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Empowerment Zones Enterprise Communities (1)

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UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

USDA AMERICORPS PROJECTS EZ / EC AND CHAMPION COMMUNITIES

In its first year of operation, AmeriCorps --- the domestic national service program proposed by President Clinton and passed with bipartisan support by Congress --- engaged 25,000 Americans of diverse backgrounds in service that filled unmet human, environmental, educational, and public safety needs. In exchange for such service, AmeriCorps Members received an educational award that can be used to pay for college, job training, graduate school, or to repay student loans.

The Corporation for National Service, which oversees AmeriCorps, has given preference to project applications from Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities, and Champion Communities; thus many AmeriCorps projects are located in these areas.

Most AmeriCorps projects are funded through state commissions appointed by each state's governor and managed by non-profit organizations and local government organizations ---- most projects are *not* funded or managed directly by Federal agencies. However, a highly competitive process coordinated by the Corporation for National Service allowed a small portion of AmeriCorps positions to be managed by Federal agencies in tandem with local groups.

In the first year of operation, the largest Federal agency award was granted to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), allowing the Department to create unique public / private partnerships that sponsored 1,200 Members in over 300 mostly rural sites. These projects provided service focused on boosting rural development, fighting hunger, and improving the environment. The rural development projects were sponsored by four different USDA agencies: the Rural Housing Service, the Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Forest Service.

Most of these USDA AmeriCorps rural development projects were placed in areas that were designated as either Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities, or Champion Communities. (List attached)

Moreover, these projects targeted the most persistently poverty-ridden rural areas of the nation: Appalachia, the Mississippi Delta, the “colonias” on the U.S./Mexico border, and Native American reservations in the “Four Corners” (in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah) area.

During the first program year, AmeriCorps Members in USDA rural development projects achieved the following results:

- Secured new homes for 390 low-income families.
- Helped 3,484 families obtain running water and/or modern bathrooms for the first time.
- Provided early childhood development services to 4,670 children.
- Helped over 100 counties improve their emergency preparedness and response.
- Provided 867 families with assistance for health and safety hazard repairs in their homes.
- Educated 175 parents and children in parenting and family skills.
- Created after school programs, activities, and events that benefited 400 parents and students.
- Mentored and tutored 180 students.
- Helped save or create 1,000 jobs.
- Delivered technical assistance to 395 family farmers to help them continue to earn enough income to support their families and stay on their land.
- Taught entrepreneurship seminars attended by 285 citizens.
- Provided job training and/or vocational counseling to 509 citizens.

All USDA AmeriCorps projects “got things done” while strengthening communities, expanding educational opportunity, and encouraging personal responsibility.

For more information about the USDA AmeriCorps program, contact Joel Berg at 202-720-5746 or e-mail: “Jberg@USDA.Gov”

AMERICORPS/USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN EZ / EC AND CHAMPION COMMUNITIES

Site ID	Status	EZ/EC ID#	# Mem	Applicant Entity	City	State
R02B	CH	171	8	Lower Yukon Economic Development Council	Anchorage	AK
R05A	CH	2	1	Crowley's Ridge Development Council, Inc.	Jonesboro	AR
R05B	EC	20	1	Mississippi County, Arkansas EOC, Inc.	Blytheville	AR
R05C	CH	58	1	East Central AR Ec. Dev. Corporation - West Memphis	Forrest City	AR
R05D	EC	84	1	East Central Arkansas Economic Development Corporation - Brinkley	Moro	AR
R05F	CH	136	1	Mid-Delta Enterprise Community	Helena	AR
R05C	EC	183	1	East Central Arkansas Economic Development Corporation - Forrest City	Forrest City	AR
R04A	CH	18	1	City of Eloy	Eloy	AZ
R04C	CH	28	1	Greater Flagstaff Economic Council, Inc.	Flagstaff	AZ
R04B	EC	168a		City of Douglas	Douglas	AZ
R04D	EC	168b	1	City of San Luis	San Luis	AZ
R04E	EC	168c	1	Nogales-Santa Cruz County Economic Development Foundation	Nogales	AZ
R06A	EC	35	1	Imperial County Enterprise Community	El Centro	CA
R06B	CH	61	1	City of Shafter	Shafter	CA
R06E	EC	71	1	City of Watsonville	Watsonville	CA
R06C	CH	79	1	Kings Community Action Organization, Inc.	Hanford	CA
R06F	CH	153	1	City of Hollister	Hollister	CA
R06D	CH	207	1	County of Fresno, I-5 Business Development Corridor	Firebaugh	CA
R12B	EC	89	5	Marianna Chamber of Commerce	Marianna	FL
R13A	CH	157	1	QUOLA LC/CDC	Valdosta	GA
R13B	EC	211	1	Crisp/Dooley EZ/EC Coordinating Committee	Cordele	GA
R13C	EC	216	1	CSRA Regional Development Center	Keysville	GA
R17A	CH	198	1	City of Cairo	Cairo	IL
R21C	CH	70	1	Flat Woods Community-Based Development Corporation, Inc.	Oneida	KY
R21B	CH	90	1	Kentucky Communities Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.	Barboursville	KY
P21D	CH	165	1	Big Sandy Community Action Program/RECD	Prestonburg	KY
R21F	CH	165	1	The Service Connection (Big Sandy ADD)	Prestonberg	KY
R21H	CH	172	1	City of Bowling Green, Operation P.R.I.D.E.	Bowling Green	KY
R21D	CH	TN127	1	Bell County	Middlesboro	KY
R21I	CH	TN186	1	McCreary Co. Fiscal Court	Whitley City	KY
R21A	CH	TN19	1	Cumberland Valley ADD	London	KY
R22B	CH	152	1	Southern Mutual Help Association, Inc.	New Iberia	LA
R22A	CH	160	1	St. Landry Economic Inducement District	Opelousas	LA
R22C	CH	164	1	St. Mary Community Action Agency, Inc.	Franklin	LA
R22H	CH	173	1	RECD - Town of Cullen	Cullen	LA
R22D	EC	215	1	Macon Ridge Economic Development Program	Ferriday	LA
R22F	CH	221	1	Project Celebration, Inc.	Many	LA
R28B	CH	4	1	Town of Edwards	Edwards	MS
R28A	CH	14	2	Madison County Human Resource Agency	Canton	MS
R28C	EZ	45	3	Mid-Delta Empowerment Zone Alliance (MDEZA)	Greenville	MS
R28R	CH	108	2	Alcorn State University	Lorman	MS
R28Q	CH	203	1	Natchez-Adams County Economic Development Authority	Natchez	MS
R37A	CH	214b	1	Madison County Family Resource Center	Marshall	NC
R35A	EC	67	1	La Jicarita Enterprise Community	Taos	NM
R35C	CH	80	2	Eastern Plains Council of Governments	Clovis	NM
R35B	CH	98	1	NW New Mexico Council of Governments	Gallup	NM
R42A	CH	156	5	SW PA Heritage Preservation Commission	Holidaysburg	PA

AMERICORPS/USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN EZ / EC AND CHAMPION COMMUNITIES

Site ID	Status	EZ/EC ID#	# Mem	Applicant Entity	City	State
R45A	CH	27	1	Denmark Community Outreach Enterprise Committee*	Denmark	SC
R45C	CH	83	1	Penn Center*	St. Helena Island	SC
R45D	EC	97	1	Williamsburg Enterprise Community Commission, Inc*	Lake City	SC
R45B	CH	99	1	Allendale-Barnwell Redevelopment Program	Fairfax	SC
R48C	CH	49	1	City of Luling	Luling	TX
R48A	CH	59	1	Middle Rio Grande Development Council	Uvalde	TX
R48D	CH	64	1	South Texas Development Council	Laredo	TX
R48E	CH	76	1	City of Gonzales	Gonzales	TX
R48B	CH	92	1	Dimmit County Commissioners Court	Carrizo Springs	TX
R48F	EZ	107	1	Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone	Mercedes	TX
R51B	EC	218	2	VA Eastern Share Economic Empowerment & Housing Corporation(VESEEHHC)	Nassawadox	VA
R53A	CH	177	1	Grant County Community Action Council	Moses Lake	WA
R54B	CH	137	1	Mingo County Commission	Williamson	WV
R54I	CH	139	1	Marion County Extension Office (City of Fairmont)	Fairmont	WV
R54C	CH	184	1	P.R.I.D.E In Logan County, Inc.	Logan	WV
R54F	CH	185	1	Mountain Enterprise Community	Webster Springs	WV
R54D	EC	187	1	McDowell County Action Network	Wilcoe	WV
R54J	CH	196	1	City of Morgantown	Morgantown	WV
R54H	CH	205	1	Lincoln County Economic Development Authority, Inc.	West Hamlin	WV
R54A	CH	206	1	Barbour County Development Authority	Philippi	WV
			87			

TO: EZ/EC AmeriCorps Applicant Communities (Finalists)
SUBJECT: Final Preparations
DATE: September 7, 1995

Once again, our apologies for not having a final word for you on the 1996 AmeriCorps program. There are a myriad of uncertainties regarding USDA budgets -- and the start-up of this program is being directly affected. This memo will bring you up to date on what progress has been made and where your program should be at this time.

Because you are receiving this correspondence, **your application has been accepted by USDA** (except those of you notified regarding specific changes). There may be some modifications requested at a later date, but they will be modest in scope. **Nearly all applications which requested multiple AmeriCorps Members have been reduced to one Member only.** This reduction resulted from cuts in USDA's allocation by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). We trust that you will still be able to operate an effective program.

Once you are notified to proceed, applicants for the USDA's Rural Economic and Community Development (RECD) AmeriCorps program will have to be signed up on or before September 30 -- the last day of the fiscal year. The Members are not required to begin their service on that date, but **they will have to sign and date their Service Agreement on or before September 30.** This means that, even though we have not secured funding, you must have completed your interview and selection process prior to that date. Until you receive notification from this office, **do not sign up or make any commitments to your selected candidates.** We thoroughly understand the difficulties this situation will create. We have every expectation that this program will be funded within the next 7-10 days, **but there is no guarantee.** Again, our apologies.

Regarding the Service Agreement and other necessary administrative forms; we will be forwarding these and other important materials to your offices in the coming weeks. Included with this information will be administrative manuals which cover nearly all aspects of an AmeriCorps Member's term of service. If you have questions about these materials, or any other issues relating to hiring, selection, etc., please your RECD AmeriCorps State Contact. A list of these individuals is included with this memo.

AmeriCorps Members will be working under the supervision of your organization. However, the RECD State Contact will be administratively responsible for the Members. This will include time and attendance records, leave, stipends, and reimbursement for travel and training expenses. They will also ensure that the AmeriCorps Members are carrying out their duties in accordance with the plans you have submitted, and are reporting their activities in a timely and accurate manner. If you have not already, please ensure that you establish a

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PRESERVATION

relationship with you State Contact very soon. Each of you should make arrangements with the State Contact for an AmeriCorps program training. This will be necessary for the program to operate smoothly. If you encounter problems in setting up this training, do not hesitate to give this office a call.

Those of us working on the RECD AmeriCorps program, as well as those working on EZ/EC, are all very excited about this next year. Last year, with a minimum of preparation, we had some stunning success stories which were publicized nation-wide. We expect even more of the same this year. The AmeriCorps program allows the USDA to provide hands-on technical assistance to rural communities. Technical assistance is one of the most critical elements in successful community development (if not the most critical) and we are so pleased that we can assist in this manner.

Please make sure you have your candidates ready for signing prior to September 30. We will be contacting you as soon as our budget is approved. Thanks for your forbearance.

David Gibson

cc: State Contacts
Alvin Brown
Norm Reid
Joel Berg
Jim Coyle

attachment:

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**SUBJECT: Application for 1997 AmeriCorps Program Participation
Due June 7, 1996.**

**TO: Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) Communities
(Designated and Champions)**

In our first two years, over two hundred Rural Development AmeriCorps Members successfully performed their 1700 hours of community service in over 100 rural communities. Housed in not-for-profit organizations, local units of government, and Rural Development field offices, the Rural Development AmeriCorps Members provided a tremendous variety of direct services to rural residents. Additionally, they coordinated thousands of local volunteers who contributed many more hours of service to improve their local communities.

Because the Rural Development AmeriCorps Program has been so successful in providing critical services to the nation's poor rural areas, we are pleased to announce our third year of participation with the Corporation for National Service's AmeriCorps Program. For those communities interested in participating in our 1997 program year an application packet is enclosed. The packet contains some background on the program, directions for application, an application form and supporting materials. Communities currently hosting an AmeriCorps Member have already submitted a pre-application. If they still are interested in participating, the enclosed application will have to be completed and submitted. Deadline for new application is May 31, 1996.

If you have questions regarding the AmeriCorps Program in general, or this application process, please call your AmeriCorps State Program Director (a list is enclosed). Thank you for your interest in, and support of, this very special Presidential Initiative.

Send a one copy of your application to the AmeriCorps State Program Director, c/o or your state Rural Development office. Please forward a second copy to:

AmeriCorps - Office of Community Development
Room 701, Reporters Building
300 7th & D Street SW
Washington, DC 20023

Remember, applications must be received **no later than COB June 7, 1996.**

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment	Title
A	Rural Development AmeriCorps Background
B	The Application Process
C	Rural Development/AmeriCorps - General Program Information
D	Instructions and Application
E	Prohibited Activities
F	Rural Development AmeriCorps State Program Directors
G	CNS State Commission Executive Directors list
H	CNS State Program Directors list

Program Authority

The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, Public Law 103-82, provides legislative authority for the creation of CNS and its oversight of national service programs. The USDA is involved in running three types of AmeriCorps programs; Anti-hunger Teams, Environment and Public Lands Teams, and Rural Development Teams. The total contingent of 1200 USDA AmeriCorps Members are working in rural and urban areas of the country.

History

For 1996 the Office of Community Development, in the Rural Development mission area of USDA, was awarded 125 AmeriCorps Member positions from the Corporation for National and Service (CNS). These Members were placed in not-for-profit organizations, local units of government, and Rural Development field offices around the country. The placements awarded to EZ/EC Designated or Champion communities were made on a competitive basis and totaled 86 Members. The AmeriCorps Members were to provide assistance in implementing the one or more components of the community's strategic plan. These Members serve in 48 Champion Communities, 16 Enterprise Communities, and three Empowerment Zones. For 1997, the program will remain the same size.

Rural Development Teams

For 1997, Rural Development will continue sponsoring Rural Development Teams (RDTs) comprised of **college or professional school graduates** possessing specific skills that are needed by the community. The AmeriCorps Members are recruited and selected by the host community, with assistance from the Rural Development State Office. Rural Development sponsored Members are restricted to activities relating to, or in support of, those goals and objectives identified in the **EZ/EC Strategic Plan or Benchmarks**.

Project Design

There are **several expectations** for each AmeriCorps project. It is expected that each Member will receive sufficient training, education, and supervision for each service project performed. They will also be expected to learn general skills in citizenship and community development. It is expected that this training will teach Members to accept personal responsibility for improving their community, while rewarding them with increased opportunities for education or job training.

AmeriCorps Members are required to give at least 1700 hours of service to programs or projects that provide a **direct and demonstrable benefit that is of value to the community and reflects the USDA mission of Rural Development** and help in the personal development of the Member. The Member's activity must result in a specific identifiable service or improvement that otherwise would not be provided with existing funds or volunteers, and that **does not duplicate** the routine functions of workers or displace paid employees (see Attachment D, 'Prohibited Activities'). These efforts must result in strengthened communities, bringing together both institutions and individuals to cooperate in creating lasting and constructive change.

Application

The enclosed application is as short and succinct as possible. It asks only for the minimum information necessary for the Rural Development's Office of Community Development to make an informed decision. Additional supporting information may be included with your application - at your discretion. In order to be considered for the 1997 AmeriCorps program year, the attached **application must be submitted by June 7**. Final decisions on awards will be made within two weeks of the deadline.

Recruitment

With graduation in May or June, many college graduates will shortly be making decisions about the coming year. In order to attract the largest pool of quality applicants possible, recruiting has to begin soon. Recruiting materials will be sent to you in the next couple of weeks. Please be advised that USDA has an ongoing recruiting process. The list of individuals who have already expressed interest in the program **from your area** can be requested from your AmeriCorps State Program Director at the state Rural Development office. Your community or office may want to begin some tentative recruitment locally or through universities and other educational institutions. Final decisions on placements will be made on **June 7**. The AmeriCorps Members themselves will **not begin their service until September, 1996**.

Selection

As with recruitment, **selection will be a collaborative process between applicants and the USDA Rural Development State Office**. Final selections can be made anytime after formal notification of award. Materials for use in interviews and selection will be included with the recruitment package. Since these AmeriCorps Members will be working primarily with EZ/EC communities, it is expected that the community will take charge of the process and make final decisions - with the concurrence of the Rural Development State Office.

Each community will be considered for **only one AmeriCorps Member**. There may be situations where two or more Members can be placed in a community because of extraordinary circumstance, compelling need, or to comply with CNS requirements. Check with your State Program Director if you think your project would qualify. Members serve for a single year but can be considered for a second year, depending on the local situation. If you currently have an AmeriCorps Member, you may or may not elect to extend that Member for a second year. The decision on whether your current Member meets your future needs is up to the local community. If different skills are required for the second year, you will want to engage in this year's recruitment process.

Contribution of Host

The host community or office will be expected to provide office space, some administrative support, and supervision of work. After the Members begin their service, quarterly reports on work progress are required. Depending on the situation, host communities may be **asked to provide liability coverage for the Members under their supervision. Your community must be prepared for this eventuality, but filling out this Application will in no way obligate** you for this cost. Hosts will also provide whatever training is necessary for each Member to perform his or her specific duties.

Each host community will be expected to **cover the cost of travel for its AmeriCorps program supervisor** to the Rural Development state office for training about AmeriCorps. This will be no more than one to two days, and will cover all administrative and programmatic aspects of the initiative.

Contribution of the Rural Development mission area

The Rural Development mission area will provide assistance in recruiting and selecting AmeriCorps Members. Each state RECD office has a **designated AmeriCorps State Program Director** (formerly State Contact) who will provide overall program supervision for each state. They will be responsible for the program meeting USDA and CNS guidelines and regulations. The Rural Development mission area will coordinate and hold training sessions to meet CNS and USDA guidelines for minimum preparation for Members to function as USDA AmeriCorps Members. A limited travel and training budget for each Member will be administered by the Rural Development state office, as well as limited administrative support.

THE AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM

AmeriCorps was signed into law in September, 1993, and launched a year later. AmeriCorps Members perform a minimum of 9 months/ maximum of 12 months of service meeting critical human, environmental, public safety, and educational needs by providing direct, quantifiable services and benefits to citizens. Members serve at a variety of established Federal, State, local, non-profit, and private organizations.

The present 20,000 AmeriCorps Members themselves come from every walk in life (although they must be at least 17 years old), have a variety of skills and educational backgrounds, and are serving in most areas of the country. During their season of service AmeriCorps Members receive a monetary stipend and certain benefits such as health care coverage and on-the-job training, as well as a \$4,725 academic award upon satisfactory completion of their service.

AmeriCorps Members are interviewed and selected by the supporting agency, and then work in assisting in the accomplishment of the mission of that agency.

The Corporation For National Service (CNS)

The national AmeriCorps program is run by the Corporation for National Service (CNS) which is a Federally-sponsored non-profit organization set up for that purpose. The CNS determines which Agencies and organizations may participate in the AmeriCorps program, sets uniform standards for program operations, provides training and materials (uniforms, buttons, banners, signs, etc.), evaluates overall performance, and provides miscellaneous assistance during the course of the program (fiscal) year, and program matching funds (see below).

The CNS runs the AmeriCorps program in partnership with supporting non-profit, State, and Federal agencies. Agencies that wish to support AmeriCorps Members apply to the CNS and successful applicants receive matching funds and certain benefits such as child care payments (to qualifying Members) and the \$4,725 academic award. About 85% of all AmeriCorps programs operate through State Commission for National Service offices, which are generally located in State capitals, and are referred to as "State" programs. The Executive Director of the CNS State Commissions is appointed by the Governor of the State and is a State employee. The CNS also has field offices in certain cities headed by a State Program Director. Lists of the State Commission Executive Directors and the CNS State Program Directors are attached.

The other approximately 15% of AmeriCorps programs are run by larger national organizations, usually out of the headquarters of the organization involved, and are referred to as "national direct" programs. Given its national scope, the USDA/AmeriCorps program is a national-direct AmeriCorps program, run from the USDA national office in Washington.

Through its State Commission offices the CNS provides a variety of information, assistance, and guidance to all AmeriCorps programs, including the national-directs and the USDA/AmeriCorps program, operating within the States.

USDA/AMERICORPS PROGRAM

Overall direction to the USDA/AmeriCorps program at the Departmental level is provided by the Director of National Service, Joel Berg, and his staff. Within the USDA, the Director has final say on which USDA programs and which parts of those programs may participate in AmeriCorps.

In the current 2nd year (FY96) of AmeriCorps, the USDA is supporting about 1,350 Members of 2,000 Federally-supported Members nationwide. USDA/AmeriCorps Members serve on one of three (3) teams, each of which addresses a particular area of need:

- Anti-Hunger, Nutrition, and Empowerment
- Public Lands & Environment, and
- Rural Development

The USDA Agencies participate in one or more of these program areas by "supporting" Members. Support in the context of USDA/ AmeriCorps means that each of these Agencies pays the following expenses of the Members serving with their Agencies:

- A \$12,000 stipend,
- health benefits
- on the job training, and
- in-kind supervisory, administrative, and staff support

The CNS provides child-support benefits to qualifying Members through its AmeriCorps CARE program which is administered by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, as well as the \$4,725 academic award to Members who satisfactorily complete a term-of-service.

The USDA/AmeriCorps Agencies supporting Members during FY96 are:

- Rural Development
- the U.S. Forest Service
- the Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Food & Consumer Services, and
- the Farm Services Agency

RURAL DEVELOPMENT/AMERICORPS PROGRAM

Rural Development has supported approximately 125 Members in FY95 and FY96, and will maintain this level in FY97. Funding support for the Rural Development/AmeriCorps program is provided by the National Office and is accessed through normal administrative procedures.

In the current (FY96) year, approximately:

- 80 Members are serving in EZ/EC Designated and Champion Communities assisting those organizations in accomplishing parts of their Strategic plan, and
- 39 Members are serving in Rural Development field offices and accomplishing outreach and application assistance for its grant and loan programs, and assisting community organizations (that are not EZ/EC Communities) pursuing a complementary mission to that of Rural Development.

Rural Development intends to maintain this approximately 2/3 EZ/EC to 1/3 field office/community organizations placement ratio in FY97.

EZ/EC Placements - Function

Rural Development/AmeriCorps Members placed at EZ/EC Communities will assist those communities in the accomplishment of one or more of the strategic objectives set forth in that Communities' Strategic Plan and/or benchmarks which were submitted to the USDA Office of Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities. It is incumbent upon those communities that wish to receive an AmeriCorps Member to:

- Focus on specific strategic objective(s), or related activities in support of the strategic plan or bench marks, the accomplishment of which would be of direct benefit to the residents of that Community/Zone;
- Ensure that any proposed activities are not prohibited (see "Prohibited Activities" below); And
- Make certain that the Member can accomplish all their objectives during the course of their service.

Rural Development Field Office Placements - Function

In FY97 Rural Development would like to continue to place Members at field offices to perform community resource development and outreach for its grant and loan programs. The Members serving in field offices will:

- Perform Federal, State, private, and foundation resource searches for the community;
- Perform outreach for Rural Development grant and loan programs, especially for those that are underused;
- Organize and conduct the grassroots approach to rural development under the Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP);
- Perform outreach for its grant and loan programs to individuals and groups that have been traditionally underserved;
- Help assemble application materials and documentation, and assist applicants in meeting all application requirements;
- Counsel applicants; and identify and assist in the application for other types of non-Federal assistance as appropriate for the client population;
- In offices where there are backlogs and/or a lack of funds in certain programs, AmeriCorps Members will emphasize programs that do have funding and do not have backlogs. In addition, in offices where outreach for its programs is not possible or practical, Members will research and outreach other forms of aid that is appropriate and available to its client population.

Rural Development Community Organization Placements - Function

Rural Development/AmeriCorps Members have also been working with a variety of community groups and organizations that are pursuing either similar or complementary missions. The objective of these placements has been to allow the Agency to continue to assist rural communities in new and innovative ways in areas where program monies may not be available, or may not be available in sufficient quantity to meet identified critical needs.

Partnerships with community organizations may be undertaken when:

- There is the commitment on the part of a local State Rural Development office to provide administrative support and supervision; And
- The local/State office has a long-standing relationship with the proposed community organization and is familiar with the organization, its goals, and its staff.

In FY97 Rural Development would like to continue its partnerships with these types of organizations where possible and practical. Exact details of such a partnership depend on the circumstances, but all community organization placement Members should spend at least their first 2-4 weeks working at a field or State office under the direction of an Agency employee to learn about:

- The history, mission, and operation of the Agency;
- General philosophy of rural development, especially with regards to the local community;
- The part that the local Rural Development office and its programs plays in the region;
- The operational aspects of the office;
- Appropriate administrative tasks necessary to support the placement, such as reporting time & attendance, travel, sick & annual leave, progress reporting, and supervisory interaction.

Following this orientation, and as circumstances dictate, the Member would then move to work full- or part-time directly with the organization. The Member could be based full- or part-time at the field office. Under either circumstance, the field office always has primary supervisory and administrative responsibility for the Member.

Even if the Member is serving full-time at the organization, the Member must still report to the proximate Rural Development field office at least bimonthly for status meetings, signing time and attendance forms, etc. Rural Development has ultimate responsibility for the Member, and would have the final say on any decision to change or terminate the placement.

AmeriCorps Member Recruitment & Qualifications

The USDA/AmeriCorps National Office will publicize the USDA/ AmeriCorps program on a national basis. However, each Rural Development field office, community organization, and EZ/EC or Champion Community should advertise for candidates locally. The Rural Development/AmeriCorps National Coordinators will send recruitment information, applications, and forms to each State Program Director.

Each office, community organization, and EZ/EC or Champion community has the responsibility for recruitment and hiring. That is, each placement site should recruit, interview, evaluate, and select their Member(s) according to their own program objectives. The State Program Director has oversight responsibility and must be involved in the process. This will ensure the Members hired best reflect the Agency mission and prevent problems with conflict of interest and/or nepotism.

An AmeriCorps Member must be selected according to normal Federal hiring guidelines with regards to equal opportunity, lack of discrimination, etc., and must be a U.S. citizen or a resident alien whose status has been verified.

Training

CNS requires that organizations accepting Members must allow them to spend up to 20% of their service time in training, as situations warrant. Setting aside time for training will improve the performance of the Member in accomplishing the mission of the Agency, provide the Member with support and information for their personal development, further the AmeriCorps program itself, and improve their services to citizens.

Cluster Meetings

The CNS requires all AmeriCorps programs to allow their AmeriCorps Members to meet periodically. Experience has shown that regular meetings between at least five (5) AmeriCorps Members in the same area (called a "cluster") are essential for morale and for effective AmeriCorps program operation. At cluster meetings, which should be held at least once every two (2) weeks, Members can discuss and improve their work, develop solutions to common problems, organize training, invite guest speakers and community leaders, plan group projects, etc.

These cluster meetings **do** count as part of the time allotted for training, and should in fact be used for that purpose. Wherever possible, Rural Development/AmeriCorps Members should be placed within a reasonable travel distance to facilitate the interaction with other Rural Development Members in the region doing complementary work. That is, field office Members are in proximity to EZ/EC-placed Members so that the field office Members can provide additional program expertise and resources.

USDA/AmeriCorps Clusters

There are areas where clustering solely with Rural Development-connected sites is neither practical nor possible within a reasonable travel distance. In lieu of a Rural Development-only cluster, Rural Development/AmeriCorps Members can be clustered with Members from other USDA agencies, at their option. However, **Rural Development-only clusters are preferred.**

In clustering with other USDA Agencies, the Agencies and Members involved should be pursuing similar missions to that of Rural Development. The State Program Manager should work with the coordinators of the other Agencies to arrange and schedule cluster meetings. Please contact the following offices in your State for further information on their AmeriCorps programs:

- Farm Services Agency (FSA),
- Food & Consumer Services Agency (FCS),
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and
- U.S. Forest Service

Non-USDA Only Clusters

There are also areas where clustering solely with USDA-connected sites is neither practical nor possible within a reasonable travel distance. In lieu of a Rural Development-only or USDA-only cluster, Rural Development/AmeriCorps Members can be clustered with proximate Members sponsored by non-USDA

agencies and organizations. However, this is not recommended because the SPD and the Rural-Development Members will have little or no control over the priority that will be given to cluster meetings, professional cooperation, etc. Rural Development-only and USDA-only clusters over non-USDA clusters are always preferred over non-USDA only clusters.

In clustering with non-USDA organizations, the Agencies and Members involved should be pursuing similar missions to that of Rural Development. The SPM should work with the coordinators of the other organizations to arrange for the cluster meetings and other interaction. In order to find out about non-USDA AmeriCorps programs which are operating in your State, please contact the CNS State Office and the AmeriCorps State Program Directors listed on a separate attachment.

NATIONAL OFFICE PROGRAM SUPPORT

The Rural Development National Office will provide funding support the AmeriCorps program by paying for:

- Usual expenses associated with the Members such as the stipend, health benefits,
- "Miscellaneous" expenses incurred by the Member such as mileage, per diem, etc.*; And
- National rural development training for Members and State Program Directors.

*up to a pre-specified limit. In FY95 and FY96 each Member was allocated \$1,600 in miscellaneous expense support money. The per-Member miscellaneous expense allowance for FY97 has not yet been determined. Miscellaneous expenses in excess of this FY97 allowance must be **covered out of State Office funds** for the balance of the Member's service year.

National Coordinators

Rural Development will provide national coordination and logistical support in the form of two (2) National Coordinators. They will represent the Rural Development/AmeriCorps program within the USDA and provide guidance and direction to the program through regular contacts with the State Program Managers.

USDA Office of National Service

The USDA Director of National Service, Joel Berg, and his staff will provide a variety of assistance in the form of policy, directives, newsletters, and reports for recruitment, program operation, employee benefits, academic award, and other aspects of the AmeriCorps program.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE STATE COMMISSIONS

AmeriCorps is a national service program with Members serving in a variety of capacities in a great number of organizations in most States and regions in the country. Most States have a State Commission for National Service, as well as a CNS State Program Director, (both usually located in the capital city) to assist in the implementation and coordination of the various AmeriCorps programs and operations within the State. A list of the Executive Directors of the State Commissions and the Program Directors of the CNS State offices is attached.

To support their State programs, these organizations will often organize and sponsor training, meetings, conferences, rallies, days of service, etc. aimed at creating a program spirit and to assist Members in the accomplishment of their service objectives and the goals of the AmeriCorps program. Sponsoring organizations should allow their Members to attend these occasional activities, and actively support them - where possible.

Each Rural Development/AmeriCorps SPM should contact their CNS State Commissions early in the service year to inform the Commission about their program, where their Members will be serving, what they will be doing, and what kind of training and/or organizational needs they might have. SPMs and Site Supervisors should feel free to contact the Commissions anytime during the year to discuss training and/or organizational needs, seek help to problems, request needed equipment (buttons, posters, etc.), and inform them of progress, activities, special events, and noteworthy successes.

Attachment D - Instructions and Application

PART I: Background Information

The first two pages of the application cover basic background information. Please be as precise as possible. You can use the form provided, or you may develop your own - following the same format. You are encouraged to put the application on 3 1/4 floppy disk (in any format) and submit **it along with a hard copy.**

PART II: AmeriCorps Project Objective(s) Statement

This section asks you to consider the following information in the conception and drafting of your AmeriCorps project objectives. Please refer to 'Attachment C' for **prohibited activities** for AmeriCorps Members.

Objectives are statements of what your program believes will be the result of a year of effort by your AmeriCorps Member; a statement about what will change. Objectives should be measurable and address what work will get done. Objectives must be specific enough to allow determination of what changes will occur as a result of the efforts. A good objective describes both the desired change and the means of determining whether the change occurred.

Multiple Objectives:

Please be aware that you can have **multiple objectives relating to a single overall goal.** . This is especially true if there will be activities taking place before, during, and/or after the accomplishment of the main objective which will result in measurable, direct services to local citizens. For instance, a major issue in your community is the creation of a community center. One of your objectives would be to open a community center to serve 3,000 local residents. A supporting objective would be to put a new roof on a building, donated for this purpose, using 35 local volunteers. Another could be to paint the building using 10 volunteers. Yet another could be the training of local citizens in grant writing which results in the community receiving \$35,000 to finish rehabilitating the structure. An objective after the community center was finished would be to develop a senior arts program to serve 40 local elderly citizens.

When putting together objectives, you have **to think strategically in imagining all of the measurable objectives** that will have to be accomplished during the year **even if** you have one major objective in mind. Providing safe and affordable housing for 35 families is a great objective. A supporting objective, critical to its accomplishment, is helping 80 families fill out applications for 504 direct and guaranteed loans. A similar support activity after the families have obtained their homes is training 35 new homeowners in simple home repair and household budgeting.

If you have more than one objective for your project, **use a separate page for each.** The objective(s) should be realistic in that they describe what a single AmeriCorps Member would likely be able to accomplish in one year (1700+ hours of service). The National Community Service Act prohibits Members from engaging in lobbying or advocacy work, religious proselytizing, political activities, labor organizing, or service which will directly benefit a single for-profit entity.

'Outcome' vs 'Process Objectives:

Be sure that the objectives set out are **'outcome'** objectives and not **'process'** objectives. Process objectives say **how** work will get done - not **what** work will get done. 'Attending weekly staff meetings' is a process objective. 'Producing 15 units of affordable housing in year one' is an outcome objective.

Specifying Objectives:

Community service objectives should **stay away from vague buzzwords** such as "facilitating partnerships", "broadening public understanding", etc. Rather, the objectives should focus on how many trees will be planted, how many people will receive better housing, how much the recycling rate will be increased, how many new small-scale farms will be created, how many more people will receive running water, how many students will receive educational presentations, how many new businesses and jobs will be created, how water quality will be improved, etc.

Each objective must **realistically relate the service to be performed to the final goal**. For instance, an objective cannot simply state that a Member will create a tourism plan for the area, and that such a plan will create 1,000 new jobs. The objective needs to explain precisely how the Member will not just plan, but actually help implement, concrete activities that directly create 1000 jobs.

Measurement of Success:

Each objective **must define an impartial way of assessing the quality of the service** to be performed. It is unacceptable to use vague language indicating that, somehow, everyone will be satisfied. Rather, if the objective relates to education, the objective should predict specific percentile increases in test scores on that topic. If the objective relates to recycling, the objective should predict the actual decrease in the number of tons of waste weighed-in annually at the county landfill.

Lastly, each objective must state exactly how many community residents will receive the direct benefits from the service performed by our AmeriCorps Members. It is **unacceptable to simply make the claim that an AmeriCorps project will somehow benefit everyone in a town or a county**, and then list the total population of the town or county. The number cited should reflect a carefully thought out prediction of how many people will be concretely and directly aided by the service of-AmeriCorps.

While we want these objectives to be as concrete and well thought out as possible, it is permissible to amend them in the future if the situation warrants. Objectives agreed upon prior to the placement of a Member can also be changed. Once a Member is performing service, the local situation will quite often change. These changes can be submitted for approval to your State AmeriCorps Program Director.

Be sure to do a separate page of each work objective. Also, there must be separate objectives for each AmeriCorps Member requested.

Part III: Quarterly Work Plan

This part provides a guide to the types of activities which will take place throughout the year. It will also allow the National Office to understand the progression of activities. For instance, the first quarterly

report may have accomplished little in terms of the objectives. The Quarterly Work Plan would make it clear that most the first quarter's activities revolve around training and orientation. The Work Plan is also a useful tool in thinking out your project and the steps necessary to carry it out successfully.

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AMERICORPS

1996-97 Program Year Application

Please answer the following questions:

- a) This is the actual organization with which the AmeriCorps Member will serve. If this application is being written by a different and/or sponsoring organization, do not put that name here. The organization must be a not-for-profit, local unit of government, or a USDA Rural Development Field Office. The organization does not have to be the lead entity associated with an EZ/EC application, but must be associated with critical elements of the original strategic plan submitted to USDA. USDA Rural Development Field Offices are exempt from this criteria.
1. _____
2. _____
3. Name of the organization: _____
4. _____
5. _____
- a) This must be the permanent address for this project to which all official correspondence will be directed.
6. Address of organization:
7. _____
8. street, number, and P.O. (if applicable)
9. _____
10. City _____ State _____ Zip _____
a) _____
- b) Write the name of the person who has primary responsibility for overseeing this application.
11. Name of Contact Person for the AmeriCorps project:
a) _____
12. _____
- a) Telephone and fax numbers of the Supervisory.
13. Telephone number: _____ - _____ - _____
a) _____
14. Fax number: _____ - _____ - _____
15. _____
16. _____
- a) A list of all eligible communities, and the counties they serve, is included with these materials. For USDA Rural Development Field Offices, write the name of all EZ/EC applicant entity(s), whether Designated or Champion, whose service area(s) fall within the service area of your office.
17. Name of the designated Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community or Champion Community associated with this application:

18. _____
a) _____

- b) Write in the city and county in which the AmeriCorps Member's office will be located.

19. **City or Town:** _____

20. **County:** _____

PART I Cont.

a) This individual will be providing day to day supervision of the Member's service and oversee the work to be accomplished.

b) This must be the permanent address for the supervisor to which all appropriate correspondence will be directed.

c)

d)

e) Telephone and fax numbers of the Supervisory.

f) Refer to the included list of EZ/EC applicants and the counties they serve. Some project work may be done in contiguous counties, but the majority of the Member's service must be in eligible counties.

g)

h) Indicate only the district(s). It is not necessary to write the name of the representative(s).

i)

j)

k)

If you had a project for the 1994-95 program year, please list the number of Members and their names. Include your Site ID # for 1995.

7. Name of person who will provide supervision for the AmeriCorps Member.

8. Address of Supervisor:

street, number, and P.O. (if applicable)

City

State

Zip

9. Telephone number: _____ - _____ - _____

Fax number: _____ - _____ - _____

10. List all counties or parishes in which the proposed project will take place:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

11. Congressional districts in which the proposed project will take place: _____

12. Total Number: _____

Site ID# _____

MemberNames

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- l) List all 1997 program year AmeriCorps projects, whether CNS, State Commission, or USDA, within an approximate 50 mile radius from the Member's main worksite. This information can be obtained from your federal or state CNS representative or USDA office. A listing is included with these application materials.
- | 13. Members | Organization | City | # of |
|-------------|--------------|------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

PART II

Description of Work

Please answer the following questions clearly and precisely. You may use this form or create your own, following the same exact format. Please make copies for additional objectives.

OBJECTIVE ____ (Indicate 1, 2, 3, etc.):

Statement of Work:

A general statement providing background information, the current situation, and what you expect the AmeriCorps program to accomplish.

I) The work to be done

This is a succinct statement of what your program will accomplish as a result of a year of effort by your AmeriCorps Member

II) The result of this work:

What are the measurable results of this work. Express in numbers of miles, people served, acres planted, etc.

III) The standard of quality or success:

What are you going to use as a standard to measure the quality of the work? How will you measure how good, bad, or successful it is?

Objective ____ (Indicate objective number) Cont.

IV) Number of Service Recipients: _____

This is the ultimate number of people who will be served by the work performed. Do not express in general terms such as 'families'. This may be the same amount as II.

V) What resources will be required:

Describe the resources which will be necessary to accomplish the objective described above.

PART III

QUARTERLY WORK PLAN

NOTE: You may use this form or create your own.

Quarter One:

Please describe each activity to be accomplished, quarter by quarter. These will be the guideposts or milestones upon which to measure progress towards accomplishing the objective.

Activity 1:

Activity 2:

Activity 3:

Activity 4:

Quarter Two

Activity 1:

Activity 2:

Activity 3:

Activity 4:

Quarter Three

Activity 1:

Activity 2:

Activity 3:

Activity 4:

Quarter Four

Activity 1:

Activity 2:

Activity 3:

Activity 4:

Attachment E - Prohibited Activities

Because of the statute under which our program operates, many economic development activities are problematic for AmeriCorps Members – e.g. grant writing and fund raising; assistance for for-profit businesses; and staff work focused on coordinating meetings, developing plans, producing economic development promotional materials, etc. Therefore, we request that you not include work objectives which incorporates these activities.

It is understood that some of these activities may be a small part of the 'process' in which an AmeriCorps Member engages during his/her community service activities. **In no case are they to be the focus of the work.** In writing your objectives, do not focus on these activities. Instead, focus on the **outcomes** of the work.. If your Member is writing a grant to create a child care center, state your objective in terms of the numbers of children which will be served by the center - not the number of grants written or dollars raised for the project. **Keep in mind:**

- In no case should an AmeriCorps Member be involved in **fund-raising** for any organization.
- AmeriCorps Members **may not assist individual businesses.** They can serve a group of businesses in a classroom setting or by counseling. They may benefit the businesses of a community by setting up a revolving loan fund; but Members cannot perform services which benefit a single business to the exclusion of others.
- Members cannot be responsible for developing **promotional materials.** They can train a group of citizens this task, but not do it themselves. Likewise, a Member cannot spend the year planning a community celebration or festival. These are worthwhile activities, but the CNS requires a Member to be involved in more substantive efforts providing **measurable, direct services** to a community.
- Members may not spend their service year **coordinating and attending meetings, doing clerical activities,** or any other type of routine office tasks. Especially, they can not displace an employee or perform tasks that would normally be performed by an employee.
- AmeriCorps Members cannot spend their 1700 **hours developing plans, writing feasibility analysis, or doing studies.** These activities may represent a small portion of their time, but the objectives should focus on what direct services will be performed as a result.
- AmeriCorps Members are prohibited from engaging in **lobbying or advocacy** work, religious proselytizing, political activities, or labor organizing

Applications containing these activities will be rejected, regardless of their other merit.

Attachment F - Rural Development State AmeriCorps Program Directors

NAME	OFFICE	ADDRESS	CITY	ST	ZIP	COMMUNICATION
Frank Muncy	RECD State Office	634 S. Bailey, Ste 103	Palmer	AK	99645-6330	Ph: 907-745-2176 Fax: 907-745-5398
Shirley Tucker	RECD State Office	700 W. Capital St. P.O. Box 2778	Little Rock	AR	72203	Ph: 501-324-6284 Fax: 501-324-7351
Bonnie Fricks	RECD County Office	2585 N. Grand, Suite 2	Nogales	AZ	85621	Ph: 520-281-1068 Fax: 520-281-1460
Toni Symonds	RECD State Office	194 West Main Street Suite F	Woodland	CA	95695-2915	Ph: 916-668-2025 Fax: 916-668-2055
Glen Walden	RECD State Office	4440 N.W. 25th Pl	Gainesville	FL	32614-7010	Ph: 904-338-3440 Fax: 904-338-3452
Donnie Thomas	RECD State Office	355 E. Hancock Ave., Stephens Federal Building	Athens	GA	30610	Ph: 706-546-2171 Fax: 706-546-2135
Charles Specht	RECD State Office	1817 S. Neil Street, Ste 103	Champaign	IL	61820	Ph: 217-398-5412 Ext. 244 Fax: 217-398-5337
Louis Elliott	RECD State Office	P.O. Box 1227	Shelbyville	KY	40066-3277	Ph: 502-633-0892 Fax: 502-633-0552
Richard Hoffpauir	RECD District Office	PO 330 302 North Monroe Street	Marksville	LA	71351	Ph: 318-253-7528 Fax: 318-253-4662
Bettye Oliver	RECD State Office	Federal Building, Ste 831 100 W Capital SF	Jackson	MS	39269	Ph: 601-965-5460 Fax: 601-965-5384
Debra Nesbitt	RECD State Office	4405 Bland Road, Suite 260	Raleigh	NC	27609	Ph: 919-873-2042 Fax: 919-873-2075
John Thomas	RECD State Office	6200 Jefferson St., NE Room 255	Albuquerque	NM	87109	Ph: 505-761-4960 Fax: 505-761-4977
Bud Fisher	RECD State Office	101 S.W. Main, Suite 1410	Portland	OR	97204	Ph: 503-414-3365 Fax: 503-414-3386
Frank Lee Patterson	RECD County Office	602 Evans City Rd., Ste 101	Butler	PA	16001-8701	Ph: 412-482-4888 Fax: 412-482-4826
Greg White	RECD State Office	1835 Assembly St. Room 1007	Columbia	SC	29201	Ph: 803-253-3498 Fax: 803-765-5633
Lorraine Clements	RECD State Office	Fed Bld Suite 102 101 S. Main	Temple	TX	76501	Ph: 817-774-1304 Fax: 817-774-1477
Jim Anderson	RECD State Office	1606 Santa Rose Road Culpeper Bldg. #238	Richmond	VA	23229	Ph: 804-287-1554 Fax: 804-287-1785
Mary McBride	RECD State Office	P.O. Box 2427	Wenatchee	WA	98807-2427	Ph: 509-664-0215 Fax: 509-664-0202