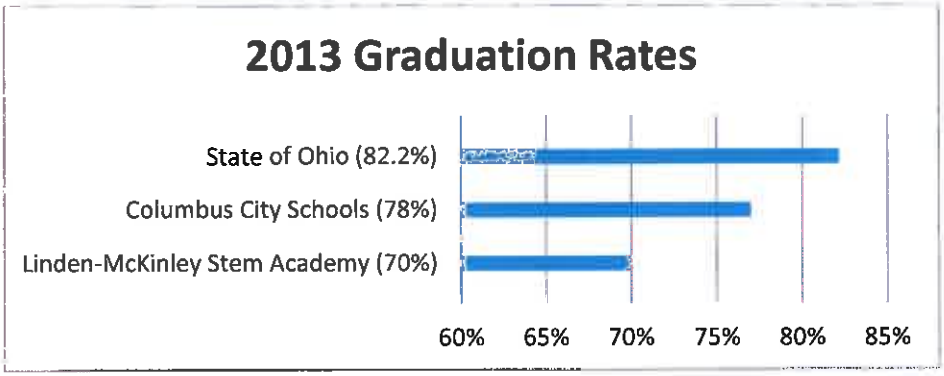
St. Stephen's Community House understands that investing in children early will generate a better-educated workforce, abate incarceration, and redirect needed funds from remediation programs. Being intuitive to the needs of our community, we have identified a target population of 65 seventh and eighth graders, from Linden McKinley STEM Academy to mentor and follow through the course of their high school, college and career entry. These participants will enter the Talent-Opportunity-Academic-Potential (TOP-A, hereinafter) Program, which is designed to promote positive youth development by providing comprehensive services to at-risk youth in a neighborhood-based center throughout the year with the support of peer, adult, and business mentors.

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

C. Expansion of an existing program within the applicant organization-

TOP-A is an intensified, replication of our highly successful Pathways to Central Ohio Engineering Program. Our program modifications include engaging younger youth who have demonstrated an interest, aptitude, and commitment to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math). The fact that so many students never complete high school has a deep and wide-ranging impact on the U.S.'s long-term economic outlook. NCES reports a strong link exists between poverty and high school dropout rates. Students from low-income families dropped out of high school five times more than students from high-income families. The term "dropout factories" was coined to refer to high schools that

graduate 60 percent or less of their students. The dropouts are highly influenced by poverty in the school locations. There is no single prominent risk factor predicting dropout. Rather, there are numerous risk factors that in combination with each other raise the probability of youth leaving high school early (Gleason & Dynarski, 2002). These factors fall into four broad categories related to individuals (e.g., truancy, poor school attitude), families (e.g., low-income, lack of parental involvement), schools (e.g., negative school climate, low expectations), and communities (e.g., high crime, lack of community support for schools), according to the Center for Mental Health in Schools, UCLA (2007). As children progress through the sixth and eighth grades, poor academic performance in math and English, low-reading scores, absenteeism, and disengagement from school become very reliable predictors of whether they will later drop out of high school (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007).



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.

Fortunately, there is a growing and encouraging body of research for schools on how to prevent dropout by addressing problem behaviors through activities that build character and resiliency; promote academic success with an emphasis on goal setting and guidance on how to develop demand-driven career pathways, and enhance overall health and well-being for students by strengthening self-efficacy and hope.

TOP-A, with partnerships from Linden McKinley STEM Academy, and Brown & Caldwell Engineering Firm, will mentor and guide our participants through innovative, substantive and sustainable programs. The substantive program events include weekly lecture series on career exploration and talent matching; college exposure trips, 21st century workforce skills of accountability, attire, attitudes, ethics, values and communication. Additional activities include monthly engineering/STEAM field trips; school and home visits; and activities that will identify the talents of the participants, align opportunities to support their talents, heighten their understanding of their potential, while improving their academics. TOP-A participants will complete 30 hours of community service over the course of three program years in order to graduate and successfully enter into the PCOE program and/or the Transit Arts program.

For the past decade, the United States has focused nationally on closing achievement gaps between the lowest and highest-performing students, and between the poorest and most affluent. (Partnership for 21st Century Skills 2010). Today, more than 80 percent of jobs are in the service sector, which includes high-growth, high-wage and high-skilled occupations in new and emerging industries. Our activities will focus on introducing and developing our participants in these specific areas. Today more than ever, individuals must be able to perform non-routine, creative tasks if they are to succeed. While skills like self-direction, creativity, critical thinking, and innovation may not be new to the 21st century, they are newly relevant in an age where the ability to excel at non-routine work is not only rewarded, but also expected as a basic requirement. Whether a high school graduate plans to enter the workforce directly, or attend a vocational school, community college, or university, it is a requirement to be able to think critically, solve problems, communicate, collaborate, find good information quickly, and use technology effectively. These are today's survival skills— not only for career success, but for personal and civic quality of life as well. We will infuse the 21st century

interdisciplinary themes of, but not limited to critical thinking & problem solving pristinely woven with articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral and written communication skills and thus building aptitudes in: Global Awareness- understanding global issues, other nations and other cultures. We will include Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy- knowing how to make economic choices, understanding the role of the economy in society. Civic Literacy will be present within TOP A, learning how to participate effectively in civic life; exercising the rights and obligations of citizenship; also, Health Literacy-obtaining, interpreting and understanding basic health information and services; understanding preventive physical and mental health measures. The primary location for the TOP-A program will be St. Stephen's Community House; we will provide transportation to our location and to the field trips. Our physical spaces are adaptable and facilitate collaboration, interaction, and information sharing; they are also accessible and open to the larger community that surrounds the Linden McKinley STEM Academy. We expect project-based and hands-on learning acumen, which sparks the interest and passion of youth to engage in STEAM education. Participants will demonstrate improved awareness of emotional intelligence; redirection techniques for anger management, bullying, improved interpersonal communication and transferrable soft skills.

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

The program activities focus on the whole child concept complete with wrap around services that will abate barriers to learning and participation. TOP A activities include lecture series, engineering and art events, school academic support, parent engagement opportunities and support services. We will use responsible mentoring, occurring in the forms of

Traditional mentoring: One adult to one young person

Group mentoring: One adult to up to four young people

Team mentoring: Several adults working with small groups of young people in which the adult to-youth ratio is not greater than 1:4

Peer mentoring with caring youth mentoring other youth

E-mentoring: Mentoring via e-mail and the Internet

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.

On the individual level, it is also important to consider children's beliefs in their own competence and motivation to succeed academically. Research seems to indicate that children's beliefs in their abilities tend to become increasingly negative, as they grow older, at least through early adolescence. When children believe they are less competent in certain academic activities, they tend to value them less which has negative implications for the effort they will put into schoolwork (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). The transition into ninth grade can also be particularly difficult for many youth. At this stage, many students move from middle schools into high schools where they are likely to feel lost and where academic rigor increases substantially (Balfanz, 2007); hence our attention to seventh and eighth graders. Research also shows that youth are more likely to succeed with the support of a caring adult. A five-year study sponsored by Big Brothers Big Sisters Canada (St. Stephen's Community House has a sister organization in Canada) found that children with mentors were more confident and had few behavioral problems. Girls in the study were four times less likely to become bullies than those without a mentor and boys were two times less likely. (www.childrenunitingnations.org). Additional studies from the www.childrenunitingnations.org state:

- When young people are mentored well, 98% stay in school
- When young people are mentored well, 98% do not become teen parents

- When young people are mentored well, 85% do not use drugs
- When young people are mentored well, 98% avoid gang participation
- 59% of mentored teens get better grades
- 81% of teens feel that talking with adults helps reduce teen pregnancy
- 53% of students credit mentors with improving their ability to avoid drugs
- 27% of mentored youth are less likely to begin using alcohol, and 52% are less likely to skip school

Overall, youth participation in mentoring relationships experience positive academic returns

- Better school attendance
- Increased chance of going on to higher education
- Better attitudes towards school
- Mentoring enhances many aspects of young people's social and emotional development
- Participating in mentoring promoted positive social attitudes and relationships

7. St. Stephen's Community House has a strong relationship with area colleges and universities as well as a 41 member, hands-on governing board of directors, committed to the program's success. TOP-A also utilizes Federal Work Study students from Ohio Dominican and the Ohio State University as mentors. Many of our relationships with different organizations, businesses and schools provide program youth with opportunities and new experiences. Many organizations (philanthropic groups, churches and college fraternities and sororities) sponsor field trips for the youth as well as volunteer time working with the youth. Youth participants also have the opportunity to play in the Kids Inner-City Soccer League, which is a facilitated and coached by St. Stephen's staff and volunteers.
8. 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.

As reflected in the SSCH mission, our organization has a long and significant history of services to youth and families and is fully committed to providing pathways to develop positive goal-oriented, youth primed for success, while also offering opportunities as a means of assisting youths' successful transition into post-secondary education, the 21st century workforce and self-sufficiency. St. Stephen's Community House Department of Youth and Child Services currently offers after-school and summer programming, developmental groups and tutoring to help "at-risk" youth to better deal with the challenges of growing up. Through a holistic approach, educational, social and emotional needs are assessed and addressed. Annually, 1,600 youth are served through St. Stephen's youth programming. St. Stephen's has secured and successfully managed youth focused Federal, State, County and City funding and has complied with all mandated reporting and audit requirements. St. Stephen's has strong history of working in partnership with Community Based Organizations, not-for-profits, Columbus City Schools, as well as, private industry and serves as lead agent on various local projects and initiatives.

St. Stephen's has been awarded grants from Franklin County Department of Jobs and Family Services, Franklin County Department of Children Services, and grants from the City of Columbus. Managing these awards, maintaining fiscal compliances, segregation of duties and reporting mandates, postured our agency for national accreditations. Our 95-year history of providing programs with community involvement has created a beacon of hope within this community. Parents of our participants embrace that their children are already involved in programs at St. Stephen's throughout the school year; many parents feel as though it is best for them to continue in the summer rather than attending other

outside programs. Parents and staff have already built a positive relationship with one another, and they are aware of the benefits that St. Stephen's has to offer. In addition, many of the summer employees also work with Columbus City Schools throughout the school year, which happens to reflect our target population. This allows them to inform classroom parents of the great opportunities TOP A has to offer. Overall, St. Stephen's Community House has a well-known presence in the community, and a history that people trust. As part of TOP A, a parent orientation will be held the week before the start date of the program to introduce project staff, project components, youth and parent expectations as well as rules & regulations for the project. Parents will also receive a parent handbook specifically designed for TOP A.

9. What will make this collaboration successful? What will the indicator(s) of success be for this collaboration? Successful collaboration requires that all team members want to work together towards a common goal. The partners all feel valued and embrace the unique perspectives all involved. Successful collaboration represents a united and strong sense of purpose, shared trust, and shared responsibility. According to Dr. Jean Rhodes, professor of psychology at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, the most significant predictor of positive mentoring results is whether mentors and mentees share a close, trusting relationship. To achieve success we will establish a case management protocol so the program has regular contact with both mentors and mentees about their relationship. For mentoring relationships to flourish and endure, our staff will be in touch with mentors and mentees on an ongoing basis. That way, they can assess how well each relationship is progressing and offer guidance and advice along the way. Success is maintaining a steady presence in the mentee's life. That means showing up for scheduled meetings or, when that is not possible, telling the mentee in advance, in order to avoid any disappointment. A phone call, e-mail or fax can help when a face to-face meeting is not possible. Focus must remain on the mentee's needs—not the mentor's own wants and needs. Mentors should look to improve the mentee's prospects while respecting the young person's life circumstances and perspective. This includes not trying to transform the mentee or impose the mentor's own values on the mentee. We will ensure that the mentors pay attention to the mentee's need for fun. We will support mentors as they get to know the mentee's family without getting over involved. Mentors need to understand that they are not substitutes for parents. We will maintain a transparent policy that allows mentors to seek out and use the help and support of mentoring program staff. Successes are, managing Partnership/Collaboration parameters and making sure that the conditions and expectations for their involvement with the school or St. Stephen's are clearly defined. This includes issues such as where and when mentoring will occur; who is responsible for transportation if applicable; who will keep program records; who will screen, select and supervise the mentors; and who will enforce program policies.

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

All staff and volunteers are trained in cultural diversity, recognizing and reporting abuse or neglect, facilitating in-school and after-school programs and nutrition/food handling. St. Stephen's Program staff members have been employed with the agency between 4-15 years. Kristin Dillard, The Youth Services Director has been with St. Stephen's Community for 10 years, and will be supervising the program. Kristin has a unique gift that allows her to be both mentor and

authoritarian within the program. Her rapport with the participants is endearing and effective. Marilyn Mehaffie, The Vice President of Program and Services has extensive knowledge of successful programming and has been working with youth and family programs for 26 years, as well as working on Ohio After-School Network's Core Competencies and Knowledge Initiative for After-School Programs. She too will be supporting the management and day-to-day oversight of the program. Her passion is evident in her tenure and her model professionalism with the youth. All programs and services are under the auspice of the Honorable Michelle M. Mills, MSSA, LSW, who has served as President /CEO of St. Stephen's Community House for 8 years. President Mills has a long history of managing and developing custom programs for youth and disenfranchised populations. The President/CEO and the VP of Program Services will hire and screen staff and volunteers. They will also will enforce program policies and ensure the processes associated with responding to and resolving conflicts. Support from Linden McKinley STEM Academy will be provided by its Principal, Chris Rhorer; his passion for education and children allow for seamless support when providing student mentors, space, and participation in lecture series and exposure trips. Kristen Atha, Vice President of Brown & Caldwell, is a genuine "youth whisperer" as she is a mother of four teenagers and supreme fundraiser, her contribution of time talent and treasurer will complement and advance the program.

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.

Project Timeline

April 2015 Communicate with LMSA personnel to obtain referrals and start recruitment efforts to enroll youth

May 2015– Select and/or create curriculum and lay out the elements of the program, obtain participant school data; complete the Youth Questionnaire Measurement tool, establish benchmarks and evaluative tools

June 2015- Evaluate and communicate with all partners making sure programs processes realistic, prudent, diplomatic and sustainable. All employees and mentors will be required to attend at least ten hours of training that focuses on classroom management, child abuse recognition and reporting, developmental milestones, and training on specific STEAM curriculum modules. This training will take place from June 15 – June 19, 2015 at St. Stephen's Community House, from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm daily. Staff and Mentors will undergo BCI FBI checks and submit professional references

July 2015-Gather all data for measuring outcomes as well as compile project report. Host participant, parent, and volunteer orientation

August 2015- Identify partnership roles and responsibilities. Designate staff assignments, partner leadership roles, and volunteer opportunities, document program schedule and determine the on-site location. Distribute and retrieve signed commitment letters. Match Mentees with volunteer mentors. Communicate commencement date to partners, mentees, mentors and volunteers.

Sept-2015-Program implementation

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.

The TOP-A Program enhances program operations with a variety of community volunteers as mentors. All adult mentors complete:

- 10 hours of training prior to being matched with a child
- Commit to a three-year mentoring term
- Provide negative TB test result
- Must be able to clear a criminal background check and child abuse index clearance, and submit three professional references
- Submit DMV driving history for approval
- Have a valid OH driver's license
- Reliable transportation with valid auto insurance and registration

Mentors will use classroom strategies and appropriate use of technology that support group work, decision making, and goal setting. Complete mentoring needs assessment. Establish participant goals.

Participants that have expressed an interest and/or aptitude in STEAM will be inducted into the TOP A program. Intake for mentees will assess the TOP-A levels of each participant; using the United Way approved Youth Questionnaire. The Youth Questionnaire is administered at the beginning and end of each program to monitor each participant's enrichment skill attainment. All assessments are entered into a database and kept on file for each child enrolled in the program. Additionally we will establish policies and procedures to answer: Where and when mentoring takes place. How mentors are oriented, trained and screened. How mentors and mentees are matched, Who supervises mentoring pairs and how often that individual is in contact with each mentor/mentee pair, Whom a mentor or a mentee should contact when problems arise, How to handle complaints and How to resolve problems in relationships or bring relationships to closure. Community based mentors spend 8-10 hours per month with their mentees generally on weekends and weekday evenings for a minimum of two years; reinforcing that the strong and healthy bond that mentor and mentee will develop helps to increase the young person's self-esteem, social skills, and emotional development.

Research shows that if families, schools and communities work together that the work has a positive impact on children's academic success. In a survey on school experiences, 38% of parents had never been asked how their school might help them become more involved at school. Through Parent Engagement Activities, school officials will collaborate with St. Stephen's to engage families in new ways. We have achieved piloted success with parent engagement and school officials via communication with school principals who have identified parents with a positive attitude and are interested in participating in parent involvement activities. On a larger scale, we plan to have several parent nights and events at St. Stephen's as well the creation of parent support groups to be held bi-weekly covering topics outlines in the STEAM curriculum as well as topics of interest to the participants. All programs are governed by

the Board of Trustee Program and Finance committees, which are charged with monitoring and reporting fiduciary accountability.

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.

Because of our history and existing relationships with the partners participating, TOP A will follow an existing program plan of Linden McKinley STEM Academy supporting our enrollment efforts and mentor acquisition and Brown & Caldwell providing the STEAM lecture series, exposure trips and supporting fundraising efforts.

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.

At, Buffalo State College, Cyndi Burnett tells her class to walk around campus for an hour and write down 100 things that bother them, and then come up with ways to overcome the annoyances. "They are using divergent thinking, so the ideas could be outlandish," she says. "The main goal is to have them begin to think about their problems as opportunities." This is representative of how we approach learning. We present the participants with concepts, ideas, or problems and guide them through the resolution. How do we bounce back from negative situations? If you observe a friend displaying erratic behavior, what do you do? Tell me three things you love about yourself? Describe what you see in your future and how are you going to bring those things to fruition.

We have learned that as programs expand or replicate, it is often necessary to implement multiple kinds of evaluations simultaneously in order to maintain integrity at both the original and replicated or scaled-up levels. There are multiple forms of evaluation that will be used in TOP A, a STEAM Test and Youth Questionnaire and a personality/talent gifting tool. Additionally, through our partnership with Learn 4 Life, we can accurately track and monitor the exact reading levels of all of our program participants, as recorded by their Columbus City Schools teachers during the school year. The STEAM evaluation tool measures academic skill attainment, aligned with project curriculum and the Youth Questionnaire assesses each student's emotional/ social skill attainment. The evaluation tool to measure outcomes for academic proficiency in TOP A will be a STEAM pre and post-test for each child in the program. The pre-test will allow us to assess each student's knowledge of basic STEAM concepts. The post-test will provide a measurement as to the extent of knowledge gained and concepts mastered annually over the course of the program. We administer the Youth Questionnaire, which was created by United Way of Central Ohio, and will be used to document and measure the emotional/social skill attainment component of the TOP A. This questionnaire is completed by staff members who will assess the youth's behavior and social skills at the beginning of the program (pre-test) and at the end of the program (post-test). Program staff will complete the pre-test, based on observation of youth's behavior during the first week of the program. Post-tests will be completed by the program staff with the collaboration of the teachers and project coordinators, and any staff who has had interaction with the youth. Those youth who have demonstrated progress in behavior and social skills will be counted as obtaining a skill attainment/success. Additionally, attendance logs are recorded on a daily basis, then analyzed every week to document youth attendance and mentor engagement activities. Attendance is inputted into computer database on a weekly basis and analyzed at the end of project to determine 80%

attendance. If attendance rates are lower than anticipated by week 2, program staff will re-open enrollment to youth on the waiting list to ensure program attendance rates are consistent and the maximum number of children receive services. Ultimate outcomes will reflect

•Enrolled youth will participate in 80% of the program components as demonstrated by daily attendance records/mentor engagement logs

•80% of the enrolled will maintain above 90% attendance rate (state requirement) to demonstrate at-risk students staying actively engaged in school as demonstrated by school attendance records;

•85% of enrolled youth will improve social skills as demonstrated on Youth Questionnaire Measurement tool; and

•85% of enrolled youth will progress towards to the next grade level as demonstrated by interim reports, report cards and credit accumulation.

All program documentation is collected, monitored, and analyzed on a regular basis by the Youth and Child Services Director. This includes, but is not limited to enrollment forms, verification, receipts, attendance sheets, grades, test scores, and behavior report forms. Weekly data such as attendance records, test scores, and grades will be collected and input into our agency database, Community Tech Knowledge (CTK). Annual data such as pre and posttest scores will be analyzed and submitted at the conclusion of the program. Anticipated barriers include lack of parent engagement, mentee participation in extracurricular activities such as sports and drama productions, or the initial perception of being a highly structured program.

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.

Partnerships are extraordinarily important in the work of transforming 21st century education and mentoring programs. For the work to be sustainable, teamwork inside the program and within the partners is, obviously, critical. But it is perhaps the evolving partnerships that are formed between the program and the larger community that can make the biggest impact and invoke sustainability. We have learned that long-term sustainability occurs when programs are integrated systemically with permanent links among schools, community agencies, and after-school initiatives. We plan to leverage additional funding from our annual special events, mail campaign, individual donors, and private family foundations who have expressed interest in transitional education programs. A lot of our sustainability will come from being proactive and understanding institutions/ private family foundations; in other words, constantly seeking institutional collaborators, engaging their interests, finding ways for them to help shape the program, and letting them take credit for good practices.

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)* _____ *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.*