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December

Divider Title:_____

December 12, 1996

To: Martha

From: Joel

Subject: **Urgent AmeriCorps Letter and Memo for Signature by the Secretary**

When I met with the Secretary last week, he requested that I immediately draft a letter to Senators Bond and Mikulski, as well as a memorandum to Carol Rasco, explaining the status of the USDA AmeriCorps program.

After a maddening week of working both documents through clearance at a snail's pace, they are both finally ready for signature.

The letter to Bond, Mikulski, and Grassley has been reviewed by OGC, OBPA, and Dave and Cheryl in OCR . Harris Wofford also reviewed it personally and requested that we also send the letter to Grassley, which I am suggesting that we do. The final original letter for signature should come from OES to the Cage tomorrow for signature.

The memo to Rasco has been reviewed by Dave and Cheryl in OCR, as well as the Corporation for National Service. Since I understand that memorandums do not go through the formal executive correspondence system, the original is attached for signature.

Because the Secretary requested that I prepare both documents, I do not believe an accompanying decision memo is necessary.

I would greatly appreciate your help in getting both signed asap. Since the program's deadline for closure is now December 20, it is imperative that both documents get sent on Friday or Monday at the latest.

December 3, 1996

To: David Carlin

From: Joel Berg

Subject: **UPDATED AMERICORPS DECISION MEMORANDUM**

I revised the decision memorandum to include your edits to the previous version. After consulting with projects managers nationally, I have stated in the memorandum that December 13, 1996 is the "drop dead date" for a decision on the future of the program.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY/DEPUTY SECRETARY

THROUGH: J. David Carlin
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 to 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 Represenatives 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 uncertainly 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 _____

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November

Divider Title:_____

Dear Friend in Service:

There is an exciting --- and growing --- national movement that is effectively recovering excess food and distributing such food to citizens in need.

Enclosed is "A Citizen's Guide to Food Recovery," published by USDA, which explains how any interested group or individual can aid this movement. Upon request, we can provide you with additional copies of this guide for distribution in your state or local area.

As detailed in the guide, USDA sponsored a special food recovery program this summer in which AmeriCorps members worked in partnership with community-based anti-hunger groups, youth service corps, farm organizations, food banks, churches, and food recovery organizations. The AmeriCorps members in this summer program helped recover over 1,005 tons of food, which provided an estimated 1.34 million meals. The 88 AmeriCorps members in the program also recruited over 1,600 non-compensated community volunteers who helped pick, sort, deliver, and prepare the recovered foods.

The guide uses the summer program as a "case study" as to how community service projects related to food recovery can succeed. While the examples are based primarily on projects coordinated by AmeriCorps members sponsored by USDA, they can apply to any AmeriCorps, VISTA, Learn and Serve America, or Senior Corps project. Additionally, these lessons can apply to any food recovery project undertaken by civic groups, FFA chapters, Girl or Boy Scout groups, youth corps, or any other group of community volunteers.

USDA will gladly provide technical assistance to any service organization seeking to undertake food recovery projects. If you are in need of such assistance, have any questions, or would like more copies of the guide, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-720-5746 or Donna Hines at 202-690-0693.

Sincerely,

Joel Berg

Joel Berg
Director of National Service, USDA

AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

November 25, 1996

To: Harris Wofford, CEO, Corporation for National Service

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA JB

Subject: **Urgent Need to Reach Closure on the USDA AmeriCorps Program**

Ironically --- despite the fact that President Clinton specifically praised our AmeriCorps "Summer of Gleaning" program in this Saturday's radio address and that over one dozen Republicans in the Senate have recently offered support for continuing USDA AmeriCorps projects --- there is still an urgent need to immediately decide whether USDA AmeriCorps projects will continue or end.

As you will recall, on February 13, 1996, Shirley Sagawa sent a memorandum to all Federal agency AmeriCorps coordinators indicating that the Corporation's Board of Directors had ratified a new policy in which "Agencies may establish Education Award Only programs." Thus, our projects --- which would receive education awards only from CNS--- have been expecting approval since February.

Up to 1,000 people around the country --- who are either expecting to complete their second year of the program or are hoping to start their first year of the program --- are still waiting to determine how to proceed with their lives as negotiations continue. The hundreds of communities which were expecting to host projects are also in limbo, unable to determine whether the important community projects planned will still be accomplished.

Tables 1 and 2 (attached) summarize the probable impact of program cancellation upon select USDA AmeriCorps projects. Over $10 million in non-Federal matching funds have already been set aside for these projects. Furthermore, if allowed to continue, the projects noted in the tables would produce an estimated $336 million dollars in economic benefits.

Given that AmeriCorps Members must finish their 1,700-hour term of service before the end of the fiscal year on September 30, we are rapidly nearing a date beyond which it would be practically impossible to run a full program. Secretary Glickman has asked me to provide him with a decision memo on this matter. (A draft of that memo is attached.)

I would very much like to meet with you at your earliest possible convenience to discuss both how we proceed this year and how we can help CNS develop a long-term strategy to continue to serve rural America.

CC: Terry Russell, Shirely Sagawa, Steve Waldman, Diana Algra, Gene Sofer, Hank Oltman

November 26, 1996

To: Dennis Kaplan

From: Joel Berg

Subject: **OPBA Review of Charts Describing Impact of AmeriCorps Cancellation**

Tables 1 and 2 (attached) summarize the probable impact of program cancellation upon select USDA AmeriCorps projects. The projects listed in the charts comprise only about 15% of all USDA AmeriCorps projects Over $10 million in non-Federal matching funds have already been set aside for these slect projects. Furthermore, if allowed to continue, the projects noted in the tables would produce an estimated $336 million dollars in economic benefits.

Assistant Secretary Carlin believes it would be useful for OPBA to review these charts before we share them with the Secretary.

To give you some idea of how the economic impact of some projects can be measured, attached is a press release detailing the impact of AmeriCorps rural fire protection projects.

I would appreciate any help you could provide in this matter.

USDA AMERICORPS PROJECTS
IN PROGRESS
TABLE 1

ST	PROJECT TITLE	% of PROJECT COMPLETED	STATE FUNDS COMMITTED	NON-GOVERNMENT FUNDS COMMITTED	POTENTIAL JOBS CREATED	POTENTIAL ECONOMIC BENEFIT
AR	RURAL FIRE PROTECTION	20	$ 2,200,000	$ 150,000		$75,000,000
AR	HOLLY GROVE FLOODPLAIN RELOCATION	20	1,250,000	200,0	50	200,000 +
HI	TREE PLANTING					
ID	HOME*A*SYST	30	20,000	5,000	10	10,000,000
KS	CHENEY LAKE RESTORATION	50		20,000	8	4,000,000
KS	KANOPLIS/WILTON LAKE	60		20,000	8	3,000,000
KS	TUTTLE/MILFORD LAKES	65		20,000	8	4,000,000
KS	PERRY/CLINTON LAKES	60		20,000	8	4,000,000
KS	EL DORADO LAKE			20,000	8	5,000,000
KS	GREAT PLAIN NATURE CTR			50,000	10	*
KS	BIG CREEK STREAM RESTOR'T	70		15,000	7	
KS	SHAWNEE CO STREAM RESTORATION	60		25,000	20	
KY	ONEIDA AREA IMPROVEMENT			2,000		
LA	RURAL FIRE PROTECTION	57	$ 996,984			$50,000,000
MI	FARM*A*SYST		249,000			

ME	COASTAL WATER QUALITY & CLAM INDUSTRY	60	50,000	40,000	150	4,000,000 yr
ME	SHELLFISH WATER QUALITY EDUCATION COORDINATORS	50	80,000	60,000	100	3,000,000 yr
ME	FORESTRY/ENVIRONMENTAL WATER QUALITY COORD.	35	60,000	20,000	15	5,000,000 yr
ME	CRANBERRY WATER QUALITY COORDINATOR	75	50,000	50,000	200	50,000,000 yr
ME	CASCO BAY/SEBAGO LAKE WATERSHED COORD.	40	20,000	25,000	10	2,000,000 yr
ME	ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CIRCUIT RIDER	10	10,000	20,000		
ME	MACD EDUCATION COORDINATOR	60	20,000	20,000		
ME	ST. CROIX WATERSHED COORDINATOR	70	10,000	15,000	5	200,000 yr
ME	FISH RIVER LAKES WATERSHED COORDINATOR	50	50,000	100,000	5	200,000 yr
ME	TRAIL COORDINATOR	40	20,000	40,000	75	5,000,000 yr
ME	DARMANISCOTTA RIVER WATERSHED COORDINATOR	40	20,000	50,000	40	4,000,000 yr
ME	CAMP ROAD WATER QUALITY COORDINATOR	50	10,000	20,000	2	20,000 yr
ME	MEDUNEKEAG RIVER WATER QUALITY COORDINATOR	30	20,000	20,000	10	100,000 yr
ME	CHINA LAKE WATER QUALITY COORDINATOR	40	10,000	20,000	5	50,000 yr
NH	RURAL FIRE PROTECTION	25	10,000	35,000	10	25,000,000

NH	WATERSHED PROJECT	15	20,000	65,000	5	15,000,000
NH	NH COOKS	10	200,000	400,000	40	3,500,000
NY	SOIL MAP COMPUTERIZATION , T. OF EDEN, NY (25,000 AC)	10		3,000		500,000
NY	SOIL MAP COMPUTERIZATION, ERIE & NIAGARA (200,000 AC)	75	25,000	15,000	1	2,000,000
NY	STREAM MAPPING IN GIS	90	1,000	10,000		400,000
NY	NIAGARA FRONTIER WETLANDS INITIATIVE LAND USE	10	20,000	5,000		1,000,000
NY	STATE REGULATED WETLAND BOUNDARY MODIFICATIONS	25	5,000	1,000		500,000
NY	SENECA NATION OF INDIANS - ABANDONED GAS WELL LOCATIONS	30		10,000	3	5,000,000
NY	RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DRY HYDRANT PROJECT	10		50,000	1	5,000,000
NY	COUNTY AG DISTRICT MAP UPDATE	10		5,000		100,000
NY	URBAN FORESTRY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT	10		750	1	80,000
NY	BUFFALO CREEK CORRIDOR PROTECTION PROJECT	10		25,000	1	2,000,000
NY	HABITAT OF HUMANITY PROJECT MAP	75		250		50,000
NY	OLD GROWTH FOREST MAPPING & PRESERVATION	20		250		1,500,000
NY	BARN OWL NEST SITES	20		250		2,000,000

NY	INTERNATIONAL MARSH MONITORING LPROJECT	75	20,000	20,000	2	800,000
NY	SENECA NATION OF INDIANS DATA TRANSFER & TNG	25		35,000	1	10,000,000
NY	TOWN OF EDEN, GIS TNG & OPEN SPACE STUDY	50		7,500		1,000,000
NY	TOWN OF WALES GIS TNG & DATA DISTRIBUTION	50		12,000	25	400,000
NY	LAKE ERIE/LAKE ST. CLAIRE NAT. WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT	90		2,000		1,000,000
NY	FEMA FLOOD MAP DATA DISTRIBUTION	15		200		600,000
NY	BUFFALO RIVER TAX PARCELS	50		4,000		200,00
NY	TOWN OF GRAND ISLAND TAX PARCELS	20		7,000		75,000
NY	AMHERST FARMLAND PROTECTION PROJECT MAPS	25	900,000	900,000	1	2,500,000
NY	CAZENOVIA CREEK UNREGULATED DISCHARGE MAPPING	75		1,000		75,000
NY	BUFFALO CREEK PROJECT MAINTENANCE MAPPING	75		30,000	1	60,000
NY	UNITED WAY FOOD BANKS & PANTRIES PROJECT	65		2,000		200,000
NY	ELECTION WARDS & DISTRICTS MAPPING PROJECT	15		2,500		50,000
NY	INTEGRATING INFORMATION & ACTION	25		5,000	1	

NY	F&WS ATLANTIC SALMON REINTROD & DATA MAPPING	50		2,000	5	10,000,000
OK	WINDBREAK RESTORATION	10	30,000	30,000	10	100,000
OK	ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION	20	10,000	25,000		
SC	NATURE TRAIL CONSTRUCT'N	25	75,000	75,000	2	1,000,000
SC	ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTERS	30	50,000	125,000	5	2,000,000
SC	PUBLIC SAFETY-911	25	10,000	400,000	10	5,000,000
SC	RURAL FIRE PROTECTION	30	200,000	500,000	15	10,000,000
VT	RURAL FIRE PROTECTION	50		34,000		560,000
WV	HOUSING IMPROVEMENT REVOLVING LOAN FUND	30	310,000			
WV	BARBOUR COMMUNITY NET			24,745		
	TOTALS:		7,031,984	3,916,445	897	336,340,000

* IMPACTS ON 85,000 STUDENTS

Table 2?

Table 2

USDA AMERICORPS PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES IF THIRD YEAR AMERICORPS CANCELED

ST	PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT SERIOUSLY DELAYED	PROJECT CANCELED
AR	RURAL FIRE PROTECTION	Installation of dry fire hydrants in rural areas	X	
AR	HOLLY GROVE FLOODPLAIN PROJECT	Moving families out of the floodplain	X	
GA	WORKING WITH AT-RISK STUDENTS	Work in the prevention of school dropouts, teen pregancy, & tutoring		X
GA	HOUSING IMPROVMENT	Assist with home repairs and area clean-ups		X
GA	FOOD BUYING CLUBS	Establishing food buying clubs in a 6 county area		X
HI	MOLOKAI-LANAI REFORESTATION	Plant trees in critical watersheds to reduce non-point pollution		X
ID	HOME*A*SYST	Wellhead/environmental protection project		X
IL	STREAMBANK STABILIZATION	Installing willow posts		X
IL	CITY REVITALIZAT ION	Paint & repair downtown buildings		X
IL	DAY CARE CENTER IMPROVEMENT	Remodeling local day care center		X
IL	CEMETARY CLEAN-UP	Remove debris, trees, and brush from cemetary		X
KS	CHENEY LAKE RESTORATION	Flood restoration work		X
KS	KANOPLIS/WILTON LAKE	Flood restoration work		X
KS	TUTTLE/MILFORD LAKES	Flood restoration work		

IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES IF THIRD YEAR AMERICORPS CANCELED - CONTINUED

KS	PERRY/CLINTON LAKES	Flood restoration work		X
KS	EL DORADO LAKE	Flood restoration work		X
KS	SHAWNEE CO STREAM RESTORATION	Flood restoration work		X
KY	OPERATION PRIDE	Coordination between neighborhoods to organize, clean-up, etc		X
KY	FRONTIER HOUSING	Pre-home ownership counseling program		X
KY	SERVICE CONNECTION	Emergency repairs for low income families at little or no cost		X
KY	ONEIDA AREA IMPROVEMENT	Improve area around the 2 springs where families get fresh drinking water		X
KY	ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION	Construction of an Outdoor Environmental Classroom		X
KY	E-911	Development of an emergency 911 system	X	
KY	DANIEL BOONE DEV COUNCIL	Counseling program for people to move into homes being built	X	
LA	DRY FIRE HYDRANTS PROGRAM	Installation of dry fire hydrants in rural areas	X	
LA	TOWN OF CULLEN	Community wide beautificattion project		X
LA	PROJECT CELEBRATION	Youth projects and a battered women's shelter	X	
LA	ST. MARY COMMUNITY ACTION	Working with very low and low income families to make homes available	X	
LA	ST. LANDRY ECON. INDUCEMENT DISTRICT	Match low income community members with sources of homes		X
LA	SOUTHERN MUTUAL HELP ASSOCIATION	Working with numerous environmental issues & a community based Adult Readiness Center	X	
MI	FARM*A*SYST	Water quality improvement program		X

IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES IF THIRD YEAR AMERICORPS CANCELED - CONTINUED

ME	FORESTRY ENVIRONMENTAL WATER QUALITY COORDINATOR	Water quality improvement program		X
ME	ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CIRCUIT RIDER	Teaches environmental education to students throughout the area		X
ME	ST. CROIX WATERSHED COORDINATION	Water quality improvement program		X
ME	TRAILS COORDINATOR	Coordinated trails construction		X
ME	DAMRISCOTTA RIVER WATERSHED COORDINATOR	Water quality improvement program		X
ME	CAMP ROAD WATER QUALITY COORD.	Water quality improvement program		X
ME	CHINA LAKE WATER QUALITY COORDINATOR	Water quality improvement program		X
ME	COASTAL WATER QUALITY & CLAM INDUSTRY	Water quality improvement with emphasis on re-opening clam flats	X	
ME	CRANBERRY WATER QUALITY COORD.	Water quality improvement program	X	
ME	FISH RIVER LAKES WATERSHED COORD.	Water quality improvement program	X	
ME	MEDUXNEKEAG RIVER WATER QUALITY COORD.	Water quality improvement program	X	
ME	SHELLFISH WATAER QUALITY EDUCATION COORD.	Conservation education	X	
ME	CASCO BAY/SEBAGO LAKE WATERSHED COORDINATORS	Water quality improvement program	X	
ME	MACD EDUCATION COORDINATOR	Conservation education	X	
TX	DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION	Clean-up and improve downtown area		X

IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES IF THIRD YEAR AMERICORPS CANCELED - CONTINUED

TX	TEXAS RURAL LEADERSHIP TNG PROGRAM	Train local people in leaderships skills		X
VA	DEVELOPMENT OF DAY CARE CTR	Design & implement a quality daycare and after school center		X
VT	RURAL FIRE PROTECTION	Design fire protection plans for local rural communities	X	
WA	HOUSING DEVELOPMENT	Coordinate and oversee the construction of a 14 unit low income senior housing development	X	
WA	HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT	Coordinate activities of housing development based on assessment	X	
WV	WAGE COMPARABILITY/JOBS DEVELOPMENT ENTREPRENEURIAL ENVIRONMENT STUDY	Gather information relevant to the development of McDowell County		X

November 26, 1996

To: David Carlin

From: Joel Berg JB

Subject: **Revised AmeriCorps Decision Memorandum**

Attached is the revised memorandum, which incorporates all your edits. In the interest of getting the memorandum to the Secretary as soon as possible, I have taken out the charts on the impacts of canceling the projects and have deleted the reference in the memorandum to those charts. I will submit the charts to OPBA for review; if OPBA subsequently approves them, I will send them to the Secretary under a separate cover.

I have also included the two relevant memos from OGC.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

November 25, 1996

TO: James R. Lyons, Under Secretary Natural Resources and Environment

FROM: Joel Berg, USDA Director of National Service

SUBJECT: Food Recovery and Gleaning Working Group

Re: Memo from Secretary Glickman, dated November 25, 1996, subject: Food Recovery and Gleaning Initiatives.

In this memo the Secretary stated that he was establishing a food recovery/gleaning working group and asked that a liaison from each mission area be named to serve with this group. I ask that you consider Dee DiFiore to represent NRE on this working group. She is familiar with the work that was accomplished this past summer in the "Summer of Gleaning Program" and played a valuable role in the management of this program. She is already assigned to work with my office and is working on this issue.

cc:
Tom Herbert, Deputy Under Secretary, NRE
Paul Johnson, Chief, NRCS
Pearlie Reed, Associate Chief, NRCS
Humberto Hernandez, Director, CARD
Larry Holmes, AmeriCorps Program Manager, CARD

Patty - Please fax to JBerg. Gen

AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

To: **Gene Sofer**

From: **Joel Berg**

3 pages

Please provide me comments on this draft.

Joel -

I would flip the letter -- begin by referencing the Crossley letter and conclude w/ Summer of Learning as another cost effective delivery system that enjoyed broad bi-partisan support, the support of the independent sector, and religious groups w/ church affiliations that couldn't have done this otherwise. The independent sector & religious groups (Bread For the World, etc.) couldn't operate at this level w/o AC Corps members supported by USDA, etc.

Gene

DRAFT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Hannagan

To: **Bill Hannagan, Office of Senator Grassley**

From: **Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA**

We continue to search for a compromise that would meet Senator Grassley's goal of ending direct Federal agency management of AmeriCorps projects, but would allow USDA to continue to provide technical assistance and funding to locally-based organizations that sponsor AmeriCorps projects.

As you may be aware, in addition to year-long AmeriCorps rural development projects, USDA sponsored a highly successful summer AmeriCorps program this year focused on recovering excess food that normally would be discarded and distributing that food to citizens in need. For your information, enclosed is a report detailing the achievements of this program, including the project in Iowa.

This "Summer of Gleaning" program worked in partnership with hundreds of locally based anti-hunger groups, youth service corps, farm organizations, food banks, churches, and food recovery organizations.

The AmeriCorps members in this summer program helped recover over 1,005 tons of food, which provided an estimated 1.34 million meals. **Given that the total Federal dollars spent on this summer program -- including collection, transportation, and storage of food, and stipends and educational awards for the AmeriCorps members --- was $430,000, the total Federal cost per meal provided was approximately 43 cents each.**

Furthermore, the program was based on the "volunteer generator model" of community service in which a handful of compensated AmeriCorps members recruit numerous non-compensated volunteers to help implement large-scale tasks. **The 88 AmeriCorps members in the summer program recruited over 500 non-compensated community volunteers who helped pick, sort, deliver, and prepare the recovered foods.**

We hope Senator Grassley will consider these achievements as both USDA and the Corporation for National Service continue to work with your office to suggest mutually agreeable ways in which USDA can aid such projects in the future.

In addition, I would like to clarify three points raised in Senator Grassley's September 25, 1996 letter to Harris Wofford:

1) We have never sought to have AmeriCorps Members work "at USDA" - our AmeriCorps Members work directly in each community or directly on public lands.

2) In our first year of operation, the total Federal spending on the USDA AmeriCorps program --- including tools, equipment, supplies, and staff support needed for projects --- was $29.311 million, equaling $24,426 per AmeriCorps Member. Given that the AmeriCorps Members in the program recruited 14,176 non-compensated volunteers, the total Federal cost per citizen engaged in service was only $1,906. Moreover, given that the service provided by the program helped 828,000 people and aided 234,000 acres of land, the Federal government spent only $17 per person aided and only $62 per acre helped. In addition, the Forest Service calculated that, for each Federal dollar spent on Forest Service AmeriCorps projects, between 1.51 to $2.30 worth of work was performed.

3) The Committee on Appropriations Subcommittees on Agriculture in both Houses of Congress have previously been informed about USDA spending on AmeriCorps and have never raised any objection to such spending.

I hope we can continue to discuss these and other issues regarding our program. In the meantime, please call me at 720-5746 with any questions.

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October

Divider Title:_____

Clinton Presidential Records
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September

Divider Title:_____

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

September 30, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR MONICA HOLMAN, GRANTS OFFICER, CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE

FROM: JOEL BERG, USDA Joel Berg
DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL SERVICE

SUBJECT: Return of Corporation for National Service Grant Funds Disbursed to USDA Under Grant 94ADFDC047 (as amended)

While it is unusual for some government programs to stay within their budgets', I am happy to announce that the USDA AmeriCorps not only stayed within its budget but actually spent less than was budgeted. As a result the Department of Agriculture is returning to the Corporation for National Service $245, 642 in Corporation for National Service funds that were disbursed to USDA under grant 94ADFDC047 (as amended). This amount includes $125,000 that was going to be used by the USDA Forest Service but was not used because a recent Congressional decision prevent the start-up of a Forest Service program in the FY 95-96 program year, as well as $120,642 that was not used during the operation of the USDA AmeriCorps program.

The initial savings were actually higher, but a combination of the skill of our AmeriCorps members and regular USDA staff, USDA's ability to respond rapidly to situations occurring across the country, and the availability of these Corporation funds saved by our original projects' efficiencies and good management allowed USDA AmeriCorps programs to provide disaster relief to our fellow American citizens affected by hurricane Marilyn in the fall of 1995, the winter floods of 1996, and hurricane Fran in the summer of 1996, as well as, operate a summer of gleaning program that recovered and gleaned over two million pounds of food during the summer of 1996.

It is our recommendation that the excess funds being returned to the Corporation be used to fund two or three additional AmeriCorps members at each of the Anti-Hunger Consortium sites (District of Columbia, Los Angeles, Mississippi, Milwaukee, and Vermont) to continue gleaning and food recovery efforts they began as part of this year's USDA "Summer of Gleaning"

AmeriCorps program. The assignment of additional members would of course be based on the Corporations regulations and criteria for approving members including but not limited to:

1. Corporation funds being limited to a maximum of $13,800 per member (not including the educational award of $4,725 for a full-time member);

2. Each site being able to meet the matching requirements of the Corporation based on receiving additional funds from the Corporation, and;

3. The quality of the plan submitted by each site for the service to be performed by each member.

The "Summer of Gleaning" program, which we operated with you approval this summer collected over 2,000,000 pounds of food supporting distribution of approximately 1,340,000 meals in only twelve weeks. Given that we have only a few weeks to plan and prepare the execution of this program, It is our opinion that placing members in key areas now who can focus on establishing stronger links to food banks, producers and recipients will result in substantial amounts of food being gleaned or recovered next year. If you have any questions concerning this proposal please contact me at (202) 720-5746.

cc: M. Kenefic
H. Oltmann

This is to clear the paper trail.

September 25, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR MIKE KENEFIC, GRANTS AND CONTRACTS OFFICER,
CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE

FROM: JOEL BERG
DIRECTOR USDA NATIONAL SERVICE

SUBJECT: Confirmation of Previous Requests and Discussions

As we prepare to close out the final year of our Corporation for National Service grant, 94ADFDC047 (as amended), I want to confirm our understanding of certain issues that have arisen in the last year:

1. When completing our budget for this year (the second year of our grant), your office indicated that if we had funds remaining from the first year of our grant that amount should be subtracted from our budget request for this year. When we received that notification we discussed with your office the fact that our budget for the this year was tentative and may change depending on directions we might receive from Congress. It was decided that we would NOT subject the amount of any first year carryover from our second year budget request. The situation would be re-evaluated at the end of this year and such a re-evaluation has become mute because we will not be submitting a budget for a third year program. Please confirm this understanding.

2. On March 8, 1996 we submitted a request to your office for approval of Amendment 2 to our grant, requesting approval for a summer of gleaning program. While we were given verbal approval and the Corporation and the Trust set aside education awards for the members, we have not yet received a written approval. Given the mail problems that sometimes occur in our building it is possible you sent this and we just didn't receive it. Can you please send another copy to:

   Mr. Joel Berg
   U.S. Department of Agriculture
   AG STOP 1320
   14000 Independence Ave, S.W.
   Washington, D.C. 20250-1320

3. On June 13, we submitted a clarification to you explaining how we were changing the distribution of some of the Corporation's money to our individual agencies by way of what we called a "mini-grant" program. Again we received verbal approval but could you please forward the written approval to us at your convenience.

As we end this year, I want to express my gratitude for the work of your staff in assisting run a very successful program.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

September 23, 1996

BRIEFING MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

FROM: Joel Berg JB
Director of National Service, USDA

Donna Hines, Coordinator
USDA AmeriCorps Anti-Hunger Programs

SUBJECT: **AMERICORPS SITE VISIT IN MILWAUKEE**

PURPOSE OF THE SITE VISIT:

The primary purpose of the site visit is to attempt to attract media coverage that highlights the effectiveness of the President's AmeriCorps national service program in fighting hunger. A secondary purpose of the visit is to provide you with another opportunity to learn first-hand about local anti-hunger efforts. Both stops are in Milwaukee's HUD-designated urban Enterprise Community.

STOP #1 --- COMMUNITY GARDEN {OPEN PRESS}

You are expected to arrive at 9:30 a.m. at the Guest House (homeless) Shelter.

You will be met at the shelter by Holly Gardiner, Executive Director at Guest House, and Tony Perez, Executive Director of the Milwaukee Community Service Corps (MCSC), the organization to which we have sub-granted funds to run the AmeriCorps anti-hunger project in Milwaukee. Mr. Perez is the immediate past Chair of the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (NASC), the leading national membership and advocacy organization for youth corps programs.

Mayor John O. Nordquist, County Executive Tom Ament, and representatives of Governor Thompson, Senator Kohl, Senator Feingold, Congressman Kleczka, and Congressman Barrett may also meet you.

Representatives of the Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee, the County Extension Service, and the Corporation for National service --- all of which have been key partners in this project --- may also greet you.

You will briefly tour the shelter and then cross the street to view a community garden, where food is grown and harvested by the USDA AmeriCorps Members. The food at the garden is used to feed residents of the Guest House Shelter; extra produce is distributed among other prepared meal sites throughout Milwaukee. At this time, you will have the opportunity to meet about 20 USDA AmeriCorps Members who will be working in the garden that morning, and to ***join them in their efforts (picking tomatoes, mainly) if you would like to do so.***

Also in attendance may be a number of other young people in the Milwaukee Community Service Corps --- some of whom are in non-USDA AmeriCorps projects. The USDA AmeriCorps Members will clearly be marked by their uniforms.

After you view and/or work in the garden, we will ask all the corps members to gather for a short presentation. Mr. Perez will speak first. Then a representative of the Rainbow Farmers Cooperative will speak briefly about the vital role that the USDA AmeriCorps project has played in aiding the farmers' market. If Mayor Nordquist is present, he will then speak and introduce you.

I recommend that you speak for about five to ten minutes about the importance of the overall AmeriCorps program and about the program's specific success in fighting hunger. (See "talking points"section of this memorandum).

If any media outlet would like one-on-one interviews, I would anticipate those would occur after you make your comments.

You will depart from the garden site at 10:15 a.m.

STOP #2 --- HOMELESS SHELTER {CLOSED PRESS}

At 10:30 a.m., you should arrive at Hope House, a homeless shelter where USDA AmeriCorps Members have helped construct a "Super Food Pantry." You will be met by the Executive Director of this facility, Sherri Kay.

You will briefly tour and observe operations at this homeless shelter, which also serves as a "Super Pantry," where low-income families and individuals can shop supermarket-style for the food items, as well as some non-food basics such as paper products or disposable diapers.

BACKGROUND:

The USDA AmeriCorps project you will visit is titled the Milwaukee Anti-Hunger Nutrition and Empowerment Project (MAHNEP), and is managed on the ground by the Milwaukee Community Service Corps

.

MAHNEP was begun 2 years ago as one of USDA's original AmeriCorps Anti-Hunger programs. In the first two years of operation, this project received three major sources of funding:

1) Federal funds from the Corporation for National Service, which were granted to USDA and, in turn, sub-granted from my office to the Milwaukee Community Service Corps.

2) Federal funds from the USDA Food and Consumer Service.

3) Non-Federal funds raised by the Milwaukee Community Service Corps from private and non-profit sources. (For instance, the project has received significant funds from General Electric -- see attached news clip).

Unlike the USDA AmeriCorps rural development and environmental projects, which were funded almost entirely by USDA, the USDA AmeriCorps anti-hunger projects -- including the one in Milwaukee -- were funded mostly by the Corporation for National Service.

Because USDA knew that we would no longer have the legal ability to obtain operating funds from the Corporation for National Service that we could sub-grant to anti-hunger groups, we worked closely with those groups to work out a way through which they could directly receive funds from the Corporation for National Service.

Consequently, for this next year, the non-profit organizations operating with USDA oversight established their own parent organization that is affiliated with Congressman Tony Hall's Congressional Hunger Center ---- the National Anti-Hunger Consortium.

This consortium applied for and won a continuance grant from the Corporation for National Service. Thus, no matter the outcome of our continuing negotiations with Senator Bond about the future of the rest of the USDA AmeriCorps program, the five anti-hunger projects, including the one in Milwaukee, will continue next year. (The 1996-1997 program year).

While USDA will have slightly less responsibility for directly overseeing this program, we will continue significant involvement, providing critical technical assistance. The objectives of this project will continue to be closely connected to the mission areas of USDA agencies, particularly FCS, FSIS, and AMS.

As explained in the "options" section, the only uncertainty is whether FCS will continue to provide limited matching funds to the project.

It is important to note that the USDA AmeriCorps anti-hunger project in Milwaukee has achieved significant accomplishments. The Milwaukee Community Service Corps pre-dated AmeriCorps, but was able to adapt very well to administer our project, as well as other new AmeriCorps projects. Using the youth corps model to provide capacity and sustainability for its activities, the project is a collaborative effort of MCSC, Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee, the University of Wisconsin-Extension, and Farm City Link. The project combines the strengths of four prominent Milwaukee non-profit organizations to create a force of AmeriCorps Members to combat hunger and related issues in the city.

The major goals for this year's program are: 1) to increase the breadth and scope of Milwaukee's community gardens project; 2) work with growers and community organizations to create farmers' markets in Milwaukee's HUD Enterprise Community; 3) provide nutrition education at farmers' markets, and to provide information to farmers and community residents on how to utilize food stamps and AC coupons at farmers' markets; and 4) to support the start-up of a prepared and perishable food rescue program in Milwaukee.

TALKING POINTS:

Overall AmeriCorps Program

* President Clinton has made AmeriCorps a top personal priority. It is one of the clearest examples of how the President has boosted education by both providing more funding from government and demanding more personal responsibility from citizens.

* The House and the Senate have just reached a bi-partisan agreement to continue funding AmeriCorps through fiscal year 1997, which will fund the 1997-1998 program year. This means that AmeriCorps currently has funding for at least the next two years.

* USDA is currently sponsoring approximately 1,000 AmeriCorps Members who are serving in over 45 different states in projects fighting hunger, improving the environment, and re-building rural communities.

* The USDA portion of AmeriCorps is a relatively small, yet important, portion of the larger overall program; the overall program now enrolls approximately 23,000 AmeriCorps members serving in every state of the nation.

* AmeriCorps projects are "getting things done" providing vital and mainstream service to rural, suburban, and urban communities throughout America.

* For instance, USDA projects have built trails and fought fires on National Forests, improved city parks, helped farmers decrease their pesticide use, aided rural fire departments, created urban gardens, provided disaster-relief, brought running water to low-income rural families, and recovered excess food.

* AmeriCorps projects are strengthening communities. Always working in partnership with community-based organizations, AmeriCorps Members are meeting the most pressing needs in each of hundreds of locales in which they are operating.

* The AmeriCorps program forges common bonds of unity among all Americans. By bringing together Americans of all races, classes, genders, religions, and physical abilities to work side-by-side, AmeriCorps strengthens the cords that bind us together as a people.

* The AmeriCorps program expands educational and economic opportunity. Participants in the program receive a small living stipend and an educational award worth $4,725 that can be used to pay for college, graduate school, job training, or to pay back existing student loans. There is NO economic needs test to participate in this program -- the only requirement to participate is a desire to serve the country.

* AmeriCorps program promotes personal responsibility. All AmeriCorps projects require extremely hard work in exchange for educational benefits, while helping AmeriCorps Members build a life-long commitment to community service.

Milwaukee Anti-Hunger AmeriCorps Project

* The Clinton Administration put special emphasis on placing AmeriCorps projects in Enterprise Communities, such as the one in Milwaukee, so that both initiatives could bolster each other.

* The community garden is just one example of how the USDA AmeriCorps anti-hunger project in Milwaukee and similar projects nationally have achieved concrete results in fighting hunger.

* The AmeriCorps program has enabled the Milwaukee Community Service Corps, whose previous anti-hunger activities consisted mainly of construction work at pantries, to grow into an organization respected for its leadership in developing holistic approaches to fighting the entire problem of hunger.

* Including the USDA AmeriCorps Members, the Milwaukee Community Service Corps runs the largest overall AmeriCorps program in the State of Wisconsin.

* Next year, the project will also focus on rescuing prepared and perishable foods.

* The project was instrumental in helping Wisconsin implement the AC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program in the summer of 1995, and continues to work closely with the FMNP.

* The Milwaukee project already has been granted Federal funding for next year.

* Over the next 9-10 months, the project plans to create 40 new urban gardens from vacant lots, triple the average number of customers at farmers' markets in the HUD Enterprise Community, work with over 2,400 children teaching nutrition through gardening and food preparation.

USDA AmeriCorps Anti-Hunger Projects Nationally

* In addition to the project in Milwaukee, USDA AmeriCorps Anti-Hunger projects now exist in Los Angeles, the District of Columbia, Mississippi (the Delta), and Vermont (state-wide).

* In the current program year, these projects: aided 152 community gardens, cooked and served 40,155 meals at soup kitchens, implemented 51 new sites for the Summer Food Service Program that fed 40,912 children, provided 391,542 people with donated food, gave food safety and nutrition presentations to 25,257 students and senior citizens, and helped establish four farmers markets.

* The USDA AmeriCorps program also sponsored special "Summer of Gleaning" projects in 22 states that recovered excess food, which normally would have been discarded, and distributed that food to citizens in need. For instance, at the Olympic Games in Atlanta, USDA AmeriCorps Members, in conjunction with the Atlanta Community Food Bank and the Congressional Hunger Center, led efforts that salvaged 174 tons of excess food.

OPTIONS:

The Milwaukee Community Service Corps may ask you whether the USDA Food and Consumer Service (FCS) will continue to be able to provide $350,000 this fiscal year, as it has in the previous two fiscal years, to support the five AmeriCorps anti-hunger projects nationally, utilizing a grant mechanism approved by the USDA Office of General Counsel. FCS has taken significantly longer than the previous two years to make this decision.

Option 1: The Secretary would allow FCS to make a decision on its own whether it will be a agency priority to continue to fund AmeriCorps anti-hunger projects.

Option 2: The Secretary would direct FCS to take every step legal and practical to continue to provide at least the current level of funding to AmeriCorps anti-hunger projects.

Local news

MILWAUKEE SENTINEL Thursday, December 29, 1994 5A

ANTI-HUNGER PROGRAM

United Way given $25,000

United Way of Greater Milwaukee has received a $25,000 grant from the General Electric Fund to support a local initiative to hire and train 38 young people to work with an anti-hunger program.

The grant will be used to support the Department of Agriculture's AmeriCorps Anti-Hunger, Nutrition and Empowerment Project coordinated by the Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Community Service Corps.

The two coordinating organizations will recruit, hire, train and educate 38 people between the ages of 18 and 23 for the program.

AmeriCorps teams then will implement activities in four focus areas: community outreach; constructing and renovating buildings for food sites and or meal programs; helping local farmers with neighborhood farmers markets; and working with food pantries, meal programs and food drives to collect, sort and assist at the Hunger Task Force warehouse.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

OCT 18 1995

September 15, 1995

Grant Buntrock

To: Grant Buntrock, Administrator, FSA
Maureen Kennedy, RHCDS
Paul Johnson, Chief, NRCS
Jack Ward Thomas, Chief, USFS
Dayton Watkins, Administrator, RBCDS

Through: Jim Coyle, AmeriCorps Coordinator, RHCDS
Dave Gibson, AmeriCorps Coordinator, RBCDS
Paula Cole Jones, AmeriCorps Coordinator, NRCS
John Seymour, AmeriCorps Coordinator, USFS
Charles Sims, AmeriCorps Coordinator, FSA

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

We are extremely proud that, in our first year of operating USDA AmeriCorps projects, all our agencies worked closely together --- in both the field and in Washington --- to build the highest quality AmeriCorps projects possible.

We are now seeking to further strengthen this interagency cooperation ---- bolstering both the quality of the USDA AmeriCorps program and viability of Secretary Glickman's vision of a reorganized, efficient "Team USDA." This increased inter-agency cooperation has also been requested by the Corporation for National Service, the entity that coordinates the overall AmeriCorps program for President Clinton.

For the second year of operation, we are seeking your support to institutionalize and formalize a joint, interagency, AmeriCorps management team in each state. While each state's team will clearly respect the institutional, structural and mission differences between the agencies, the team approach will be critically helpful in coordinating joint recruitment, training, service, and public affairs activities.

We would very much appreciate if you would agree to sign the attached memorandum to the field. Your endorsement will reinforce the mutual resolve of all USDA agencies to work closely together to further improve this already excellent and important program.

AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

To: Farm Service Agency State Executive Directors and State AmeriCorps Project Managers

Forest Service Regional Foresters, Regional AmeriCorps Coordinators, Forest Supervisors, AmeriCorps Project Managers

Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservationists, State Conservationists, and AmeriCorps Project Directors

Rural Economic and Community Development State Directors and State AmeriCorps Contacts

From: Grant Buntrock, Administrator, Farm Service Agency

Maureen Kennedy, Administrator, Rural Housing and Community Development Service

Pearlie S. Reed
Associate Chief

Paul Johnson, Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service

SEP 2 8 1995

Jack Ward Thomas, Chief, Forest Service

Dayton Watkins, Administrator, Rural Business and Community Development Service

Subject: Interagency AmeriCorps Management Teams

As you know, AmeriCorps is a top priority of President Clinton and of the entire Department of Agriculture. In its first year of operation, the USDA program made remarkable strides in promoting rural development, protecting the environment, and fighting hunger. As Secretary Glickman has put it, "The USDA AmeriCorps program is obtaining concrete, measurable results that are making a significant difference in communities across the nation. All the projects are designed to get things done, while promoting community, opportunity, and responsibility."

While Congress and the President are still negotiating over FY96 funding for the Corporation for National Service (CNS), which oversees AmeriCorps, the FY95 funding for CNS has already been agreed to by both sides. Because CNS's portion of the USDA/AmeriCorps budget is provided from FY95 appropriations to CNS, the FY96 USDA program will not be affected by any potential cuts in future appropriations to CNS. Thus, <u>USDA has already started a second year of AmeriCorps.</u> Please make this clear to all members of your staff, some of whom may have garnered the false impression from the media that the program has been eliminated by Congress.

We are extremely proud that, in the first year of the program, all our agencies worked closely together --- in both the field and in Washington --- to build the highest quality program possible. Your vision and hard work have made this a reality.

We are now seeking to further strengthen this interagency cooperation, bolstering both the quality of the USDA AmeriCorps program and the viability of Secretary Glickman's vision of a reorganized, efficient "Team USDA." This increased interagency cooperation has also been requested by the CNS.

For the second year of operation, we are seeking your support to institutionalize and formalize a joint, interagency, AmeriCorps management team in each state. While each state's team will clearly respect the institutional, structural and mission differences between the agencies, the team approach will be critically helpful in coordinating joint recruitment, training, service, and public affairs activities.

Here's how the new structure will work:

* Each agency operating the program in any given state will assign one employee to be the "State AmeriCorps Project Director." These Project Directors will either directly supervise that agency's AmeriCorps/USDA Members throughout the state or supervise the work of all operating site managers in the state who will directly supervise AmeriCorps/USDA Members. Most agencies have already created such a position in their states.

* Each agency's State AmeriCorps Project Director --- or a designated representative --- will participate in an "AmeriCorps/USDA State Management Team" which will meet at least once a month, either in person or by conference call. By consent of all the USDA agencies in a state directly funding AmeriCorps projects, representatives from other USDA agencies or other governmental entities may be welcomed and encouraged to participate in this management team. In the few instances in which only one agency in a state is directly funding AmeriCorps projects, that agency will have the option of either staffing the AmeriCorps management team itself or seeking help from other agencies. Also, in those states where USDA has an AmeriCorps Anti-Hunger project (CA, DC, MS, VT, WI), representatives from the non-profit organization managing that project should be included on the State Management Teams.

* Each Team meeting will have an agenda prepared by one of the Team members. Staff representing Anti-Hunger projects, Public Lands and Environment projects, and Rural Development will participate equally in this Team.

* Active and continuous participation by member agencies in the State Management Team is critical. Attendance at monthly meetings is necessary, both to ensure the effective functioning of the current program and to ensure future project approval from the Department. Any agency may designate a representative of a sub-grantee or another governmental or non-profit agency to represent that agency on the AmeriCorps/USDA State Management Team, provided that the representative is qualified and able to fulfill all the duties of Team Membership.

* All major decisions in a state that affect more than one agency AmeriCorps/USDA program --- such as decisions involving recruitment, joint service projects, launch activities, joint training activities, etc --- should be determined by a consensus of the AmeriCorps/USDA State Management Team. As long as decisions are permissible based on legal authorities of our agencies, the regulations of the CNS, and budgetary restrictions, we pledge to support the decisions made by each state's team.

* While each participant in an AmeriCorps/USDA State Management Team will individually answer to their supervisors in the state or region, the Team as a whole will report to the national AmeriCorps/USDA working group, composed of the USDA Director of National Service, his staff, and the national AmeriCorps coordinators for each agency funding projects. Any time a State Management Team fails to reach a consensus on an important issue, the Team can request that the issue be resolved by the national AmeriCorps/USDA working group. The national AmeriCorps USDA Working Group will have frequent conference calls with the State Management Teams.

* Each AmeriCorps/USDA State Management Team should ensure that the following four functions are performed by the Management Team. Each of the functions may be performed by a different member of the team or some members of the team may perform more than one function. However, it is critical that the agencies immediately agree upon one "Project Management Liaison" for the state:

Project Management Liaison - The prime contact with the Corporation for National Service, state commissions, and the USDA Director of National Service. A finalized list of Project Management Liaisons will be provided to the Corporation for National Service in advance of the launch of next year's program; all external complaints or questions about individual AmeriCorps/USDA projects should be made directly to the Liaison in each state. All internal agency complaints and questions should continue to be

communicated between each agency AmeriCorps project managers and each agency's national AmeriCorps staff. The Liaison will have broad knowledge of all AmeriCorps/USDA projects in the state and will coordinate overall project planning, problem solving, and continuous improvement activities.

Data Reporting Liaison - The Data Reporting Liaison will be responsible for distributing, explaining, collecting, and forwarding to the Department all forms and reports required by CNS for both Members and operating sites. It is critical for USDA to obtain this information directly from the states because the Department is building a complete and detailed database for all AmeriCorps Members to ensure that they receive their educational awards and other benefits on a accurate and timely basis. The Liaison will also collect all quarterly reports in the state, and forward them to the Department within the proscribed time-frames.

Cluster Meeting Liaison - The Liaison will coordinate all cluster meetings for the Rural Development Team, all joint signature service projects, and Member "swaps" between programs within the state or nationally. The Liaison also will coordinate all joint Member and staff training activities. Additionally, the Liaison will also be responsible for scheduling and preparing the monthly staff meetings of the AmeriCorps/USDA State Management Team and distributing meeting agendas.

External Affairs Liaison - This individual will coordinate all outreach to the media, local Congressional offices, state and local governments, and interest groups, and provide updates to the national staff. The Liaison will coordinate all joint recruitment activities.

Please agree upon one person to serve as Project Management Liaison in each state and provide that name --- along with his or her phone number, fax number, and address --- to your agency AmeriCorps coordinator by November 20, 1995.

We know that such interagency management teams can work well because similar teams have already worked in pilot locations --- such South Carolina, the Four Corners, and Louisiana --- where field staff from all our agencies took it upon themselves to reinvent government to work as a team to manage AmeriCorps projects in the first year of the program.

At the completion of the first quarter of operation for the new AmeriCorps program year, the national USDA/AmeriCorps working group will solicit your input on the efficiency and effectiveness of the management structure outlined in this memorandum. The working group will consult with you closely to implement any suggested refinements in the structure, particularly those that would limit the paperwork burden on individual field offices.

2) Ensuring that USDA rapidly responds to all challenges and can continuously improve all projects throughout the service year in a manner that is consistent with the both the vision of AmeriCorps and each agency's internal culture and resources at the local level.

3) Ensuring an accurate and timely distribution and collection of all forms and reports required by the CNS.

4) Increasing the number and quality of the interactions among AmeriCorps/USDA Members and between AmeriCorps/USDA Members and Members of other AmeriCorps programs.

5) Providing a model for realistic methods to reinvent government for other Federal agencies, while bolstering the overall USDA reorganization effort.

6) Avoiding both the duplication of effort when different agencies simultaneously perform overlapping duties in the states.

7) Coordinating more effective interactions with state commissions, Congressional offices, state and local governments, and interest groups.

Thank you once again for all your efforts in building both a better USDA and a better AmeriCorps program.

September 13, 1996

Mr. Ed Barbier
1734 N. 89th Street
Fairview Heights, IL 62223

Dear Ed:

It was good meeting you at Bert and Margaret's wedding a number of weeks ago.

I would like you to know that I followed-up on our conversation about the AmeriCorps tutoring program in East St. Louis. I determined that the tutoring program is not run by USDA and is therefore not under my jurisdiction. However, I passed on your concerns to the federal Corporation for National Service, which, in turn, provided the information to the Illinois Commission of Community Service, which promised to thoroughly investigate the project in question.

I am pleased to let you know that the USDA portion of AmeriCorps in East St. Louis, which I do oversee, has significantly improved since last year. I personally visited the work sites and found significant progress. This year, the project has restored one city park, cleaned 10 flood-damaged homes, restored six abandoned lots, provided environmental education to 1,525 students, collected 400 pounds of food in a food drive, planted 500 trees, and prepared and served 1,800 meals at a soup kitchen. I hope you will agree that these are worthwhile accomplishments.

Please do hesitate to contact me at (202) 720-5746 if you have any additional information --- positive or negative --- about AmeriCorps.

Sincerely,

Joel Berg
Director of National Service, USDA

AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

9-12-96

TO: USDA Under Secretarys, Assistant Secretarys & Agency Administrators

FROM: Joel Berg, USDA Director of National Service (AmeriCorps) JB

SUBJECT: USDA/AmeriCorps Relief Assistance to North Carolina

The USDA National Service staff would like to organize a team of AmeriCorps Members drawn from the FY96 USDA/AmeriCorps program. This team would be composed of current and recently-graduated Members who volunteer to go to North Carolina for a 2-4 week period to assist in clean-up activities in the wake of Hurricane Fran.

RECRUITMENT

Each USDA/AmeriCorps Agency will be asked to recruit:

- Members who would be willing to go to NC for at least 2 weeks to engage in vigorous manual labor under post-disaster conditions, and

- Agency supervisors with team-building/organizing, and preferrably disaster-relief, experience* who would also be willing to organize and manage the Members.

* supervisory experience of USDA/AmeriCorps Members is not required; experience with groups and/or disaster relief would be required.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Each Agency would also be asked to contribute the financial support necessary to support each Member for the period for such expenses as air-fare, ground transportation, per diem, etc. In addition, we may be able to provide some support monies at the Departmental level.

AGENCY COMMITMENT

In order to expedite planning, organization, and recruitment efforts, I need to know as soon as possible if you are willing and able to support such an effort, and to what extent. Please call me at (202) 720-5746 (fax: 202-720-4614) at your earliest convenience so that we can discuss this.

Thank you in advance for your expeditious consideration of this request and for your continuing support of USDA/AmeriCorps.

September 12, 1996

BRIEFING MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

From: Joel Berg JB

Subject: **YOUR AMERICORPS MEETING WITH SENATOR BOND**

PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of the meeting is to attempt get Senator Christopher (Kit) Bond to give at least tacit approval to a compromise to allow USDA to continue sponsoring AmeriCorps projects.

SENATOR BOND'S VIEWS ON AMERICORPS

Senator Bond, who is Chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies which funds the Corporation for National Service, continues to be skeptical about the AmeriCorps program. He has stated his belief that AmeriCorps Members displace non-compensated volunteers, that the program improperly lets government --- rather than non-profit groups --- set service priorities, that AmeriCorps is too costly and bureaucratic, and that --- while the program might perform some worthwhile activities --- it could not possibly be as worthy as other funding priorities such as veterans hospitals.

In the last two fiscal years, Bond has reluctantly supported funding for the overall AmeriCorps program only because he wants to avoid a Presidential veto of his appropriations bill. Thus, last week, he ensured that the Senate restored full FY 1997 funding for the Corporation for National Service (CNS), which had again been zeroed out by the House. The overall funding issue for FY 1997 now goes to conference.

It is especially important to note that Bond has been particularly strident in his specific opposition to Federal agencies running AmeriCorps projects.

In the past, Bond's greatest objection to Federal agencies running AmeriCorps projects is his belief that Federal agencies should not receive grants of operating funds from CNS which otherwise would have theoretically gone to non-profit organizations such as the Future Farmers of America, the 4-H Foundation, or the American Red Cross. You should make it clear in the meeting that USDA will no longer receive such operating funds from CNS --- thus there is no possible way for USDA to even theoretically be competing for funds with non-profit organizations.

Bond has also questioned whether AmeriCorps Members have been used to secretly bolster the Federal workforce and whether Federal agency funding for AmeriCorps has been used to violate the intent of Congress by improperly augmenting the appropriations provided to the Corporation for National Service.

It is important to note that while Bond has been highly critical of AmeriCorps programs sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Endowment of the Arts, and the Department of Defense, he has never, to my knowledge, publicly criticized the specific USDA portion of AmeriCorps.

SENATOR BOND'S SUPPORT OF FOOD RECOVERY

It is also important to note that Bond has been very supportive of the general idea of food recovery. Bond played the key role in the Senate in getting his leadership to place the Emerson (Danner) good samaritan food donation bill on a fast track for floor action.

Still, to my knowledge, Bond has taken no public stand on our AmeriCorps Summer of Gleaning project in Missouri.

You may want to open the meeting by thanking Bond for his help with the Emerson Bill.

AMERICORPS COMPROMISE WE ARE SEEKING

In both the 1994-1995 program year and the 1995-1996 program year, USDA sponsored community-based AmeriCorps projects throughout the country that fought hunger, protected the environment, and boosted rural community development. In both program years, the projects were supported by four sources of funding:

> 1) Corporation for National Service (CNS) funding paid for educational awards for AmeriCorps Members that successfully completed the program. *These funds were not transferred to USDA* --- they were deposited into a trust fund that will later pay the lending and/or educational institutions of AmeriCorps graduates.

2) CNS funds were granted from CNS to USDA, which USDA , in turn, sub-granted to local AmeriCorps projects --- principally to five anti-hunger projects.

3) USDA utilized money from the Department's own appropriated funds. USDA used funds from several agencies to support AmeriCorps projects that provided critical community services in areas directly related to the mission areas of those agencies.

4) State and local governments and private sector organizations provided matching funds. In the 1994-1995 program year, non-Federal sources provided $1.7 million in funding to USDA-sponsored AmeriCorps projects.

However, in order to meet concerns raised by Senator Bond, Senator Grassley, 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 #2 --- operating funds transferred from CNS to USDA --- has been eliminated.

The few USDA AmeriCorps projects that were most dependent on this source of funding --- the five anti-hunger projects --- banded together as a consortium under the umbrella of the non-profit Congressional Hunger Center (formerly co-chaired by the late Congressman Bill Emerson) to successfully apply for funding directly from CNS.

The prohibition on the distribution of CNS operating funds (funding source #2) to Federal agencies does NOT restrict the ability of CNS to enter into cooperative agreements with Federal agencies, such as USDA, in order to provide non-financial assistance to AmeriCorps projects of Federal agencies and provide educational awards (funding source #1) to the AmeriCorps Members in those projects.

Thus, USDA still has the *legal* ability to use their own appropriated funds (source #3) and obtain state, local, and private matching funds (source #4) to support AmeriCorps projects. { See "Attachment A" --- A memorandum from USDA Assistant General Counsel Ken Cohen memorandum from Ken Cohen -- Additional copies of this attachment may be given to Bond and/or his staff during the meeting}

Consequently, if CNS signs a cooperative agreement providing non-monetary assistance to USDA, AmeriCorps programs sponsored by the Department will still have the legal ability to continue --- and the graduates of those projects will still be able to obtain educational awards.

Thus, new legislation and/or additional appropriations are NOT required to continue the USDA AmeriCorps program. However, even though both CNS and USDA have both the legal and financial ability to ensure that USDA can continue to run an AmeriCorps program, the Department and CNS are seeking to reach a bi-partisan *policy* consensus with key leaders in Congress that USDA will do so.

CNS CEO Harris Wofford has written to Senator Grassley asking for his support for this compromise. { See "Attachment B" --- Additional copies of this attachment may be given to Bond and/or his staff during the meeting} Grassley's staff has responded by saying that Grassley would NOT object to the compromise.

Thus, it is now critical for us to receive at least tacit approval from Senator Bond on this issue.

USDA and CNS both want to be sure that Bond does not have even the perception that USDA and CNS are violating Congressional intent by continuing to sponsor AmeriCorps projects.

The entire USDA AmeriCorps program --- including projects in Missouri --- has been placed on hold pending the discussion with Bond. Given the fact the USDA AmeriCorps program is now six months behind the two previous program years in terms of both planning and implementation, the entire program may have to be eliminated if agreement on this issue is not reached soon.

POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL ROLE FOR STATE NATIONAL SERVICE COMMISSIONS

Bond's staff has suggested that full responsibility for funding and managing all USDA AmeriCorps projects could be transferred to state commissions on national service, which are appointed by each state's governor.

Yet **most state commissions on national service have neither the available funds nor the technical expertise to continue these projects on their own. In addition, most state commissions do not have the ability to effectively place projects in many of the rural areas served by USDA AmeriCorps projects. While most state commissions strongly support the USDA AmeriCorps projects in their state, they do NOT want to take them over.** In reality, transferring these projects to state commissions would be, in effect, an unfunded mandate placed on the states.

If Bond presses on this matter, we could offer an additional compromise under which state commissions could exercise a veto power over USDA AmeriCorps projects in their state. USDA would still be allowed to fund and manage projects in any state, with the exception of a state in which the state commission, appointed by the state's governor, disapproves of the project. It would be assumed that USDA AmeriCorps projects would be able to continue in states without state commissions such as South Dakota and North Dakota.

Such a compromise would meet Senator Bond's desire to place final control over our AmeriCorps projects under state governments, while allowing a wide range of quality projects to continue serving communities across America.

However, if our programs are to be able to start this Fall, you should agree with Bond that this new arrangement would not be put into effect until the next program year, which would start in the fall of 1997.

USDA AMERICORPS PROJECTS IN MISSOURI

{Most of the following information is also included in "Attachment C" and the news clips in "Attachment D" --- which could be distributed to the Senator and/or his staff at the meeting}.

In Missouri, USDA sponsored 11 full-time AmeriCorps Members last year, sponsored 5 full-time AmeriCorps Members this year, and is sponsoring five additional AmeriCorps Members this summer in a special project focused on recovering excess food for distribution to citizens in need.

During last year (the 1994-1995 program year), eleven AmeriCorps Members aided flood recovery work on 53,000 acres of land; provided conservation education to 1,770 students; helped maintain 27 flood-retarding dams; assisted 95 landowners in assessing herbicide runoff into the water supply; worked with 11 farmers to develop water management plans; completed flood prevention work on 3,600 acres of land; and restored 995 acres of wetlands.

During this past year (the 1995-1996 program year), five year-long AmeriCorps Members performed "Farm-a-Syst" water quality evaluations for over 300 farm families, over 60% of whom adopted all or some of the water quality protection measures recommended by the AmeriCorps Members. The AmeriCorps Members also provided conservation education to over 2,000 students and 900 adults, of whom more than 90% later demonstrated improved knowledge of conservation issues.

In addition, AmeriCorps Members are serving this summer and fall in a food recovery project in the Kansas City area in partnership with local organizations. In just the first few weeks of the project, the USDA AmeriCorps Members recovered over 500 pounds of food, which will provide about 330 meals.

In the upcoming year (1996-1997 program year), USDA hopes to find ways to continue such AmeriCorps projects, as well as to attempt to support an AmeriCorps application from the East Prairie Enterprise Community.

KEY SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM IN MISSOURI AND NATIONALLY

The USDA AmeriCorps project has received strong support from the Missouri Farm Bureau, the Missouri Pork Producers Association, the University Extension Service of Missouri, and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Congresswoman Danner and Congressman Skelton strongly support our projects in their districts.

When you traveled on June 9, 1995 to Defiance, Missouri to view flood damage, Joe Ortwerth, the Republican County Executive of St. Charles County, expressed his support for the disaster-relief work of the USDA AmeriCorps Member sited in the county.

Republican Senators Cohen, Snowe, Specter, and Jeffords all have expressed specific support for the USDA potion of AmeriCorps. Other Republican Senators and/or their staffs --- including McConnell, Hatfield, Burns, Smith, Thurmond, and Craig --- have supported specific AmeriCorps projects sponsored by USDA, although they may not have been aware of the specific issues relating to USDA sponsorship of AmeriCorps.

Senator Pat Leahy has written to Senator Bond requesting support for the continuance of USDA AmeriCorps projects. {Attachment "E" --- which could be distributed to the Senator and/or his staff at the meeting}.

A large number of other Democratic Senators and/or their staffs have supported the USDA AmeriCorps program, including Senators Daschle, Mikulski (the ranking Democrat on Bond's subcommittee), Pryor, Bumpers, Boxer, Feinstein, Breaux, Sarbanes, Levin, Wellstone, Conrad, Dorgan, Bingaman, Wyden, Robb, and Murray.

The late Congressman Bill Emerson was Co-Chair of the Congressional Hunger Center, which is now the sub-grantee of all the main USDA AmeriCorps anti-hunger projects. Congressman Doug Bereuter (R-NE) has been effusive in his praise for the disaster relief work performed by the USDA AmeriCorps project in response to a recent tornado and a recent flood in his district.

Congressman Jerry Lewis (R-CA), Chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Committees (thus Bond's counterpart in the House), supports the USDA AmeriCorps projects in his district. Congressman Joe Skeen, Chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, has expressed strong support for the USDA AmeriCorps program.

POTENTIAL QUESTIONS FROM BOND

Q. Isn't the proposed compromise just a back-door way for USDA to break the agreement between Harris Wofford and Senator Grassley that eliminated CNS grants of operating funds to Federal agencies?

Suggested answer: Absolutely not. As per the agreement, USDA will receive no operating funds at all from CNS. Thus, the greatest objection offered by Bond and other AmeriCorps opponents --- that USDA was theoretically receiving CNS grant funds that ordinarily would have gone to non-profit groups --- is no longer an issue.

Moreover, the Grassley/Wofford agreement never stated that Federal agencies would not be able to use their own appropriated funds to support AmeriCorps. In fact, the Grassley/Wofford agreement sought to increase "educational awards only" programs in which CNS would only give educational vouchers but no operating funds to grantees -- the proposed USDA program would be precisely such an "educational awards only" program.

USDA wants to be absolutely clear that it is bolstering, not violating, Congressional intent.

Q. Is the USDA AmeriCorps program being used to improperly augment the appropriations granted to CNS?

Suggested answer: No. Absolutely no funds are transferred from USDA to CNS. Furthermore, USDA has requested NO additional funds from Congress to support AmeriCorps. Rather, USDA is simply using its already appropriated funds to use AmeriCorps as an alternative delivery system to deliver critical services to citizens.

The Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees in both chambers of Congress are well aware of the money USDA is spending on AmeriCorps; Congressman Skeen has strongly supported USDA using its funds in this way and Senator Cochran's staff has said that the Senator will not oppose USDA using its funds in this way.

In addition, USDA AmeriCorps projects provide taxpayers with double the "bang for the buck." For instance, USDA Forest Service projects use some funding from existing trail repair budgets. Not only do the AmeriCorps Members repair more trails than would be repaired by other means, they also bring communities together, promote personal responsibly, and help the earn their own way through college --- all for the same tax dollars that normally would fund just the trail repair.

Q. If USDA projects are so good, why can't state commissions fund and run them?

Suggested answer: Most state commissions on national service have neither the available funds nor the technical expertise to continue these projects on their own.

The USDA program enables AmeriCorps Members to perform tasks requiring technical expertise far beyond the capabilities of the vast majority of non-profit organizations. For instance, under direct and sustained supervision from experts in the field, USDA AmeriCorps Members are inspecting flood-damaged dams, implementing strategic plans to create local jobs, designing and implementing entire recycling programs for counties, helping farmers diversify their crops, bolstering Empowerment Zones and Enterprise communities, designing and building timber bridges, and decreasing ground water pollution. If AmeriCorps Members are to "get things done" that require more than simple physical labor and that result in long-lasting improvements in communities, then Members need the kind of advanced technical training and supervision that can be provided by entities such as USDA.

If USDA did not spend money on AmeriCorps, those funds would NOT be transferred to state national service commissions.

In addition, most state commissions do not have the ability to effectively place projects in many of the rural areas served by USDA AmeriCorps projects. While most state commissions strongly support the USDA AmeriCorps projects in their state, they do NOT want to take them over. In reality, transferring these projects to state commissions would be, in effect, an unfunded mandate placed on the states.

Q. Are USDA AmeriCorps Members being used to bolster the Federal workforce?

Suggested answer: No. USDA AmeriCorps Members are not Federal employees and they are not performing USDA office work. Rather, AmeriCorps Members are performing service that meets critical community needs, but which our agency does not now have the resources to meet. In many cases, our Members are not even working directly in Federal offices, but are working for county and state agencies and local non-profit organizations. Moreover, the service projects were not designed or implemented in Washington --- all our projects are locally-proposed and locally-administered. Each project is filling needs determined as most critical by each individual community. Consequently, most of our projects have received broad-based bi-partisan support from local leaders. For instance, one of the AmeriCorps Members you met with last year worked closely with the St. Charles County Executive Joe Ortwerth on flood relief.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

9-12-96

TO: USDA Under Secretarys, Assistant Secretarys & Agency Administrators

FROM: Joel Berg, USDA Director of National Service (AmeriCorps) JB

SUBJECT: USDA/AmeriCorps Relief Assistance to North Carolina

The USDA National Service staff would like to organize a team of AmeriCorps Members drawn from the FY96 USDA/AmeriCorps program. This team would be composed of current and recently-graduated Members who volunteer to go to North Carolina for a 2-4 week period to assist in clean-up activities in the wake of Hurricane Fran.

RECRUITMENT
Each USDA/AmeriCorps Agency will be asked to recruit:

- o Members who would be willing to go to NC for at least 2 weeks to engage in vigorous manual labor under post-disaster conditions, and

- o Agency supervisors with team-building/organizing, and preferrably disaster-relief, experience* who would also be willing to organize and manage the Members.

* supervisory experience of USDA/AmeriCorps Members is not required; experience with groups and/or disaster relief would be required.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT
Each Agency would also be asked to contribute the financial support necessary to support each Member for the period for such expenses as air-fare, ground transportation, per diem, etc. In addition, we may be able to provide some support monies at the Departmental level.

AGENCY COMMITMENT
In order to expedite planning, organization, and recruitment efforts, I need to know as soon as possible if you are willing and able to support such an effort, and to what extent. Please call me at (202) 720-5746 (fax: 202-720-4614) at your earliest convenience so that we can discuss this.

Thank you in advance for your expeditious consideration of this request and for your continuing support of USDA/AmeriCorps.

AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

September 5, 1996

TO: Jerry Mitchell, AmeriCorps Project Director, NRCS, Arkansas

FROM: Joel Berg, USDA Director of National Service JB

SUBJECT: Award of Mini-Grants

This letter is to notify you that your request for a mini-grant to purchase tools for site Y05A has been approved.

Funds in the amount of $600.00 have been transferred to your National Headquarters and should be transferred to your State.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Ron DeMunbrun at (202) 690-3894.

AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

September 5, 1996

TO: Billie Moore, AmeriCorps Project Director, NRCS, Louisiana

FROM: Joel Berg, USDA Director of National Service JB

SUBJECT: Award of Mini-Grants

This letter is to notify you that your request for a mini-grant to purchase sand and fencing has been approved.

Funds in the amount of $1000.00 have been transferred to your National Headquarters and should be transferred to your State.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Ron DeMunbrun at (202) 690-3894.

AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

September 5, 1996

TO: Jan Jorgensen, AmeriCorps Project Director, NRCS, Nebraska

FROM: Joel Berg, USDA Director of National Service JB

SUBJECT: Award of Mini-Grants

This letter is to notify you that your request for a mini-grant to pay for the resource directories has been approved.

Funds in the amount of $993.00 have been transferred to your National Headquarters and should be transferred to your State.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Ron DeMunbrun at (202) 690-3894.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

September 5, 1996

TO: John Harris, AmeriCorps Project Director, NRCS, Tennessee

FROM: Joel Berg, USDA Director of National Service JB

SUBJECT: Award of Mini-Grants

This letter is to notify you that your request for a mini-grant to purchase paving material has been approved.

Funds in the amount of $1,000.00 have been transferred to your National Headquarters and should be transferred to your State.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Ron DeMunbrun at (202) 690-3894.

AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

September 5, 1996

TO: Irene Lieberman, AmeriCorps Project Director, NRCS, New Jersey

FROM: Joel Berg, USDA Director of National Service JB

SUBJECT: Award of Mini-Grants

This letter is to notify you that your request for a mini-grant to purchase tools and trail markaers has been approved.

Funds in the amount of $838.00 for Tim Dunne and $550.00 for George Jones have been transferred to your National Headquarters and should be transferred to your State.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Ron DeMunbrun at (202) 690-3894.

September 5, 1996

TO: Michael Price, AmeriCorps Project Director, NRCS, Minnesota

FROM: Joel Berg, USDA Director of National Service JB

SUBJECT: Award of Mini-Grants

This letter is to notify you that your request for a mini-grant to pay for transportation has been approved.

Funds in the amount of $687.00 have been transferred to your National Headquarters and should be transferred to your State.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Ron DeMunbrun at (202) 690-3894.

AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

September 5, 1996

TO: Alan Herceg, AmeriCorps Project Director, NRCS, Michigan

FROM: Joel Berg, USDA Director of National Service JB

SUBJECT: Award of Mini-Grants

This letter is to notify you that your request for a mini-grant to purchase 100 Home-A-Syst packets has been approved.

Funds in the amount of $1000.00 have been transferred to your National Headquarters and should be transferred to your State.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Ron DeMunbrun at (202) 690-3894.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

September 5, 1996

TO: Michael Kolman, AmeriCorps Project Director, NRCS, Hawaii

FROM: Joel Berg, USDA Director of National Service JB

SUBJECT: Award of Mini-Grants

This letter is to notify you that your request for a mini-grant to purchase educational books, videos and displays for site Y15B has been approved. Video equipment is NOT approved.

Funds in the amount of $300.00 have been transferred to your National Headquarters and should be transferred to your State.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Ron DeMunbrun at (202) 690-3894.

AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

September 5, 1996

TO: Jerry Joiner, AmeriCorps Project Director, NRCS, Florida

FROM: Joel Berg, USDA Director of National Service JB

SUBJECT: Award of Mini-Grants

This letter is to notify you that your request for a mini-grant to purchase water shower heads for site Y12B has been approved.

Funds in the amount of $639.00 have been transferred to your National Headquarters and should be transferred to your State.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Ron DeMunbrun at (202) 690-3894.

To: Kyna Iman Roberts

From: Joel Berg JB

6 PAGES, including this cover

Per our discussion, attached is an one page fact sheet on the USDA AmeriCorps issue facing Senator Bond, an one page description of our projects in Missouri, two pages of talking points about our overall program, and one page of talking points about our national Summer of Gleaning.

I thank you again for your assistance.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please call me at (202) 720-5746.

FACT SHEET ON PROPOSED COMPROMISE FOR MAINTAINING USDA-SPONSORED AMERICORPS PROJECTS

In both the 1949-1955 program year and the 1995-1996 program year, USDA managed USDA sponsored community-based AmeriCorps projects throughout the country that fought hunger, protected the environment, and boosted rural community development.

In both program years, the projects were supported by four sources of funding:

1) Corporation for National Service (CNS) funding that paid for educational awards for AmeriCorps Members that successfully completed the program; ***none of these funds are ever transferred to USDA*** --- they go directly to the educational institutions of the AmeriCorps graduates

2) The CNS Service funding granted from CNS to USDA, which USDA , in turn, sub-granted to local AmeriCorps projects; the total amount of these funds have always been minimal compared to the overall cost of the USDA program.

3) USDA funding from the Department's own appropriated funds; USDA uses funds from a variety of agencies to support AmeriCorps projects that provide critical community services in areas related to the broad mission areas of those agencies

4) State and local government and private sector funding; in the 1994-1995 program, non-Federal sources provided $1.7 million in funding to USDA-sponsored AmeriCorps projects

In the compromise deal agreed to by CNS CEO Harris Wofford and Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA), a leading critics of the program, CNS would no longer make grants of operating funds to Federal agencies. Thus, **only USDA AmeriCorps funding source #2 has been eliminated.** AmeriCorps Members sponsored by USDA would still have the ability to obtain educational wards funded by source #1 and USDA would still be able to spend its own funds (source #3) and USDA AmeriCorps projects would still be able to obtain state, local and private funds (source #4).

Thus, the Secretary of Agriculture still has the ***legal*** ability to sponsor AmeriCorps projects funded with funds from USDA (not CNS), and USDA-spored AmeriCorps Members would still have the legal ability to obtain educational awards from the Corporation for National Service. However, even though USDA has the legal ability to run a AmeriCorps program, the Department and CNS are seeking to reach a bi-partisan consensus with key leaders in Congress that USDA will do so. The Department wants to be sure that no critics of AmeriCorps believe that CNS has, in essence, "broken the deal" regarding Federal agency programs.

Consequently, both USDA and CNS are seeking at least tacit approval from Senator Kit Bond of Missouri, the Chairperson of the Senate appropriations sub-committee that funds CNS, to support a compromise in which USDA would no longer receive operating awards from CNS but in which USDA would still be able to spend its own already-appropriated funds on AmeriCorps and in which USDA-sponsored AmeriCorps Members would still be able to receive educational awards funded by CNS.

TALKING POINTS ON THE OVERALL USDA AMERICORPS PROGRAM

*** USDA is sponsoring approximately 1,000 AmeriCorps Members who are serving in over 45 different states in projects fighting hunger, improving the environment, and re-building rural communities.** The USDA portion of AmeriCorps is a relatively small, yet important, portion of the larger overall program; the overall program now enrolls approximately 23,000 AmeriCorps members serving in every state of the nation. The USDA portion of the program is highly unusual because the vast majority of AmeriCorps projects are not funded or managed by Federal agencies --- most are funded through state commissions appointed by each state's governor and are managed by non-profit organizations and local government organizations. USDA AmeriCorps projects do **NOT** duplicate the functions of AmeriCorps projects funded by state commissions; rather, USDA AmeriCorps fill unique needs that can not generally be filled by state commission-funded projects.

*** USDA AmeriCorps Members are reducing government bureaucracy by performing community service that rapidly and directly aids citizens.** USDA AmeriCorps Members are not Federal employees and are not performing functions generally performed by Federal employees. However, they are performing work far more cost-effectively than would be provided through normal government methods.

*** USDA AmeriCorps projects are "getting things done" providing vital and mainstream service to rural, suburban, and urban communities throughout America.** For instance, USDA projects are building trails and fighting fire on National Forests, improving city parks, aiding rural fire departments, creating urban gardens, bringing running water to low-income rural families, and teaching children how to improve their nutrition.

*** USDA AmeriCorps projects provide taxpayers with double the "bang for the buck."** USDA is simply utilizing funds already appropriated to the Department. For instance, USDA Forest Service projects use some funding from existing trail repair budgets. Not only do the AmeriCorps Members repair more trails than would be repaired by other means, they also bring communities together, promote personal responsibly, and help the earn their own way through college --- all for the same tax dollars that normally would fund just the trail repair.

*** USDA AmeriCorps projects are strengthening communities.** Usually working in partnership with community-based organizations, USDA AmeriCorps Members are meeting the most pressing needs in each of hundreds of locales in which they are operating. **The service projects are not designed or implemented as a "cookie cutter" approach dictated from Washington --- all the projects are locally-proposed and locally-administered.** Consequently, virtually all of the USDA AmeriCorps projects have received broad-based bi-partisan support from local community leaders.

(Talking points on overall USDA AmeriCorps program --- continued)

*** Most USDA AmeriCorps projects are in rural and suburban areas that often receive less aid from the Federal government.** These areas also often lack significant non-profit sector support networks. USDA has a field structure that is uniquely suited to run programs in traditionally under-served areas. USDA AmeriCorps projects are particularly important in North and South Dakota, which currently do not have state national service commissions.

*** The USDA program enables AmeriCorps Members to perform tasks requiring technical expertise far beyond the capabilities of the vast majority of non-profit organizations.** For instance, under direct and sustained supervision from experts in the field, USDA AmeriCorps Members are inspecting flood-damaged dams, implementing strategic plans to create local jobs, designing and implementing entire recycling programs for counties, helping farmers diversify their crops, bolstering Empowerment Zones and Enterprise communities, designing and building timber bridges, and decreasing ground water pollution. If AmeriCorps Members are to "get things done" that require more than simple physical labor and that result in long-lasting improvements in communities, then Members need the kind of advanced technical training and supervision that can be provided by entities such as USDA.

*** The USDA AmeriCorps program forges common bonds of unity among all Americans.** By bringing together Americans of all races, classes, genders, religions, and physical abilities to work side-by-side, AmeriCorps strengthens the cords that bind us together as a people. The "sweat equity" created by AmeriCorps is playing a role in healing the nation's wounds and bridging our divisions. AmeriCorps is changing the country because it creates a new civic compact in which any citizen can be tied to the nation by the simple virtue of making a difference in the lives of others.

*** The USDA AmeriCorps program expands educational and economic opportunity.** Participants in the program receive a small living stipend and an educational award worth $4,725 that can be used to pay for college, graduate school, job training, or to pay back existing student loans. There is NO economic needs test to participate in this program -- the only requirement to participate is a desire to serve the country. Thus, this program greatly boosts students from the middle class, who were previously told that their families "make too much money" to qualify for most existing Federal aid programs. Yet the program also helps low income families for whom aid programs are clearly insufficient.

*** The USDA AmeriCorps program promotes personal responsibility.** All AmeriCorps projects require extremely hard work in exchange for educational benefits, while helping AmeriCorps Members build a life-long commitment to community service. AmeriCorps gives all Americans a new way of giving something back to the country. It reminds us that, along with rights we enjoy as citizens, we all have certain obligations to protect those rights and to aid our own communities. Furthermore, AmeriCorps gives young people a tangible way to take charge of their own lives.

TALKING POINTS ON USDA AMERICORPS SUMMER OF GLEANING

* In partnership with literally dozens of locally based anti-hunger groups, youth service corps, food pantries, and food recovery organizations, USDA is sponsoring special "Summer of Gleaning" AmeriCorps projects in 20 states. This special summer initiative is a small, but important, part of both the USDA AmeriCorps program and the overall AmeriCorps program.

* The "Summer of Gleaning" projects promote the general idea of food recovery, a top personal priority of Secretary Glickman. These projects are designed to work with farmers, agribusinesses, food distribution organizations, institutions, and restaurants to recover and glean food that would be otherwise thrown away and to distribute that food to hungry people.

* The "Summer of Gleaning" projects are based on the so-called "volunteer generator" model in which a handful of AmeriCorps Members recruit numerous non-compensated volunteers to help implement the project.

* The "Summer of Gleaning Projects last twelve weeks, during which the AmeriCorps Members receive small living stipends. All AmeriCorps Members who successfully complete this special summer program will receive a $1,000 educational award that can be used to pay for college, job training, graduate school, or to pay back existing student loans.

* The "Summer of Gleaning" is **not** based on the traditional liberal premise that a heavy-handed, bureaucratically driven, large government program based in Washington has all answers to the nations' problems. Conversely, the "Summer of Gleaning" is **not** based on the traditional conservative premise that the free-market, volunteers, and non-profit organizations alone --- without any government help at all --- can solve all the nation's social problems. Rather, the "Summer of Gleaning" is based on the reinventing government philosophy which believes that government must provide energy, vision, and some limited Federal funds as a catalyst to empower local communities to help solve their own problems.

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August

Divider Title:_____

AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

August 20, 1996

To: Steve Waldman, CNS

From: Joel Berg, USDA JB

Subject: **Responding to Your Request about AmeriCorps and Welfare Reform**

In a recent memorandum, you requested specific examples of how AmeriCorps can aid in the implementation of welfare reform.

The following are examples of accomplishments of the 1995-1996 USDA AmeriCorps program year --- as of the end of the third quarter --- that could directly aid welfare reform or provide social services that supplement government programs. Many of our projects -- particularly those in rural Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities -- are specifically designed to help give citizens the tools to leave public assistance. USDA AmeriCorps Members have:

Job and Entrepreneurial Training and Development

* Provided job training to 341 people.

* Provided entrepreneurial training to 1,109 people.

* Created a revolving loan fund that awarded micro enterprise loans to 11 individuals.

* Helped 12 municipalities develop public transportation systems.

* Created 195 school-to-work internships.

Home Ownership and Housing

* Provided training in home ownership and personal finances to 230 families.

* Assisted 256 families in obtaining affordable housing.

* Helped expand two homeless shelters.

* Assisted with the construction of seven new rental houses.

Youth Programs

* Provided after school programs, activities, and events for 2,391 children and parents.

* Educated 3,959 students in conferences and seminars against dropping out from school.

* Provided mentoring to 60 youth.

* Conducted 71 conflict resolution seminars.

* Involved 250 people in a "Teens Against Pregnancy" task force.

Food Recovery

* Recovered over 550 tons of food that would otherwise have been discarded; this food will provide about 3/4 of a million meals.

* Given that the total Federal cost to both CNS and USDA for the "Summer of Gleaning" is a little over $500,000, the program has provided meals at less than a cost of 79 cents each.

Food Access

* Provided outreach that allowed an additional 1,060 people to obtain cheaper and more nutritious food through farmers' markets.

*Established four new country markets.

* Provided outreach on the WIC (Womens, Infants, and Children) Farmer's Market program to 1,500 people.

* Transported 2,096 people to needed social services.

Social and Economic Counseling and Training

* Counseled 391 families on how to become self-sufficient.

* Provided drug abuse and safety counseling to 4,393 people.

* Provided counseling to 109 children to help them improve their self-esteem.

* Provided life skills and parenting training to 579 people.

* Referred 9,894 people to relevant social services.

* Provided budgeting assistance to 43 families.

* Help create a shelter for battered women.

The Direct Provision of Food

* Served meals to an additional 84 families through a home meal delivery service and provided 2,660 meals through "Meals on Wheels."

*Handled 41,200 pounds of food at soup kitchens.

* Provided 1,273 meals to homeless people.

* Sorted 42,000 pounds of food at pantries.

* Collected 94,950 pounds of food through community food drives.

* Created four new sites for the Summer Food Service Program, which serves young people who would ordinarily receive school lunches during the school year.

Nutrition Education

* Provided nutrition education to 575 post-partum women.

* Educated 5,721 elementary and secondary school students on nutrition and food safety.

* Provided nutrition outreach to 1,549 homeless people.

If you would likely any more specific information about how and where the above-listed accomplishments were achieved, please do not hesitate to contact me.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

August 16, 1996

BRIEFING MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

From: Joel Berg JB

Subject: **Your Meeting with AmeriCorps Head Harris Wofford**

Summary:

The entire USDA AmeriCorps program, including all AmeriCorps food recovery projects, will be eliminated almost immediately unless the Administration can reach agreement with Senator Christopher (Kit) Bond of Missouri to allow the program to continue.

The main purpose of the meeting is for Mr. Wofford and yourself to agree upon a strategy to persuade Senator Bond to accept a compromise that would save the USDA program.

Secondary purposes of the meeting are to agree upon a strategy to continue the Forest Service-sponsored portion of the program and to discuss ways that all the programs run by the Corporation for National Service (CNS) can incorporate food recovery activities into their ongoing service.

Background on the Meeting:

You are scheduled to meet with former Senator Harris Wofford, who is now Chief Executive Officer of CNS, on Tuesday, August 20. Wofford succeeded Eli Segal, who is now serving AmeriCorps part-time as Chairperson of the Board of Directors of CNS. The Secretary of Agriculture serves as a ex-officio member of the CNS board; I generally represent you at its meetings.

CNS was created in 1993 as a result of the National and Community Service Act of 1993. CNS brought together three previously existing Federal service entities under one umbrella : the Commission on National and Community service (created by the Democratic Congress and signed into law by President Bush in 1990), the ACTION agency (which ran VISTA and the Retired Senior Volunteer Programs), and the White House Office of National Service. Of course, the greatest responsibility of CNS is funding and overseeing the President's AmeriCorps national service program.

As you may be aware, as a young aide to both John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, Wofford play a critical role in creating both the Peace Corps and VISTA. He later served as Secretary of Commerce in Pennsylvania, creating a series of highly innovate state government-sponsored youth service programs. He was elected to the Senate in 1991 and lost his Senate seat in 1994 to Rick Santorum.

Mr. Wofford has frequently praised the overall quality of the USDA AmeriCorps program and has highlighted its importance to rural America. He is aware of the fact that we sponsor far more AmeriCorps members than any other Federal agency because we spend far more of our own appropriated money on AmeriCorps than any other Federal agency.

He and his office have also been continually made aware that you have been more personally involved than any other cabinet secretary in meeting AmeriCorps members and supporting the program.

A number of weeks ago, David Carlin and myself met with Gene Sofer, the head of Governmental Affairs for CNS. We all agreed that --- because the future of the USDA AmeriCorps program was now in the hands of the Senate --- it was important for Mr. Wofford and yourself to meet in the near future to agree upon a strategy.

The Success To Date of the USDA AmeriCorps Program

In both the 1994-1995 program year and the 1995-1996 program year, USDA sponsored community-based AmeriCorps projects throughout the country that fought hunger, protected the environment, and boosted rural community development.

As you know, most AmeriCorps projects are funded through state commissions appointed by each state's governor or through direct grants from the Corporation for National Service (CNS) ---- most projects are *no*t funded or managed directly by Federal agencies. However, in the first year (1994-1995 program year) of the program, a highly competitive process coordinated by the CNS Service allowed a small portion (less than 15%) of AmeriCorps positions to be managed by Federal agencies in tandem with local groups.

In the 1994-1995 program year, 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 Members in over 300 different urban and rural projects fighting hunger, protecting the environment, and boosting rural community development.

These Members served in 38 states --- spread throughout every region of the country --- and provided 1.812 million hours of service to their communities. The results in the first program year were impressive indeed:

* USDA AmeriCorps Members in environmental projects performed flood recovery work on 75,300 acres, constructed or maintained 715 miles of trail, improved 6,176 acres of wildlife habitat, provided 885 landowners with water quality assistance, built or repaired 76 campground sites, planted 110,400 trees, made 42 recreation sites accessible for the disabled, restored 760 acres of fisheries habitat, and protected 67,483 acres of coastline.

* USDA AmeriCorps Members in anti-hunger projects cooked and served 40,155 meals at soup kitchens, implemented 51 new sites for the Summer Food Service Program that fed 40,912 children, provided 391,542 people with donated food, gave food safety and nutrition presentations to 25,257 students and senior citizens, helped 152 community gardens, and aided gleaning efforts.

* USDA AmeriCorps Members serving in rural development projects helped 390 low-income families secure new homes, 3,484 families obtain running water or modern bathrooms for the first time, 867 families repair health and safety hazards in their homes, and over 100 counties improve their emergency preparedness and response.

* The 1,200 USDA AmeriCorps Members recruited 14,176 non-compensated volunteers to serve in community service projects. Thus, each AmeriCorps Member, on average, recruited more than 11 non-compensated volunteers.

* The AmeriCorps Members directly provided services to over 828,000 citizens and performed environmental work on over 234,000 acres of land. For each person assisted by anti-hunger and rural development projects, the Federal government spent only $17. For each acre of land on which the environment was improved, the Federal government spent only $62.

In the second year of the program (the 1995-1996 program), USDA had expected to sponsor 1,300 AmeriCorps Members. Unfortunately, because the Interior Appropriations Sub-committees of both Houses of Congress denied your request to continue Forest Service sponsored AmeriCorps projects, USDA was forced to limit is program and sponsor only 1,000 AmeriCorps Members this year.

In addition, USDA is currently sponsoring "Summer of Gleaning" AmeriCorps projects in 20 states:

*** USDA AmeriCorps Members in the "Summer of Gleaning have now recovered over 500 tons of food, thereby providing more than 3/4 of a million meals. Including all Federal costs incurred by both USDA and CNS, the "Summer of Gleaning' cost taxpayers at little over $500,000. Thus, to date, the program has provided meals at 79 cents each; by the end of the program, the cost will likely be reduced to less than 50 cents each.**

* Furthermore, the 86 AmeriCorps Members in the "Summer of Gleaning" program recruited over 500 non-compensated community volunteers.

You should be aware that Mr. Wofford's staff at CNS was extremely supportive of the "Summer of Gleaning" and provided extraordinarily fast responses and rapid administrative support in order to help us get the program started on a very short time-line.

The Current Funding Sources for the USDA AmeriCorps Program

To understand the current situation facing the overall USDA AmeriCorps program, **it is important to understand the four basic sources of funding to date for the USDA AmeriCorps program:**

1) Corporation for National Service (CNS) funding paid for educational awards for AmeriCorps Members that successfully completed the program; ***none of these funds were ever transferred to USDA*** --- they went into a trust fund that will eventually pay the lending and/or educational institutions of the AmeriCorps graduates.

2) CNS funds were granted from CNS to USDA, which USDA , in turn, sub-granted to local AmeriCorps projects, especially to five anti-hunger projects; the total amount of these funds were minimal compared to the overall cost of the USDA program.

3) USDA utilized money from the Department's own appropriated funds; USDA used funds from a variety of agencies to support AmeriCorps projects that provided critical community services in areas related to the broad mission areas of those agencies. The following USDA agencies provided significant funding to the program: The Forest Service (about $9.6 million), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (about $8.5 million), the Rural Development mission areas (about $2.0 million), the Food and Consumer Service (about $350,000), and the Farm Service Agency (about $500,000).

4) State and local governments and private sector organizations provided funding; in the 1994-1995 program year, non-Federal sources provided $1.7 million in funding to USDA-sponsored AmeriCorps projects.

The Future of the Overall USDA AmeriCorps Program

In a compromise deal brokered between Wofford and Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA), a leading critic of the program, CNS will no longer make grants of operating funds to Federal agencies. This deal was codified by the appropriations language governing CNS.

Some of those critics who agreed to the deal may have believed, incorrectly, that they eliminated CNS's legal ability to allow USDA to continue to sponsor AmeriCorps projects. In fact, neither the deal not the appropriations language restricted CNS' legal ability to continue to allow AmeriCorps Members sponsored by USDA to receive educational awards.

The only legal result of the deal is that it eliminated AmeriCorps funding source #2 --- operating funds transferred from CNS to USDA. The few projects that were most dependent on this source of funding --- the five anti-hunger projects --- banded together as a consortium under the umbrella of the non-profit Congressional Hunger Center to successfully apply for funding directly from CNS.

However, the over 1,000 remaining USDA sponsored AmeriCorps positions focused on rural development and environmental protection would be eliminated entirely if CNS could not continue to sign a cooperative agreement with USDA in which the Department would continue to use its own appropriated funds to support these projects. **These projects --- many of which are the only significant AmeriCorps presence in rural areas of their states --- would end if USDA's involvement in AmeriCorps was terminated. Most state commissions on national service have neither the available funds nor the technical expertise to continue these projects on their own.**

Under the current appropriations language governing CNS, while CNS can no longer transfer operating funds (source #2) to USDA, it may sign a cooperative agreement with the Department to allow USDA-sponsored educational awards funded by source #1. Under this arrangement, USDA would still be able to spend its own funds (source #3) and USDA AmeriCorps projects would still be able to obtain state, local and private funds (source #4).

Thus, CNS still has the *legal* ability to sign an agreement with USDA to sponsor AmeriCorps projects with funds provided by USDA and non-Federal sources. Under this condition, USDA-sponsored AmeriCorps Members would still have the legal ability to obtain educational awards from the CNS. However, even though both agencies have the legal ability to ensure that USDA can continue to run an AmeriCorps program, the Department and CNS are seeking to reach a bi-partisan *policy* consensus with key leaders in Congress that USDA will do so. We want to be sure that no critics of AmeriCorps believe that either CNS or USDA have , in essence, "broken the deal" regarding Federal agency programs.

Thus, in order to preserve the overall USDA AmeriCorps program, both CNS and USDA need at least tacit approval from Senator Christopher S. (Kit) Bond of Missouri, the Chairperson of the Senate VA/HUD appropriations sub-committee that funds CNS, to support a compromise in which USDA would no longer receive operating awards from CNS but in which USDA would still be able to spend its own already-appropriated funds on AmeriCorps, and in which USDA-sponsored AmeriCorps Members would still be able to receive educational awards funded by CNS.

The Status of the Forest Service AmeriCorps Program

In the 1994-1995 program year, the USDA Forest sponsored both AmeriCorps members in both environmental and rural development projects.

In that year, AmeriCorps Members serving in National Forests:

* Constructed, maintained, and improved 682 miles of trail.

* Achieved 2,569 acres of wildlife habitat improvement; built 133 structures to shelter or protect wildlife; built 296 nesting boxes; and constructed a threatened and endangered plant greenhouse.

* Improved 668 acres of timber stand.

* Built or completely rehabilitated 446 campground sites.

* Reforested 638 acres of land.

* Prepared 42 campsites for accessibility to people with disabilities.

* Improved 760 acres of fisheries habitat.

* Constructed 86 miles of new fence.

* Maintained 18 miles of vehicle trails to keep them free of obstructive growth and slides.

* Improved watersheds damaged by fire by cutting and planting 92,500 willows in riparian areas.

* Improved Forest Service road and safety conditions ---- by "day lighting" 50 curves.

* Released 775,000 salmon fry in a fish stocking operation.

* Constructed a major visitor information center.

* Provided conservation education to 8,3 7 3 students K- 1 2.

On February 14, 1995, President Clinton traveled to San Bernardino, one of the Forest Service AmeriCorps sites. He met with a number of people involved in educational issues, including one of the Forest Service sponsored AmeriCorps members. In a speech later that day, the President said, "If you look at what this national service project does --- they're working in the San Bernardino National Forest; people who are helping to clean-up the forest, maintain it, strengthen it, keep it there

for our children and our grandchildren, make sure its an important resource ... These are the kinds of things that are going on all over America, and I think that emphasizes what I'm saying. For a small amount of Federal money we have increased opportunity with no bureaucracy. This is all done at the grass-roots level."

Also in the first year of the program (1994-1995 program year), AmeriCorps members serving in Rural Development teams in rural communities:

* Promoted alternative energy sources and wood technologies.

* Improved emergency response and prevention.

* Helped home owners relocate from a flood plain.

* Provided environmental and conservation education to school children.

* Helped design and construct timber bridges.

* Developed and implemented municipal recycling initiatives.

* Created plans for improving local recreational areas.

* Helped implement historic, scenic, and tourism trails.

Unfortunately, the FY1996 Interior Appropriations Bill passed by the House prohibited the Forest Service from funding AmeriCorps.

In consultation with us, Senator Patty Murray was able to persuade Senator Gorton to accept and amendment on the floor -- which was later adopted by the conference committees---that stated that the Forest Service could only fund AmeriCorps if the Department followed appropriate reprogramming guidelines.

As you recall, in response to this language, in both February and May you sent reprogramming letters to Senator Slade Gorton and Congressman Regula, the Senate and House chair people, respectively, of the Appropriations Subcommittees on Interior. In private meetings with both Gorton and Regula, you personally raised both issues. Unfortunately, both requests were denied based on what I believe to be totally baseless grounds.

The FY1997 Interior Appropriations Bill also contains similar language requiring reprogramming.

Thus, **we now face three choices regarding the Forest Service AmeriCorps program:**

1) Ask Senators Murray and Leahy to attempt to pass a favorable amendment to the Interior Appropriations Bill when it comes to the Senate floor in September.

2) Accept the current reprogramming language, send a reprogramming letter immediately, and develop a strategy to convince Gorton, Byrd, and Regula to approve the reprogramming request.

3) Eliminate the Forest Service's portion of AmeriCorps.

Working Together on Food Recovery Issues

On June 17, you wrote a letter to Wofford requesting help with food recovery , suggesting that he:

1) Encourage all CNS to *consider* adding food recovery and gleaning activities to their ongoing service projects.

2) Form a partnership to provide technical assistance to any national or community service program interested in performing food recovery and gleaning work.

3) Help develop a relationship with the Points of Light Foundation that could boost any volunteer efforts related to food recovery.

Wofford has not yet formally responded to this request, although his staff has expressed interest in helping.

DRAFT

August 5, 1996

Mr. Jack Lew
Office of Management and Budget
17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Jack:

I am writing to inform you of the status of the AmeriCorps program sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), one of the largest single components of the overall AmeriCorps program.

As you know, most AmeriCorps projects are funded through state commissions appointed by each state's governor or through direct grants from the Corporation for National Service (CNS) ---- most projects are *not* funded or managed directly by Federal agencies. However, in the first year (1994-1995 program year) of the program, a highly competitive process coordinated by the CNS Service allowed a small portion (less than 15%) of AmeriCorps positions to be managed by Federal agencies in tandem with local groups.

The Success To Date of the USDA AmeriCorps Program

In the 1994-1995 program year, 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 Members in over 300 different urban and rural projects fighting hunger, protecting the environment, and boosting rural community development.

These Members served in 38 states --- spread throughout every region of the country --- and provided 1.812 million hours of service to their communities. The results in the first program year were impressive indeed:

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Two Major Issues Facing the Future of the Program

In the second year of the program (the 1995-1996 program), USDA had expected to sponsor 1,300 AmeriCorps Members. Unfortunately, because the Interior Appropriations sub-committees of both Houses of Congress denied Secretary's of Agriculture Glickman's request to continue Forest service sponsored AmeriCorps projects, USDA was forced to limit is program and sponsor only 1,000 AmeriCorps Members this year.

The USDA AmeriCorps program now faces two major issues:

A) Can CNS and USDA reach agreement with key leaders in the Senate so that the USDA can continue to spend the Department's own funds to support AmeriCorps?

B) Can USDA and the Interior Appropriations Subcommittees in both Houses of Congress reach agreement of continuing the Forest Service-sponsored portion of AmeriCorps.

Funding Streams for the USDA AmeriCorps Program

To understand both issues, it is important to understand the four basic sources of funding to date for the USDA AmeriCorps program:

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* Improved Forest Service road and safety conditions ---- by "day lighting" 50 curves.

* Released 775,000 salmon fry in a fish stocking operation.

* Constructed a major visitor information center.

* Provided conservation education to 8,3 7 3 students K- 1 2.

On February 14, 1995, President Clinton traveled to San Bernardino, one of the Forest service AmeriCorps sites. He met with a number of people involved in educational issues, including one of the Forest Service sponsored AmeriCorps members. In a speech later that day, the President said, "If you look at what this national service project does --- they're working in the San Bernardino National Forest; people who are helping to clean-up the forest, maintain it, strengthen it, keep it there for our children and our grandchildren, make sure its an important resource ... These are the kinds of things that are going on all over America, and I think that emphasizes what I'm saying. For a small amount of Federal money we have increased opportunity with no bureaucracy. This is all done at the grass-roots level."

Also in the first year of the program (1994-1995 program year), AmeriCorps Members serving in Rural Development teams in rural communities:

* Promoted alternative energy sources and wood technologies.

* Improved emergency response and prevention.

* Helped home owners relocate from a flood plain.

* Provided environmental and conservation education to school children.

* Helped design and construct timber bridges.

* Developed and implemented municipal recycling initiatives.

* Created plans for improving local recreational areas.

* Helped implement historic, scenic, and tourism trails.

Unfortunately, the FY1996 Interior Appropriations Bill passed by Congress included language prohibiting the Forest Service from funding AmeriCorps projects unless the Secretary of Agriculture followed appropriate reprogramming guidelines. In response to this language, Secretary Glickman went to great lengths to obtain bi-partisan Congressional support for the Forest Service AmeriCorps program. In both February and May, Secretary Glickman sent reprogramming letters to Senator Slade Gorton and Congressman Regula, the Senate and House chair people, respectively, of the Appropriations Subcommittees on Interior. In private meetings with both Garden and Regula, Secretary Glickman personally raised both issues. Unfortunately, both requests were denied.

The FY1997 Interior Appropriations Bill also contains similar language requiring reprogramming.

Unless that language is removed before the President signs the bill, USDA expects to soon submit an AmeriCorps reprogramming letter for FY 1997.

Thus, we would need special effort to either remove the language from the Bill before it is signed by the President or ensure that the reprogramming request is approved.

How We Can Work Together on Both Issues

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

RESPONSE DUE COB, SEPTEMBER 30, 1996 --- PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

August, 1996

TO: AmeriCorps USDA State Coordinators

THRU: FCS, FS, FSA, NRCS, and RECD National AmeriCorps Coordinators

FROM: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

SUBJECT: **INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING AMERICORPS 4TH QUARTER REPORT**

Enclosed is the fourth quarter progress report format. Please note that because this is also our final report, you are asked to pay particular attention to the instructions below so that we can be certain we have accurately and adequately captured all of the outstanding work your projects have done this year. Also, because this is our final report, those few sites that will not be done by the September 30, 1996 due date are asked to proceed as follows:

1. You must submit a report by the September 30th deadline. DO NOT wait until you are actually done with your projects.

1. In this 4th quarter report give all of the accomplishments toward objectives up to September 30.

2. Give the number of hours the members have served

The report is due back to my office completed by COB September 13, 1996. You will note that most of the information submitted in the first three quarters progress reports has been incorporated into this progress report. Only information that did not properly meet AmeriCorps community service objectives was omitted. .

In completing your progress report please remember that the "success measurement" should almost always expressed as a percentage, and should be intended to measure the **quality** of the service performed. For instance:

What percentage of the students receiving education presentations improved their test scores?

Out of the farmers adopting new conservation practices, what percentage improvement in their water quality did we measure?

Out of the families receiving outreach information on USDA home repair programs, how many actually received a grant to repair their homes?

If the QTY measurement states how many gardens were built, how many hungry families were fed by those gardens?.

Each of these measures should be matched up to information you have already provided the Department on the standard form for creating community service objectives.

The "Year's success target" should be taken from the original objectives form from under the heading "standard of quality or impact of the program."

The "Year's success unit of measure" should be taken from the original objectives form from under the heading "means of measuring the quality of the product or the impact of the service."

The first quarter success should relate how the project stood in relationship to only the success target. Thus, if the "year's success target" is "75" and the year's "success unit of measure" is the "% of students improving their environmental knowledge," than the "1 QTR success" should simply relate what percentage of students increased their environmental knowledge.

The "1st QTR success" column should **not** count the percentage of the year's QTY target that was achieved in that quarter.

Below are some other problems we continue to encounter in some of the third quarter reports. It is clear that while a few of the problems listed below are simply reporting problems, others caused significant concerns about the basic management and direction of projects. While we are reducing the number of problems significantly each quarter, their potential impact on the program necessitates us repeating these items once again.

1) Sites are operating under unapproved objectives. While my office can (and usually will) approve requests to accept new community service objectives based on changing conditions, such requests must be made **before** AmeriCorps Members are asked to provide such service. In other words, you need formal approval to deviate from the previously agreed to objectives that are summarized in question 13. Projects that simply ignore the previously agreed to objectives may face a significant penalty in the renewal process. Furthermore, a few sites have asked Members to meet objectives that have previously been specifically **rejected** by my office in earlier negotiations; this is totally unacceptable --- these sites should immediately instruct the members to re-focus their activities on objectives that must be approved.

2) Activities are not clearly stated or are not measurable. Please be as clear as possible--- in lay

people's terms --- as to what Members are doing. The people most likely to read your reports are not technical experts in your field. Also, you must be able to numerically measure progress for each site in each quarter.

3) Measurements are used that did not match codes. Code measurements cannot be changed, however new codes and measurements can be developed if needed in consultation with our office and with agency AmeriCorps coordinators. In fact the code book has been expanded to include new items identified in the second quarter's reports.

PLEASE PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THIS ISSUE OF FORMS! SOME SITES PENCILED IN A MEMBER'S NAME BECAUSE IT DID NOT APPEAR ON THE LIST WE SENT BUT THEY DID NOT SEND ANY FORMS. ALL THIS MEANS IS THAT WE KNOW THE NAME OF THE MEMBER BUT THAT PERSON IS NOT IN THE CORPORATION'S DATABASE AND WILL NOT GET AN EDUCATION AWARD.

4) Sites still lack Member enrollment forms and/or end of term forms. If a Member is not listed on the printout provided, it means that the Member is not listed in our database and is not enrolled in the program. We experienced the following problems:

a. **Some States provided the names of members BUT did not provide the enrollment forms. You will notice that we did NOT add these members names to the print out given under question 10.** If you provided us with names but you do not see those names on the member listing it means you must send us the forms, or if you mistakenly sent the forms to the Corporation for National Service you must send us a copy of the complete form. Our FAX number is (202) 720-4614. We will only enter the members once we have a form for them.

b. Some States provided us with names but did not include the hours of service performed in the first quarter. If you provided us with names but you do not see any hours listed for the member under the first quarter, that means you did not provide those hours. Please provide them as well as the hours of service performed by the member for the second quarter.

c. Some States used last year's enrollment form. You should have used this year's 4 page enrollment form which combines last year's program enrollment and trust enrollment forms. Where the wrong form was used we have notified you and sent copies of the proper forms. If you need forms please ask your program manager in D.C. to provide them to you. Again, the members who were enrolled on the incorrect form will not appear in the database until we receive the proper form.

d. Members were listed as having left the program but no end-of-term-of-service form was provided. Please remember that once a member is enrolled and they leave the program, a end-of-term-of-service form must be completed so the member can be cleared from the system. **End of Term of Service forms for the Members in your state were included in the 3rd quarterly report request package mailed in June.**

For the most part the States did very well, and we want to thank you. Your efforts will help us avoid most of the problems concerning the roster of members. But please remember that if our office does not have the proper forms for a Member, that Member may be in jeopardy of not receiving the educational and health care benefits to which the Member is legally entitled. If a Member's status

is incorrect in our database, you must submit an End of Term of Service Form.

There is one final issue that relates to members hours and that is the distinction between the hours the member served and the hours of personal leave and holidays. As you will recall, the member is paid for 1,812 hours. This is 1700 hours of service plus 40 hours of personal leave plus 72 hours for nine Federal holidays. The hours we want recorded under SECTION III. Member Data **ARE THE HOURS OF SERVICE** and **NOT THE HOURS OF SERVICE PLUS THE LEAVE HOURS AND THE HOLIDAY HOURS.** If you have been including holiday and leave hours in the totals you have been reporting please **ADJUST YOUR FOURTH QUARTER HOURS SO THAT THE TOTAL OF ALL FOUR QUARTERS IS ONLY THE HOURS SERVED.** If the member served 1700 hours took all their personal leave and holidays, the total of all four quarters should be 1700 hours.

Also remember that all members are entitled to 1,812 hours of living allowance. If for some reason a member did not take all their personal leave or holidays, they should be paid for that time when they terminate. The code is 66 and the concept is the same as when Federal employees go from one agency to another, they are paid cash for their comp time in the old agency.

5) Members are used as support staff for other AmeriCorps Members, rather than engaging in direct service themselves. This is impermissible. Page 13 of the USDA AmeriCorps operations manual states: "Under no circumstances should an individual AmeriCorps Member spend the bulk of the service year providing administrative or clerical support for other AmeriCorps Members; Members may not serve as `administrative coordinators' for projects."

6) State reports failed to consolidate individual site reports into one state report. One consolidated report for each state is required. One of the primary duties you have is to use these reports to demonstrate cohesiveness of your entire program state-wide. Furthermore, you may **not** simply ask the AmeriCorps Members to complete the reports themselves with no help from either you or their direct site supervisor; it is *your* legal responsibility to compile these reports and verify their accuracy.

7) Reports are not submitted on time. The Department has a legal requirement to meet very tight reporting deadlines set by the Corporation for National Service. It is imperative that states submit reports to the Department by each quarter's deadline.

Summer of Gleaning project information will not be included in this 4th quarter report. Each USDA Summer of Gleaning project has a separate operating site ID and information concerning these projects and their members will be collected separately but using the same format as used here. Details will be provided separately to each Summer of Gleaning project manager and site supervisor.

As a final note please remember that when you are reporting data whether it is quantity data related to objectives, hours served by members, number of volunteers or volunteer hours generated, you are reporting the data for JUST the 4th quarter. Do not give totals to date but rather give the amount performed or accomplished since the third quarterly report.

When we have the final data tablulated, each of you will receive a copy of our complete report so you can see how your work fit in with the work of your fellow USDA AmeriCorps projects. I think you will be quite impressed with how much and how well you have done.

I thank you once again for your efforts of this vital initiative.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

AmeriCorps *USA

USDA State Progress Report (CNS Grant No. 95ADFDC047)

1. **Check this reporting period:** ❑ First (10/1 - 12/31) ❑ Second (1/1 - 3/31) ❑ Third (4/1 - 6/30) ❑ Fourth (7/1 - 9/30)

SECTION I - STATE INFORMATION

2. **State:** _____

3. **Agency:** ARS ❑ NRCS ❑ Forest Service ❑ RECD ❑ FSA ❑ FCS ❑

SECTION II - STATE CONTACT INFORMATION:

(Make Corrections if Necessary)

4. **Contact Name:** _____ (First) _____ (Middle) _____ (Last)

5. Title: _____

6. **Address:** _____
street, number, and PO (if applicable)

_____ _____ _____
City **State** **Zip**

7. **Telephone number:** ___-___-____

8. **Fax number:** ___-___-____

9. **E-Mail Address (if any) :** _____

SECTION III - MEMBER DATA:

10. Attached are sheets concerning AmeriCorps Member data. The first type of Member Data sheet lists each Member, by operating site, for whom the USDA Office of National Service has received at least a Member enrollment form. The sheet will also list the number of slots allotted to that site and the number of enrollment forms received by the Department; you will need to fill in the number of Members actually enrolled. The sheets give the Member's name, social security number, and enrollment status. Please review the data and check for:

a. Correct spelling of the name;

b. Accuracy of the Social Security Number;

c. Service type (F= Full-time member; P= Part-time member);

d. Program Status (A = Active; C = Completed; E = Ended Service Early)*

e. Trust Status (A = Earning Award; B = Earned Award; C = Did Not Earn Award; D = On Hold by the Corporation for National Service; E = Under Review).

Alongside each name, give the total number of hours served (includes training time) by the Member this reporting period. Do this even if the Member has terminated during the reporting period. For Members who are on the list but have terminated or had their service type or status changed, just cross out the old status and print the new one alongside it. Make your corrections directly on this sheet and submit it along with the other portions of your progress report.

The second type of Member Data sheets give an Operating Site ID number and the name of the site supervisor but has no Member names listed. That is because the USDA Office of National Service has not received Enrollment forms for **any** Members from these sites. Please print the necessary information for each member on the appropriate sheet and submit an Enrollment form to the Department. If a Member began service but terminated, we still need a form for that person --- indicates their status as terminated. Also note whether or not the site sent the enrollment form directly to the Corporation for National Service. It is hoped that by now everyone understands that all forms (except health and child care) should come directly to the USDA Director of National Service and NOT--- repeat NOT --- the Corporation for National Service.

REMEMBER:

a. ALL members should be listed even though they only served a few days. If an enrollment form was submitted for a Member who then terminates either by officially notifying you or simply by walking away from the program, an End of Term of Service Form MUST be submitted for the Member.

b. If Members are serving at an operating site and their name does not appear on the list for that site, first check to see if the Member is listed under a different operating site; if not, then an Enrollment Form must be submitted so the person can be enrolled in the program.

c. List all the hours a Member served during the reporting period regardless if they terminated or if they started in the middle of the period.

11. Please list the total number of **volunteers** who took part in activities which were sponsored or organized by all the Members in the state during this period.

1st Qtr.	2nd Qtr.	3rd Qtr.	4th Qtr.	Total
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

12. Please list the total number of hours of community service completed by the volunteers cited above during this period.

1st Qtr.	2nd Qtr.	3rd Qtr.	4th Qtr.	Total
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

SECTION IV - PROGRESS TOWARDS ACCOMPLISHING SERVICE OBJECTIVES:

13. Original Community Service Objectives: Attached are sheets summarizing the community service objectives that were originally approved for each operating site. In cases where a single objective may take an entire year to complete, that objective may have a sub-objectives listed. **You need to fill in the column marked "4th QTR Quantity" and the column marked "4th QTR Success" --- as well as any column that is blank, has a zero, or has a question mark --- for EVERY operating site.** Each chart should have the following columns:

"State" - The standard two-letter code for your state

"Obj No" - Each community service objective for each site is assigned an individual number

"Op Site" - Each site's unique operating site identification

"PGM Code" - Each type of service has been assigned a unique code to describe that type of service. See the appendix to this report entitled "Community Service PGM Code List"

"Obj/Impact Statement" - A few words verbally summarizing the community service objective

"Year's QTY Target" - The year's numerical goal for the people or things to be aided

"Target Unit of Measurement" - The unit of measure used in the previous column

"4th QTR Quantity" - Provide a hard number indicating progress towards the "Year's QTY Target"

"Year's Success Target" - Number for a way of measuring *quality* of service provided --- if this column is blank, has a question mark , or has a zero, please replace it with the accurate information

"Success Unit of Measure" - Explanation of the number in the previous column --- if this column is blank, has a question mark , or has a zero, please replace it with the accurate information

"4th QTR Success" - Provide a hard number indicating progress towards the "Year's Success Target"

15. **Community Service Objectives Narrative (optional)**: If you feel it is necessary and/or helpful, you may use this space to describe in more detail accomplishments towards the original community service objectives reported in question 13 and/or your additional community service objectives reported in question 14. Please make sure you include the Operating Site ID Number in each narrative description so we can be clear which accomplishment is matched to which site.

16. **Community Building Objectives Narrative (optional):** Briefly describe how projects have brought together diverse groups of people, empowered communities to solve their own problems, built-long term structures that will last beyond each AmeriCorps Member's term of service, and generally improved the abilities of local citizens to help improve their own lives.

17. **AmeriCorps Member Development Objectives Narrative (optional):** Briefly describe how the AmeriCorps Members themselves have benefited from serving in the program, particularly in regard to expanding their own educational opportunity and increasing their own ethic of personal responsibility. Describe specific skills learned by Members through either their service or training. Describe any Members that earned a GED or otherwise advanced their education. Describe any Members that left public assistance to join AmeriCorps. Relate how AmeriCorps allowed Members to continue college or graduate school. Describe how Members may have changed their ethic of work, citizenship, or community volunteerism.

SECTION V - SUCCESS STORIES:

18. **Unique Successes or Great Stories :** Briefly describe one or two unique and/or exceptional success stories, a program highlight, or a 'great story' from your state. Please explain any instance in which AmeriCorps Members recruited non-AmeriCorps community volunteers for projects. Please include all media coverage, including original newspaper clips, videotapes of TV coverage, and cassette tapes of radio coverage; any letters of support or thank you letters; "before and after" photographs, brochures, posters, and newsletters created by the project; and other types of creative documentation.

SECTION VI - CHALLENGES

19. **Difficulties Faced by the Program:** Use this section to report on any problems your Members have encountered in the program this period. These should be significant issues which were related to achieving objectives, significant delays in implementation, administrative problems, or any other expectations, events or incidents that have caused the Members concern. State the problem concisely and how the issue has, or has not been resolved. Be sure to outline the steps taken and identify any resources needed to assist in resolving the problem.

SECTION V - GENERAL INFORMATION

20. **National Identity Activities (OPTIONAL):** Please describe any activities undertaken by Members that fostered the national identity of AmeriCorps. These could include joint service activities, meetings with other AmeriCorps projects, national telephone conference calls, use of Internet to communicate with other sites, etc.

21. **Organizational Changes:** Please outline and describe any changes in your program's organization and/or structure during the quarter.

22. **Organizational Improvements (OPTIONAL):** Please write any suggestions by you, your Members, site managers, or anyone else regarding ways in which the USDA or CNS AmeriCorps program could be improved.

23. **Primary Training and Technical Assistance Needs (OPTIONAL):** Please specify precisely what kind of staff or Member training or other technical assistance can be provided by USDA, the Corporation for National Service, or other sources to improve your projects.

{END OF REPORT}

14. PROGRESS TOWARDS ACCOMPLISHING ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE OBJECTIVES

Use this section to report progress towards completing additional new objectives --- those objectives in addition to the main objectives of each project listed on the proceeding page. Please fill in all columns for all objectives. It is important to make sure that each objective is listed with its own "OP site" (Operating site) code; this ensures that we know precisely what service is performed at each site. Please fill in all columns for each objective. Under "Obj No.," please give each new objective a number different from the number used for any of the objectives on the proceeding page. Under "PGM Code", please use a one-letter and three-digit code to describe the service from the code list provided at the end of this report. Under "Obj/Impact statement," provide a several-word summary of the nature of the service project -- this verbal summary should roughly match the "PGM Code" listed in the previous column. Under "Year's QTY Target," provide a hard number for the people or things aided. Under "Target Unit of Measurement," specify what unit of measure was used in the previous column -- such as miles, number of people served, acres, etc. Under "1st QTR Quantity," provide a hard number indicating progress towards the "Year's QTY Target" that was accomplished during this reporting period. Under "Year's Success Target," provide a hard number for a way of measuring how well the service was provided. Under "Successes Unit of Measure," specify exactly what the number in the previous column meant. Under "I st QTR Success," provide a hard number indicating progress towards the "Year's Success Target" that was accomplished during this reporting period.

State	Op Site	Obj No.	PGM Code	Obj/Impact statement	Year's QTY Target	Year's QTY Unit of Measure	1st QTR Quantity	Success Target	Unit of Measure	1st QTR Success
{SAMPLE:}										
CA	Y05A	18	EN96	Constrcuting whale nesting boxes	3	Boxes	1	90	%	meeting stand. 95%

AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

August 13, 1996

TO: Jim Coyle, AmeriCorps Program Manager, Rural Development
David Gibson, AmeriCorps Program Manager, Rural Development
Donna Hines, AmeriCorps Program Manager, FNS
Charles Sims, AmeriCorps Program Manager, FCS

FROM: Joel Berg, USDA Director of National Service JP

We have been contacted by the Allianz Insurance Company regarding non-payment of insurance fees. This is the health insurance company for AmeriCorps Members.

In order to resolve this problem I must compile a list of all USDA members enrolled in the health care plan. Ron and Dee will work with the Allianz staff to reconcile their list with our list. In order to compile the USDA list of members, I need a complete list of AmeriCorps Members currently enrolled in this health insurance plan. Request you supply this information to my office no later than August 23, 1996.

With the end of the fiscal year approximately six weeks away, it is imperative that we resolve this problem as soon as possible.

Thank you for your assistance.

August 6, 1996

Ishwarlal C. Patel
Rutgers Urban Gardening
162 Washington Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102

Dear Sir:

My office recently received a request from you for a USDA Mini-Grant. While your request is for a very worthwhile project, USDA cannot legally accept this grant.

The USDA Mini-Grants are for USDA AmeriCorps projects only. In checking with the USDA Project Director in New Jersey, I discovered that your project is not a USDA AmeriCorps project.

I am very sorry I cannot fulfill your request. Good luck with your project.

JS

JOEL BERG
USDA Director of National Service

How is this related to USDA AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps USDA

USDA Mini-Grant Application - FY 1996

Please answer the following background questions:

1. Originating USDA Agency (check one) ☐ RD ☐ FSA ☐ FCS ☒ NRCS ☐ Forest Service

2. NEWARK URBAN GARDENING
Operating Site ID #

3. Member Name: Ishwarlal (First) C. (Middle) Patel (Last)

4. Host Organization: RUTGERS URBAN GARDENING
(If different than #1)

5. Address: 162 Washington Street
street, number, and PO (if applicable)
Newark (City) New Jersey (State) 07102 (Zip)

6. Telephone number: (201) - 648 - 5958 Fax number: (201) - 648 - 1430

7. Site Supervisor: Victor A. Chico, Program Associate Rutgers Urban Gardening

PROPOSAL CRITERIA

The priority criteria upon which all proposals will be evaluated are listed below. These are general guidelines that each proposal should take into consideration and is not meant to be exhaustive.

- Will benefit the largest number of people per dollar spent;
- Provide a critical service to the community;
- Is combined with other matching dollars (not in-kind);
- Creates a partnership with volunteer community organizations or groups;
- Helps in accomplishing or enhancing established site objectives; And,
- Are consistent with the USDA AmeriCorps service priorities of fostering and creating community opportunity, and responsibility.

PROPOSAL ELEMENTS

In no more than one or two paragraphs (one page maximum) please answer the following questions:

- What your project intends to do (including a brief timeline);
- The total cost of your proposal (including a budget);
- What resources will be required for this proposal;
- How this proposal will further the current work objectives of the site;
- Why there is no other way to fund this proposal;
- How many people will benefit from this project (include cost per person benefited); And,

Any other information which describes the impact of your proposal.

Proposal Narrative

Rutgers Urban Gardening Newark, New Jersey

Vegetable Transplant Production Through Volunteers

Rutgers Urban Gardening (RUG) is operating in Newark with the financial support of federal (USDA) and state governments. It has established about 1200 community gardens utilizing about 22 acres of city vacant lots.

RUG needs about 50,000 vegetable transplants each year for its program participants. Essex County greenhouse in Newark will be used to produce vegetable transplants with the help of local volunteers. Due to the budget-cuts, we need to buy fertilizer (20:20:20), vermiculite (to sow seeds), pro-mix (to transplant-seedlings) and plastic packs and trays from the proposed grant. The break up of the grant is as follows:

Fertilizer (20:20:20)	$500.00
Vermiculite, Pro-mix and plastic packs and trays	$500.00
	$800.00

The spring, summer and fall transplants will be produced from March to August 1997 in the greenhouse and distributed to about 1000 community gardeners. They will plant these transplants in the gardens and will harvest vegetables worth over $500,000 during 1997 gardening season. The proposal is highly cost-effective. It is a community partnership program and about 50 volunteers from the communities will be involved in the project. Quality transplants are important for a successful harvest. The RUG will pay for the greenhouse cost, rent, water and for the wages of the technicians needed for transplant production.

July 8, 1996

Clinton Presidential Records
Digital Records Marker

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

This marker identifies the place of a tabbed divider. Given our digitization capabilities, we are sometimes unable to adequately scan such dividers. The title from the original document is indicated below.

July

Divider Title:_____

To: Amy Rainone

From: Joel Berg

4 PAGES, including this cover

I assume you have already recieved the attached letter from Harris Wofford clarifying CNS' legal ability to allow USDA to run an "educational awards only" AmeriCorps program.

Also also attached is a two page fact sheet we prepared to further clarify the major issues facing the future of our program.

I will call you to get your suggestions on how we might follow-up.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please call me at 720-5746.

To: David Bowers

From: Joel Berg

4 PAGES, including this cover

FYI, attched is a letter to Senator Leahy from Harris Wofford, the head of the Corporation for National Service (CNS), clarifying CNS' legal ability to allow USDA to run an "educational awards only" AmeriCorps program.

Also also attached is a two page fact sheet we prepared to further clarify the major issues facing the future of our program.

I will call you to get your suggestions on how we might follow-up.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please call me at 720-5746.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

RESPONSE DUE COB, August 1, 1996 --- PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

July 24, 1996

TO: AmeriCorps USDA Summer of Gleaning Coordinators

THRU: FSA, and RECD Summer of Gleaning AmeriCorps Coordinators

FROM: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

SUBJECT: **INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING AMERICORPS USDA SUMMER OF GLEANING MID-TERM REPORT**

Enclosed is the USDA Summer of Gleaning Mid-Term progress report format. **The report is due back to my office completed by COB August 2, 1996.** (To meet this deadline, you may fax a copy of the report to (202) 720-4614 and then mail the hard copy.)
In completing your progress report please remember that the "success measurement" should almost always expressed as a percentage, and should be intended to measure the **quality** of tne service performed. For instance:

What percentage of the students receiving education presentations improved their test scores?

Out of the farmers adopting new conservation practices, what percentage improvement in their water quality did we measure?

Out of the families receiving outreach information on USDA home repair programs, how many actually received a grant to repair their homes?

If the QTY measurement states how many gardens were built, how many hungry families were fed by those gardens?.

Each of these measures should be matched up to information you have already provided the Department on the standard form for creating community service objectives.

The "Summer's success target" should be taken from the original objectives form from under the heading "standard of quality or impact of the program."

The "Summer's success unit of measure" should be taken from the original objectives form from under the heading "means of measuring the quality of the product or the impact of the service."

The Mid-Term success should relate how the project stood in relationship to only the success target. Thus, if the "Summer's success target" is "75" and the Summer's "success unit of measure" is the "% of students improving their environmental knowledge," than the "Mid-Term success" should simply relate what percentage of students increased their environmental knowledge.

The "Mid-Term success" column should **not** count the percentage of the Summer's QTY target that was achieved in that quarter.

Below are some other problems we have experienced with other projects. It is clear that while a few of the problems listed below are simply reporting problems, others caused significant concerns about the basic management and direction of projects. While we are reducing the number of problems significantly each quarter, their potential impact on the program necessitates us repeating these items once again.

1) Sites are operating under unapproved objectives. While my office can (and usually will) approve requests to accept new community service objectives based on changing conditions, such requests must be made **before** AmeriCorps Members are asked to provide such service. In other words, you need formal approval to deviate from the previously agreed to objectives that are summarized in question 13. Projects that simply ignore the previously agreed to objectives may face a significant penalty in the renewal process. Furthermore, a few sites have asked Members to meet objectives that have previously been specifically **rejected** by my office in earlier negotiations; this is totally unacceptable --- these sites should immediately instruct the members to re-focus their activities on objectives that must be approved.

2) Activities are not clearly stated or are not measurable. Please be as clear as possible--- in lay people's terms --- as to what Members are doing. The people most likely to read your reports are not technical experts in your field. Also, you must be able to numerically measure progress for each site in each quarter.

3) Measurements are used that did not match codes. Code measurements cannot be changed, however new codes and measurements can be developed if needed in consultation with our office and with agency AmeriCorps coordinators. In fact the code book has been expanded to include new items identified in the second quarter's reports.

4) Sites still lack Member enrollment forms and/or end of term forms. If a Member is not listed on the printout provided, it means that the Member is not listed in our database and is not enrolled in the program. We experienced the following problems:

a. Some States provided the names of members BUT did not provide the enrollments forms. You will notice that we did NOT add these members names to the print out given under question 10. If you provided us with names but you do not see those names on the member listing it means you must send us the forms, or if you mistakenly sent the forms to the Corporation for National Service you must send us a copy of the complete form. Our FAX number is (202) 720-4614. We will only enter the members once we have a form for them.

b. Some States provided us with names but did not include the hours of service performed in the first quarter. If you provided us with names but you do not see any hours listed for the member under the first quarter, that means you did not provide those hours. Please provide them as well as the hours of service performed by the member for the second quarter.

c. Members were listed as having left the program but no end-of-term-of-service form was provided. Please remember that once a member is enrolled and they leave the program, a end-of-term-of-service form must be completed so the member can be cleared from the system. **End of Term of Service forms for the Members in your state have been included with this package.**

Please remember that if our office does not have the proper forms for a Member, that Member may be in jeopardy of not receiving the educational and health care benefits to which the Member is legally entitled. If a Member's status is incorrect in our database, you must submit an End of Term of Service Form.

5) Members are used as support staff for other AmeriCorps Members, rather than engaging in direct service themselves. This is impermissible. Page 13 of the USDA AmeriCorps operations manual states: "Under no circumstances should an individual AmeriCorps Member spend the bulk of the service year providing administrative or clerical support for other AmeriCorps Members; Members may not serve as `administrative coordinators' for projects."

6) State reports failed to consolidate individual site reports into one state report. One consolidated report for each state is required. One of the primary duties you have is to use these reports to demonstrate cohesiveness of your entire program state-wide. Furthermore, you may **not** simply ask the AmeriCorps Members to complete the reports themselves with no help from either you or their direct site supervisor; it is *your* legal responsibility to compile these reports and verify their accuracy.

7) Reports are not submitted on time. The Department has a legal requirement to meet very tight reporting deadlines set by the Corporation for National Service. It is imperative that states submit reports to the Department by each quarter's deadline.

Summer of Gleaning only summer of gleaning project information will be included in this Mid-Term report. Do not include information that pertains to other USDA AmeriCorps projects in your state. That information will be captured by the 4th QTR progress report, which is also the final progress report for those projects. There will also be a final Summer of Gleaning project report that will be required by October 15,1996 or sooner depending on when a particular project ends.

Media Please provide a hard copy of all media coverage that you receive or generate.

As a final note please remember that when you are reporting data whether it is quantity data related to objectives, hours served by members, number of volunteers or volunteer hours generated, you are reporting the data for the period marked by the beginning of the project through July 26, 1996

I want to thank you once again for your efforts of this vital initiative.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

AmeriCorps *USA

USDA Summer of Gleaning
State Progress Report
(CNS Grant No. 95ADFDC047)

1. **Check this reporting period:** Mid-Term ___ Final ___

SECTION I - STATE INFORMATION

2. **State:** _____

3. **Agency:** ARS ❑ NRCS ❑ Forest Service ❑ RECD ❑ FSA ❑ FCS ❑

SECTION II - STATE CONTACT INFORMATION:
(Make Corrections if Necessary)

4. **Contact Name:** _____ _____ _____
First Middle Last

5. Title: _____

6. **Address:** _____
street, number, and PO (if applicable)

_____ _____ _____
City **State** **Zip**

7. **Telephone number:** ___-___-____

8. **Fax number:** ___-___-____

9. **E-Mail Address (if any) :** _____

SECTION III - MEMBER DATA:

Attached are sheets concerning AmeriCorps Member data. The first type of Member Data sheet lists each Member, by operating site, for whom the USDA Office of National Service has received at least a Member enrollment form. The sheet will also list the number of slots allotted to that site and the number of enrollment forms received by the Department; you will need to fill in the number of Members actually enrolled. The sheets give the Member's name, social security number, and enrollment status. Please review the data and check for:

a. Correct spelling of the name;

b. Accuracy of the Social Security Number;

c. Service type (F= Full-time member; P= Part-time member);

d. Program Status (A = Active; C = Completed; E = Ended Service Early)*

e. Trust Status (A = Earning Award; B = Earned Award; C = Did Not Earn Award; D = On Hold by the Corporation for National Service; E = Under Review).

Alongside each name, give the total number of hours served (includes training time) by the Member this reporting period. Do this even if the Member has terminated during the reporting period. For Members who are on the list but have terminated or had their service type or status changed, just cross out the old status and print the new one alongside it. Make your corrections directly on this sheet and submit it along with the other portions of your progress report.

The second type of Member Data sheets give an Operating Site ID number and the name of the site supervisor but has no Member names listed. That is because the USDA Office of National Service has not received Enrollment forms for **any** Members from these sites. Please print the necessary information for each member on the appropriate sheet and submit an enrollment form to the Department. If a Member began service but terminated, we still need a form for that person --- indicates their status as terminated. Also note whether or not the site sent the enrollment form directly to the Corporation for National Service. It is hoped that by now everyone understands that all forms (except health and child care) should come directly to the USDA Director of National Service and NOT--- repeat NOT --- the Corporation for National Service.

REMEMBER:

a. ALL members should be listed even though they only served a few days. If an enrollment form was submitted for a Member who then terminates either by officially notifying you or simply by walking away from the program, an End of Term of Service Form MUST be submitted for the Member.

b. If Members are serving at an operating site and their name does not appear on the list for that site, first check to see if the Member is listed under a different operating site; if not, then an Enrollment Form must be submitted so the person can be enrolled in the program.

c. List all the hours a Member served during the reporting period regardless if they terminated or if they started in the middle of the period.

11. Please list the total number of **volunteers** who took part in activities which were sponsored or organized by all the Members state during this period.

	1st half	2nd half	Total
	_____	_____	_____

12. Please list the total number of hours of community service completed by the volunteers cited above during this period.

	1st half	2nd half	Total
	_____	_____	_____

SECTION IV - PROGRESS TOWARDS ACCOMPLISHING SERVICE OBJECTIVES:

13. Original Community Service Objectives: Attached are sheets summarizing the community service objectives that were originally approved for each operating site. In cases where a single objective may take an entire year to complete, that objective may have a sub-objectives listed. **You need to fill in the column marked "Mid-Term Quantity" and the column marked "Mid-Term Success" --- as well as any column that is blank, has a zero, or has a question mark --- for EVERY operating site.** Each chart should have the following columns:

"State" - The standard two-letter code for your state

"Obj No" - Each community service objective for each site is assigned an individual number

"Op Site" - Each site's unique operating site identification

"PGM Code" - Each type of service has been assigned a unique code to describe that type of service. See the appendix to this report entitled "Community Service PGM Code List"

"Obj/Impact Statement" - A few words verbally summarizing the community service objective

"Summer's QTY Target" - The Summer's numerical goal for the people or things to be aided

"Target Unit of Measurement" - The unit of measure used in the previous column

"Mid Term Quantity" - Provide a hard number indicating progress towards the "Summer's QTY Target"

"Summer's Success Target" - Number for a way of measuring *quality* of service provided --- if this column is blank, has a question mark , or has a zero, please replace it with the accurate information

"Success Unit of Measure" - Explanation of the number in the previous column --- if this column is blank, has a question mark , or has a zero, please replace it with the accurate information

"Mid-Term Success" - Provide a hard number indicating progress towards the "Summer's Success Target"

15. **Community Service Objectives Narrative (optional)**: If you feel it is necessary and/or helpful, you may use this space to describe in more detail accomplishments towards the original community service objectives reported in question 13 and/or your additional community service objectives reported in question 14. Please make sure you include the Operating Site ID Number in each narrative description so we can be clear which accomplishment is matched to which site.

16. **Community Building Objectives Narrative (optional):** Briefly describe how projects have brought together diverse groups of people, empowered communities to solve their own problems, built-long term structures that will last beyond each AmeriCorps Member's term of service, and generally improved the abilities of local citizens to help improve their own lives.

17. **AmeriCorps Member Development Objectives Narrative (optional):** Briefly describe how the AmeriCorps Members themselves have benefited from serving in the program, particularly in regard to expanding their own educational opportunity and increasing their own ethic of personal responsibility. Describe specific skills learned by Members through either their service or training. Describe any Members that earned a GED or otherwise advanced their education. Describe any Members that left public assistance to join AmeriCorps. Relate how AmeriCorps allowed Members to continue college or graduate school. Describe how Members may have changed their ethic of work, citizenship, or community volunteerism.

SECTION V - SUCCESS STORIES:

18. **Unique Successes or Great Stories :** Briefly describe one or two unique and/or exceptional success stories, a program highlight, or a 'great story' from your state. Please explain any instance in which AmeriCorps Members recruited non-AmeriCorps community volunteers for projects. Please include all media coverage, including original newspaper clips, videotapes of TV coverage, and cassette tapes of radio coverage; any letters of support or thank you letters; "before and after" photographs, brochures, posters, and newsletters created by the project; and other types of creative documentation.

SECTION VI - CHALLENGES

19. **Difficulties Faced by the Program:** Use this section to report on any problems your Members have encountered in the program this period. These should be significant issues which were related to achieving objectives, significant delays in implementation, administrative problems, or any other expectations, events or incidents that have caused the Members concern. State the problem concisely and how the issue has, or has not been resolved. Be sure to outline the steps taken and identify any resources needed to assist in resolving the problem.

SECTION V - GENERAL INFORMATION

20. **National Identity Activities (OPTIONAL):** Please describe any activities undertaken by Members that fostered the national identity of AmeriCorps. These could include joint service activities, meetings with other AmeriCorps projects, national telephone conference calls, use of Internet to communicate with other sites, etc.

21. **Organizational Changes:** Please outline and describe any changes in your program's organization and/or structure during the quarter.

22. **Organizational Improvements (OPTIONAL):** Please write any suggestions by you, your Members, site managers, or anyone else regarding ways in which the USDA or CNS AmeriCorps program could be improved.

23. **Primary Training and Technical Assistance Needs (OPTIONAL):** Please specify precisely what kind of staff or Member training or other technical assistance can be provided by USDA, the Corporation for National Service, or other sources to improve your projects.

{END OF REPORT}

14. PROGRESS TOWARDS ACCOMPLISHING ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE OBJECTIVES

Use this section to report progress towards completing additional new objectives --- those objectives in addition to the main objectives of each project listed on the proceeding page. Please fill in all columns for all objectives. It is important to make sure that each objective is listed with its own "OP site" (Operating site) code; this ensures that we know precisely what service is performed at each site. Please fill in all columns for each objective. Under "Obj No.," please give each new objective a number different from the number used for any of the objectives on the proceeding page. Under "PGM Code", please use a one-letter and three-digit code to describe the service from the code list provided at the end of this report. Under "Obj/Impact statement," provide a several-word summary of the nature of the service project -- this verbal summary should roughly match the "PGM Code" listed in the previous column. Under "Summer's QTY Target," provide a hard number for the people or things aided. Under "Target Unit of Measurement," specify what unit of measure was used in the previous column -- such as miles, number of people served, acres, etc. Under "1st QTR Quantity," provide a hard number indicating progress towards the "Summer's QTY Target" that was accomplished during this reporting period. Under "Summer's Success Target," provide a hard number for a way of measuring how well the service was provided. Under "Successes Unit of Measure," specify exactly what the number in the previous column meant. Under "I st QTR Success," provide a hard number indicating progress towards the "Summer's Success Target" that was accomplished during this reporting period.

State	Op Site	Obj No.	PGM Code	Obj/Impact statement	Summer's QTY Target	Summer's QTY Unit of Measure	1st QTR Quantity	Success Target	Unit of Measure	1st QTR Success
{SAMPLE:}										
CA	Y05A	18	EN96	Constrcuting whale nesting boxes	3	Boxes	1	90	%	meeting stand. 95%

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

July 1, 1996

To: USDA AmeriCorps State Coordinators, Project Managers, and Members

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

Subject: **National Week of Food Recovery, August 19 - 25**

As you probably are aware, a great deal of good and healthy food is currently thrown away in America on a daily basis. It has been estimated that nearly one fifth of all the food produced for consumption in this country is lost every year --- in fields, commercial kitchens, markets, stores, school, and restaurants. One of Secretary of Agriculture Glickman's top priorities is to expand efforts nationally to glean and recover excess food and distribute that food to hungry Americans. We view this effort not as a large new government program, but as a series of efforts to encourage, energize, and reward ongoing and new efforts of citizens, state and local governments, and non-profit organizations.

The USDA AmeriCorps program is already playing a significant role in this initiative. A year-long AmeriCorps project is being conducted by USDA in Illinois and special "Summer of Gleaning" AmeriCorps projects are now being carried out by USDA --- in partnership with numerous local organizations --- in twenty states.

To expand our efforts further, we are designating August 19-25 as the "National Week of Food Recovery" and are urging all USDA AmeriCorps projects to spend that week -- or at least one day that week --- engaged in some activity to recover excess food.

Projects are encouraged to work with existing "Summer of Gleaning" sites and/or contact local anti-hunger groups to arrange to glean food from fields or to recover food from large events, institutions, and/or restaurants. We will also be sending information to non-USDA AmeriCorps projects to also urging them to participate.

We will be sending you more detailed information on this week soon, but, in the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 720-5746 or Donna Hines at (202) 690 - 0693.

Statement of

HARRIS WOFFORD

Chief Executive Officer
Corporation for National Service

on

House FY1997 VA/HUD/Independent Agencies Appropriations Action
June 27th, 1996

By now you've undoubtedly heard that the U S House of Representatives yesterday eliminated FY1997 funding for AmeriCorps and Learn & Serve America. While morning headlines proclaimed our demise, the net effect of the day's action is -- on balance -- quite encouraging

The VA/HUD/Independent Agencies Appropriations subcommittee bill had proposed $36 / million -- an 8 percent cut from current levels -- for the AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America programs beginning in the fall of 199?.

An amendment to eliminate the two programs, offered by Rep John N. Hostettler of Indiana, was defeated by a wide margin in a bipartisan vote of 183 - 240. Nearly double the number of Republicans voted against the amendment (50) as voted for the 1993 Act. They were joined by nearly every Democrat (189, plus 1 Independent).

A subsequent tactical ploy by Rep. Todd Tiahrt of Kansas -- passed by voice vote when only a handful of members were on the floor -- transferred $40 million of Corporation funding to the Veterans' Administration; the remaining $327 million was earmarked for deficit reduction. The amendment was offered during a series of pro-veteran amendments that received near-unanimous support. Armed with the earlier bipartisan victory for AmeriCorps funding, Subcommittee Chairman Jerry Lewis of California and other AmeriCorps supporters quietly accepted the amendment, rather than engaging in a divisive competition with veterans' medical programs.

As the New York Times reported this morning, *"A voice vote does not put lawmakers under the kind of political pressure that a recorded vote does, so tonight's vote was not a true test of the future of AmeriCorps."*

In a final parliamentary move of the evening, Subcommittee Ranking Member Louis Stokes of Ohio offered a motion to recommit (send the bill back) to committee to restore national service funding. Chairman Lewis -- siding with proponents of AmeriCorps -- rose in favor of the motion. Supporting a recommittal motion by the minority party is highly unusual for a subcommittee chairman. Although procedural votes usually follow party lines, 21 Republicans joined with 183 Democrats and 1 Independent in favor of the recommittal. Perhaps sensing a close vote, the Speaker (who by tradition rarely votes) came to the floor and cast his vote. Some Republicans who had initially voted to restore AmeriCorps funding changed their votes before the clock ran out on the high-pressure, late night roll call. The final losing tally of 205-212 did not include the votes of 12 Democrats, who were not present at that late hour.

cont'd

Yesterday's action is only one step in a long budget process. The next step for AmeriCorps is Senate VA-HUD-Independent Agencies appropriations subcommittee consideration, where national service has fared well. The Senate timetable is unclear. Neither house has yet completed action on the Labor-HHS appropriation bills, which fund AmeriCorps*VISTA and the National Senior Service Corps (Senior Companions, Foster Grandparents, and Retired & Senior Volunteers).

When both houses complete action on the bills, a conference committee will iron out differences and send final joint proposals back to both houses for passage. The final bills are then sent to the President. If the process is not completed by September 30th, a continuing resolution can be enacted to fund affected programs and agencies.

Last night, Chairman Lewis said, "I don't believe that the (House Republican) leadership wants to have last year's fight all over again." A White House spokesman said, "The President has not lost one iota of enthusiasm for national service... we will work as hard as we need to retain healthy funding for the program through the legislative process."

It is unfortunate that yesterday's action might be construed by some to indicate the demise of national service. They are wrong. Our position is much stronger than it was one year ago. Congressional critics like Senator Grassley and Chairman Lewis are now working with us to sustain and improve national service. The bipartisan victory on the Hostettler amendment -- together with last spring's successful bipartisan effort in the Senate - puts us in good position when the House and Senate conferees meet later this summer or fall.

Indeed, as the New York Times reported this morning, *"In private, even some of the program's most ardent opponents conceded tonight that it is unlikely that they would succeed (at killing national service) this year. . . the latest attempt to eliminate the program is expected to be quashed in the Senate."*

The strong favorable roll call vote yesterday is a direct result of your hard work. Our challenge is to do even better despite headlines that might discourage potential recruits, private sector partners, and the AmeriCorps members who are doing their best to serve our country. We must continue to communicate national service accomplishments -- and to thank those who support service. Inviting elected officials and other community leaders to graduation ceremonies or site visits might be a good opportunity for them to experience national service firsthand. Let your community know that national service is here - and getting things done.

Statement of

HARRIS WOFFORD

Chief Executive Officer
Corporation for National Service

on

Clarifying the White House Press Statement on National Service

June 28th, 1996

A press statement by the White House (see text below) on this week's House action on national service, quoted in an Associated Press story today, offers unflinching support for national service but also states -- if the bill were to pass both houses and be signed by the President as is -- that "every national service participant would be sent home."

That will be confusing to many. The budget being debated in the Congress is for fiscal year 1997 for programs beginning in the fall of 1997 -- the Class of '98.

The ongoing AmeriCorps and Learn & Serve America grant processes for programs beginning this fall -- the Class of '97 -- is unaffected by the budget proposals now being debated in Congress.

Further, the strong, bipartisan vote yesterday against eliminating AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America leaves us well positioned as the process moves to its next stage (see Wofford message, 6/27/96).

The misstatement about the effect of the House action can hurt our recruitment efforts, discourage current AmeriCorps members, and create confusion among program staff.

Please help us get the word out that AmeriCorps is alive and well and looking for new recruits for the Class of '97!

Post this message on listservs, web sites, bulletin boards, etc. to let the national service community know that AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America will continue to play vital roles in service to our country.

Statement By White House Press Secretary On AmeriCorps

WASHINGTON, June 27 U.S. Newswire/ --

Following is a statement by the White House Press Secretary

Over the last three years, AmeriCorps National Service participants have tutored thousands of students to help raise reading levels, helped victims of disasters such as floods and earthquakes in more than 20 states, and participated in anti-drug efforts in communities across the nation. Under the Republican bill passed yesterday, every National Service participant would be sent home, and hundreds of thousands would be denied this opportunity to serve their country while earning money for college.

Last year, in their misguided budget effort, Republicans voted to eliminate National Service. President Clinton vowed to veto any legislation to eliminate National Service, and when Republicans sent him such a bill, he did just that.

Last night, House Republicans renewed this fight with the President by voting once again to scrap all funds for National Service.

President Clinton remains firm. He will veto any bill that does not provide adequate funds for AmeriCorps. And he will continue to fight against efforts to provide $57 billion less for education and training than his Balanced Budget request.

Eliminating National Service was a poison pill then, it is a poison pill now, and it will remain a poison pill as long as Republicans insist on eliminating the program.

AMERICORPS NATIONAL SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

July 1, 1996

To: USDA AmeriCorps State Coordinators, Project Managers, and Members

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA JB

Subject: **National Week of Food Recovery, August 19 - 25**

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