

# FOIA MARKER

**This is not a textual record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.**

---

**Collection/Record Group:** Clinton Presidential Records

**Subgroup/Office of Origin:** Americorps

**Series/Staff Member:** General Files

**Subseries:**

---

**OA/ID Number:** 24223

**FolderID:**

---

**Folder Title:**

Decision Memos [1]

**Stack:**  
**S**

**Row:**  
**66**

**Section:**  
**1**

**Shelf:**  
**4**

**Position:**  
**1**



January 31, 1994

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Joel Berg  
Deputy Director  
Office of Public Affairs

**FROM:** Lawrence Wachs *L. Wachs*  
Associate Director

**SUBJECT:** National Service Proposal

This is in response to your memorandum of January 28. Attached for your information is a copy of the advice that we provided to the Deputy Secretary on this subject.

To enable the Secretary to make an informed decision on your National Service proposals, we suggest that you:

- Describe your plans in sufficient detail (including funding sources) to allow OGC to determine if the funding sources can be used to fulfill the requirements of your plan. Since the President's FY 1995 Budget has been completed and it does not include "new" money for USDA National Service initiatives, you will also need to work with the involved agencies to describe the impact on existing programs by funding this plan.
- After receiving OGC comments, ask the relevant Under/Assistant Secretaries to clear the proposals or provide comments (a simultaneous clearance would be the most expeditious way to accomplish this).
- Send the entire package to the Deputy Secretary/Secretary for a decision.

With this information in hand, the Secretary should more easily be able to determine the specific levels at which the Department should participate in the National Service Initiatives.

Attachment

JAN 27 1994

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY**

**FROM:** Stephen B. Dewhurst                      ~~STEPHEN B. DEWHURST~~  
Director

**SUBJECT:** Funding for USDA National Service Project

Charlie Rawls recently sent us a copy of Joel Berg's decision memorandum to the Secretary requesting decisions on a number of proposals to implement national service projects. Some of these proposals would affect the FY 1995 budget. The most significant proposal requests funding of \$19 to \$45 million for long-term USDA national service activities that would focus on rural development, hunger, and environmental issues. The decision memorandum indicates that the FY 1995 budget should include either line items or special earmarks for these activities. As you know, we are currently in the advanced stages of the budget process. Budget numbers and allocations were settled with OMB several weeks ago, and we are now reviewing galley proofs of the final budget documents. Needless to say it is too late to include new material in the President's budget.

It would be possible, however, to identify existing funding sources or programs that might be used to further national service objectives. A statement for inclusion in testimony or in other documents could be prepared which would indicate how we plan to carry out these initiatives through existing programs. The Office of the General Counsel would need to review the potential sources of funding identified in the decision memo to ensure that funds could, in fact, be used for the purposes that are proposed, and it would certainly be appropriate to request comments on the specifics of the plan and funding proposals from the relevant agencies and sub-cabinet before asking the Secretary for a decision. We would be glad to work with OGC and Joel Berg to facilitate this review, if you so desire.

cc: Kim Schnoor  
Charlie Rawls



UNITED  
STATES  
DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

F-1  
- Joel

**DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY/DEPUTY SECRETARY**

THROUGH: J. David Carlin *JDC*  
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations

FROM: Joel Berg *JB*  
Director of National Service

Subject: **Status of the USDA AmeriCorps Program**

**ISSUE:**

Despite the fact the USDA AmeriCorps program has been supported by the President, nearly all the Democrats in the Senate, and the offices of over one dozen Republicans in the Senate, the program continues to be on hold due to opposition from Senator Bond.

The issue is whether the Secretary will cancel the USDA AmeriCorps program planned for the 1996-1997 program year or whether the Secretary or the Deputy Secretary will take a series of final actions aimed at securing a compromise agreement with Senator Bond that would allow the program to continue for a one year period of transition.

**BACKGROUND:**

**The USDA AmeriCorps Program is NOT Currently Operating**

A third year of the USDA AmeriCorps program was scheduled to have started on October 1, but all projects have been placed on hold pending continued negotiation with key Congressional leaders with oversight responsibilities over AmeriCorps programs.

The Forest Service AmeriCorps program has been shut-down even longer --- for a year and a half --- because the Interior Appropriations Subcommittees rejected the Secretary's reprogramming request last year. If we do have success in solving the overall USDA AmeriCorps issue, we will still need to get reprogramming approved from the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee in order to continue the Forest Service portion of the program.

### **Why a Decision Must Be Made Immediately**

Given that AmeriCorps members must finish their full term of service --- which normally lasts ten calendar months --- before the end of the fiscal year on September 30, 1997, it would be impossible to run a full program if a compromise is not reached by December 13.

Both the potential program participants and the communities should be notified as to whether they will have an AmeriCorps program this year or whether they immediately need to make alternative plans.

### **Other Options Suggested by Congressional Staff Are Not Legal or Possible**

Several congressional staff have suggested that all USDA projects could continue immediately by applying directly to the Corporation for National Service (CNS) or state commissions on national service. As of next year (the 1997-1998 program year), some AmeriCorps projects previously sponsored by USDA may be funded directly by CNS and/or by governor-appointed state commissions of national and community service. However, CNS and state commission funds have already been committed and application deadlines have already passed for this year (the 1996-1997 program year). Thus, this option can help start new projects *next* program year, but is not relevant to projects planned for *this* program year.

Other congressional staff have suggested that USDA fund the entire program --- including educational awards --- itself, without signing a cooperative agreement with the CNS. However, the USDA Office of General Counsel has ruled that USDA can not legally fund an AmeriCorps program without a cooperative agreement with CNS and that USDA can not fund educational awards. (See attached memorandums from Kenneth E. Cohen, dated March 11, 1994 and March 26, 1996).

**Therefore, there is no legal, financial, or logistical way to continue the projects now on hold without some support from both USDA and CNS for at least one year of transition.**

Thus, if compromise is not reached by December 13, all the USDA AmeriCorps projects planned for this year will be canceled.

### **Senator Bond's Most Recent Position**

Senator Leahy recently wrote letter to Senator Bond (attached), requesting some clarification on how USDA AmeriCorps projects might be able to proceed. In a letter of response to Leahy (attached), Bond still indicated that he had reservations about USDA spending funds on AmeriCorps:

"After reviewing your proposal to allow the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to use its own appropriated funds to support AmeriCorps projects, I fear that this approach is contrary to the objectives we have pursued to reform AmeriCorps to generate support for funding of AmeriCorps."

However, Bond's letter to Leahy did seem to keep the door open for some future compromise:

"I understand your objective and agree the USDA AmeriCorps programs are beneficial and serve the community well. Be assured that when Congress convenes in January, I will work with Members to ascertain new ways of funding these programs."

Senator Grassley --- with whom Harris Wofford reached an agreement to reform certain aspects of AmeriCorps in exchange for Grassley's support of the overall AmeriCorps program --- has also opposed USDA spending the Department's own funds on AmeriCorps. (See attached letter).

### **Republican Support for the USDA AmeriCorps Program**

While Speaker Gingrich continues to oppose the overall AmeriCorps program, the three most relevant committee chairs in the House have not opposed USDA spending its own funds on AmeriCorps.

Congressman Jerry Lewis, Chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies, and Congressman Joe Skeen, Chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, have not objected to USDA spending the Department's own funds on AmeriCorps.

Congressman Bill Goodling, Chair of the House Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee --- the authorizing committee over AmeriCorps --- also holds a favorable position, writing: "It is my understanding that this agreement (Wofford's agreement with Grassley) in no way limits the Department of Agriculture from unilaterally funding AmeriCorps programs." (See attached letter).

A number of Republicans in Congress --- many of whom have previously opposed the overall AmeriCorps program --- have contacted USDA by phone or by mail asking us to find ways to continue AmeriCorps projects in their state or district; these include: Senators Phil Gramm, Kay Bailey Hutchinson, John McCain, Pete Dominici, Dirk Kempthorne, Larry Craig, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Spencer Abraham, Jim Jeffords, Olympia Snowe, Bill Cohen, Mark Hatfield, Arlen Specter, Mitch McConnell and Congressmen Doug Bereuter and Jack Quinn.

**Unfortunately, while a number of these supportive Republican offices have written and/or called the offices of Bond and Grassley, none of them have, to date, agreed to play a forceful leadership role in trying to save the program.**

On the Democratic side, Senator Leahy has been the strongest supporter of the program, having both spoken with and written to Bond about this matter a number of times. Reportedly, Bond has not been particularly receptive to these discussions. Other Democratic offices that have been active in supporting USDA AmeriCorps are: Senators Paul Wellstone, Paul Sarbanes, Jeff Bingaman, Chuck Robb, Tom Daschle, Patty Murray, Bob Graham, Ron Wyden, Diane Feinstein, and Carl Levin and Representatives John Murtha, Frank Mascara, Frank Pallone, Earl Blumenauer, Elizabeth Furse, John Baldacci, John Dingell, Mike McNulty, Jack Reed, James Clyburn, Pete Peterson, Tony Hall, Pat Danner, Frank Tejeda, Norm Dicks, Richard Durbin, Steny Hoyer, Lynn Woolsey, and Colin Peterson.

All told, we have spoken with over 170 Congressional offices about this matter. Various letters of support and inquiry are attached.

## **OPTIONS:**

### **Option 1: Make A Concerted, Final Attempt to Save Program**

The Secretary would request Congress to allow USDA to continue funding and supporting AmeriCorps projects for one year only as the projects were allowed to transition into a new arrangement, starting next year, in which they would receive funding directly from the CNS and/or from state commissions of national service.

**Advantages of this option:** It seems to be the only remaining way to find any possible compromise to save USDA AmeriCorps projects. Even if these efforts fail, we can tell Congressional and other supporters that we made every effort possible to save the program.

**Disadvantages of this option:** There is a slight chance that such actions might anger Senator Bond.

If the Secretary does choose this option, the Secretary or Deputy Secretary could take some or all of the following actions:

**1) Call Congressman Jerry Lewis, who, as Chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies, is Bond's counterpart in the House.** USDA has had successful AmeriCorps projects in Lewis' district sponsored by both the Forest Service and NRCS, and Lewis has no personal objections to USDA continuing to fund AmeriCorps. The Secretary would request Congressman Lewis to contact Senator Bond.

**2) Call Congressman Joe Skeen, Chair of the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, and/or Senator Thad Cochran, Chair of the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee.** USDA has sponsored successful AmeriCorps projects throughout Cochran's home state of Mississippi. Congressman Skeen's staff has urged USDA to

continue to support a successful project in Mr. Skeen's district. Both Bond and Grassley have couched their opposition to the USDA AmeriCorps program on the statement --- either implicit or explicit --- that the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees oppose USDA spending on AmeriCorps. If the Secretary could convince Skeen and/or Cochran to communicate with Bond and Grassley that such a belief is not accurate, this might convince Bond and Grassley to allow us to continue funding projects.

**3) Call Senator Barbara Mikulski, who is ranking Democrat on the Senate appropriations Committee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies.** Senator Leahy's staff believes that Mikulski is the only Democrat in a position to influence Bond. In the past, Mikulski has not been extremely supportive of Federal agency AmeriCorps programs, but her staff has recently learned of the success of USDA projects in rural Maryland. In addition, key Democratic offices have already contacted her office asking for her help in this matter. The Secretary would ask her to contact Bond.

**4) Re-contact Senator Bond.** I would suggest first sending Bond a copy of the "Citizens Guide to Food Recovery," with a cover note that thanks him for his help on the Emerson Bill, points out that the guide is dedicated to Emerson, and asks for his help on a compromise on AmeriCorps. I would suggest that the Secretary call him a few days after the guide and the note are delivered.

**5) Work with the office of Harris Wofford to determine whether the President, the Vice-President, the Head of OMB, or the White House Chief of Staff would be willing to call Bond about this matter.** Given the fact that the President highlighted the USDA AmeriCorps program in his recent radio address, this may be an available option.

#### **Option 2: Cancel the program planned for this year.**

**Advantages of this option:** It would end the uncertainty about the program endured for months by past and prospective AmeriCorps Members, project managers, and staff.

**Disadvantages of this option:** It would end an extremely successful program and foreclose most future projects related to food recovery, rural development, and environmental protection. Some in Congress might react to such an action by blaming USDA for ending successful projects.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

I recommend option one, in which the Secretary or the Deputy Secretary would immediately take concrete steps to attempt to save the program.

**DECISION BY THE SECRETARY (DEPUTY SECRETARY):**

Approve \_\_\_\_\_  
Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_  
Discuss with me \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_

MAR 11 1994

MEMORANDUM FOR JOEL BERG  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FROM: Kenneth E. Cohen *Kenneth E. Cohen*  
Assistant General Counsel  
Research and Operations Division

SUBJECT: National Service Projects

This memorandum summarizes the conclusions of our March 7, 1994, meeting with Terry Russell, Acting General Counsel, Corporation for National and Community Service. The Corporation is charged by Congress with administering the National and Community Trust Act of 1993, Pub. L. No. 103-82, 107 Stat. 785. (References are to Subtitle C, Part I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended.) Accordingly, courts will be deferential to the Corporation interpretation of the Act.

Based on our discussion with Mr. Russell, we reached the following conclusions:

1. USDA may receive assistance from the Corporation. (section 121(b)(1), 107 Stat. 788).
2. The Act confers upon USDA the authority, if it receives Corporation assistance under section 121, to conduct national service programs or to enter into contracts or cooperative agreements. While USDA is not fettered in the type of entity that may receive assistance from USDA, existing national service programs should under section 121(b)(4) be considered.
3. If USDA receives assistance under section 121, then USDA is authorized and required to pay stipends, health care, and child care. (Sections 140(a), (d), and (e), 107 Stat. 811-813).
- \* ( 4. USDA has no general authority to provide national service educational awards directly and it may not provide funds to the Trust for such purpose.

We also concluded that it is possible for USDA to conduct to some degree national service programs without section 121 assistance, but the extent of such programs would have to be

reviewed case-by-case. Receiving assistance under section 12 confers considerable authority on USDA under the Act that we otherwise would not enjoy generally. No minimum amount of assistance from the Corporation is required to trigger section 121.

Finally, I cautioned that any financing mechanisms used within USDA should assure that agency appropriations are not augmented unlawfully.



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture


Office of the  
General  
Counsel

Washi.  
D.C.  
20250-1400

ATTACHMENT A

MAR 27 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR JOEL S. BERG  
DIRECTOR  
NATIONAL SERVICE

FROM Kenneth E. Cohen   
Assistant General Counsel  
Research and Operations Division

SUBJECT Authority of USDA to Administer an AmeriCorps  
Program Without a Grant From the Corporation for  
National and Community Service

This memorandum is in response to your request for a legal opinion as to whether the Department of Agriculture ("USDA") has the authority to administer a national service program in the absence of a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service (the "Corporation") to support the program. For the reasons expressed below, it is my view (i) that USDA does have the authority to administer a national service program without a grant from the Corporation, but (ii) USDA does not have the authority to bestow upon program participants those benefits commonly associated with national service programs, i.e., living allowance, health insurance, child-care, and an educational award, unless USDA receives some assistance, even non-monetary assistance, from the Corporation.

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-610, 104 Stat. 3129, codified at 42 U.S.C. § 12501 et seq. (the "Act"), as amended by the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, Pub. L. No. 103-82, 107 Stat. 785, established the Corporation in order to administer various national service programs authorized under the Act and under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973. 42 U.S.C. § 12651 et seq. Chief among these programs are the AmeriCorps programs.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> I.e., AmeriCorps National, AmeriCorps State, and AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps. The term "AmeriCorps" does not actually appear in the Act, but the regulations for the Corporation (45 CFR Chapter XXV) define "AmeriCorps" as "the combination of all AmeriCorps programs and participants." 45 CFR § 2510.20. The regulations then define an "AmeriCorps program" as "any program that receives approved AmeriCorps positions" or "any program that receives Corporation funds under section 121 of the Act," *id.*; an "AmeriCorps participant" is defined as "any individual who is serving in -- (1) An AmeriCorps program; (2) An approved AmeriCorps position;

Section 121 of the Act authorized the Corporation to enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with Federal agencies in order to provide assistance to the agencies in support of national service programs. 42 U.S.C. § 12571(b)(1). This same section also authorized Federal agencies receiving assistance from the Corporation to enter into subcontracts and subagreements with local entities carrying out national service programs to support those programs. (b)(4). The Act further provided that national service programs carried out with assistance provided under Section 121 must provide program participants with specific benefits, to wit: a living allowance, § 12594(a)(1); fully paid health insurance, (d)(1); child-care, (e)(1); and an educational award, § 12595(a).

In Fiscal Year 1995, USDA administered an extensive national service program using assistance, in the form of a grant, that it had received from the Corporation under Interagency Cooperative Agreement No. 94ADFD047, dated October 19, 1994. This agreement had been entered into by the Corporation and USDA pursuant to Section 121 of the Act. In administering this program, USDA provided program participants with the benefits required by 42 U.S.C. §§ 12594 and 12595.

Now, however, USDA faces the possibility that it will not receive grants from the Corporation to support USDA national service programs in Fiscal Year 1996 and beyond. Will the absence of such cash assistance provided under Section 121 preclude USDA from using its appropriations to administer a national service program and provide program participants with the benefits required by 42 U.S.C. §§ 12594 and 12595?

The first step in this inquiry is to ascertain what activities in the area of national service programs the Act presently authorizes Federal agencies to perform, since, in the absence of such authority, Federal agencies generally do not have the authority to provide the above-described benefits that are required for national service program participants. The Act, however, does not contain any express or specific grant of authority to Federal agencies to administer national service programs. Section 121 of the Act, which is the part of the Act that most approximates such a specific authority, merely states that "the Corporation may enter into a contract or cooperative agreement with another Federal agency to support a national service program carried out by the agency." The Act, therefore, only states how the Corporation may assist Federal agencies; in

---

or (3) Both," *id.* An "approved AmeriCorps position" is defined, in turn, as "an AmeriCorps position for which the Corporation has approved the provision of an AmeriCorps educational award as one of the benefits to be provided for successful service in the position." *Id.*

doing so, it appears simply to assume that Federal agencies may administer national service programs.

Nevertheless, the Act clearly states that only those programs that receive assistance under Section 121 are required to provide the full panoply of national service program benefits.<sup>2</sup> 42 U.S.C. §§ 12594(a)(1) (living allowance); (d)(1) (health insurance); (e)(1) (child care); § 12595(a) (educational award). Thus, if grants are unavailable as assistance under Section 121, the question becomes whether other forms of assistance, i.e., non-monetary assistance, may be available from the Corporation that will trigger the USDA authority to spend its appropriations on the national service program benefits.

On this issue, the Act is clear. It mentions several forms of non-monetary assistance that could be the subject matter of an agreement between the Corporation and Federal agencies. For example, the Corporation may provide program assistance, in the form of planning assistance, operational assistance, or replication assistance, to entities -- including Federal agencies (see 42 U.S.C. § 12582(a)) -- that submit applications for the planning, establishment, operation, expansion, or relocation of a national service program. 42 U.S.C. § 12574. The Corporation also is authorized to provide technical assistance to those entities, such as Federal agencies, that are described in Section 121 of the Act. § 12575(b). Finally, the Corporation may provide training assistance to support programs already receiving assistance under Section 121. § 12575(a). Thus, there is a cornucopia of non-monetary assistance that the Corporation may provide to Federal agencies through a cooperative agreement that would qualify as assistance under Section 121.<sup>3</sup> Once a

---

<sup>2</sup> Thus, the Act appears to countenance Federal agencies establishing a species of national service programs that would not bestow upon participants the benefits described in §§ 140 and 141 of the Act. For USDA, this is fully consistent with the Secretary's authority to accept voluntary service. 7 U.S.C. § 2272. However, since I understand your inquiry to be whether USDA may administer a national service program complete with the benefits described in the Act, I will venture no further down this legal cul-de-sac.

<sup>3</sup> I do not believe, however, that the availability of educational awards for participants in a national service program may qualify, in and of itself, as Section 121 assistance since such awards, by the very terms of the Act, shall be available to participants in national service programs that are already receiving "assistance provided . . . under [Section 121.]" 42 U.S.C. § 12595(a) (emphasis added). Thus, to characterize the educational awards as Section 121 assistance would amount to

Federal agency receives such assistance from the Corporation, it may then provide to the participants in its national service program the benefits required by 42 U.S.C. §§ 12594 and 12595.

Moreover, Section 121 of the Act does not state that the assistance which Federal agencies receive from the Corporation must be a grant. Section 121(b) refers to cooperative agreements, which envisage substantial involvement on the part of the cooperators, but does not require the transfer of money. Further, Section 121 (b) expressly says that the "support provided by the Corporation pursuant to the contract or cooperative agreement *may include* the transfer to the Federal agency of funds available to the Corporation." 42 U.S.C. § 12571(b)(1). The necessary corollary of this provision is that such contracts or cooperative agreements may include other forms of assistance besides funds.

This view of USDA's authority to administer national service programs in the absence of a grant from the Corporation is shared by the Corporation itself. Terry Russell, General Counsel for the Corporation, has opined that:

[T]he National and Community Service Act reflects Congressional intent to provide authority to Federal agencies to operate national service programs -- regardless of whether operational funds are transferred from the Corporation to the federal agencies.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Russell's views provide me with additional comfort for my opinion because, as I indicated to you in an earlier memorandum,<sup>5</sup> the Corporation has been charged by Congress with administering the Act, and courts of review are deferential to agencies in the agencies' reasonable interpretation of statutes within their purview. Therefore, courts would be deferential to the Corporation in its view that the Act authorizes Federal agencies to operate national service programs without operational funds from the Corporation.

Therefore, I conclude that USDA has the authority to administer a national service program, such as an AmeriCorps program, without a grant from the Corporation, provided that USDA

---

circular reasoning.

<sup>4</sup> Memorandum from Terry Russell to Kenneth E. Cohen, Assistant General Counsel, Research and Operations Division, Office of the General Counsel, USDA, at 2 (March 12, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> Memorandum from Kenneth E. Cohen to Joel Berg, Deputy Director, Office of Public Affairs, at 1 (March 11, 1994).

enters into an agreement with the Corporation to receive non-monetary assistance, such as that referred to in 42 U.S.C. §§ 12574 and 12575.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Michael F. Kiely of this office at (202) 720-4600.

CHRISTOPHER S. BOND

MISSOURI

COMMITTEES:

APPROPRIATIONS  
BANKING, HOUSING AND  
URBAN AFFAIRS  
SMALL BUSINESS  
BUDGET  
ENVIRONMENT AND  
PUBLIC WORKS

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2503

October 23, 1996

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
433 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Pat:

After reviewing your proposal to allow the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to use its own appropriated funds to support AmeriCorps projects, I fear that this approach is contrary to the objectives we have pursued to reform AmeriCorps to generate support of funding for AmeriCorps.

I understand your objective and agree the USDA AmeriCorps programs are beneficial and serve the community well. Be assured that when Congress convenes in January, I will work with Members to ascertain new ways of funding these programs.

I look forward to working with you during the 105th Congress. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Shawn Gilleylen of my staff at 4-5721.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Bond

- 136 HARRIS STATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501  
(202) 724-3744  
TTY: (202) 224-4470  
e-mail: chuck\_grassley@grassley.senate.gov
- 721 FEDERAL BUILDING  
210 WALNUT STREET  
DALLAS, TEXAS 75201-2140  
(512) 284-4990
- 708 FEDERAL BUILDING  
101 1ST STREET SW  
COLUMBIA, MISSISSIPPI 39201-1227  
(601) 363-6632

# United States Senate

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501

September 25, 1996

- 103 FEDERAL COURTHOUSE BUILDING  
320 8TH STREET  
SEMIY CITY, IA 51501-1244  
(712) 232-1800
- 210 WATERLOO BUILDING  
531 COMMERCIAL STREET  
WATERLOO, IA 50701-8427  
(319) 232-0857
- 116 FEDERAL BUILDING  
131 E. 4TH STREET  
DUNCANPORT, IA 52007-1613  
(319) 222-4331
- 307 FEDERAL BUILDING  
8 SOUTH 8TH STREET  
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA 51501-4204  
(712) 322-7103

Mr. Harris Wofford  
 Chief Executive Officer  
 Corporation for National Service  
 1201 New York Ave., NW  
 Washington, D.C. 20525

Dear Mr. *Harris* Wofford:

Thank you for your September 4 letter regarding the desire of the United States Department of Agriculture to administer an AmeriCorps program. While the intentions of those who would design this joint program may be socially meaningful, for various reasons, I would not support an arrangement reinstating a joint program with AmeriCorps Members working at the USDA.

As you know, the end of grants to federal agencies is an operative element of our agreement. Though the argument could be made that funding the operating costs of a joint USDA/AmeriCorps program from a surplus account at USDA may not literally violate our agreement, I feel that such accounting would serve to violate the spirit and intent of that agreement. The General Accounting Office measured the average cost per participant at federal agency grant programs as exceeding \$30,000. I do not feel that taxpayers will be comforted to know that their government would finance such expensive programs by using two respective accounts at USDA and AmeriCorps instead of the former singularly AmeriCorps approach. I think that taxpayers expect that these expensive programs have ended.

Committee Assignments:

FINANCE

JUDICIARY

BUDGET

Even if it were possible to run an efficient and effective jointly funded program, I believe that taxpayers would perceive our efforts to reinstate these failed programs as a general abandonment of reform. Indeed, I think that my acquiescence to a continued AmeriCorps program at USDA may be perceived by some of my colleagues as an abandonment of my commitment to effective oversight of the programs.

Finally, I am not convinced that this is an appropriate time for USDA to be undertaking additional financial responsibilities beyond the recently appropriated level. Since the Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee for Agriculture seems to have made no specific appropriation for an AmeriCorps program, and since the Subcommittee likely believes that sacrifices were made so that it could reach its outlay targets for USDA, I find it difficult to support an idea that a new financial endeavor should be undertaken by an already financially challenged USDA.

It will be a long road toward recovery and attainment of AmeriCorps' full potential. I am happy to continue to help you along that path.

Sincerely,



Chuck Grassley

United States Senator

1531 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-4865

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3820**

VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
EDUCATION, TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT  
AND HOUSING

October 9, 1996

The Honorable William F. Goodling  
Chairman  
House Committee On Economic  
And Educational Opportunities  
2181 RHOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Goodling:

I am writing to urge that you make every effort to reach an agreement with Department of Agriculture officials so that several every successful AmeriCorps programs operating in my District can continue in Fiscal 1997.

Over this past year, a program, involving 10-12 young people, established and ran a very successful food program in Fayette County that included gleaning and community gardening projects, as well as an educational component that taught needy residents about effective nutrition. Another Fayette County program, overseen by USDA's Rural Development Agency, utilized five young adults who helped low-income citizens file for home loans, worked on designing the National Road Visitors' Center, and organized and assisted in running clean-up projects of junk yards and trails near the National Road.

Local officials involved with both of these efforts have repeatedly praised the Corps volunteers and spoken highly of the quality of their work. They are deeply interested in ensuring they can count on both of these projects providing assistance in the coming months. As a result, I would implore you to work out the needed understanding with Department of Agriculture officials that will allow the Department to continue to play a role in such important AmeriCorps programs.

---

DISTRICT OFFICES  
(800) 213-5570

Greene Co. Ofc. Bldg.  
93 E. High St. Rm. 303  
Waynesburg, PA 15370  
(412) 852-2182

47 East Penn Street  
Uniontown, PA 15401  
(412) 437-6078

96 North Main Street  
Washington, PA 15301  
(412) 228-4328

3093 Washington Pike  
Bridgeville, PA 15017  
(412) 220-9048

Municipal Bldg. Room 103  
326 Fallowfield Avenue  
Charleroi, PA 15022  
(412) 483-8016

I want to thank for your time and attention and your assistance in resolving this problem which directly impacts many citizens of my District.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Mascara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Frank Mascara  
Member of Congress

FM:bml



COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2181 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6100

MARGE ROUKEMA, NEW JERSEY  
STEVE GUNDEPSON, WISCONSIN  
MARRIS W. ELL, ILLINOIS  
CASS BALLENGER, NORTH CAROLINA  
BILL BARNETT, NEBRASKA  
RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM, CALIFORNIA  
PETE NOEAKSTRA, MICHIGAN  
HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON, CALIFORNIA  
MICHAEL N. CASTLE, DELAWARE  
JAN MEYERS, KANSAS  
SAM JOHNSON, TEXAS  
JAMES M. TALENT, MISSOURI  
JAMES C. GREENWOOD, PENNSYLVANIA  
TIM HUTCHINSON, ARKANSAS  
JOSEPH K. KNOLLENBERG, MICHIGAN  
FRANK D. ROGGS, CALIFORNIA  
LYNDEY O. GRAHAM, SOUTH CAROLINA  
DAVE WELDON, FLORIDA  
DAVID FUNDERBURK, NORTH CAROLINA  
MARK SOLDER, INDIANA  
DAVID MONTOSH, INDIANA  
CHARLIE NORWOOD, GEORGIA

GEORGE MILLER, CALIFORNIA  
DALE E. HELD, MONTANA  
PAT HARTJAMES, MONTANA  
MATTHEW S. MARONICZ, CALIFORNIA  
MARTIN H. CHIRBA, NEW YORK  
THOMAS E. SWINNEY, OHIO  
DONALD R. DAYNE, NEW JERSEY  
PATRYK J. LEAH, KANSAS  
ROBERT E. ANDERSON, NEW JERSEY  
JACK REED, RHODE ISLAND  
TIM WENGER, INDIANA  
XAVIER BECERRA, CALIFORNIA  
ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, VIRGINIA  
GENE CRUZ, TEXAS  
LYNN C. WADSWORTH, CALIFORNIA  
CARLOS K. ROMERO-BARCELONA, PUERTO RICO  
CHUCKA BATTAL, PENNSYLVANIA  
KARL BLUMENBAUM, OREGON

MAJORITY — (202) 225-4627  
(TTY) — (202) 225-2372  
MINORITY — (202) 225-3726  
(TTY) — (202) 225-3113

November 15, 1996

The Honorable Frank Mascara  
1531 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Frank:

Thank you for your letter concerning the beneficial work of the AmeriCorps members serving in your district under two Department of Agriculture sponsored AmeriCorps programs. I, too, have noticed the beneficial work of AmeriCorps members serving in my district, and around the country.

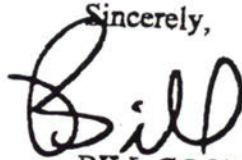
As I'm sure you are aware, the issue of funding for AmeriCorps has been quite contentious this past year. However, the decision to discontinue funding of federally sponsored AmeriCorps programs, such as those sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, is the result of an agreement reached between Harris Wofford, the CEO of the Corporation for National Service, and Senator Grassley. This action was not taken by this Committee and I was not a part of the negotiations that led to the final agreement. However, it is my understanding that this agreement in no way limits the Department of Agriculture from unilaterally funding AmeriCorps programs. Instead, the agreement merely limits the Department's ability to "directly" sponsor such programs.

Furthermore, the language contained in the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriation's Act of 1996, H.R. 3610, allows the Departments of Agriculture and Interior to fund AmeriCorps programs, but only after making the required reprogramming requests (which apparently had not been done in the past). In short, I would expect that the programs operating in your district will continue to operate unless the Department of Agriculture or the Appropriation's Committee opt to cease their funding of these programs. In either case, this decision would be out of the control of this Committee. Therefore, I would urge you to contact the Department of Agriculture and the Committee on Appropriations with this concern.

While I have serious questions about the current operations of the Corporation for National Service and its premier program, AmeriCorps, I believe that this Congress can, and will, find a better way to encourage and support community service during the coming year. Your input into this matter is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for sharing your views with me on this very important issue.

Sincerely,



BILL GOODLING  
Chairman

WFG/dam

PATRICK LEAHY  
VERMONT

COMMITTEES:  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND  
FORESTRY  
APPROPRIATIONS  
JUDICIARY

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4502

October 21, 1996

The Honorable Kit Bond  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on VA, HUD and Independent Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Kit,

I am writing to follow up on my letter to you last April and our conversation regarding USDA sponsored AmeriCorps programs that took place during conference on the Appropriations bill for the VA, HUD and Independent Agencies.

I hope that you can provide the clarification that is needed for USDA sponsored AmeriCorps programs to continue under the leadership of local organizations and land managers. These programs have brought new volunteer efforts to every corner of rural Vermont--- areas difficult to reach through traditional nonprofit organizations.

The Department of Agriculture would like to build on the success of their AmeriCorps programs in keeping with the requirement that National Service funds should not be transferred to Federally run programs. Already local organizations play an active role in most USDA AmeriCorps programs. The Department intends to transfer authority for running all of its AmeriCorps programs to the local non-profits or land managers involved in those programs, while continuing to offer technical assistance and financial support. However, National Service education awards are needed to allow this new partnership to move forward.

To be clear, the Corporation for National Service interprets current law as allowing the Corporation "to enter into agreements with federal agencies to support national service programs, with the understanding that such agreements need not include the transfer of funds." Providing education awards for USDA sponsored programs would result in no funds being transferred to any federal agency. Those awards, like all National Service education awards would be set-aside on behalf of individual participants in the program and would go directly to approved institutions of higher education or lending agencies from the National Service Trust. The Department of Agriculture would fund all necessary costs for operating these programs and paying member stipends from funds already appropriated to it by the Congress. No "new" money is needed.

The uncertainty about providing National Service "education only" awards to participants in USDA supported programs has left around 1,000 prospective members in limbo. Equally important, the delay has left countless residents of rural areas without the assistance these members would bring to rural communities.

NOV 14 '96 11:11 AM  
October 21, 1996  
The Honorable Kit Bond  
Page 2

The Rural Fire Protection Task Force is a good example of the benefits these programs can bring. With the assistance of the AmeriCorps Fire Technical Team, Vermont's Rural Fire Protection Task Force was able to install 44 dry fire hydrants, lowering insurance rates by about \$76 per year for 1,600 home owners living in rural areas of the state. That translates into over \$7 of savings for every \$1 spent on the program.

The AmeriCorps programs sponsored by USDA in Vermont have provided valuable assistance to poor rural residents. I hope that you will be able to provide the clarification that is needed to build on the success of these programs while we discuss options for sustaining them in the future.

Sincerely,

  
PATRICK LEAHY  
United States Senator

PJL/adr

ARLEN SPECTER  
PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEES:  
INTELLIGENCE  
JUDICIARY  
APPROPRIATIONS  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3802

September 19, 1996

The Honorable Christopher S. Bond  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on VA, HUD and Independent Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Kit:

It has just been brought to my attention that a funding issue has arisen concerning the role of the United States Department of Agriculture in various AmeriCorps projects.

I am advised that an AmeriCorps program in Fayette County, Pennsylvania has six students who are prepared to commence work to rehabilitate housing and to mitigate pollution, which is vital to economic development in that region. I would appreciate your help to see that all necessary steps are taken to allow these six AmeriCorps students to commence work.

I understand you recently met with Secretary Glickman on the broad issue of the United States Department of Agriculture involvement in AmeriCorps. I am hopeful that this matter will be resolved promptly so the Fayette County work of AmeriCorps personnel can proceed.

As always, I appreciate your assistance on this matter and wish to thank you for your personal consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Arlen Specter

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER



JOHN P. MURTHA  
12TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEE  
APPROPRIATIONS

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-3812

November 21, 1996

Senator Christopher S. Bond  
U.S. Senate  
293 Russell Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Bond:

I'm writing to you out of concern over the potential loss of some USDA Americorps projects in southwestern Pennsylvania that have been very successful in contributing to the area's economic development. I understand Senator Specter has also written to you previously about the USDA Americorps team in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, where the unemployment rate is over 10% and over 20% of residents live below the poverty level. Fayette County is part of the Congressional district I represent.

I know you've had some concerns over the USDA's funding of these projects. However, I ask you to reconsider allowing the USDA to fund its Americorps projects for the coming year. It is my understanding that the USDA and the Corporation for National Service are offering to make this the last year in which the USDA will administer the programs and that they will use this year to transition to a direct, non-profit funding mechanism for those programs.

We're down to the wire in terms of being able to get this year's projects under way. Soon there won't be enough time left for the students to complete the number of hours of service to fulfill the requirements of the program. In an area with such high unemployment and poverty levels, the program has given invaluable opportunity to these kids. They've been waiting for their jobs to start and will be left hanging-- it will be too late for them to pursue other options, which are few and far between.

Additionally, there are projects that were begun last year on which work was expected to continue this year but which now remain unfinished. The work done thus far will have been wasted if it is not followed through this year to its completion.

I appreciate your assistance on this issue.

Sincerely,

  
JOHN P. MURTHA  
Member of Congress

JOHN McCAIN  
ARIZONA

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,  
AND TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

# United States Senate

November 4, 1996

Mr. Vince Ancell  
Director  
Department of Agriculture  
Office of Congressional Relations  
ADMBG, Room 213-A  
Washington, D.C. 20250-0001

Dear Mr. Ancell:

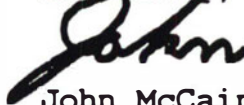
I wish to bring to your attention a matter concerning my constituent, Helen Crofford, who has expressed her concerns regarding potential changes to Department of Agriculture /Americorps partnerships.

Please investigate, in accordance with existing rules, regulations, and ethical guidelines, the statements made in the enclosed letter and return the response to me at the following address:

Attn: Kevin Adam  
Office of Senator John McCain  
1839 S. Alma School Rd.  
Suite 375  
Mesa, AZ 85210

The response you provide will be greatly appreciated and will be forwarded to my constituent. If you should have any questions, please contact my office at (602) 491-4300. I look forward to your reply at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



John McCain  
United States Senator

JM/zka  
Enclosure

241 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0303

(202) 454-2235

1839 SOUTH ALMA SCHOOL ROAD  
SUITE 375

... MESA, AZ 85210

(602) 491-4300

2400 EAST ARIZONA

BILTMORE CIRCLE

SUITE 1150

PHOENIX, AZ 85016

(602) 952-2410

450 WEST PASEO RECONOZO

SUITE 200

TUCSON, AZ 85701

(520) 670-6334

TELEPHONE FOR HEARING IMPAIRED

(202) 224-7132

(602) 952-0170



Navajo County Natural Resource Conservation District  
51 W. Vista - Holbrook, AZ 86025 - Phone (520) 524-2652

October 29, 1996

Honorable John McCain  
United States Senator  
1839 S Alma School Rd Ste 375  
Mesa AZ 85210

Dear Honorable John McCain:

The Navajo County Natural Resource Conservation District Board would like you to consider, and hopefully support us on the following issue.

For the last two years, USDA, through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has utilized the services of various individuals serving as Americorps Members in Navajo County. These folks have furthered the cause of resource conservation with local individuals and groups by serving in roles that NRCS has never employed, except as volunteers (and as such, with very limited success).

Americorps workers under USDA-NRCS have established the need for a continuing demonstration of sustainable agriculture in this remote part of rural Arizona. Our Demonstration Farm has a capable farm manager available at this time that will continue the work of the last two years: over 350 people visited the Farm in 1996 alone, and the Farm newsletter "As it Grows" is currently mailed to over 300 people. Numerous classes from local schools and tours from the surrounding area (including the Navajo Nation) get first-hand experience here on what goes into the production of the nation's food.

Our new designated farm manager cannot begin work because it is our understanding that Senator Bond and Senator Grasley do not feel that the Americorps program warrants participation by USDA. Be assured that the Americorps program is serving the concerns of rural Arizona. We ask for your support in continuing the USDA-Americorps partnership in Navajo County.

Sincerely,

Helen Crofford  
Chairperson, Navajo County NRCD

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC

November 7, 1996

Mr. Vince Ancell  
Director, Office of Congressional Relations  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Room 213A, ADMBG  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Ancell:

Enclosed is a copy of a letter that I have received from constituents of mine regarding delays in funding for EnviroCorps, a USDA/AmeriCorps program that works with local sponsors on environmental education and enhancement in the Portland (Oregon) area.

As you will note, Messrs. Cannon and Dallaire report that EnviroCorps is currently waiting to start its third year but cannot do so until a consensus is reached between the USDA and Senators Bond and Grassley and funds are released.

Because of my interest in this matter, I would encourage the Department in doing whatever is possible to bring this matter to a satisfactory conclusion.

With best regards.

Sincerely,



Mark O. Hatfield  
United States Senator

MOH/aw

505-326-3386

LaMarr Cannon  
Jeff Dallaire  
1315 SE Pine St.  
Portland, OR. 97214

Senator Mark Hatfield  
121 SW Salmon St. Suite 1420  
Portland, OR. 97204

October 24, 1996

Dear Senator Hatfield:

We are writing to you to express our concern over the delay of funding for EnviroCorps. EnviroCorps is a USDA/AmeriCorps program that works with local sponsors on environmental education and enhancement in the Portland area.

In the last year alone, this twenty-member team improved 23 acres of wetland, planted 3,367 trees and shrubs, recruited 1,795 volunteers, led 1,159 students on service learning projects, canvassed 10,326 homes in Portland to disconnect their downspouts to reduce sewage overflow and filled 2,000 sandbags during the February floods to protect buildings and the sewage treatment facility.

EnviroCorps works with local partners such as Metro Regional Government, the East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District, Portland State University, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services, the Environmental Middle School, Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center, Friends of Trees, Friends of Smith and Bybee, local business owners and others.

The reason for the funding delay is complicated but stems from concerns that the USDA cannot effectively run AmeriCorps programs. The USDA is currently seeking to reach a consensus with Senators Christopher Bond (MO) and Charles Grassley (IA), to allow USDA to continue to provide technical assistance, funding, and administrative support services to AmeriCorps programs. Program funds have already been set aside, no additional funds are necessary and projects and work done by EnviroCorps are chosen by the team and its local partners, not by the USDA.

EnviroCorps is currently waiting to start its third year but cannot do so until consensus is reached. The delay in funding has already caused several qualified candidates to seek employment elsewhere and left EnviroCorps unable to provide support and assistance to its local partners. Further delays may jeopardize the future of EnviroCorps. Anything that your office can do to help bring about this consensus would be greatly appreciated by the community that benefits from their spirit of volunteerism.

Thank you.



LaMarr Cannon



Jeff Dallaire

Phil Gramm  
Texas

United States Senate

---

MEMORANDUM

Date: 10-8

Office of Public Affairs  
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture  
14th & Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

My constituent has sent me the enclosed communication, and I would appreciate a response which addresses his/her concerns.

Please send your response, together with the constituent's correspondence, to me at the following address:

Office of Senator Phil Gramm  
2323 Bryan Street, #1500  
Dallas, Texas 75201

Attention: Brett Brewer

214 - 767  
- 8754



# CITY OF GONZALES

SHRINE OF A GREAT TEXAS HERITAGE

OCT 08 1996



Where The Fight For Texas' Liberty Began

September 25, 1996

Senator Phil Gramm  
United States Senate  
Russell Senate Office Bldg., Rm 370  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Americorps Program

Dear Senator Gramm:

A letter from me by facimile dated September 24, 1996, conveyed to you the importance of the Americorp Program to Gonzales, Texas. After several phone calls to Washington I am beginning to understand some of what is happening and how it affects us in Gonzales.

Based on these phone conversations, I am under the impression that the Americorps Program as such is alive and well. However, the portion that is funded through grants from Corporation for National Service (CNS) to USDA has been eliminated. It is further understood that this is the direct result of concerns raised by Senator Christopher "Kit" Bond of Missouri. In order to meet concerns raised by Senator Bond and others, CNS will no longer make grants of operating funds to Federal agencies. The legal result of this policy is that USDA funding source (operating funds transferred from CNS to USDA) has been eliminated. The USDA AmeriCorps program, including our program and other projects in Texas, has been put on hold pending discussions.

The success of the Gonzales AmeriCorps program was conveyed in the previous correspondence. This success happened **only** because of the support of USDA. We did not possess the manpower to make these successes happen. We do not foresee being able to budget additional manpower to continue the program in the absence of USDA assistance. Our focus on housing and workforce training will continue, but some other part of the job description of Main Street or Economic Development will have to be prioritized out. These two departments including all clerical duties are being handled by one employee. This lack of manpower exists with all rural communities and prohibits them from focusing on all community and economic opportunities that arise.

page 2

Luling, Columbus, and Hallettsville, Texas are three of our neighbors that will lose along with Gonzales. The budget required for their communities to accomplish community and economic development is nominal at best. The loss to these communities is monumental.

It is additionally understood that new legislation is not necessary and additional appropriations are not required to continue the USDA AmeriCorps program. Therefore, I stress the importance of approval from Senator Bond on this issue.

This is a very complicated issue. I am not sure that I have all the necessary information. Please search out all sides of this issue from USDA, CNA, Senator Bond, etc. in order to determine if we can access this program for the 1996-1997 year.

Sincerely,



Sandra F. Mauldin  
Main Street Program Manager  
Economic Developer - Gonzales  
Vice President, Community  
Empowerment Board



# CITY OF GONZALES

SHRINE OF A GREAT TEXAS HERITAGE



Where The Fight For Texas Liberty Began

September 24, 1996

Senator Phil Gramm  
370 Russell  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Gramm:

The City of Gonzales has experienced great community and economic benefits due the process of the Enterprise Communities grant, being named a Champion Community and the organization of the Gonzales Community Empowerment Board. The non-profit organization is intended to accomplish improvements in the four areas that include housing, recreation, economic development and education for a quality work force. In addition the Community Empowerment Board encourages citizens participation in solving community problems and planning for the future.

The Community Empowerment Board applied for an Americorps Member for 1995-1996, and made great strides during this program time. The member is sponsored by the City of Gonzales. An accounting is enclosed for your reference.

We were so pleased with our successes in housing and economic development that we applied for a second program year. We are further along with education and are looking forward to accomplishments in this area also. However, now we learn that the funding for our portion of the Americorps Program is in jeopardy because of Senator Christopher "Kit" Bond of Missouri. Several other communities such as Luling and Hallettsville had hoped for an Americorps Member for the next year.

You have been involved and supportive of our program in the past. We ask if you could determine the reasoning for Senator Bond's position. We thank you in advance for any and all assistance you may be able to give. We look forward to a reply.

Sincerely,

Deidra Voigt  
Council, District 3  
City of Gonzales

Gonzales, is a Champion Community under the Federal Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community initiative. The Community Empowerment Board applied to the United States Department of Agriculture for an Americorps member to work in local areas of community improvements for the 1996-1997 year. Applications are being solicited subject to final notification of funding.

Gonzales currently has an Americorps member in the 1995-1996 program year, and the accomplishments have benefitted the City's community and economic development. The following are accomplishments or successes for this past one year term. The member helped develop a survey of housing in Gonzales. A house by house identification of properties was accomplished. This includes possible ways to utilize vacant lots, historical houses, substandard structures, etc. A database of this information was developed and coordinated with the Gonzales County Appraisal District to identify ownership and cross reference properties for timely information retrieval.

The member assisted in a housing survey to identify the need for rental and purchase property. This survey was accomplished in cooperation with the top three employers in Gonzales.

This program provided the Assistance in developing a video of neighborhood participation in the Gonzales Housing Program. The video was used to support an application for a Federal Home Loan grant.

The Gonzales Americorps member served with, and assisted the Housing Rehabilitation Citizens Committee. The member helped develop a contractor's packet to show opportunities for local contractors. This was also associated with the Federal Home Loan grant.

The program provided assistance in developing a database for use in creating business proposals for businesses interested in expanding or relocating in Gonzales. It has allowed the local economic developers to respond quickly and professionally to requests by companies interested in Gonzales for expansion or relocation.

The Americorps member participated and helped with Community Empowerment Board Activities and assisted with the Housing Initiative made up of realtors, bankers, lawyers, architects, contractors, and community leaders to address various housing needs of Gonzales. In a nutshell this has helped create awareness of the housing need and urge citizen participation on the various committees.

Record keeping duties included maintaining a file of reporting to the State and National Office for the Americorps Program and helping organize a visual presentation for the meeting with Clifford J. Diehl from the General Accounting Office for the U.S House of Representatives.

The Gonzales Americorps member participated in a project cluster meeting hosted by the Enterprise Zone Office in Mercedes, Texas, a community service project benefitting the Head Start Program in Weslaco, Texas, and a project cluster meeting sponsored by the Rural Development Office. This was followed by a community service project benefitting owners of sub-standard housing in Hebronville, Texas.



STATE OF KANSAS  
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & PARKS



Operations Office  
512 SE 25th Avenue  
Pratt, KS 67124-8174  
316/672-5911 FAX 316/672-6020

October 4, 1996

The Honorable Christopher Bond  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Lewis  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Grassley  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bond:

I appreciate the efforts of yourself, Senator Grassley, and Congressman Lewis to examine the relationship between USDA and the Corporation for National Service regarding the AmeriCorps program. At this time in America, it is critical that government operate ethically and above board, without the intent, act or perception of wrongdoing.

However, as I am certain you will find, the relationship between USDA, CNS and the AmeriCorps projects administered at the state level is reasonable and desirable. This partnership allows rural Americans to perform needed community services for an honest wage and broaden their potentials for the future in the process. When these AmeriCorps members have completed their educations, they will be ready to take their places as productive members of society, with not only the classwork behind them, but also the experience earned in the successful completion of their AmeriCorps projects.

Without the assistance of the USDA and CNS, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks would not be able to hire these young people, lacking the funding to do so. The department can, however, provide raw materials, tools and supervision. Important projects underway now, and others that might be completed in the future, would die without being completed. Rural communities would lose the employment options provided by AmeriCorps, the public would lose the benefits provided to the natural resources and outdoor recreation projects, and the individuals who would have been selected as members would lose valuable opportunities. The language proposed by USDA correlates to previous agreements, and fully supports the principles under which AmeriCorps was conceived, while ending the transfer of operating funds from CNS to USDA.

No additional funding is needed to support the AmeriCorps program, and the positive impact it makes is tremendous. I hope that you will find that you are able to fully support continuation of AmeriCorps as a viable program important to the American people.

Sincerely,

Rob Manes  
Assistant Secretary for Operations

RUC:er  
= 100, Haver  
File 807.0



# Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts

802 W. Bannock, Hoff Building, Suite 1006  
P.O. Box 2637  
Boise, ID 83701  
(208) 338-5900

(208) 338-9537 FAX

Conservation - Development - Self-Government

October 4, 1996

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### President

Rod B. Robison  
2697 W. 6300 S.  
Rexburg, ID 83440

### Vice-President

Kevin Koester  
P.O. Box 697  
Lava Hot Springs, ID  
83246

### Secretary

Kyle Hawley  
1180 Lewis Road  
Moscow, ID 83843

### Treasurer

Roger Stutzman  
1937-B East 4100 North  
ID 83316

### Director

Art Beal  
P.O. Box 9  
Sweet, ID 83670

### Director

Alice M. Wallace  
1005 North Fifth Avenue  
Sandpoint, ID 83864

### Executive Director

J. Kent Foster

### Idaho Home\*A\*Syst

Project Specialist  
J. Kent Foster

The Honorable Larry E. Craig  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Craig:

The Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD), representing the 51 local Conservation Districts in Idaho needs your help in allowing the USDA to continue to aid grass-roots groups sponsoring AmeriCorps projects. As we understand the current situation, the USDA and Corporation for National and Community Service (CNS) do NOT need any additional funds, nor do they need Congress to take any formal legislative action.


The USDA and CNS simply need to reach an informal consensus with key members of Congress (Senator Christopher Bond; Senator Charles Grassley; and Congressman Jerry Lewis) on this issue. The issue of allowing the USDA to participate in the AmeriCorps program for FY 1997 needs to be resolved now. We are already behind in implementing this years program and recruiting new AmeriCorps members.

The IASCD sponsors the Homestead Assessment System (Home\*A\*Syst) project, a wellhead/environmental protection program, because of its tremendous value as a mechanism for community outreach teaching voluntary protection of drinking water. Last year we partnered directly with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to have 15 AmeriCorps members deliver the Home\*A\*Syst program to rural and urban communities state-wide. This is a community service that otherwise would not be provided. As a result of this program, this past year some 158,593 Idaho citizens have been exposed to and made aware of the Home\*A\*Syst program and 1,332 citizens have participated by completing voluntary assessments.

The IASCD is asking that you request Senator Bond, Senator Grassley, and Congressman Lewis to reach an informal consensus that would allow CNS to enter into a *non-monetary* cooperative agreement with the USDA. This *non-monetary* cooperative agreement will allow the Department to provide technical assistance, funding, administrative support services and other assistance to national service programs sponsored by non-profit organizations, state, local, and tribal governments, and the local managers of public lands, and to allow participants in those programs to receive National Service educational awards from the National Service Trust.

This informal consensus must be reached as quickly as possible as the future approach and success of our efforts here in Idaho are very much dependant on the USDA AmeriCorps program. We appreciate your timely attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,



J. Kent Foster  
Executive Director

cc: Rod Robison, IASCD President, Rexburg



# National Road

## HERITAGE PARK

3543 National Road & Nelson Road  
Box 528 • Farmington, PA 15437  
Phone: 412 329-1560 • 412 329-1552  
Fax: 412 329-1561

Joel Berg  
U.S.D.A. Director of National Services  
Room 538 A  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Berg:

October 7, 1996

In 1996, the National Road Heritage Park was fortunate to employ five U.S.D.A. AmeriCorps workers to assist in carrying out the mission of the NRHP.

These five young people were instrumental in implementing numerous programs and performing valuable services benefiting the three-county area, including:

1. Creating a low-interest loan program for restoration of residential and commercial properties
2. Cleaning up junkyards and dump sites along the National Road
3. Conducting research and making application on behalf of three National Road communities to be nominated to the National Register as Historic Districts (some of which had been seeking the National Register nomination for years)
4. Assisting the local community center in remodeling the community building
5. Developing heritage school programming in the three-county area.

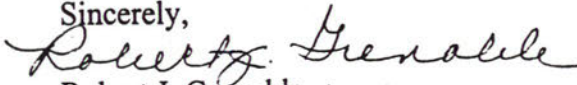
Without the participation of AmeriCorps volunteers this year, there is no doubt that these and other programs would never have been successfully implemented.

The National Road corridor is economically distressed with an unemployment average of over 9%. Without sufficient tax base and infrastructure, we need the assistance of programs such as AmeriCorps to develop resources and heritage tourism.

We therefore urge you to support and work to ensure that the AmeriCorps program receives further funding. Currently, enactment of renewed funding is in the hands of Senator Christopher Bond of Missouri. We ask you to use your good offices to encourage Senator Bond to release the AmeriCorps bill for vote and approval.

Your cooperation and interest are appreciated.

Sincerely,

  
Robert J. Grenoble  
Executive Director

Robert Rabasco  
2150 North Meridian  
Apt. 3604  
Wichita, KS. 67203

Mr. Joel Berg  
Ag Box 1301  
Washington, DC. 20250-1301

Dear Mr. Berg,

I am writing to you on behalf of the six members of the Great Plains Nature Center Americorps team in Wichita, Kansas. With the general election over I can not help but wonder if President Clinton's re-election will have any effect on the future of our team. The recent conciliatory tones that are being put forth by Congress seem to indicate that our legislators are more willing to work together. Again, I am brought to question whether or not there is any new information available on the status of our team. The other members of our team have indicated that they are ready to start work on a days notice. We anxiously await information concerning our start date. I appreciate any news you have concerning the status of our team. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Robert Rabasco

*Robert Rabasco*

*Peyan Stucky*

*Matt*

*Josh*

1996 OCT 16 P 2: 54

COPIES: \_\_\_\_\_

Mary E. Swartz  
323 North Ash  
Newton, Ks. 67114

October 8, 1996

Dear Mr. Glickman,

I am a candidate for an AmeriCorps position. I applied to the program for two reasons. First, I believe that the program benefits both the individual as well as the community. The benefits may be seen at the national level as well, support of higher education and job skill enhancement can only improve individuals ability to be functional in the job market. This in turn may help to alleviate dependence on non work oriented work benefits. The cash award would help to guarantee that student loans will be paid back, which would be an obvious benefit to the taxpayer. Second, as a near graduate of a masters in biology I felt the position I applied for focused on areas that my education has prepared me for as an, educator, naturalist and interpretitor work. The education of children about their environment is very important for them to be able to make responsible choices when making decisions concerning the environment. As you know the program was to begin on October 1, but was held up do to the funding issue. Now it seems since the program has been funded for two years, congressmen have held up its implementation for program administration concerns. I am writing to you in hopes of convincing you of the importance of the program and its implementation. I am sure my reasons may sound selfish, however, I truly believe the program is worthy of merit.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

*Mary E. Swartz*  
Mary E. Swartz

Action Office: oc  
Referral Code: 2



\* 3 1 1 4 8 5 4 \*



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

D9553

April 6, 1994

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY/DEPUTY SECRETARY

THROUGH: James Michael Kelly *JKelly*  
Associate General Counsel

FROM: Joel Berg *JB*  
Deputy Director, Office of Public Affairs

SUBJECT: Justification of Non-Competition of Current National Service Projects

ISSUE:

The Corporation for National and Community Service has given tentative approval to our grant request for money to operate our Summer of Safety project with the Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences. Their grant will make it possible to run the program this summer. It will provide jobs to participants, many of whom will be recent graduates of the high school, service to the community, and up to 50 education awards worth \$1,000 each for participants who successfully serve the entire summer. In order to accept the Corporation's funds for the Chicago project as well as the major yearlong programs we have planned in the areas of rural development, anti-hunger, and the environment, the Department must award the necessary discretionary cooperative agreements non-competitively for this year's round of applications.

BACKGROUND:

In September of 1993, Congress passed the National and Community Service Trust Act, which enables Federal Departments to manage national service programs individually or manage them in partnership with others. The basic mechanism for the Department to enter into "partnerships" with non-profit groups and State and local organizations for the purpose of implementing national service programs is a discretionary cooperative agreement. Under normal circumstances, such agreements should be awarded on a competitive basis. However, the time between publication of the Corporation for National and Community Service's final rules on March 11, 1994 and the application deadlines of March 14 for Summer of Safety programs and April 29, 1994 for AmeriCorps FY 95 yearlong projects, make it impractical to engage in a competitive process.

Departmental regulations allow for the award of agreements non-competitively where such awards are in the best interest of the Government and/or where such competition is impractical. The National and Community Service Trust Act makes it clear that Federal departments are expected to manage national service programs and that such participation is necessary for the Corporation to meet its objectives. The lack of sufficient time to compete awards was a factor

imposed on us externally by the Corporation and not the result of any delay within the Department. Combined, these two factors would seem to form a necessary justification for making non-competitive awards in this first year of the program.

In addition to the above issues, I believe that the other factors listed below further justify a decision to make our initial awards non-competitively:

1. The Department is using the implementation of pilot projects for FY 94 Summer of Safety and FY 95 AmeriCorps programs as the mechanism to develop the necessary regulations, procedures, and processes for ensuring maximum competition in future awards.
2. While it is impractical for the Department to initially make awards competitively, the award process is not devoid of competition. The Corporation's approval of applications is based on their own formal competitive process which conforms to all applicable Federal laws and regulations. For the Department's applications for FY 94 Summer of Safety and FY 95 AmeriCorps programs to be approved, they must first be reviewed and graded by a panel of independent experts and then selected on the basis of objective and subjective rankings.
3. The projects that will be sent to you for your final approval are the result of meetings, briefings, calls and mailings to hundreds of farming, anti-hunger, rural development, environmental, and other constituency groups over the last 11 months. We have endeavored to give the broadest possible exposure to TEAM USDA's national service program.

#### OPTIONS:

1. **Participate** in the national service program for the summer of 1994 and the yearlong programs beginning in September of 1994 and running through June of 1995 by relying on the attached justification for non-competition as well as the competition conducted by the Corporation. In addition, use the experience gained in running programs to establish the necessary competitive procedures for all awards in following years beginning with the Summer of Service programs in June of 1995.

**PRO:** The Summer of Safety program we are proposing to run in partnership with the Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences will be able to proceed. This program alone will result in the Corporation awarding up to 50, \$1,000 education awards to participants. The yearlong programs we are proposing will result in the award of up to 1,500, \$4,725 education awards from the Corporation's funds. Both the summer and yearlong programs will also result in significant benefit to the public in the areas of rural development, anti-hunger, and the environment.

**CON:** An organization or member of Congress may protest based on the lack of competition in our selection process. However, it must be pointed out that our regulations do provide for exemptions to competition and OGC has concurred with the attached justification laying out the rationale for non-competition in this instance.

2. **Do not participate** in the national service program for the summer of 1994 and the yearlong programs beginning in September of 1994 and running through June of 1995 until the necessary competitive procedures can be established.

PRO: No discretionary cooperative agreements would be granted without competition.

CON: The Summer of Safety project involving the Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences would have to be canceled. We would not be able to run the major yearlong programs we have planned in the areas of rural development, anti-hunger, and the environment you have previously announced. The Department could not participate in any projects until the next Summer of Service period which would be June of 1995.

RECOMMENDATION:

I recommend implementing option one. I request that you endorse the attached justification for non-competition of current national service projects, which will allow us to proceed with any projects the Corporation for National and Community Service approves this year.

As manager of the Department's national service program I want to assure you that I recognize the need for and value of competitive awards. Given the circumstances, every effort is being made to minimize the negative impact of non-competition and to use the existing circumstances to ensure that a sound, long-term process is set in place to foster competition in all future awards. In the interim, the projects that are forwarded to you for final selection as part of the USDA AmeriCorps application were not formulated in a vacuum. They are the result of almost a year's worth of conversations and presentations to the widest variety of constituent groups, non-profit groups, members of the public, and State and local organizations.

As a final note, I would add that the approach recommended here, that is to award non-competitively now while developing proper procedures for competition in all future awards, is an approach that is being adopted by other Federal departments, most notably Health and Human Services.

Agree \_\_\_\_\_ ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

Date 4/24/94

Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_

JUSTIFICATION FOR NON-COMPETITIVE SELECTION OF SITES  
AND PARTNERS FOR USDA FY 94 "SUMMER OF SAFETY"  
AND  
FY 95 AMERICORPS YEARLONG PROJECTS

Pursuant to the regulations contained in 7 CFR 3015.158 (d), the Deputy Director for Public Liaison who serves as the Department of Agriculture's National Service Program manager hereby determines that it is in the best interest of the government and necessary to the accomplishment of the goals of the program to award co-operative agreements for FY 94 Summer of Safety and FY 95 AmeriCorps programs non-competitively. As these agreements are being executed, a concurrent effort will be undertaken to develop the rules, policies, and procedures necessary to ensure that all subsequent awards are made competitively. This determination was made after careful consideration of several factors including:

1. USDA participation in national services programs is needed for the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Government to meet the goals for the nation's national service program;
2. The limited time available to apply to the Corporation for funds makes competition impractical;
3. The national service program is new and pilot projects are needed to maximize the Department's ability to define the proper procedures and rules for implementing the program in the future;
4. Because Federal agency involvement in national services programs is designed to build on existing structures, the Department opted to focus on projects that most closely resembled current service structures in order to provide a foundation for expanding structures and services in the future; and
5. The process of awarding funds for projects is not completely devoid of competition because the Department's application to AmeriCorps is approved by the Corporation on a competitive basis.

The following discussion presents a detailed explanation of each factor considered in making the determination to award cooperative agreements non-competitively.

## I. ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PROGRAM GOALS

The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, P.L. 103-82, clearly states that one of its main objectives is to, "build on the existing organizational service infrastructure of Federal, State, and local programs and agencies to expand full-time and part-time service opportunities for all citizens..."<sup>1</sup> The important role of Federal agency participation in national service programs is reinforced in the Act's provision to allow the Corporation for National and Community Service to, "...enter into a contract or cooperative agreement with another Federal agency to support a national service program carried out by the agency."<sup>2</sup> It is clearly the intent of the program to use participation by Federal agencies to accomplish its goals. There are even specific funds set aside solely for the purpose of awarding money to Federal agencies who apply to run programs individually or in partnership with other Federal agencies, non-profit organizations, institutions of higher learning, etc. A failure by Federal departments to participate would adversely affect the Corporation for National and Community Service's (AKA AmeriCorps) ability to achieve its goals.

## II. TIME CONSTRAINTS

In order to participate, Federal agencies (Federal departments and independent agencies) must submit applications for funds to the Corporation for National and Community Service by the deadlines established by the Corporation's rules. Because the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 was not signed into law until September 21, 1993, there has been little time for the Corporation for National and Community Service (AKA AmeriCorps) to establish the necessary rules to guide Federal departments in their implementation of the program. Prior to enactment of the law, the Department undertook several initiatives to prepare for its implementation. A work group was established in March of 1993 to begin defining how to implement national service within USDA and to structure the "models" that form the guides for such service. Unfortunately, the late signing of the bill left insufficient time for USDA to complete all the steps necessary to engage in full competition for its projects.

AmeriCorps did not publish its notice of availability of funds for Summer of Safety programs until February 3, 1994. The time between this notice and the application deadline of March 14, 1994 was insufficient to allow for a publication by USDA of a request for proposals, review the applications, and submit an application to AmeriCorps. This left two options: one, do not submit a Summer of Safety application; two, identify projects that had previously been discussed within the Department and see if they were candidates for submission to AmeriCorps. In view of the time constraints, it was determined to be in the best interest of the Government and necessary to carry out the objectives of the USDA National Service program to choose the later option. The precise mechanism for choosing projects is described in Paragraph IV.

---

<sup>1</sup>P.L. 103-82, Sec. 2(a)(7)

<sup>2</sup>P.L. 103-82, Sec. 121(b)(1)

The severe time constraints placed on applicants in the initial year of the program can be seen in table 1. These time constraints are imposed on the Department externally and are not caused by delay within the Department.

Table 1. Time Line for Significant Events in Preparation of CNCS Application for FY 94 Summer of Safety Application Due 3/14/94 and Yearlong FY 95 AmeriCorps Programs due 3/29/94.

EVENT	DATE OCCURRED	DATE SUMMER OF SERVICE APPLICATION DUE	DATE YEAR-LONG AMERICORPS APPLICATION DUE	TIME AVAILABLE FOR USDA TO ESTABLISH AND CONDUCT COMPETITION <sup>1</sup>	REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME NEEDED TO CONDUCT COMPETITION <sup>2</sup>
<u>National and Community Services Trust Act of 1993</u> signed by President Clinton	9/21/93				
Draft Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) regulations published	1/7/94				
Notice of availability of Funds for Summer of Safety programs published	2/3/94				
Comment period on draft regulations ends	2/7/94				
CNCS Regulations approved by OMB	3/11/94	3/14/94		3 DAYS	150 DAYS
CNCS final regulations published	3/18/94		3/29/94	42 DAYS	150 DAYS

<sup>1</sup> Time from the approval of rules to the time an application was due to be delivered to the CNCS.

<sup>2</sup> Time required to publish a request for proposals, have proposals evaluated by independent review panel, and make award of cooperative agreement, including the time to develop the necessary rules, publishing them, get comments and publish them in final form. The entire process could take 120 to 180 days. 150 days is used here as an average.

### III. DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNAL RULES

Because Federal Department involvement in national service programs is new, it is necessary to establish the most effective process for ensuring that all future awards are made with the maximum degree of competition. The Office of Communications is establishing a schedule for the development of the necessary rules and regulations that will allow for full competition of awards beginning with the Corporation for National and Community Service's Summer of Service program in FY 95. The experiences gained in the initial awards will serve as a valuable "testing" ground to final rules and procedures that emphasize the integrity of the Department's program and the maximum benefit to the public.

### IV. INTEGRATION OF NATIONAL SERVICE INTO USDA STRUCTURE

In addition to establishing departmental rules and procedures, it is necessary to evaluate how national service programs can be integrated into the Department's organizational structure. It is an obvious goal of the national service program to allow existing Federal organizations to merge, where practicable, their existing program delivery with national service projects. This is a formidable task in a department with 43 agencies and 115,000 plus employees.

Part of the process for developing rules and procedures involves an assessment of how the Department's existing resources can be focused to provide support to national service projects. This assessment involves three steps: 1) identify key agencies; 2) establish national service teams; and, 3) identify pilot projects for FY 94 applications.

#### 1. Identify Key Agencies.

a. In March of 1993, a national service work group was established in USDA. The group consisted of representatives from all agencies and offices. This group developed a proposed model for deliver of national service programs within USDA. The model consists of three "Teams":

- (1) An Environmental Team
- (2) An Anti-Hunger and Empowerment Team
- (3) A Rural Development Team

- b. In conjunction with the work group, the Office of Communication identified the key agencies that would need to be involved in pilot efforts. Initially, a total of four key agencies or groups of agencies were determined to already have program delivery mechanisms that mirror or closely resemble those necessary for national service projects. The Extension Service (ES), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), and the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) were determined to be the key groups associated with the Anti-Hunger team. The Forest Service (FS), the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and ES were determined to be the key group associated with the Environmental Team. The Rural Development Administration (RDA), Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), and Rural Electrification Administration (REA), SCS and FS were determined to be the key groups associated with the Rural Development Team.

Several of these agencies have large existing programs or delivery mechanisms that lend themselves to most effectively defining how national service should be implemented within USDA. The Extension Service supports the world's largest volunteer group, the 4-H Clubs. The Forest Service through its human resources division runs Youth Conservation Corps and National Forest Foundation camps that are similar to the type of project expected to be run under national service. The new Rural Development Team groups those agencies which form the focus of services in rural development which is one of the Corporation's priority areas. Finally, the Soil Conservation Service deals daily with the public in an interactive mode quite similar to that proposed for national service.

2. Establish National Service Teams.

Once the key agencies were identified, teams were established to develop the necessary procedures and propose pilot projects for submission in FY 94 applications. The teams were an expansion of the agencies' representatives on the national service work group. Their purpose is to move from a "work group" structure toward integration of national service within the agencies' established organizational structure.

3. Identify Pilot Projects.

- a. As part of the efforts to establish models for national service within the Department, USDA representatives attended a wide variety of forums, meetings, conventions, and briefings where the public was informed of the proposed national service program and the role that Federal departments might play if the law was enacted. In addition to the meetings, interviews were given to magazines and newsletters that would most likely be read by groups interested in engaging in partnerships with the Department.

While these efforts were not official requests for proposals, they served to alert the public of the national service program. As a result of these efforts a few organizations submitted unsolicited proposals to the Department. Three criteria were used to identify candidate pilot projects. Note that these projects are called "candidate" because their identification by USDA does not guarantee that they will be approved by AmeriCorps. The criteria are:

- (1) Does the project conform to the criteria established by the Corporation for National and Community Service;
- (2) Does the project maximize the Department's ability to use its resources in unique ways with an emphasis on the greatest number of partnerships between other Federal agencies, public, and non-profit organizations;
- (3) Does the project maximize the Department's ability to establish sound Department-wide rules, policies, and, procedures for the implementation of national service within its agencies.

- b. Table 2. shows the projects selected for the FY 94 Summer of Safety application submitted by the Department and the reasons for their selection.

Table 2. FY 94 Summer of Safety Pilot Projects

PROJECT	CRITERIA	RATIONALE FOR SELECTION
Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences	1. Conform to AmeriCorps criteria.	<p>Participants will be doing work in three areas identified as appropriate for Summer of Safety:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Youth as a Resource</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Restoring Safety to Public Spaces</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Youth Safety Initiatives</p>
	2. Maximize Department's ability to use its resources and partner with other agencies.	Run in conjunction with the Justice Department, this project involves the participation of the Extension Service, Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, The Chicago Public School District, and The Chicago Housing Authority. This mix of partners was not found in any other potential pilot project.
	3. Maximize Department's ability to establish sound policies and procedures for future awards.	The large number of partners, the relationship between USDA and the Justice Department and several local agencies lends itself to identifying issues and solutions in a wide variety of situations
Arizona Department of Youth Treatment and Rehabilitation	1. Conform to AmeriCorps criteria.	<p>Participants will be doing work in three areas identified as appropriate for Summer of Safety:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Youth as a Resource</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Restoring Safety to Public Spaces</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Youth Safety Initiatives</p>

PROJECT	CRITERIA	RATIONALE FOR SELECTION
Arizona Department of Youth Treatment and Rehabilitation	2. Maximize Department's ability to use its resources and partner with other agencies.	Participants in this project include the State of Arizona Department of Youth Treatment and Rehabilitation, Arizona State University, the Forest Service and the Maricopa County Court System. It provides an expansion of the existing Youth Conservation Corps concept with the providing of service in an urban setting.
	3. Maximize Department's ability to establish sound policies and procedures for future awards.	The largest existing program in USDA that mirrors the national service concept is the Youth Conservation Corps. This project provides the opportunity to explore ways to expand that concept and integrate it with national service. It also provides an opportunity to work with elements of the local justice system to determine ways to best structure national service programs targeted at crime related issues.

V. EXISTING COMPETITION

There is already an element of competition in the award process. Projects developed by the Department are submitted to the Corporation for National and Community Service. All applications are reviewed by panels of independent experts, graded, and then evaluated by the Corporation's management before they are rejected or approved.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20250-1300

September 20, 1993

**DECISION MEMO FOR THE SECRETARY**

**From:** Joel Berg, Deputy Director of Public Affairs

**Through:** Ali Webb, Director of Public Affairs

**Subject:** Next Steps for National Service at USDA

*JB*  
*AW*

**ISSUE:**

As you know, the National Service Trust Act will be signed by President Clinton tomorrow. While slightly scaled-down in cost and size, the final law basically resembles the broad outlines of the national service program that Clinton proposed during the campaign. It is a major victory for both President Clinton and the "New Democrat" politics championed by the DLC.

The House version of the bill contained an amendment by Congressman George Miller mandating that USDA run an environmental corps on public lands. Since you had previously testified in the Senate about your intention for USDA to run precisely such a program, we strongly supported the amendment and it was included in the final conference bill.

As a direct consequence of your vocal public support for national service, I have been able to obtain strong backing for our long-term planning efforts from most USDA agencies. The White House has continually recognized USDA as the leading Cabinet department in promoting the initiative, which is one of the President's top priorities.

USDA is also playing a major role in coordinating flood relief efforts tied to youth service. Ron brokered a compromise between myself and the Extension Service wherein a minimum of 10% of the disaster relief money spent by the Extension Service in the Midwest -- a minimum of \$290,000 -- will be used for 4-H youth service projects. Additionally, John Maynor and I are working closely with Secretary of Education Riley's office to determine what role we can have in helping manage a program authorized by the disaster bill that will allow up to \$8 million in work-study funds to be used for Midwest college students involved in community flood relief projects.

With regard to our long-term, non-flood related planning, we have made great progress. I have informally solicited help from over 30 different USDA employees in 10 different agencies. However, now that the bill has become law, I believe we should institutionalize our planning group into a cross-agency management team, which will eventually run our Anti-Hunger, Nutrition, and Empowerment Corps, our Rural Development Corps, and our Environmental Corps.

In order to properly run a complex and challenging new program, I believe we need to build a management team comprised of some of the most talented and highly motivated employees from a wide range of USDA agencies. My goal is to make the assignment to the national service management team one of the most prestigious and sought-after jobs in the Department. With your continued support, national service will be a flagship project demonstrating the effectiveness of your "Team USDA."

DECISION # 1:

I recommend detailing six career employees from various USDA agencies to work full-time on developing our national service initiatives. I recommend selecting the detailees after conducting a Department-wide search open to all USDA employees. I recommend that at least three of the six employees will have program experience in nutrition, rural development, and natural resources. I further recommend that you direct the Assistant Secretary for Administration to find office space for at least nine employees to work together. (The six detailees, my assistant, and two full-time, non-paid interns.)

Agree \_\_\_\_\_

Date 9/30/93

Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss with me  \_\_\_\_\_

DECISION # 2:

I recommend that, by either meeting or memo, you communicate to your Sub-Cabinet and the relevant Agency Administrators that national service is an important priority for both the President and yourself. I recommend that you ask them to give full support for non-reimbursable details for the six employees mentioned above.

Agree to do in a meeting  \_\_\_\_\_

Date 9/30/93

Agree to do by memo \_\_\_\_\_

Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss with me  \_\_\_\_\_



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

## DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

### USDA NATIONAL SERVICE BUDGET



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20250-1300

D9400

January 21, 1994

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

From: Joel Berg, Deputy Director of Public Affairs

JB

Subject: **Budget for USDA National Service Projects**

Background:

As you will read in the attached memorandum to you from Mack McLarty and Eli Segal (attachment A), the White House hopes that Cabinet agencies will match Corporation for National Community Service funds with money from their own budgets in order to pay for agency-sponsored national service projects.

In response to the White House request, I am now in the process of consulting with USDA under and assistant secretaries, agency administrators, and office heads to determine potential resources for our national service programs. This process will soon discern how much money USDA agencies are willing to contribute voluntarily to national service, but I need direction regarding the size, scope, and budget of the overall program you would like the Department to manage.

**I still hope to discuss budget issues and other key national service issues with you personally. However, I am requesting that you make decisions about USDA's national service budget as soon as possible, so I can work with OBPA and OMB to incorporate our proposal into the President's budget before his February 7 address to Congress.** The charts on the following three pages outline the three phases I am proposing for USDA national service projects:

**In Phase One**, starting this April, USDA would assign personnel to help manage Civilian Community Corps Projects in Maryland.

**In Phase Two**, this July through August, USDA would help manage an urban farming project with the Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences and a forestry project in Arizona or California.

**In Phase Three**, starting this Fall, USDA would begin to run our long-term Rural Development, Empowerment and Anti-Hunger, and Public Lands and Environmental Teams.

**In this memorandum, I request that you make five decisions on critical budgetary and structural issues that must be resolved before we can proceed with any of the three phases.**

## Phase 1, Starts April 1994

**What:** Team USDA Coordinates Civilian Community Corps Projects

**Projects:** Corps Projects Include Environmental, Anti-Hunger, and Midwest Disaster Relief Work

**Where:** Based in Ft. Meade, Maryland, But Work Will Be in Baltimore, Eastern Shore, Virginia National Forests, and Flood Areas of the Midwest

**Number of Participants:** 60

**USDA Budget:** None, Except for Staff Time in Helping the Corps Run USDA-Related Projects

## Phase 2, Starts July 1994

**What:** Team USDA Runs Summer of Service Programs

**Projects:** Gang Members and Other at-Risk Youth Engage in Environmental Work in a National Forest and in Urban Farming at Sites Throughout a Major City

**Where:** Two Sites, One Possibly in Chicago and Another Possibly in Arizona or Southern California

**Number of Participants:** 100 or 50

**USDA Budget:** \$800,000 or \$400,000

## Phase 3, Starts September 1994

**What:** USDA Year-Round AmeriCorps Projects Begin

**Projects:** Teams Conduct Work on Empowerment and Anti-Hunger, Public Lands and the Environment, and Rural Development - Each Team Also Has Sustainable Agriculture Component

**Where:** 50 Programs in 49 States, 30 Programs in 31 States, or 21 Programs in 19 States

**Number of Participants:** 2,400 or 1,400 or 1,000

**USDA Budget:** \$45 Million, \$25 Million, or \$19 Million

Decision #1: Personnel Support for April Projects in Maryland

**Phase One** of USDA national service activities could begin this April if USDA provides assistance to projects sponsored by the Civilian Community Corps (CCC) in Maryland. The National and Community Service Act mandates the Secretary of Agriculture to develop proposals for the CCC, a national set of pilot youth service programs to be operated on closed military bases.

Phil Caplan of the White House Office of Cabinet Affairs sent the attached memorandum to Ron Blackley further urging us to help with CCC these projects (Attachment B).

Even prior to Ron's exchange with Phil Caplan, I had met with the CCC staff to discuss how USDA could help their program. We discussed the possibility of USDA loaning staff and providing technical assistance to the CCC's first projects.

There are many USDA-related projects that CCC could help manage, including: building a SCS nature trail for visitors in Beltsville; performing anti-hunger and other anti-poverty work in Baltimore; working with SCS to improve the water quality of the Anacostia River and the Chesapeake Bay; providing food assistance to migrant farm workers on the nearby Delmarva Peninsula of Delaware; running urban farms in Baltimore; working on the George Washington National Forest in Virginia; and travelling to the Midwest to provide flood relief.

**Recommendation #1:**

USDA should temporarily detail at least one employee from relevant agencies to help manage each USDA-related work project. Some possible examples: a FNS employee would be detailed to an anti-hunger project; a SCS employee would be detailed to a water quality project; or an Extension Service employee would be detailed to an urban farming project.

I further recommend that the Forest Service open their residential barracks in the George Washington National Forest and provide support personnel to CCC participants for a period of at least one month.

Agree \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss with me \_\_\_\_\_

Decision #2: Funding for Summer of Service Projects

**Phase Two** of USDA national service activities could begin this June if USDA helps run Summer of Service projects. Each year, the Corporation for National and Community Service designates a theme for special summer projects; last year's theme was "children," this year's theme will be "public safety." I am now investigating ways that USDA can help manage summer programs that combine our traditional functions with improving public safety. I have two ideas on how this can be achieved.

In conjunction with the Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences, as well as with a partner school elsewhere in Chicago or its suburbs, USDA could help run a summer project aimed at mobilizing recent high school graduates with agricultural training to recruit gang members and other at-risk youth to run urban farms. The program participants would then help form community anti-crime patrols at the farms and create "safe-havens" surrounding the farms for other community activities. Given your strong support for the Chicago school, and USDA's difficulty in providing the school with other significant funds, this summer project would be one concrete way to help.

In conjunction with an existing youth service corps or a state department of youth rehabilitation, youth offenders, gang members, and other at-risk youth could be recruited to work side-by-side with college students in conservation work in national forests. Organizations in Arizona and California have already expressed an interest in participating in such a program.

**Recommendation #2:**

USDA should manage both an urban farming program in Chicago and a forestry program in California or Arizona. The National Future Farmers of America Foundation has offered to attempt to help raise money for the Chicago project. In addition, both projects may be able to obtain funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service. In the event that we obtain no outside funding, each program would cost USDA \$400,000; both would cost \$800,000.

Agree to both summer programs \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approve only urban farming program \_\_\_\_\_

Disapprove of either \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss with me \_\_\_\_\_

### Decision #3: Funding for Long-Term AmeriCorps Pilot Sites

**Phase Three** -- the final and long-term phase -- of USDA national service activities could begin in September with the three AmeriCorps teams you have previously announced: the Rural Development Team, the Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Team, and the Public Lands and Environment Team.

These teams will provide a quick and dramatic vehicle with which you and President Clinton can demonstrate your success in reinventing government. They will fulfill the basic missions of USDA while meeting the critical needs of each community served.

We will make every effort to locate our pilot projects in Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities. Pilot programs could also be specifically targeted at rural communities facing short-term job dislocations because of NAFTA, the Northwest Forest Plan, or military base closings.

Additionally, our programs will also reunite the interests of the middle-class and the poor by allowing young people from all types of families to earn their way through post-secondary education. Such programs will likely be highly popular.

Due to a variety of factors, including differentials in the amount of the stipends and differing costs for residential and non-residential programs, each of our three teams will have differing costs per server. Each Rural Development Team member will cost around \$30,000 per year, each Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Team member will cost around \$15,000 per year, and each Public Lands and Environment Team member will cost between \$15,000 - \$20,000 per year. In each case, these estimates include the cost of a \$4,725 educational voucher.

Below I will outline possible USDA funding options. My estimates for the number of participants that could be served by each USDA funding level assume that USDA and our partner agencies will receive a minimum of a \$5 million grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service out of a total pot of \$18 million available for all federal agencies.

Following are three maps which indicate the number, type, and potential locations of AmeriCorps/USDA pilot sites if we were to spend \$19 million, \$25 million, or \$45 million dollars.

**I must stress that none of the pilot locations have been selected yet; these maps are intended to give you a general idea of the type of geographical spread we could achieve for various funding levels.**

**The \$19 million option** would fund: 1,000 participants, including 400 in the Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Team, 400 in the Public Lands and Environment Team, and 200 in the Rural Development Team. The participants would work in five Rural Development sites of 40 people each, eight Empowerment and Anti-Hunger sites (half urban, half rural) of 50 people each, and eight Public Lands and Environment sites ( half urban, half rural) of 50 people each.

**The \$25 million option** would fund: 1,400 participants, including 500 in the Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Team, 500 in the Public Lands and Environment Team, and 400 in the Rural Development Team. The participants would work in ten Rural Development sites of 40 people each, ten Empowerment and Anti-Hunger sites (half urban, half rural) of 50 people each, and ten Public Lands and Environment sites ( half urban, half rural) of 50 people each.

**The \$45 million option** would fund: 2,400 participants, including 1,000 in the Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Team, 1,000 in the Public Lands and Environment Team, and 400 in the Rural Development Team. The participants would work in ten Rural Development sites of 40 people each, 20 Empowerment and Anti-Hunger sites (half urban, half rural) of 50 people each, and 20 Public Lands and Environment sites ( half urban, half rural) of 50 people each.

### **Recommendation #3:**

Given the strong backing of President Clinton and OMB Director Leon Panetta for national service, it is possible, despite the advanced state of the budget process, for USDA to either request FY95 line items or special earmarks for our AmeriCorps projects. I recommend that you direct OBPA to work with me to develop a \$25 million AmeriCorps budget for FY95. This \$25 million figure represents about 1.3% of the \$1.8 billion of discretionary spending in USDA rural development, environmental, and anti-hunger programs that carry out tasks similar to those to be performed by our AmeriCorps Teams. This budget would fund 1,400 participants at 30 pilot locations -- an ambitious but manageable goal for our first year.

Agree to \$25 million option \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approve \$45 million option \_\_\_\_\_

Approve \$19 million option \_\_\_\_\_

Approve no USDA funds \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss with me \_\_\_\_\_

#### Decision #4: Creation of USDA Center for National Service

I strongly believe that our AmeriCorps program will be most likely to succeed if it is managed in a non-traditional and non-bureaucratic manner that cuts across existing USDA agency lines.

Despite strong support for my planning efforts from the White House and from Ron Blackley, some agencies have reacted to my initial requests for help with indifference or hostility.

One agency even continues to hamper our efforts to incorporate youth service activities in Midwest flood relief.

Furthermore, many of our team concepts would require help from agencies that, even under your reorganization plan, will continue to be managed by different under and assistant secretaries. For instance, the Rural Development Team will need help from RDA, the Forest Service, the Extension Service, FmHA, REA, and SCS. The Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Team would need help from FNS, the Extension Service, AMS, and HNIS.

Even the Public Lands and Environment Team, which will be run mostly by employees under Jim Lyons on the Forest Service or SCS, will still likely need help from sustainable agriculture experts in ARS, outreach workers in the Extension Service, and conservation program employees in ASCS. Based on these cross cutting needs, USDA AmeriCorps programs will work best if coordinated at the departmental level.

**We must have a management structure which will guarantee that AmeriCorps/USDA programs meet the vision of President Clinton and yourself rather than the bureaucratic idiosyncracies of individual USDA agencies.**

**AmeriCorps should be a flagship program for your "Team USDA" concept.**

I fully understand your reluctance to create a new USDA office at a time you are reducing offices and merging agencies. Therefore, I would recommend creation of a new "center" to guide USDA national service activities that would not technically be a new office or agency. Secretary Babbitt has already taken such an action at the Department of Interior.

This new center could either remain tied to public affairs functions by being placed in the new Office of Communications (OC) or it could be created as a free-standing entity that reports directly to the Secretary and would be administered under the umbrella of Executive Operations.

The new center could manage a large AmeriCorps/USDA program with only ten full-time employees in Washington, who would be recruited from the ranks of existing USDA employees: a Director, a Rural Development Team Coordinator, an Empowerment and Anti-Hunger Team Coordinator, a Public Lands and Environment Team Coordinator, an Internal and External Communications Coordinator, a Coordinator of Recruitment and Training, a Coordinator of Private and Non-Profit Fundraising, an Office Manager, a Staff Assistant, and a Receptionist.

If the new center operates with staff detailed from USDA agencies, it would need its own budget of only \$231,931 for FY95 (Attachment C). If, however, the new center operates with employees whose positions have been transferred from agencies, then it would need its own budget of \$862,744 for FY95. (Attachment D). You could take either action, under the authority of the National and Community Service Trust Act, without further approval from Congress.

**Either budget for the center could be funded out of the \$19 million, \$25 million, or \$45 million you would set aside to run our three AmeriCorps Teams.**

**Recommendation #4:**

If you approve of USDA managing significant AmeriCorps program with sites across the country, management of that program will require leadership independent of the office of public affairs. I therefore recommend that you create a new USDA Center for National Service that reports directly to the Secretary under the umbrella of Executive Operations. The office would have ten employees transferred from other USDA agencies.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Agree to new independent center with transferred employees \_\_\_\_\_

Approve new independent center with detailed employees \_\_\_\_\_

Approve new center within OC with transferred employees \_\_\_\_\_

Approve new center within OC with detailed employees \_\_\_\_\_

Disapprove of any new national service structure \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss with me \_\_\_\_\_

Decision #5: Method for Obtaining National Service Budget

Funding for USDA AmeriCorps initiatives could either be requested through new separate line item or multiple line items in the USDA budget request, or it could simply be earmarked as a Secretarial initiative with funds coming from a wide variety of existing programs.

As you will see in the attached summary of existing FY94 budget items (Attachments E - H), I have identified almost \$2 billion in discretionary spending in USDA programs that carry out tasks similar to those that will be carried out by our three AmeriCorps Teams. I identified \$823 million in rural development, \$225 million in feeding programs and nutrition, and \$815 million in natural resources and the environment. Each figure represents overhead funds (not in loans or entitlements) which could be tapped legally to help fund AmeriCorps. By spreading the earmarks over a dozen USDA agencies, no single agency would be required to make an unreasonable contribution.

**Recommendation #5:**

While earmarking is the easiest approach, obtaining a separate budget line item increase the visibility of AmeriCorps, reduce resistance from USDA agencies, and make it more likely that AmeriCorps will develop strong Congressional supporters who will help institutionalize it. I recommend that the USDA seek a separate line item in the FY95 budget for each of our three AmeriCorps teams.

Agree to line item requests \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approve of earmarking approach \_\_\_\_\_

Disapprove of any budget request \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss with me \_\_\_\_\_

A

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

August 12, 1993

MEMORANDUM FOR CABINET SECRETARIES

FROM: MACK McLARTY  
ELI SECAL

SUBJECT: Budgetary Support for National Service

Congressional consideration of National Service legislation is now nearing conclusion. The President expects to sign the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 into law in early September.

The support and active assistance of your department is critical if we are to create quality placements for more than 20,000 Americans this coming year. With your help, many of these participants will become engaged in service activities which directly advance the missions of your departments.

Some federal agencies are already engaged in using full-time volunteers to deliver their programs across the country. For example, the Department of Defense supports Summer of Service and VISTA Summer Associate volunteers serving in communities impacted by base closure and realignment of military facilities. The Department of Health and Human Services involves Foster Grandparents in Head Start programs in a number of communities. Many other agencies, including the Department of Justice, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Interior are currently considering new or expanded efforts.

In addition to these ongoing efforts, National Service is a cost effective way of dealing with many national emergencies. With the assistance of the Department of Agriculture and Federal Emergency Management Agency, for example, additional service volunteers have already begun assisting communities rebuilding after the Midwestern floods.

As you develop your operating plans for FY 1994 and your budget requests for FY 1995, we ask that you identify areas where National Service volunteers can be effectively used to deliver the Administration's programs. Over the months to come, we will be discussing these matters with you in greater depth. As you know, this effort is the main agenda item for the inter-departmental working group chaired by Peter Edelman. Please call on Peter to meet with your senior staff if you would like to discuss this initiative in greater detail.

Original to: CofS-Ron Blackley  
cc: OPA/OPL DepDir-Joel Berg

B

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

December 27, 1993

MEMORANDUM TO RON BLACKLEY

FROM: PHIL CAPLAN *PC*  
SUBJ: Civilian Community Corps

As we spoke about after a breakfast last month, I have enclosed briefing material about the Civilian Community Corps, part of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The legislation calls for the Secretary of Agriculture to "develop proposals for the Corps" and to sit on the Advisory Board (see pp. 63 and 68 of the attached statute).

General Donald Scott or Sarah Whitman, both of the CCC, will follow-up with you soon.

Please call if you have any questions.

Thank you.

BUDGET FOR USDA CENTER FOR NATIONAL SERVICE WITH ALL STAFF DETAILED

C

12/30/93

CENTER FOR NATIONAL SERVICE  
FY 95 BUDGET  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

SECTION I -----		OPERATING PLANS	ACTUAL OBLIGATIONS	PROJECTED COMMITMENTS	PROJECTED FOR YEAR	VARIANCE FROM PLAN
1100	Salaries:					
	Salaries	0	0	0	0	0
	Overtime	0	0	0	0	0
	Awards	0	0	0	0	0
	Lump Sum Payment	0	0	0	0	0
1200	Benefits	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL, SECTION I		0	0	0	0	0
SECTION II -----		OPERATING PLAN	ACTUAL OBLIGATIONS	COMMITMENTS THROUGH 04/15/93	OBLIGATION/ COMMITMENTS	UNOBLIGATED AS OF 04/16/93
2100	Travel	60,000	0	0	0	60,000
2200	Transportation of Things	2,000	0	0	0	2,000
2300	Rent, Comm, Utilities:					
	Leases	0	0	0	0	0
	Mail/Communications	8,700	0	0	0	8,700
	Rent/Etc., Subtotal	8,700	0	0	0	8,700
2400	Print, Reproduction:					
	Printing	7,000	0	0	0	7,000
	Photography	3,300	0	0	0	3,300
		0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0
	Print/Repro, Subtotal	10,300	0	0	0	10,300
2500	Other Services					
	Training	0	0	0	0	0
	Design	5,000	0	0	0	5,000
	Video and Film	5,000	0	0	0	5,000
	Repair and Maintenance	1,300	0	0	0	1,300
	Teleconferences	29,180	0	0	0	29,180
	Contractors/Agreements	5,000	0	0	0	5,000
		0	0	0	0	0
	Miscellaneous	3,996	0	0	0	3,996
	Fees	3,000	0	0	0	3,000
	Other Ser., Subtotal	52,476	0	0	0	52,476
2600	Supplies/Materials					
	Subscript/Public	250	0	0	0	250
	Supplies/Materials	2,550	0	0	0	2,550
	ADP Software	3,150	0	0	0	3,150
	Gasoline	0	0	0	0	0
	Supplies/Mat., Subtotal	5,950	0	0	0	5,950
3100	Equipment:					
	Equipment	1,000	0	0	0	1,000
	ADP Equipment	10,500	0	0	0	10,500
	Equipment, Subtotal	11,500	0	0	0	11,500
4100	Prompt Payment Act	0	0	0	0	0
	Greenbook Costs	80,995	0	0	0	80,995
		0	0	0	0	0
	Reserve	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL, SECTION II		231,921	0	0	0	231,921
TOTAL, SEC. I & II		231,921	0	0	0	231,921

## BUDGET FOR USDA CENTER FOR NATIONAL SERVICE WITH TEN FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

12/27/93

 CENTER FOR NATIONAL SERVICE  
 FY 95 BUDGET  
 OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

SECTION I -----	OPERATING PLANS	ACTUAL OBLIGATIONS	PROJECTED COMMITMENTS	PROJECTED FOR YEAR	VARIANCE FROM PLAN
1100 Salaries:					
Salaries	522,096	0	0	0	522,096
Overtime	1,000	0	0	0	1,000
Awards	0	0	0	0	0
Lump Sum Payment	0	0	0	0	0
1200 Benefits	144,983	0	0	0	144,983
TOTAL, SECTION I	668,079	0	0	0	668,079
SECTION II -----	OPERATING PLAN	ACTUAL OBLIGATIONS	COMMITMENTS THROUGH 04/15/93	OBLIGATION/ COMMITMENTS	UNOBLIGATED AS OF 04/16/93
2100 Travel	60,000	0	0	0	60,000
2200 Transportation of Things	1,000	0	0	0	1,000
2300 Rent, Comm, Utilities:					
Leases	0	0	0	0	0
Mail/Communications	5,800	0	0	0	5,800
Rent/Etc., Subtotal	5,800	0	0	0	5,800
2400 Print, Reproduction:					
Printing	4,500	0	0	0	4,500
Photography	3,000	0	0	0	3,000
	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0
Print/Repro, Subtotal	7,500	0	0	0	7,500
2500 Other Services					
Training	0	0	0	0	0
Design	5,000	0	0	0	5,000
Video and Film	5,000	0	0	0	5,000
Repair and Maintenance	1,000	0	0	0	1,000
Teleconferences	22,320	0	0	0	22,320
Contractors/Agreements	1,800	0	0	0	1,800
Labor Employment	0	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	1,000	0	0	0	1,000
Fees	1,000	0	0	0	1,000
Other Ser., Subtotal	37,120	0	0	0	37,120
2600 Supplies/Materials					
Subscript/Public	250	0	0	0	250
Supplies/Materials	2,000	0	0	0	2,000
ADP Software	1,000	0	0	0	1,000
Gasoline	0	0	0	0	0
Supplies/Mat., Subtotal	3,250	0	0	0	3,250
3100 Equipment:					
Equipment	1,000	0	0	0	1,000
ADP Equipment	5,000	0	0	0	5,000
Equipment, Subtotal	6,000	0	0	0	6,000
4100 Prompt Payment Act	0	0	0	0	0
Greenbook Costs	73,995	0	0	0	73,995
	0	0	0	0	0
Reserve	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL, SECTION II	194,665	0	0	0	194,665
TOTAL, SEC. I & II	862,744	0	0	0	862,744

POSSIBLE FUNDS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM  
ALREADY IN USDA BUDGET

TITLE	DESCRIPTION FROM FY 94 EXPLANATORY NOTES	POTENTIAL FUNDS (IN MILLIONS)
FMHA Very Low-Income Repair Grants	Provides funds for grants to very low-income elderly owner-occupants to make necessary repairs to improve and modernize their dwellings in order to remove safety and health hazards.	25.000
FMHA Rural Housing for Domestic Farm Labor	Provides funds for USDA to share with state or other political subdivisions, public or private nonprofit organizations, or nonprofit organizations of farmworkers the cost of providing low-rent housing, basic household furnishings and related facilities to be used by domestic farm laborers.	11.000
FMHA Mutual and Self-Help Housing Grants'	Provides funds for grants made to local organizations to promote the development of mutual or self-help housing programs under which groups of usually six to ten families build their own homes by mutually exchanging labor. Funds may be used to pay for construction supervisors who will work with the families.	12.750
FMHA Rural Housing Preservation Grants	Provides funds for grants to eligible private nonprofit groups, Indian tribes, and government agencies for the rehabilitation of single family housing owned by low-income and very low-income families and the rehabilitation of rental and cooperative housing for low and very low-income families.	23.000
FMHA Supervisory and Technical Assistance Grants	Provides funds for grants to public and private nonprofit organizations for packaging loan applications for housing assistance under the various housing programs of FMHA.	2.500
FS Research on Enhancing Rural America	Provides funds for research on ways to broaden the economic opportunities available to rural communities with forest-based economies.	13.000
FS Economic Recovery	Provides technical and financial assistance to help communities that have become distressed due to their economic dependence on forest resources, including timber.	4.864
FS Rural Development	Strives to strengthen rural communities and enhance their social and natural environments. Through a more diverse use of forest resources -wood, recreation, wildlife, minerals, scenic quality - communities can develop natural resource-based opportunities and enterprises.	3.890
FS Economic Diversification Studies	Provides funds for studies to be cost-shared with participating communities to develop alternative economic opportunities for strengthening rural communities or regions.	0.550
FS Forest Products Conservation and Recycling	Provides funds to allow the program staff to be a partner in coalitions concerned with the future of both rural and urban communities with an emphasis on, among other things: the role of proper utilization of forest resources in economic development and business retention; identification of needs as part of research project planning and application of new technologies.	1.500

TITLE	DESCRIPTION FROM FY 94 EXPLANATORY NOTES	POTENTIAL FUNDS (IN MILLIONS)
FMHA Very Low-Income Repair Grants	Provides funds for grants to very low-income elderly owner-occupants to make necessary repairs to improve and modernize their dwellings in order to remove safety and health hazards.	25.000
ES Rural Development Centers		.950
Alternative Agriculture Research and Commercialization Center	Provides funds for the Center to offer grants to support the development and commercialization of new industrial and consumer products and uses for agricultural and forestry materials, with preference for projects that benefit rural communities and are environmentally friendly.	6.500
ES Farm Safety	Provides funds for proposals including training emergency rescue professionals in farm accident extrication procedures and education of nonprofessional in first-on-the-scene emergency response procedures.	1.975
CSRS National Research Initiative Competitive Grants	Provides funds for research grants. Emphasis is placed on research in the areas of natural resources and the environment; nutrition, food quality, and health; plant systems; animal systems; rural development, markets, and trade; and processing of value added products.	107.664
RDA Water and Waste Disposal Grants	Provides funds for grants to public and quasi-public, and nonprofit associations, and to certain Indian tribes for the development, storage, treatment, purification, and distribution of water or the collection, treatment, or disposal of waste in rural areas.	500.000
RDA Rural Business Enterprise Grants	Provides funds for grants to finance and facilitate development of small and emerging private business enterprises in rural areas or cities of up to 50,000 population.	42.500
REA Rural Economic Development Grants	Provides funds for grants for the purpose of promoting rural economic development and job creation projects including funding for project feasibility studies costs, start-up costs, incubator projects, and other expenses for the purpose of fostering rural development.	13.025
APHIS Scientific and Technical Services	Programs develop methods to control animals and pests; conduct diagnostic laboratory activities that support the Agency's veterinary programs; and also provides and directs technology development in coordination with other groups in APHIS to support plant protection programs of the agency and its cooperators at the State, national and international level.	53.008
<u>RURAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL FUNDS SUBTOTAL IN MILLIONS:</u>		<b>823.68</b>

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDS FOR  
ANTI-HUNGER AND EMPOWERMENT TEAMS  
ALREADY IN USDA BUDGET

G

TITLE	DESCRIPTION FROM FY 94 EXPLANATORY NOTES	POTENTIAL FUNDS (IN MILLIONS)
ES Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program	Targets low-income youth and families with young children and helps them to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and changed behavior necessary to improve their diets.	61.431
ES D.C. Extension Service	Conducts programs in the District of Columbia addressing critical issues and problems, especially in the areas of youth development, family living, home horticulture, consumer education, community resource development, and food and nutrition.	1.038
ES Food Safety	Conducts education projects which address the needs of the different participants within the food industry. The aim is to increase responsible involvement in protecting the safety of the food supply.	1.975
ES Indian Reservation Extension Education		1.750
ES Nutrition Education Initiative	Provides funds for programs in which the Extension Service and FNS are collaborating to develop nutrition education programs that target the most needy WIC clients, who are vulnerable to at-risk factors and to those who are eligible for food assistance programs and need help to receive these benefits.	4.265
ES Rural Health and Safety		2.000
HNIS Research Program	Provides funds for competitive contracts to conduct various research activities.	.075
FNS Nutrition Studies and Education	Provides funds for FNS nutrition studies and education efforts.	15.835
FNS WIC Evaluation Projects	Provides funds for various projects to evaluate the effectiveness of the WIC program as well as provide resources for States to conduct individual evaluations	.500
FNS Food Stamp Employment and Training Program	Provides funds for 100 percent grants to States to implement employment and training programs for the purpose of assisting members of households participating in the Food Stamp Program in gaining skills, training or experience that will increase their ability to obtain regular employment.	75.00
FNS Food Stamp Research, Evaluation, and Demonstration Projects	Funds to support the FNS research agenda in several areas including, welfare reform, coordination and simplification, evaluation of program effectiveness operations and integrity, and nutrition education and monitoring.	10.600

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDS FOR  
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC LANDS TEAM  
ALREADY IN USDA BUDGET

TITLE	DESCRIPTION FROM FY 94 EXPLANATORY NOTES	POTENTIAL FUNDS (IN MILLIONS)
FS Urban and Community Forestry	Provides for State Foresters and contracted private consulting foresters to give technical assistance to private landowners to develop plans for and ensure proper tree planting.	12.500
FS Trees for the Future	Provides for expanded tree planting and stewardship efforts on private forest lands and in urban and community areas. In addition to environmental benefits, urban forestry programs can provide productive seasonal jobs for inner city youth.	12.500
FS Maintenance of Facilities	Provides for Maintenance and minor renovation of facilities including roof replacements, siding, painting, floor coverings, and electrical and mechanical systems.	26.495
FS Forest Road Maintenance	Provides for maintenance planning, roadside brushing, surface grading, replace/repair bridges and other structures and obliteration of roads no longer needed.	82.198
FS Forest Trail Maintenance	Provides for maintenance work including clearing pathways of encroaching vegetation and fallen trees, repairing or improving trail signs, treadways, drainage facilities, and bridges.	31.332
FS Research Construction	Provides construction of research facilities.	3.572
FS Construction for Fire, Administrative, and other Purposes	Provides for replacement, construction and improvement of offices, employee housing, service and storage buildings, nursery buildings, airports, and heliports. Also provides water, waste, electrical and similar utility systems to provide quality facilities to support fire and general administrative purposes.	10.264
FS Recreation Construction	Provides for repair and rehabilitation of existing recreation facilities, to meet health and safety standards, protect soil and water resources and to construct new facilities to meet public recreation needs.	73.604
FS Forest Road Construction	Program finances for planning, management, project engineering, construction, and reconstruction of multipurpose road systems on and adjacent to NFS land.	133.218
FS Trail Construction	Provides for redevelopment and improvement of the trail system. Trail redevelopment emphasizes the reconstruction and relocation of substandard trails resulting from age, heavy use, location or lack of maintenance. Reconstruction includes facility work such as bridge replacement, tread replacement, drainage structures, and barrier removal.	33.510
FS Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Infrastructure Initiative	Provides for correcting resource damage and health and safety conditions by accomplishing heavy maintenance and repair of recreation facilities especially in counties with high unemployment.	79.000

TITLE	DESCRIPTION FROM FY 94 EXPLANATORY NOTES	POTENTIAL FUNDS (IN MILLIONS)
ARS Research on Soil, Water, and Air Sciences	Provides for development of management guidelines, practices, and systems for promoting cost-effective conservation and enhancement of the quality and production capacity of our Nation's soil, water, and air resources. Emphasis is being placed on water quality protection, sustainable agriculture, waste utilization, and a better understanding of the impact of global change on agricultural productivity on soil and water conservation and protection.	83.524
ES Sustainable Agriculture	The program provides a critical step between research efforts and producers adopting improved management practices. The program focuses on: establishing validation applied research and demonstration projects; developing databases and decision support systems utilizing research based information resulting from projects funded under subtitle B.	2.963
ASCS Water Bank Program	Provides technical assistance to land owners and operators who enter into agreements for the conservation of specific wetlands.	1.490
SCS Conservation Technical Assistance	Provides funds for specialists to inventory and interpret site-specific information about soil, plant, water, and other physical conditions to determine feasible alternative land uses and conservation treatment alternatives.	24.509
SCS Great Plains Conservation Program	Provides assistance to farmers and ranchers in planning and applying resource management systems on their farms and ranches to prevent or reduce the effects of the climatic hazards of the area.	6.055
SCS Watershed and Flood Prevention Services	Provides funds to carry out preventative measures, including but not limited to reseed, engineering operations, methods of cultivation, the growing of vegetation, rehabilitation of existing work and changes in use of land.	50.122
SCS Watershed Planning	Provides funds for the Department to make surveys of proposed small watershed projects and prepares plans in cooperation with local sponsors.	1.920
SCS Resource Conservation and Development	Provides assistance to farmers and ranchers in planning and applying resource management systems on their farms and ranches to prevent or reduce the effects of the climatic hazards of the area.	26.871
SCS River Basin Surveys and Investigations	Provides funds to conduct research, investigations, and surveys of watersheds of rivers and other waterways.	1.154
Reforestation and Stand Improvement	Provides funds to reforest harvested areas, unsuccessful plantations, and areas damaged by fire, insects, or disease and to release planted trees from competing vegetation or overcrowding	62.828
ARS Special Fund	Provides funds for additional labor, subprofessional, and junior scientific help to be employed under contracts and cooperative agreements to strengthen work at Federal research installations in the field.	2.500
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC LANDS TEAM POTENTIAL FUNDS SUBTOTAL IN MILLIONS:</b>		<b>815.14</b>

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

THROUGH: Richard Rominger  
Deputy Secretary of Agriculture

FROM: Ali Webb  
Director of Communications

SUBJECT: Remaining Issues for Implementing the USDA AmeriCorps Program

**ISSUE:**

In order to formalize and institutionalize AmeriCorps at USDA, this decision memo -- drafted with extensive input from the Office of General Counsel (OGC) and the Office of Budget and Program Analysis (OBPA) -- requests that you: formally delegate authority for the AmeriCorps/USDA national service program, approve a process for staffing and funding the program and communicate your desire to continue the program in FY 96 and beyond.

**By signing off on the attached Secretary's Memorandum, you will empower me to work with the sub-cabinet, agency administrators, OGC, and OBPA to run the large and high-quality program we have planned -- without you having to review lengthy decision memos about technical issues. More importantly, you will make the program an institutionalized part of USDA.**

This memo will attempt to cover comprehensively the major national service decisions which need to be made now to implement our FY 95 TEAM USDA AmeriCorps program.

## **ISSUE # 1 - Need for a Formal AmeriCorps Management Group:**

Now that the Team USDA AmeriCorps national service program has moved from the planning stage to the actual implementation of projects, we need to establish formally the program within the Department's organizational structure. Such delegation is necessary now to avoid possible delays or obstacles to the USDA AmeriCorps program.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In September of 1993, Congress passed the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, which enables federal agencies to manage national service programs individually or manage them in partnership with others. Using the authorities contained in the Act and the existing authorities of USDA program agencies, I have worked with the Department's agencies and other federal departments to develop the Department's AmeriCorps program this year.

Thirteen different USDA agencies --- SCS, FS, FNS, FmHA, ASCS, RDA, REA, ARS, ES, AMS, OICD, NASS, and ERS --- will be actively involved in supporting AmeriCorps; to the extent permitted by law, some of these agencies will be providing funding and staff support while others will be providing critically needed technical assistance. While my effort to date to coordinate our planning efforts with all these sometimes competing agencies has been a difficult challenge, most of the USDA agencies have been ultimately supportive. The manner in which representatives from different agencies have worked together has been extremely encouraging to all those engaged in the process. What we have seen in developing this program is positive proof that the Secretary's vision for a reorganized and unified Department will succeed. The national service program demonstrates that there are significant benefits to the employees and to the public when we plan and act as a team and not a group of disparate agencies.

My staff and I have been able to function within an informal structure guided by your expressed interest in the program and everyone's desire to do a quality job in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations. Now that we have reached the point where formal agreements must be established between the USDA and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), as well as between the USDA and other federal, state, and local entities and non-profit organizations, there is a need for formal delegations of authority to allow the appropriate people to perform their duties. Specifically, there is a need for one person to be delegated the authority vested in you to oversee and coordinate the efforts of the USDA's agencies in developing and managing national service programs. I am convinced that we need a strong, non-bureaucratic, but fully empowered mechanism for managing national service at the Secretarial level. This program is too important to the President and too visible to be left to the agencies alone to manage. It requires someone with the authority to establish priorities and to create partnerships between agencies, and who has a clear picture of your vision and the President's vision.

Normally, the delegation of authority would be handled by identifying the organization that will manage the program and then amending the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) containing their existing authorities to add the national service program. However, the current delegations of authorities which specify the duties performed by the Director, Office of Communications are grossly out of date. The most current delegation of authority contained in the CFR is for the Office of Governmental and Public Affairs (OGPA) dating back to 1988. There has never been a formal delegation of authority which recognizes that in 1990 a portion of the duties of OGPA were assumed by the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, with the remainder assumed by the Director, Office of Public Affairs. To further complicate the issue, the existing delegation of authority does not reflect the current Office of Communications.

While it is clearly essential that the delegations of authority be brought up-to-date, that work will take a substantial amount of time. The deadlines and the requirements for planning and operating the USDA national service program make it imperative that a clear delegation of authority exist now. Many key national service issues have to be addressed immediately or certainly before a formal revision of the existing delegation of authority can be approved.

#### **OPTIONS For Issue # 1 - Need for a Formal AmeriCorps Management Group:**

1. **Do not delegate authority** to anyone to oversee centrally, manage and coordinate the USDA AmeriCorps program.

PRO: The agencies might feel that they were not being burdened by another layer of bureaucracy and will have more freedom to implement national service. Another advantage is that no paperwork would have to be done.

CON: It would be difficult to guarantee that the USDA national service program could be successfully implemented without a central authority to manage and coordinate the program. In fact, it is likely that the program would fail to meet our expectations of excellence, resulting in an undesirable outcome for the Administration, the Department, and the Secretary.

2. **Delay delegating authority for AmeriCorps until the existing OGPA Delegations of Authority can be revised** to reflect the current Office of Communications and Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations structures.

PRO: Making delegations by specifying them in the appropriate delegations of authority is the most complete way to make delegations.

CON: There is no argument about whether the existing delegations have to be amended. However, there is a substantial amount of work involved in amending existing delegations. The CNCS deadlines and the requirements of the USDA AmeriCorps program make it imperative that a clear delegations of authority exist now. Waiting until the existing delegations of authority are amended would jeopardize our conduct of an AmeriCorps program.

3. **By Secretary’s Memorandum Immediately** delegate the authority to manage the USDA AmeriCorps program to the Director of the Office of Communications, who will further delegate the authority to the Director of National Service. At the same time initiate the procedures to revise the existing delegations of authority for the Office of Governmental and Public Affairs (OGPA) to reflect the delegations of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations and the Office of Communications.

PRO: The Secretary’s memorandum requires substantially less effort to develop and would not impede or preempt any of the Secretary’s reorganization efforts but would delegate the authority necessary for the national service program to be centrally managed immediately. The revision of the delegations of authority which could proceed at their normal pace would not delay management of the USDA AmeriCorps program and would make the necessary delegations of authority for both the Office of Communications and the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations.

CON: Again, the agencies might view the establishment of a formal national service group as impinging on their authority. But regardless of their feelings on that issue, the OGPA delegations of authority have to be revised.

**RECOMMENDATION for Issue # 1 - Need for a Formal AmeriCorps Management Group:**

I recommend you implement option 3. This option would achieve Departmental coordination with the least amount of paperwork. Your signature on the attached Secretary’s Memorandum will formally establish the USDA national service program and delegate authority to manage this program to the Director of the Office of Communications who will in turn delegate this authority to the Director of National Service. It will also begin the long over due process of updating the Office of Governmental and Public Affairs delegations of authority to reflect the current Office of Communications and Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations.

**DECISION BY THE SECRETARY:**

Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_

**ISSUE #2 - Funding and Staffing of a AmeriCorps Management Group:**

The Office of Communications, in which the function of coordinating AmeriCorps is now housed, does not currently have either the budget or the FTE's to adequately support this expanding program. If you agree that the Team USDA AmeriCorps program should continue to have some centralized management group, then there is a need to institutionalize slightly expanded funding and staffing for that group.

**BACKGROUND:**

To date, the management group for these efforts has been composed of three people on full-time detail from the Office of Communications and various people on part-time detail from some of the agencies. Early start-up costs -- such as funding for travel and applications, copying the public service announcement you taped, and printing recruitment posters and brochures -- have been paid for primarily from the Office of Communications with some contributions from SCS and FS. As we move toward full implementation of the Team USDA AmeriCorps, it is important to fund and staff the formal management structure we have proposed to support the program, as well as prepare the agencies for their ever-increasing role in the Administration's national service initiatives. Without adequate staffing and funding, it will not be possible to manage effectively the 42 separate programs USDA will be operating in FY 95. It will also not be possible to fund changes to the personnel/payroll system necessary to operate one-half of our programs.

**OPTIONS for Issue 2 - Funding and Staffing the AmeriCorps Management Group:****1. Do not fund or staff the central management group.**

PRO: Agencies can proceed at their own pace in meeting their AmeriCorps objectives the best way each agency head sees fit.

CON: Without adequate funding or staffing, it will be impossible to support the central management organization recommended in issue 1. It will not be possible to coordinate a coherent set of operational guidelines, recruitment, training, and management procedures, and program objectives. In addition, many of the requirements of the CNCS involve interaction at the Departmental level. If a central organization is not staffed or funded to perform this role it would be necessary to create various task forces throughout the year to coordinate the agencies' efforts to evaluate programs, recruit participants, and submit an application to CNCS for a grant.

2. **Provide funding and staffing for the central management group from the agencies and the Office of Communications.** Use a small three- person staff in the Office of Communications supported by detailees from the agencies and funded in part with monies provided through an "assessment" of those agencies running or in the process of planning programs. This would combine the benefits of central management while reducing the burden on agency resources and, in fact, enhancing those resources through the training of agency personnel. The staff and funding requirements for this option are attached.

PRO: The program is managed centrally for the Secretary. No new organization has to be created. No separate budget has to be submitted. Detailees could be rotated into the national service support unit to learn Team USDA AmeriCorps procedures and polices and then return to their agencies to serve as a resource to manage the agency's individual program(s). Support and clerical staff would be detailed for six to eight months and professional staff would be detailed for eight to 12 months. Details would be on a non-reimbursable basis.

Each agency would be "assessed" an amount to cover a portion of the cost for the national support organization within the Office of Communications to perform its duties. The amount of the assessment would be based on the size of the organization's existing programs and those planned for the next year which must be worked on during the current fiscal year.

CON: Agencies may think they are "losing" the services of the personnel detailed. However, if the agency is running a national service program or programs and the detailees are helping to manage or operate those programs, then their services are not "lost" to the agency.

Again agencies may feel they are "losing" dollars. However, if the Secretary is to be guaranteed consistent and accountable management of the Team USDA national service initiatives, this money is a necessary expense associated with implementing national service.

3. **Establish a AmeriCorps Office in the Office of the Secretary.** Staff and fund this office by transferring positions and funds from the largest agencies expected to participate in national service programs.

PRO: A clear line of authority would exist from the Secretary to the national service office and its personnel. Funding necessary to support the program would be clearly identified.

CON: At a time when the Secretary is seeking to consolidate and trim USDA's organizational structure, a new office would be created. In addition, this may lead some Congressional opponents to claim we are creating a new bureaucracy.

**RECOMMENDATION for Issue # 2 - Funding and Staffing a National Service Group:**

I recommend you implement option 2, which would be a good compromise between either creating a large new formal office or simply letting the agencies work totally independently. This option achieves the objective of having an appropriate degree of central management while limiting the burden on the agency resources and leaving them with a substantial degree of flexibility in implementing national service projects. It is requested that you sign the attached memorandum directing the Under and Assistant Secretaries, agency administrators, and office heads to provide support to the Team USDA AmeriCorps national service program as outlined in the attachment to the memorandum. (The same memorandum also outlines FY 96 budget issues discussed in "Issue 3." )

**DECISION BY THE SECRETARY:**

Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_

### **ISSUE # 3 - Identify AmeriCorps Initiatives or Potential Initiatives in the FY 96 and FY 97 USDA Budgets.**

This year's USDA AmeriCorps program will be funded largely by approximately \$20 million in FY 95 funds appropriated to agencies for their regular activities. Working with the Office of The General Counsel, the Office of Budget and Program Analysis, and the various agency administrators and their staffs, we have identified appropriations from which we can legally fund national service programs. Given that CNCS is unlikely to contribute significant new funds in the future to USDA AmeriCorps programs, agencies must begin now to identify funds in their FY 96 budgets to support that year's programs. In addition, the Department must decide on whether or not to ask Congress for specific AmeriCorps appropriations in the FY 97 budget.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The President and former OMB Director Panetta have demonstrated their budgetary commitment to AmeriCorps by requesting funding for CNCS for FY 96 that would be double the amount funded in FY 95. However, even if Congress grants most of that request, the amount of the CNCS funds available to federal agencies will still be minimal -- increasing from about \$17 million to \$34 million. Given the likelihood that CNCS will again grant operating funds to at least 15 federal agencies, USDA can not realistically expect to receive more than \$4 million in funding from CNCS for FY 96. It is for this reason that the White House and CNCS continue to push federal agencies to find funding for AmeriCorps from their existing agency budgets.

However, maintaining or expanding a significant AmeriCorps program could place a significant burden on USDA agency budgets. If USDA simply maintains the size of our AmeriCorps program at the same level in FY 96 as in FY 95 -- 1,200 participants -- then USDA agencies will have to provide at least \$18 million from their FY 96 budgets. Increasing the size of the USDA AmeriCorps program would be even more expensive -- increasing the program to 2,000 participants would cost USDA \$34 million; doubling the program to 2,400 participants would cost USDA \$41 million.

In addition, while a few agencies such as Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service had made specific requests for AmeriCorps funds in their FY 96 budgets, some agencies still do not take the need to support AmeriCorps seriously because they have not been directed to make such requests a part of their own appropriations within the USDA budget.

One possible solution to these problems is to rely on existing appropriations in the FY 96 USDA budget to fund the Department's AmeriCorps for that year and then request Congress to appropriate to the Department funds specifically designated to support our AmeriCorps program in FY 97. To accomplish this, USDA agencies would have to be asked immediately to identify sources of funding for AmeriCorps programs in their FY 96 budgets, and in the winter include the AmeriCorps program in their FY 97 budget requests.

**OPTIONS for Issue # 3 - Including AmeriCorps in the FY 97 USDA Budget Request:**

1. **Do not make AmeriCorps a part of the Department's formal budget.**

PRO: Not including AmeriCorps in the USDA budget would lessen the potential that the Department would have to cut in other areas to meet budget caps. Some agencies may feel relieved of their perceived burden in supporting AmeriCorps. This option also limits attempts by Congress to "target" national service programs within the Department.

CON: It will be difficult to maintain -- and nearly impossible to expand -- the USDA AmeriCorps program past FY 96 without specific appropriations. Moreover, if AmeriCorps is not part of the formal budget process, most agencies will not consider it a "real" program. They certainly would not consider it a priority of either the Secretary or the President. This would also reduce the Department's ability to significantly impact the American people through AmeriCorps.

2. **Send the attached memorandum from the Secretary to the Under and Assistant Secretaries, agency administrators, and office directors directing them to identify AmeriCorps programs in their FY 96 budgets and preparing to make specific requests for AmeriCorps programs in their FY 97 budget requests.**

PRO: This would probably allow the USDA AmeriCorps program to expand and would "institutionalize" the inclusion of national service within each agency budget. One difficulty we encountered this year was that many agencies said they could not support national service because they had not planned for it. This would allow them to plan and for the Secretary to oversee the priorities. Most significantly, it would move national service from something many of the agencies see as "hanging off the side" of the Department, into the realm of being acknowledged as a central priority of the Secretary. It also opens the discussion of how the flexibility provided under the national service legislation can be used to support the Secretary's reorganization efforts and the Administration's re-invention of government initiatives. Some agencies, such as the Forest Service, have already made specific requests for AmeriCorps funding in their FY 96 budget requests.

CON: Spending funds on AmeriCorps may make it more difficult for the Department to meet budget caps. Some agencies could argue that they are being forced to come up with national service programs just to satisfy someone else's desires at the expense of current programs.

**RECOMMENDATION for Issue # 3 - Including AmeriCorps in the FY 97 Budget Request**

I recommend you implement option 2. It is requested that you sign the attached memorandum directing the Under and Assistant Secretaries to identify national service programs in their formal FY 97 Departmental budget submissions. In addition they are asked to identify funds in their FY 96 budgets that may be used to support national service in that year.

**DECISION BY THE SECRETARY:**

Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Disagree \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_

Attachments

SECRETARY'S MEMORANDUM \_\_\_\_\_

USDA National Service Program

1 PURPOSE

This memorandum establishes the USDA National Service Program and designates the Director of the Office of Communications as the USDA manager for the program.

2 BACKGROUND

The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 established the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and the Public Lands Corps. The intent of the legislation is to engage Americans of varied ages and backgrounds in community-based service. This service will address the Nation's educational, public safety, human, and environmental needs to achieve direct and demonstrable results. In doing so, national service will foster civic responsibility, strengthen the ties that bind us together as a people, and provide educational opportunity for those who make a substantial commitment to service. Federal departments are eligible to apply for funds to run national service programs directly or in partnerships with others.

3 POLICY

As the People's Department, it is the responsibility of all USDA agencies to strive for the maximum allowable participation by the USDA in the area of national service. By identifying existing programs that can be used to support national service initiatives or proposing new programs or projects, agencies will strive to the fullest extent possible to use AmeriCorps grants, services, and educational awards to leverage existing resources and to integrate the national service concept more fully into agencies' programs and activities. USDA will run programs in which both the participants and the managers at every project site will represent a socio-economically diverse group of Americans.

4 DELEGATION

The Director of the Office of Communications will manage the USDA national service program and coordinate the Department's national service initiatives, including those involving the Public Lands Corps. The Director is authorized to develop detailed guidelines and procedures for agencies to follow in planning, operating, staffing, and funding the program.

5 This Memorandum shall expire in ninety days.

MEMORANDUM TO:

UNDER SECRETARIES  
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES  
GENERAL COUNSEL  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
AGENCY ADMINISTRATORS  
OFFICE DIRECTORS

FROM MIKE ESPY

The AmeriCorps national service program is a priority for the President and for the Department. AmeriCorps will serve as an innovative and cost-effective mechanism for delivering the Department's services. I want to thank those agencies who have been so supportive of our current national service efforts. With your help the Department has been able to establish itself as the leader in Federal national service programs.

To continue and expand this leadership role, I request that you take three steps:

1) Review how you may be able to detail staff -- either full time or part time -- to the centralized USDA AmeriCorps management group. Because national service will grow in scope in each succeeding year, it is necessary to establish a trained cadre of personnel within your agencies. It is also essential to limit the size of any organization devoted to Departmental management of national service. To develop the appropriate staff while keeping the management organization small, I have decided to use personnel detailed from the agencies to provide the bulk of the support for the management group. This will give the management group the resources it needs, while giving vital training to key agency personnel who will return to the agencies to support their growing national service efforts. There is also the need to provide funds to support the activities of this group. The Office of Budget and Program Analysis will assist each agency in making the appropriate arrangements. A staffing plan and budget is attached.

2) Make recommendations as to potential AmeriCorps initiatives in your FY 96 budgets. Those agencies which did not specifically request funds for AmeriCorps initiatives in FY 96 should begin working now with the USDA Director of National Service, Mr. Joel Berg, to identify the AmeriCorp initiatives to be funded from your existing FY 96 budgets and conduct the necessary competition for inclusion of outside partners. Mr. Berg will publish a time table for the accomplishment of this work.

3) Include national service projects in your FY 97 budget requests. As we enter the FY 97 budget cycle next year, I want each agency to carefully consider specific national service programs to be identified in their budget requests.

In formally establishing the Team USDA AmeriCorps national service program, I have placed central coordinating responsibility for this program in the Office of Communications, while reserving for the agencies significant flexibility in the implementation of the program. Mr. Joel Berg, Director of National Service in the Office of Communications, is available to work with you in identifying and developing AmeriCorps projects. He can be reached at 720-6350, room 538-A.

Staffing  
for  
USDA National Service Group

POSITION <sup>1</sup>	NAME	GRADE <sup>2</sup>	ORG <sup>3</sup>	STATUS
Director	Joel Berg	ES-01	OC	Permanent
Communications Coord.	Katherine Gibney	GM 13/14	OC	Permanent
Deputy Communications and Training Coordinator	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Administrative Coord.	Ron De Munbrun	GM 15	TBD	Permanent
Office Manager	Denise Bennet	GS 6/4	ASCS	Detaillee
Anti-Hunger Coordinator	Donna Hines	GM 13/1	FNS	Detaillee
FmHA Agency Liaison	Jim Coyne	GM 12/7	TBD	Detaillee
EZ/EC and RDA Liaison	David Gibson	GM 14	TBD	Detaillee
Extension Service and 4-H Liaison	TBD	TBD	ES	Detaillee
Forest Service State and Private Forestry Liaison	TBD	TBD	TBD	Detaillee
Evaluation Coordinator	TBD	TBD	TBD	Detaillee
Resource/Grants Coordinator	TBD	GS 9/11	TBD	Detaillee
Technology Support	TBD	GS 9/11	ES	Detaillee
Clerical Support/Office Automation	TBD	GS 8	TBD	Detaillee

<sup>1</sup> Some positions may be filled on a part time basis or they may filled on a rotating basis. This can be worked out between the Director and the agencies.

<sup>2</sup> Some grade levels are dependent on the grade of the current incumbent. Grade levels may increase or decrease as new personnel are rotated through the group and as requirements change.

<sup>3</sup> The organization is determined by the subject matter of the position and/or the willingness or desire of an agency to lend support to the TEAM USDA national service group.

**Engage tens of thousands of Federal employees in a serve-a-thon during National Youth Service Week in April to raise money for AmeriCorps.**

On a Saturday or a Sunday, multitudes of Federal employees could perform community service and solicit funds per hour from "sponsors." If just 30,000 employees--- a small fraction of the Federal workforce --- participated in the event and raised an average of only \$100, we would raise \$3 million for AmeriCorps.

Such an event would raise public understanding of the unique public/private partnership of AmeriCorps, "get things done" in urban, suburban, and rural communities throughout America, and generate positive media coverage. Such an event would probably need approval from OPM for an exemption from the restrictions of the Combined Federal campaign.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

April 6, 1994

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY/DEPUTY SECRETARY

THROUGH: James Michael Kelly *JMKelly*  
Associate General Counsel

FROM: Joel Berg *JB*  
Deputy Director, Office of Public Affairs

SUBJECT: Justification of Non-Competition of Current National Service Projects

ISSUE:

The Corporation for National and Community Service has given tentative approval to our grant request for money to operate our Summer of Safety project with the Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences. Their grant will make it possible to run the program this summer. It will provide jobs to participants, many of whom will be recent graduates of the high school, service to the community, and up to 50 education awards worth \$1,000 each for participants who successfully serve the entire summer. In order to accept the Corporation's funds for the Chicago project as well as the major yearlong programs we have planned in the areas of rural development, anti-hunger, and the environment, the Department must award the necessary discretionary cooperative agreements non-competitively for this year's round of applications.

BACKGROUND:

In September of 1993, Congress passed the National and Community Service Trust Act, which enables Federal Departments to manage national service programs individually or manage them in partnership with others. The basic mechanism for the Department to enter into "partnerships" with non-profit groups and State and local organizations for the purpose of implementing national service programs is a discretionary cooperative agreement. Under normal circumstances, such agreements should be awarded on a competitive basis. However, the time between publication of the Corporation for National and Community Service's final rules on March 11, 1994 and the application deadlines of March 14 for Summer of Safety programs and April 29, 1994 for AmeriCorps FY 95 yearlong projects, make it impractical to engage in a competitive process.

Departmental regulations allow for the award of agreements non-competitively where such awards are in the best interest of the Government and/or where such competition is impractical. The National and Community Service Trust Act makes it clear that Federal departments are expected to manage national service programs and that such participation is necessary for the Corporation to meet its objectives. The lack of sufficient time to compete awards was a factor

imposed on us externally by the Corporation and not the result of any delay within the Department. Combined, these two factors would seem to form a necessary justification for making non-competitive awards in this first year of the program.

In addition to the above issues, I believe that the other factors listed below further justify a decision to make our initial awards non-competitively:

1. The Department is using the implementation of pilot projects for FY 94 Summer of Safety and FY 95 AmeriCorps programs as the mechanism to develop the necessary regulations, procedures, and processes for ensuring maximum competition in future awards.
2. While it is impractical for the Department to initially make awards competitively, the award process is not devoid of competition. The Corporation's approval of applications is based on their own formal competitive process which conforms to all applicable Federal laws and regulations. For the Department's applications for FY 94 Summer of Safety and FY 95 AmeriCorps programs to be approved, they must first be reviewed and graded by a panel of independent experts and then selected on the basis of objective and subjective rankings.
3. The projects that will be sent to you for your final approval are the result of meetings, briefings, calls and mailings to hundreds of farming, anti-hunger, rural development, environmental, and other constituency groups over the last 11 months. We have endeavored to give the broadest possible exposure to TEAM USDA's national service program.

#### OPTIONS:

1. **Participate** in the national service program for the summer of 1994 and the yearlong programs beginning in September of 1994 and running through June of 1995 by relying on the attached justification for non-competition as well as the competition conducted by the Corporation. In addition, use the experience gained in running programs to establish the necessary competitive procedures for all awards in following years beginning with the Summer of Service programs in June of 1995.

**PRO:** The Summer of Safety program we are proposing to run in partnership with the Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences will be able to proceed. This program alone will result in the Corporation awarding up to 50, \$1,000 education awards to participants. The yearlong programs we are proposing will result in the award of up to 1,500, \$4,725 education awards from the Corporation's funds. Both the summer and yearlong programs will also result in significant benefit to the public in the areas of rural development, anti-hunger, and the environment.

**CON:** An organization or member of Congress may protest based on the lack of competition in our selection process. However, it must be pointed out that our regulations do provide for exemptions to competition and OGC has concurred with the attached justification laying out the rationale for non-competition in this instance.

2. **Do not participate** in the national service program for the summer of 1994 and the yearlong programs beginning in September of 1994 and running through June of 1995 until the necessary competitive procedures can be established.

PRO: No discretionary cooperative agreements would be granted without competition.

CON: The Summer of Safety project involving the Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences would have to be canceled. We would not be able to run the major yearlong programs we have planned in the areas of rural development, anti-hunger, and the environment you have previously announced. The Department could not participate in any projects until the next Summer of Service period which would be June of 1995.

RECOMMENDATION:

I recommend implementing option one. I request that you endorse the attached justification for non-competition of current national service projects, which will allow us to proceed with any projects the Corporation for National and Community Service approves this year.

As manager of the Department's national service program I want to assure you that I recognize the need for and value of competitive awards. Given the circumstances, every effort is being made to minimize the negative impact of non-competition and to use the existing circumstances to ensure that a sound, long-term process is set in place to foster competition in all future awards. In the interim, the projects that are forwarded to you for final selection as part of the USDA AmeriCorps application were not formulated in a vacuum. They are the result of almost a year's worth of conversations and presentations to the widest variety of constituent groups, non-profit groups, members of the public, and State and local organizations.

As a final note, I would add that the approach recommended here, that is to award non-competitively now while developing proper procedures for competition in all future awards, is an approach that is being adopted by other Federal departments, most notably Health and Human Services.

Agree

\_\_\_\_\_ ✓

Date

\_\_\_\_\_ 4/24/94

Disagree

\_\_\_\_\_

Discuss

\_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by

\_\_\_\_\_

JUSTIFICATION FOR NON-COMPETITIVE SELECTION OF SITES  
AND PARTNERS FOR USDA FY 94 "SUMMER OF SAFETY"  
AND  
FY 95 AMERICORPS YEARLONG PROJECTS

Pursuant to the regulations contained in 7 CFR 3015.158 (d), the Deputy Director for Public Liaison who serves as the Department of Agriculture's National Service Program manager hereby determines that it is in the best interest of the government and necessary to the accomplishment of the goals of the program to award co-operative agreements for FY 94 Summer of Safety and FY 95 AmeriCorps programs non-competitively. As these agreements are being executed, a concurrent effort will be undertaken to develop the rules, policies, and procedures necessary to ensure that all subsequent awards are made competitively. This determination was made after careful consideration of several factors including:

1. USDA participation in national services programs is needed for the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Government to meet the goals for the nation's national service program;
2. The limited time available to apply to the Corporation for funds makes competition impractical;
3. The national service program is new and pilot projects are needed to maximize the Department's ability to define the proper procedures and rules for implementing the program in the future;
4. Because Federal agency involvement in national services programs is designed to build on existing structures, the Department opted to focus on projects that most closely resembled current service structures in order to provide a foundation for expanding structures and services in the future; and
5. The process of awarding funds for projects is not completely devoid of competition because the Department's application to AmeriCorps is approved by the Corporation on a competitive basis.

The following discussion presents a detailed explanation of each factor considered in making the determination to award cooperative agreements non-competitively.

## I. ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PROGRAM GOALS

The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, P.L. 103-82, clearly states that one of its main objectives is to, "build on the existing organizational service infrastructure of Federal, State, and local programs and agencies to expand full-time and part-time service opportunities for all citizens..."<sup>1</sup> The important role of Federal agency participation in national service programs is reinforced in the Act's provision to allow the Corporation for National and Community Service to, "...enter into a contract or cooperative agreement with another Federal agency to support a national service program carried out by the agency."<sup>2</sup> It is clearly the intent of the program to use participation by Federal agencies to accomplish its goals. There are even specific funds set aside solely for the purpose of awarding money to Federal agencies who apply to run programs individually or in partnership with other Federal agencies, non-profit organizations, institutions of higher learning, etc. A failure by Federal departments to participate would adversely affect the Corporation for National and Community Service's (AKA AmeriCorps) ability to achieve its goals.

## II. TIME CONSTRAINTS

In order to participate, Federal agencies (Federal departments and independent agencies) must submit applications for funds to the Corporation for National and Community Service by the deadlines established by the Corporation's rules. Because the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 was not signed into law until September 21, 1993, there has been little time for the Corporation for National and Community Service (AKA AmeriCorps) to establish the necessary rules to guide Federal departments in their implementation of the program. Prior to enactment of the law, the Department undertook several initiatives to prepare for its implementation. A work group was established in March of 1993 to beginning defining how to implement national service within USDA and to structure the "models" that form the guides for such service. Unfortunately, the late signing of the bill left insufficient time for USDA to complete all the steps necessary to engage in full competition for its projects.

AmeriCorps did not publish its notice of availability of funds for Summer of Safety programs until February 3, 1994. The time between this notice and the application deadline of March 14, 1994 was insufficient to allow for a publication by USDA of a request for proposals, review the applications, and submit an application to AmeriCorps. This left two options: one, do not submit a Summer of Safety application; two, identify projects that had previously been discussed within the Department and see if they were candidates for submission to AmeriCorps. In view of the time constraints, it was determined to be in the best interest of the Government and necessary to carry out the objectives of the USDA National Service program to choose the later option. The precise mechanism for choosing projects is described in Paragraph IV.

---

<sup>1</sup>P.L. 103-82, Sec. 2(a)(7)

<sup>2</sup>P.L. 103-82, Sec. 121(b)(1)

The severe time constraints placed on applicants in the initial year of the program can be seen in table 1. These time constraints are imposed on the Department externally and are not caused by delay within the Department.

Table 1. Time Line for Significant Events in Preparation of CNCS Application for FY 94 Summer of Safety Application Due 3/14/94 and Yearlong FY 95 AmeriCorps Programs due 3/29/94.

EVENT	DATE OCCURRED	DATE SUMMER OF SERVICE APPLICATION DUE	DATE YEAR-LONG AMERICORPS APPLICATION DUE	TIME AVAILABLE FOR USDA TO ESTABLISH AND CONDUCT COMPETITION <sup>1</sup>	REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME NEEDED TO CONDUCT COMPETITION <sup>2</sup>
<u>National and Community Services Trust Act of 1993</u> signed by President Clinton	9/21/93				
Draft Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) regulations published	1/7/94				
Notice of availability of Funds for Summer of Safety programs published	2/3/94				
Comment period on draft regulations ends	2/7/94				
CNCS Regulations approved by OMB	3/11/94	3/14/94		3 DAYS	150 DAYS
CNCS final regulations published	3/18/94		3/29/94	42 DAYS	150 DAYS

<sup>1</sup> Time from the approval of rules to the time an application was due to be delivered to the CNCS.

<sup>2</sup> Time required to publish a request for proposals, have proposals evaluated by independent review panel, and make award of cooperative agreement, including the time to develop the necessary rules, publishing them, get comments and publish them in final form. The entire process could take 120 to 180 days. 150 days is used here as an average.

### III. DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNAL RULES

Because Federal Department involvement in national service programs is new, it is necessary to establish the most effective process for ensuring that all future awards are made with the maximum degree of competition. The Office of Communications is establishing a schedule for the development of the necessary rules and regulations that will allow for full competition of awards beginning with the Corporation for National and Community Service's Summer of Service program in FY 95. The experiences gained in the initial awards will serve as a valuable "testing" ground to final rules and procedures that emphasize the integrity of the Department's program and the maximum benefit to the public.

### IV. INTEGRATION OF NATIONAL SERVICE INTO USDA STRUCTURE

In addition to establishing departmental rules and procedures, it is necessary to evaluate how national service programs can be integrated into the Department's organizational structure. It is an obvious goal of the national service program to allow existing Federal organizations to merge, where practicable, their existing program delivery with national service projects. This is a formidable task in a department with 43 agencies and 115,000 plus employees.

Part of the process for developing rules and procedures involves an assessment of how the Department's existing resources can be focused to provide support to national service projects. This assessment involves three steps: 1) identify key agencies; 2) establish national service teams; and, 3) identify pilot projects for FY 94 applications.

#### 1. Identify Key Agencies.

a. In March of 1993, a national service work group was established in USDA. The group consisted of representatives from all agencies and offices. This group developed a proposed model for deliver of national service programs within USDA. The model consists of three "Teams":

- (1) An Environmental Team
- (2) An Anti-Hunger and Empowerment Team
- (3) A Rural Development Team

- b. In conjunction with the work group, the Office of Communication identified the key agencies that would need to be involved in pilot efforts. Initially, a total of four key agencies or groups of agencies were determined to already have program delivery mechanisms that mirror or closely resemble those necessary for national service projects. The Extension Service (ES), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), and the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) were determined to be the key groups associated with the Anti-Hunger team. The Forest Service (FS), the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and ES were determined to be the key group associated with the Environmental Team. The Rural Development Administration (RDA), Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), and Rural Electrification Administration (REA), SCS and FS were determined to be the key groups associated with the Rural Development Team.

Several of these agencies have large existing programs or delivery mechanisms that lend themselves to most effectively defining how national service should be implemented within USDA. The Extension Service supports the world's largest volunteer group, the 4-H Clubs. The Forest Service through its human resources division runs Youth Conservation Corps and National Forest Foundation camps that are similar to the type of project expected to be run under national service. The new Rural Development Team groups those agencies which form the focus of services in rural development which is one of the Corporation's priority areas. Finally, the Soil Conservation Service deals daily with the public in an interactive mode quite similar to that proposed for national service.

2. Establish National Service Teams.

Once the key agencies were identified, teams were established to develop the necessary procedures and propose pilot projects for submission in FY 94 applications. The teams were an expansion of the agencies' representatives on the national service work group. Their purpose is to move from a "work group" structure toward integration of national service within the agencies' established organizational structure.

3. Identify Pilot Projects.

- a. As part of the efforts to establish models for national service within the Department, USDA representatives attended a wide variety of forums, meetings, conventions, and briefings where the public was informed of the proposed national service program and the role that Federal departments might play if the law was enacted. In addition to the meetings, interviews were given to magazines and newsletters that would most likely be read by groups interested in engaging in partnerships with the Department.

While these efforts were not official requests for proposals, they served to alert the public of the national service program. As a result of these efforts a few organizations submitted unsolicited proposals to the Department. Three criteria were used to identify candidate pilot projects. Note that these projects are called "candidate" because their identification by USDA does not guarantee that they will be approved by AmeriCorps. The criteria are:

- (1) Does the project conform to the criteria established by the Corporation for National and Community Service;
  - (2) Does the project maximize the Department's ability to use its resources in unique ways with an emphasis on the greatest number of partnerships between other Federal agencies, public, and non-profit organizations;
  - (3) Does the project maximize the Department's ability to establish sound Department-wide rules, policies, and, procedures for the implementation of national service within its agencies.
- b. Table 2. shows the projects selected for the FY 94 Summer of Safety application submitted by the Department and the reasons for their selection.

Table 2. FY 94 Summer of Safety Pilot Projects

PROJECT	CRITERIA	RATIONALE FOR SELECTION
Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences	1. Conform to AmeriCorps criteria.	<p>Participants will be doing work in three areas identified as appropriate for Summer of Safety:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Youth as a Resource</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Restoring Safety to Public Spaces</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Youth Safety Initiatives</p>
	2. Maximize Department's ability to use its resources and partner with other agencies.	Run in conjunction with the Justice Department, this project involves the participation of the Extension Service, Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, The Chicago Public School District, and The Chicago Housing Authority. This mix of partners was not found in any other potential pilot project.
	3. Maximize Department's ability to establish sound policies and procedures for future awards.	The large number of partners, the relationship between USDA and the Justice Department and several local agencies lends itself to identifying issues and solutions in a wide variety of situations
Arizona Department of Youth Treatment and Rehabilitation	1. Conform to AmeriCorps criteria.	<p>Participants will be doing work in three areas identified as appropriate for Summer of Safety:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Youth as a Resource</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Restoring Safety to Public Spaces</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Youth Safety Initiatives</p>

PROJECT	CRITERIA	RATIONALE FOR SELECTION
Arizona Department of Youth Treatment and Rehabilitation	2. Maximize Department's ability to use its resources and partner with other agencies.	Participants in this project include the State of Arizona Department of Youth Treatment and Rehabilitation, Arizona State University, the Forest Service and the Maricopa County Court System. It provides an expansion of the existing Youth Conservation Corps concept with the providing of service in an urban setting.
	3. Maximize Department's ability to establish sound policies and procedures for future awards.	The largest existing program in USDA that mirrors the national service concept is the Youth Conservation Corps. This project provides the opportunity to explore ways to expand that concept and integrate it with national service. It also provides an opportunity to work with elements of the local justice system to determine ways to best structure national service programs targeted at crime related issues.

#### V. EXISTING COMPETITION

There is already an element of competition in the award process. Projects developed by the Department are submitted to the Corporation for National and Community Service. All applications are reviewed by panels of independent experts, graded, and then evaluated by the Corporation's management before they are rejected or approved.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

ROUTE TO:

- SECRETARY
- DEPUTY SECRETARY
- CA     GF     SM
- DB     JG     EO
- MB     MG     MP
- TC     SG     JP
- BC     MH     CRAY
- MD     FJ     CR
- PD     AK     KS
- JD     JK     TY
- \_\_\_     \_\_\_     \_\_\_

January 24, 1996

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

THROUGH: Jill Long Thompson  
Under Secretary, Rural Economic and Community Development

*Handwritten:* 2-23-96

FROM: Joel Berg **JB**  
Director of National Service

*Handwritten:* D 96-86 FEB 23 1996

SUBJECT: **Request for Approval of 1996 RECD AmeriCorps Training Conference**

Pursuant to the Secretary's memorandum regarding offsite training with a cost in excess of \$25,000, the Rural Business-Cooperative Service and Rural Housing Service requests you to approve spending of \$137,000 for the 1996 RECD AmeriCorps training conference described below. Funds for this purpose have been previously set-aside from FY95 RECD funds -- a process approved by the USDA Office of General Counsel.

CONFERENCE TITLE: RECD/AmeriCorps National Member Training

OBJECTIVE: The objective of the conference is to instruct the FY96 RECD AmeriCorps Members and State Contacts in community development principles, theories, methods, and practices. The course material will be specifically designed to concentrate on those areas of rural development expertise that will be most useful to the Members. This information will be presented in classroom- and interactive group settings.

Similar training provided to last year's RECD-sponsored AmeriCorps Members provided a significant boost to the program by helping Members magnify both the quality and quantity of service provided to rural communities. Both AmeriCorps Members and RECD staff alike have repeatedly described last year's national training conference as the single greatest tool that ensured the success of last year's program. Perhaps most importantly, last year's training (as we expect will this year's) allowed all our Members to meet together to exchange ideas, learn from each others' strategies, and bond together as friends and colleagues as part of the national movement, called AmeriCorps, that is changing the civic ethic of the country.

This team-building across regional divisions could not possibly be accomplished through teleconferences or regional/local training programs. The Corporation for National Service (CNS), the Federal agency designated by President Clinton to oversee the AmeriCorps program, has had serious concerns about the isolation of our individually-placed Members. The CNS views this national training as a critical way of addressing that concern. Moreover, the National and Community Service Act of 1993 which authorizes AmeriCorps requires that all AmeriCorps Members receive extensive, substantive training in their field of service. An RECD national training is the most cost-effective way to meet this statutory requirement of the program.

**DESCRIPTION:** The training will prepare the Members for the work situations they encounter when they return home to their communities and sponsoring agencies. Members will receive 31 hours of training in USDA and CNS policies, community development philosophy and approaches, community analysis and assessment, understanding and managing change, group process dynamics and skills, conflict resolution, identification and development of leaders, and strategic planning for communities. In addition, those Members returning for their second year with RECD AmeriCorps will receive advanced training which will include facilitation skills, managing and motivating volunteers, community leadership development, strategic planning implementation, and project management.

The conference attendees will thereby gain a practical, working knowledge in the application of a variety of community development methodologies and techniques, and, as part of their "homework" for the week, will complete plans for specific activities they will undertake when they return. In addition, they will leave with a much greater understanding of the USDA/RECD mission, especially as it relates to the implementation of the EZ/EC initiative. This course of study and its practical application simulations will allow Members and State Contacts to work more effectively in furthering Departmental, Agency, and CNS goals.

A large, centralized training conference, such as the one proposed, is essential to the success of the RECD AmeriCorps program. In addition to the training received, it is the single opportunity during the year to bring the necessarily dispersed Members into one setting. In the brief time allotted, the team building, the sharing of knowledge, experiences and frustrations, and the experience of being together for a week is the best way to engender the spirit, focus, and motivation in each Member to represent the RECD and AmeriCorps in exemplary fashion.

**ELIGIBILITY:** All AmeriCorps Members working under the auspices of RBS and RHS, and State Contacts in the following states: AK, AR, AZ, CA, FL, GA, IL, KY, LA, MS, NC, NM, OR, PA, SC, TX, VA, WA, WV. In addition, there will be a limited number of slots available for selected FS and NARCS attendees and for the USDA Regional Facilitator for the Four Corners region - all at their Agencies' cost. These attendees will be approved by Dave Gibson (the RBS National Coordinator).

**COST:** The budgeted amount of \$137,000 will cover:

- o all travel and lodging costs for the 125 Member, 19 State Contact, and 4 National Office staff Attendees, and
- o all costs related to the training contractors and materials.

Approximately five (5) National Office personnel will attend this training at their own cost.

**COST SAVINGS:** By cutting costs wherever possible, the RECD has significantly reduced the original estimated cost of \$200,000. The specific training funds requested will now be less than \$1,000 per person; estimated per person cost is \$925.

The following steps will be taken to reduce costs:

- o AmeriCorps Members will “double-up” in their hotel rooms and all meals will be catered instead of paying the Members the usual per diem. Estimated savings: \$19,000.
- o Ground transportation and taxi charges will be minimized by choosing a hotel with airport shuttle service.
- o All materials will be printed in Washington and shipped to the conference site, eliminating Xerox costs. Estimated savings: \$8,000.

Unfortunately, we have no way of guaranteeing Federal payment for “Super Saver” flights without asking AmeriCorps Members (earning only \$12,000 annually) to incur personal financial liability in the event of cancellations, so we do not anticipate significant savings to be realized on airfare.


**DATES:** March 25 through March 29, 1996.

**LOCATION:** Jackson, Mississippi.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

I recommend that the Deputy Secretary approve this training.

**DECISION BY THE DEPUTY SECRETARY:**

Approve   
Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_  
Discuss with me \_\_\_\_\_  
Date 3.5.96  
Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_

**INFORMATIONAL BULLETS FOR THE RHS ADMINISTRATOR'S OPENING REMARKS  
TO THE  
RECD/AMERICORPS MEMBERS TRAINING CONFERENCE - JACKSON, MS**

- o in FY95 there were 125 RECD/AmeriCorps Members: 66 RBS Members and 59 RHS Members
- o in FY96 there are about 131 Members: 85 RBS and 46 RHS Members

Please note that exact numbers fluctuate during the year due to resignations and new hires

- o RECD/AmeriCorps Members are working in such diverse areas as outreach for RECD housing, home repair, and water and waste systems installation, assisting in the application for RECD grants and loans, early childhood development, youth leadership, parenting education, health care and nutrition, economic opportunity and development, neighborhood revitalization and safety, recreation resources, and agriculture.
- o RECD Members usually are working in their own communities, encouraging and organizing their friends and neighbors to take an interest in their communities while marshalling various State, Federal, and non-profit resources to support these efforts
- o in FY95 RECD/AmeriCorps Members organized over 3,700 volunteers who contributed over 23,000 hours to work together to improve their communities
- o in FY95 RECD Members (both RBS and RHS Members) served in 86 EZ/EC Designated and Champion communities and quickly identified, using community and Agency strategic plans, local needs which they could address through the AmeriCorps program
- o the 57 RHS Members doing outreach in FY95 provided 1,648 502, 504, and 306c grants and loans to 5,432 individuals in 14 States in 6 geographic regions (total RECD funds accessed through AmeriCorps: \$27,645,634)
- o the 66 RBS Members working in EZ/EC Designated or Champion Communities in FY95 accessed over \$20 million in RECD program funds benefitting more than 1,000 families in 20 communities
- o AmeriCorps Members received much local and regional press coverage of their service, and were often the recipients of commendations for their efforts
- o AmeriCorps Members, many of whom had already completed their terms of service, offered to take the skills they had

learned in the RECD/AmeriCorps program to participate in the inter-USDA/inter-Federal Virgin Islands relief effort.