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June

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June 26, 1996

TO: AmeriCorps Project Directors, Project Managers and Members

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

SUBJECT: USDA AmeriCorps Program Awards

In April the USDA AmeriCorps Taskforce solicited nominations from the field for six different awards. The taskforce voted on the nominations based on the criteria established for each award. It is my pleasure to announce the winners of these awards:

USDA AmeriCorps Project Director of the Year	Leroy Tull - Oklahoma-NRCS
USDA AmeriCorps Project Manager of the Year	Gary Fine - Louisiana-NRCS
USDA AmeriCorps Member of the Year	Rosie Watkins - Georgia-RECD
USDA AmeriCorps Team of the Year	NRCS - Chicago, IL
USDA AmeriCorps State of the Year	Louisiana - NRCS and RECD
USDA AmeriCorps Community of the Year	Bowling Green Champion Community
Special Achievement	Rod Atterbery - FSA

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the award winners and to thank them for the tremendous job they have done in the AmeriCorps Program.

Let me also thank everyone who has contributed to the success of the USDA AmeriCorps Program. Without the team of professionals who we have been fortunate to have working with us in the field, and the dedicated AmeriCorps Members, we would not have a program. Thank you all for your support, both in the past and in the future.



FAX MEMO

Rural Development
Stevens Point, WI 54481

TO: All USDA AmeriCorps Sites
FROM: Joel Berg, Director of National Service
SUBJECT: Mini-Grants
DATE: 24 June 1996

The USDA Office of National Service is pleased to announce a one-time program of mini-grants for USDA AmeriCorps sites nationwide. The purpose of this program is to make modest sums of money available to projects which will have maximum impact on the community. Many times our office hears of projects which are lacking just a few resources which, if they were available, would allow the accomplishment of a great deal more. This program hopes to address that need.

The total amount of dollars available for this program are limited, so individual grants will be small in order to spread the benefit among the largest number of sites. The targeted range of dollar amounts will be those proposals **requesting \$250 - \$1,000**. The higher the amount of a request, the more detailed the justification should be. All grants will be **awarded on a competitive basis**. Proposals will be judged according to the criteria outlined on the application form.

The guidelines for the AmeriCorps Mini-Grant program are simple. Application should consist of no more than one to three paragraphs (**one page maximum**) which answer a few basic questions. The proposals **must not contain** activities that violate USDA or CNS prohibitions. It must be clear from your proposal that these funds **will be used by, and directly benefit or enhance, the established AmeriCorps project**. New community projects unrelated to the AmeriCorps program, however beneficial, will not be considered.

The application form for the USDA AmeriCorps Mini-Grant program is attached. To provide some guidance, some sample project proposals are attached. If you have questions about your proposal or the application process, please call your agency AmeriCorps representative. The completed application must be received **no later than July 12**. Please mail and/or fax the applications to:

AmeriCorps Mini-Grant Program
% Joel Berg
STOP 1320
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-1320

or Fax to: 202-720-4614

Thank you for your time and effort. We hope that this innovative program will provide some timely and much needed assistance to some very worthy projects.

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. _____
Operating Site ID #

3. **Member Name:** _____
First Middle Last

4. **Host Organization:** _____
(If different than #1)

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

City State Zip

6. **Telephone number:** _____ - _____ - _____ **Fax number:** _____ - _____ - _____

7. **Site Supervisor:** _____

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;
- Help 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.

Your completed application must be received **no later than July 12**. Please mail and/or fax the applications to:
AmeriCorps Mini-Grant Program
% Joel Berg
STOP 1320
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-1320

or Fax to: 202-720-4614



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

June 22, 1995

BACKGROUND BRIEFING FOR THE SECRETARY

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service JB
Subject: YOUR CALL ABOUT AMERICORPS TO SENATOR BOND

BOND'S OBJECTIONS TO FEDERAL AGENCY INVOLVEMENT IN AMERICORPS

Bond, who is Chair of the Senate Appropriations Sub-Committee that oversees the Corporation for National and Community Service, added language to the Rescissions Bill that would have prohibited Federal agencies --- including USDA --- from running AmeriCorps projects.

He has two major public objections to Federally-run AmeriCorps projects:

1) At a time the Clinton Administration claims it is downsizing the Federal government --- and at a time the Administration is claiming that AmeriCorps is a grass-roots, community-driven movement --- the Administration has placed 2,800 AmeriCorps Members in Federal agencies (including 1,200 at USDA) who essentially work as Federal employees bolstering a top-heavy Federal bureaucracy.

Suggested response: "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 I met with in Missouri is working closely with the Republican County Executive of St. Charles County on flood relief. All the members I met from Missouri are achieving concrete, measurable results in helping Missouri farmers and other landowners recover from the floods of 1993 and 1995."

2) The Corporation For National and Community Service funded the USDA AmeriCorps program, at the expense of the Future Farmers of America and the National 4-H Foundation, which both unsuccessfully applied for AmeriCorps grants.

Suggested response: "The Corporation for National and Community Service awarded grants on a very competitive basis, and I am proud that USDA had a high quality proposal that was funded. Many Federal agencies, such as the Department of Treasury, applied for, but did not win, an AmeriCorps grant.

But more importantly, our AmeriCorps members are working closely with the two non-profit groups you have cited. Our AmeriCorps Members are working closely with 4-H all across the country, having created a nature trail at a 4-H camp in New Jersey, painted a 4-H building at a fairgrounds in Minnesota, and worked with 4-H on community gardens in Chicago and Milwaukee. We have worked closely with the National Future Farmers of America to recruit their Members into our program, and they have actively supported one of our urban farming projects in Chicago."

BOND'S GENERAL OBJECTIONS TO AMERICORPS

Like many conservatives, Bond has more general objections to AmeriCorps. He believes we should not "pay people to volunteer," that non-profit groups should run service programs instead of government, and that the program is generally too costly.

You may want to stress the following points:

- * AmeriCorps allows USDA to provide immediate, non-bureaucratic assistance to disaster victims in Missouri and elsewhere. Communities didn't have to fill out a lot of forms and applications to receive help from AmeriCorps --- when the need is present, AmeriCorps Members immediately drop their other duties to help with disaster relief. AmeriCorps provides Federal agencies like USDA with an innovative new tool to deliver services rapidly, efficiently, and compassionately.

- * USDA AmeriCorps Members have helped out with disaster relief throughout the country. Our members have helped with flood relief throughout the Midwest, earthquake relief in Los Angeles, tornado relief in Iowa, and flood relief in California. Just this past week, USDA AmeriCorps Members have helped with flood relief in Louisiana, leading one flood victim to write a thank you note to USDA, stating: "To know that there are people who still care when others cannot help themselves is something you can never forget."

* AmeriCorps demands personal responsibility and promotes work over welfare. 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 protecting those rights and aiding our own communities. Furthermore, AmeriCorps gives young people a tangible way to take charge of their own lives. Lastly, AmeriCorps is based on one fundamentally conservative idea --- if you don't work, you don't get a benefit.

* AmeriCorps rebuilds the sense of community that made America great. By bringing together Americans of all races, classes, genders, religions, and physical abilities to work side-by-side, AmeriCorps will strengthen the cords that bind us together as a people. The "sweat equity" created by AmeriCorps can play an important role in healing the nation's wounds and bridging our divisions. AmeriCorps will fundamentally change 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.

* USDA AmeriCorps Members are performing service that requires far more time and far more technical expertise than could be provided by volunteers. Because they are serving full-time for a year --- and because we want to ensure that service will not be just for young people from rich families --- we understand that AmeriCorps Members need a small living stipend to be able to support themselves for their year of service. AmeriCorps members earn far less than Members of the military. In addition, working your way through college is a long American tradition. AmeriCorps represents a new kind of civic compact --- sort of a "GI Bill without the GI," encourages personal responsibility while expanding educational opportunity.

* USDA AmeriCorps programs actually increase the number of non-paid volunteers. Despite the claim that AmeriCorps programs decrease the number of people who actually volunteer in communities, the facts show that all our projects actually recruit additionally community volunteers who serve side-by-side with our AmeriCorps Members.

USDA AMERICORPS PROJECTS IN MISSOURI

There are 12 NRCS-sponsored USDA AmeriCorps Rural Development Team Members in Missouri, who work on long-term projects in which they provide technical assistance more often than physical labor. Most Members of this team have at least undergraduate degrees. Before the latest round of flooding, they were engaged in the following projects:

* One Member is developing a flood recovery resource notebook and identifying the efficient cropland recovery techniques.

* One Member is developing a decision support system computer model for floodplain management for St. Charles County and other local governments.

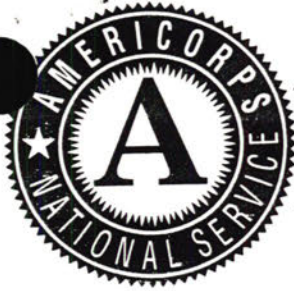
* A Member is compiling flood plain management and water quality information and utilizing GIS to provide information to communities and individuals regarding flood recovery. This Member is completing a survey of Missouri landowners affected by the flood of 1993. The survey focuses on the extent of physical damage, economic losses, and satisfaction with federal and state assistance programs.

* Four Members are providing information and guidance to landowners and producers in order to assist in flood recovery and natural resource management decision-making. The member in Osage and Cole counties has worked with landowners towards development of the Osage and Cole County Pasture and Hayland Management Guide Manual. Another of these Members has assisted the Elsberry Drainage District with flood recovery surveying.

* One Member is assisting sponsors to complete 27 dam safety reports and perform maintenance on 99 floodwater retarding dams. This Member has completed brush removal on 3 dams and seeded and mulched areas on four dams.

* Two Members are helping landowners survey and map sand deposits from the 1993 flood. They have helped twenty-one framers with this project.

* One Member is assisting the Moniteau Creek Watershed sponsors to implement a PL-566 flood and erosion control project. This Member has provided land treatment assistance and certification for five floodwater retarding dam sites and completed drainage area determinations for ninety-one watershed project dams.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

June 22, 1995

BACKGROUND BRIEFING FOR THE SECRETARY

From: Joel Berg, Director of National Service *JB*
Subject: YOUR CALL ABOUT AMERICORPS TO CONGRESSMAN LEWIS

Congressman Jerry Lewis (R-CA) is Chair of the Senate Appropriations Sub-Committee that funds the Corporation for National and Community Service. The Sub-Committee will soon be marking-up FY96 appropriations for AmeriCorps.

Lewis has not expressed specific hostility to the Federally-run aspect of AmeriCorps, probably because USDA has a very large and successful project in his District on the San Bernadino National Forest, which both the Deputy Secretary and myself have recently visited (see attached clips.) I understand that the Congressman is old friends with our Forest Supervisor on the San Bernadino, who is a huge supporter of his forest's AmeriCorps project. NRCS also has five AmeriCorps Members in Lewis' district.

However, Lewis has sometimes expressed general Republican objections to AmeriCorps. He believes we should not "pay people to volunteer," that non-profit groups should run service programs instead of government, and that the program is generally too costly. Some observers who know him believe that Lewis, who took certain liberal stands over the last few years, is trying to re-gain favor with the Speaker by opposing AmeriCorps.

Lewis has previously expressed his desire to "zero-out" AmeriCorps. After the President vetoed the Rescissions Bill, Lewis even implied publicly that he would further cut AmeriCorps just to retaliate against the President.

However, in recent days, his office has taken a more moderate position, hinting that Lewis would support simply maintaining the current level of AmeriCorps funding but opposing the large increase requested by the President.

You may want to stress the following points:

*** Lewis district has the largest single concentration in the country of USDA AmeriCorps Members, therefore it is in his interest to ask Senator Bond to drop the effort to prevent Federal agencies from directly running AmeriCorps projects. Both the FS and NRCS projects in his district are working extremely well, and the vast majority of Members of both programs are from his district.**

*** We will be glad to let Lewis take credit in the media for the renewal of the projects in his District --- which is expected soon --- as well as take credit for recruiting new Members. We will work with his office to inform them before we announce either project renewal or recruitment for next year.**

*** AmeriCorps demands personal responsibility and promotes work over welfare. 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 protecting those rights and aiding our own communities. Furthermore, AmeriCorps gives young people a tangible way to take charge of their own lives. Lastly, AmeriCorps is based on one fundamentally conservative idea --- if you don't work, you don't get a benefit.**



June 20, 1996

Dear Graduate of the First (1994 - 1995) Program Year of AmeriCorps/USDA:

I am writing to belatedly congratulate you on your success last year in having completed the first-ever year of AmeriCorps. You helped write an important new chapter in American history. You got things done, strengthened communities, expanding educational opportunity, and encouraged personal responsibility.

Enclosed is a certificate signed by Secretary Glickman to thank you for your service. I know this mailing is late, but --- as you learned the hard way when you received your AmeriCorps sweatshirt *after* winter ended --- better late than never!

Also enclosed is an annual report outlining the national accomplishments of the program in its first year of operation. You should be proud for the rest of your life for the role you played in making these achievements a reality.

Some highlights of what was accomplished through your energy, hard work, and commitment to public service:

- * 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 10,400 trees, made 42 recreation sites accessible for the disabled, restored 760 acres of fisheries habitat, and protected 67,483 acres of coastal land.

- * USDA AmeriCorps Members in nutrition and 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.

In total, USDA 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 future, there may be attempts by graduates of the program or others to organize an USDA AmeriCorps alumni group. If you wish for your name and address to be released to any potential future, nongovernmental alumni group focused solely on graduates of the USDA-sponsored portion of AmeriCorps, fill out the enclosed form and mail it back.

In inclosing please know that it was my great honor to meet --- and serve alongside --- so many of you this past year. I hope you keep in touch. Please do not to hesitate to contact me at work (202) 720-5746, fax # (202) 720-4614, or at home at (202) 387-8221. You can e-mail me at "j.berg@USDA.gov"

Most importantly, I hope you keep stay involved for the rest of your life in the movement to build a better nation through community service.

Sincerely,



Joel Berg

Director of National Service, USDA



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

USDA AMERICORPS ALUMNI GROUP

I agree to release the following information to any potential future, non-governmental, alumni group:

Name (signature): _____

Name (print): _____

Permanent Address: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

Work Phone Number: _____

Fax Number (if any): _____

E- mail Address (if any): _____



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

June 19, 1996

Mr. David Miliband
c/o Leader of the Opposition
House of Commons
London, SW1
United Kingdom

Dear David:

It was good meeting you at Matthew's wedding. I hope you have dried off from or day trip by now.

Per your request, I am sending you some information about the part of the AmeriCorps national service program which I manage --- the component sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

USDA's 1,200 AmeriCorps Members are only a fraction of the approximately 25,000 Members of the program. In fact, most AmeriCorps programs are not sponsored by Federal government agencies; rather, they are sponsored by state and local governments and by national and local non-profit organizations. Another difference between our program and the rest of AmeriCorps is that, while our portion of the program focuses narrowly on three areas ---- anti-hunger work, rural community development, and environmental protection --- the overall AmeriCorps program broadly addresses human, environmental public, safety, and educational needs. Nevertheless, the general conclusions reached in the enclosed report about our program should apply to most AmeriCorps programs.

I certainly believe that the UK would be able to craft an effective domestic service program of its own. Such a program could have some elements similar to AmeriCorps and domestic service programs of other nations, but would obviously have to be carefully crafted to meet the unique needs of the your nation.

Given that government in the UK generally provides a higher level of social and other services than government in the United States, you might want to target your national service program at one or two major national problems that are currently under-served by government. As is the case with AmeriCorps, the your enactment law could clearly specify that national service participants can not displace government employees not can they duplicate services currently performed by government.

I know that cost is an important issue for you so that you can ensure that your nation is able to financially afford any new program you create. One of the greatest costs for AmeriCorps is the post -secondary educational scholarship awarded to every participant that successfully completes the program. Given that post secondary education is already paid for by public funds in the UK, any national service program in the UK could be significantly cheaper per person than AmeriCorps.

One of the best ways for anyone to understand the full potential of a domestic national service program is to visit a service site, view the work being performed, and speak with participants, supervisors, and local community residents. I offer you or anyone else in your government a standing invitation to visit any of the USDA AmeriCorps sites now operating in 45 states.

Also, please feel free to call on me if you have any questions or require more information. I will be willing to provide as much technical assistance as is permissible under the laws and regulations of the United States that cover my current work for our government.

I can be reached at: Room 538-A, United States Department of Agriculture, 14th and Independence, SW, Washington, DC 20250, phone # 202-720-5746, fax # 202-720-4614, home phone # 202-387-8221, e-mail address: Jberg@USDA.gov.

Good luck with your endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joel Berg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joel Berg

Director of National Service

United States Department of Agriculture



UNITED
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OF AGRICULTURE

June 20, 1996

Dear Graduate of the First (1994 - 1995) Program Year of AmeriCorps/USDA:

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Some highlights of what was accomplished through your energy, hard work, and commitment to public service:

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In inclosing please know that it was my great honor to meet --- and serve alongside --- so many of you this past year. I hope you keep in touch. Please do not to hesitate to contact me at work (202) 720-5746, fax # (202) 720-4614, or at home at (202) 387-8221. You can e-mail me at "j.berg@USDA.gov"

Most importantly, I hope you keep stay involved for the rest of your life in the movement to build a better nation through community service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joel Berg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joel" and last name "Berg" clearly distinguishable.

Joel Berg

Director of National Service, USDA



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USDA AMERICORPS ALUMNI GROUP

I agree to release the following information to any potential future, non-governmental, alumni group:

Name (signature): _____

Name (print): _____

Permanent Address: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

Work Phone Number: _____

Fax Number (if any): _____

E- mail Address (if any): _____



June 14, 1996

To: Shawn Gilleylen, Office of Senator Kit Bond

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

Subject: **The Future Status of USDA AmeriCorps Projects**

Per our discussion today, I am enclosing detailed information about the USDA AmeriCorps program, including our annual report from the first year of the program and a description of ongoing projects in Missouri.

As you will read, AmeriCorps Members sponsored by USDA are *not* Federal bureaucrats directed from Washington to implement traditional government programs. Rather, USDA AmeriCorps Members are providing direct community service in projects planned and implemented at the grass-roots level by local communities to fill pressing neighborhood needs in the areas of rural development, the environment, and hunger.

Often, USDA projects are the *only* AmeriCorps projects serving rural areas, as in the example of our projects in Missouri working with farmers to help them improve the quality of their drinking water. Mike Mills of your Jefferson City office is familiar with this project.

As you know, the Corporation for National Service (CNS) will no longer be making grants of operating funds to Federal agencies. Given that such grants now constitute only a small portion of the overall USDA AmeriCorps budget, we would be able to continue to run our program without such grants.

We would very much like Senator Bond to support an arrangement in which USDA would no longer receive operating grants from CNS, but would continue to use the Department's own appropriated funds to support AmeriCorps projects related to those appropriations. Individual AmeriCorps Members in the USDA program would continue to receive educational awards funded by the Corporation, but no funds whatsoever would be transferred from CNS to USDA.

Please feel free to contact me at (202) 720-5746 if you have any additional questions or would like to be briefed at greater length on this issue.



UNITED
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OF AGRICULTURE

June 13, 1996

TO: MEMORANDUM FOR HANK OLTMAN, SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER,
AND MONICA HOLMAN, GRANTS OFFICER, CORPORATION FOR
NATIONAL SERVICE

FROM: JOEL BERG, USDA *JB*
DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL SERVICE

SUBJECT: Clarification of Disbursement of Corporation for National Service Grant
Funds Under Grant 94ADFDC047 (as amended)

This is to clarify the manner in which the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will disburse some of the funds provided to it under Corporation for National Service Grant 94ADFDC047 [Amendment 3]. In our proposal we identified that we would have two primary distributions of funds for the program year beginning October 1, 1995. The first distribution would be to our non-profit partners operating our anti-hunger programs. Individual budgets were submitted for each of these projects and approved by the Corporation. The second distribution, for the remainder of the money, would then be given to those USDA agencies sponsoring USDA AmeriCorps projects. This second method of distribution was to be a set amount per member. Given that this amount, which is approximately \$100 to \$200 dollars per member, represents only one or two percent of the total cost per member, using such a formula for disbursement was deemed to be the most equitable way to distribute the Corporation funds to the agencies. However, since there were delays in approving a final Federal budget for FY 1996, which impacted the start of some of our programs, USDA has not made a full distribution of money to its agencies. Approximately \$150,000 remains to be distributed to the agencies as their share of the Corporation funds granted to run the AmeriCorps projects. I wish to change the method of disbursement of these funds to maximize their impact and "purchasing power." While I do not believe this amends our grant because the funds have already been approved for USDA AmeriCorps projects by the Corporation and the recipients of the funds remains the same (USDA agencies), I want to inform of you of my intentions so as to be certain that you concur with my approach.

Instead of distributing the remaining \$150,000 by giving the each agency a set amount based on the number of members in their projects, I propose to ask each project to compete for the funds by identifying how they could use \$500 to \$1,000 per project site to expand and enhance their existing AmeriCorps project. In effect, each operating site (we have 368) would submit a one page request for a "mini-grant" of between \$500 to \$1,000 to buy supplies and materials, rent specialized tools, etc. to meet a critical need their AmeriCorps project has identified but for which there are no funds to meet the need. This process would accomplish three things:

1. The way or manner in which the funds would be used would be clearly identified because the site requesting the funds would have to be specific in their request. This ensures that we and the Corporation know exactly how the money is being spent.
2. The money will get to the field level and will be based on their priorities and not get lost in the larger budget at the agency's Washington headquarters.
3. While the amounts are small, this infusion of money could give several projects a shot-in-the-arm to energize their efforts through the end of the program year.
4. Funds would be widely disbursed. If all grants were the maximum of \$1,000, over 40% of our sites would be able to participate. If some grants were less than \$1,000 even more sites could participate.

To conclude, I would like to make the following points:

1. The money was already authorized and approved for use by USDA agencies for AmeriCorps projects. The money will still go to these agencies.
2. These are existing funds. No additional funds are required.
3. The only thing that changes is the method of distribution and the new method ensures that the money actually goes to support specific project needs and does not get lost in the agencies overall budgets.
4. The needs are determined by the individual project and not dictated by someone removed from the actual project site.

Unless you disagree with my approach, I intend to implement the disbursement strategy described above beginning the week of June 30, 1996. If you have any questions you can call me at (202) 720-5746.

Attachments



TO: All USDA AmeriCorps Sites

SUBJECT: Mini-Grants

FROM: Joel Berg, Director of National Service

DATE: 24 June June, 1996

The USDA Office of National Service is pleased to announce a one-time program of mini-grants for USDA AmeriCorps sites nationwide. The purpose of this program is to make modest sums of money available to projects which will have maximum impact on the community. Many times our office hears of projects which are lacking just a few resources which, if they were available, would allow the accomplishment of a great deal more. This program hopes to address that need.

The total amount of dollars available for this program are limited, so individual grants will be small in order to spread the benefit among the largest number of sites. The targeted range of dollar amounts will be those proposals **requesting \$250 - \$1,000**. The higher the amount of a request, the more detailed the justification should be. **All grants will be awarded on a competitive basis.** Proposals will be judged according to the criteria outlined on the application form.

The guidelines for the AmeriCorps Mini-Grant program are simple. Application should consist of no more than one to three paragraphs (**one page maximum**) which answer a few basic questions. The proposals **must not contain** activities that violate USDA or CNS prohibitions. It must be clear from your proposal that these funds **will be used by, and directly benefit or enhance, the established AmeriCorps project**. New community projects unrelated to the AmeriCorps program, however beneficial, will not be considered.

The application form for the USDA AmeriCorps Mini-Grant program is attached. To provide some guidance, some sample project proposals are attached. If you have questions about your proposal or the application process, please call your agency AmeriCorps representative. The completed application must be received **no later than July 12**. Please mail and/or fax the applications to:

AmeriCorps Mini-Grant Program
% Joel Berg
STOP 1320
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-1320

or Fax to: 202-720-4614

Thank you for your time and effort. We hope that this innovative program will provide some timely and much needed assistance to some very worthy projects.

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Use this page or any format of your choosing. 3 1/4" disks (any format) and hard copy are welcome.

Operating Site ID #

Your completed application must be received **no later than July 12**. Please mail and/or fax the applications to:

AmeriCorps Mini-Grant Program
% Joel Berg
STOP 1320
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-1320

or Fax to: 202-720-4614

June 10, 1996

To: Grady Forrer, Steve Carlson
From: Joel Berg
Subject: **Response to Latest Draft of Community Food Security Act R.F.P.**

1) While the statute certainly allows us to give grants for technical assistance providers, it is my personal view that we should not give grants solely for technical assistance. I believe the American people want concrete, measurable results --- not just giving more money to more groups who will then plan to help other groups. While we should certainly allow proposals that combine the provision of technical assistance with direct achievements in fighting hunger, I do not believe we should give money to any proposals in which technical assistance is the end in and of itself.

2) The section starting "expanded economic opportunities" should also include mention of "youth apprenticeship and school-to-work transition."

3) Rather than just vague references, I believe the R.F.P. should include request for concrete ways the projects can specifically ask for proposals that reduce the dependence of local citizens on existing Federal food assistance programs and aid citizens in leaving public assistance and achieving self-sufficiency.

4) The R.F.P. should provide far more specific ways --- and more rating points --- for proposals to include recovering and/or gleaning excess food, serving EZ/EC and Champion Communities, creating innovative public/private partnerships demonstrating community buy-in, reinventing government by making programs work better but cost less, utilizing Members of the AmeriCorps national service program, utilizing micro enterprise and/or assets development, utilizing job training, youth apprenticeship, and school-to-work transition projects, and utilizing non-compensated community volunteers. Rather than simply mentioning that these are initiatives that have the "potential to strengthen the impact and success of some community food projects," I believe proposals utilizing any or all of these should formally receive significant additional rating points. In addition, the R.F.P. and/or the accompanying application booklet should give examples of varied types of projects that would incorporate any or all of the initiatives.

- 5) If we want to demonstrate major community buy-in, prove we are serious in reinventing government by encouraging effective public-private partnerships, and significantly increase the number of hungry people that can be fed, then proposals should receive extra points for obtaining additional matching funds in excess of the 50% statutory requirement.
- 6) Given that community gardens can help significantly help reduce crime in neighborhoods, additional points should be given to proposals that combine anti-hunger strategies with violence prevention, crime control, community policing, and gang-reduction strategies.
- 7) The section on the EZ initiative should also mention the Vice-President, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary of H.U.D. This section should elaborate upon potential links to both current EZ/EC and Champion Communities and potential "round two" communities.
- 8) The reference to AmeriCorps should refer to participants in the programs as "AmeriCorps Members," not as "AmeriCorps volunteers."
- 9) Applicants should be required to provide any audits they have undergone in the last five years.
- 10) It is very easy to fudge "in kind contributions." I propose that at least 50% of the match (equaling 25% of the total cost of the project) be in non-federal cash, unless a proposal specifies why the area to be served has so few resources that a waiver of the match is necessary.
- 11) I would recommend lowering the smallest grant possible to \$10,000 and making that a hard number. Perhaps grants under \$50,000 could have a briefer and less cumbersome application and reporting process.
- 12) I do not think we should give awards for planning purposes only. I believe every project should be able to achieve at least some direct results in the first calendar year. We could open ourselves up to criticism if we give groups money just to plan how to later use more government money.
- 13) I believe that a standard benchmark form should be in the R.F.P and should be filled out by all applicants using the exact same procedures, so that all applications can be directly compared to each other on the same terms. Such a form could include such standard questions as "How many citizens will receive food? How many citizens will leave public assistance? How many pounds of food will be recovered? What percentage of citizens receiving nutrition information will take actual steps to improve their diets? How many new private sector jobs will be created? Etc. The USDA should then monitor this benchmarking with quarterly reports, site visits, meetings with community residents, etc. The contracted evaluation for the entire program should be secondary.
- 14) A detailed, line-by-line, budget worksheet should be included in the R.F.P. and included in each proposal.

15) I do not believe that the written proposal should be self-standing. Despite the time shortages, I think it would improve the process to have a panel interview finalist organizations. This interview could include negotiations about increasing or decreasing the size of the initial grant request.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

June 10, 1996

To: USDA National Service Staff

From: Joel Berg *JB*

Subject: **Office of Communications Policies Regarding AEP, EEO, and CR**

Attached are the new policies, which I received today, regarding the Office of Communications' commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity, Civil Rights, and Affirmative Employment.

I fully support all the objectives of these policies and expect everyone on the staff to take every step legally possible to implement them.

In addition to our commitment to a diverse staff and workforce, we continue to have an even broader commitment to meet both the letter and the spirit of the National and Community Service Act of 1993 by making a comprehensive national effort to recruit and select AmeriCorps Members that are fully diverse by race, gender, age, physical ability, sexual orientation, economic background, national origin, religion, educational background, and physical ability.



June 4, 1996

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

ANNUAL POLICY STATEMENT

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO) AND CIVIL RIGHTS (CR)

The Office of Communications (OC) is fully committed to providing equal employment opportunity to all employees. All employees shall be afforded equal opportunity for advancement to their maximum potential. Employees shall not be discriminated against on the basis of race, sex, age, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or non-disqualifying physical or mental handicap.

As Federal employees, we are sworn to maintain high standards of ethics and conduct while upholding the Constitution and the laws of the Nation. This obligation includes upholding all laws concerning equal employment opportunity and civil rights.

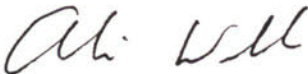
It is the policy of the Office of Communications that all discrimination in employment and delivery of services is prohibited. OC is committed to diversifying its work force; ensuring equal opportunity; respecting the civil rights of all employees, clients, and customers; and creating a work environment that is free of discrimination and harassment, while accommodating the special needs of persons with disabilities.

All executives, managers, supervisors, employees, and cooperators of OC are fully expected to comply with the Secretary's EEO and Civil Rights Policy Statement and the principles in this statement. This also includes adopting a positive approach which reflects the Department's goal to resolve problems and complaints through early intervention. **If, after careful comprehensive review, any employee is found to have mismanaged rules and regulations in a manner which results in a finding of discrimination, he or she will be disciplined appropriately.**

All executives, managers, and supervisors shall be held accountable for meeting equal employment opportunity goals and objectives, and their performance in this area shall be included within the applicable performance appraisal system. Demonstrated performance in meeting EEO objectives will be a criteria for advancement within managerial and supervisory positions.

I further expect each OC executive, manager, and supervisor to manage their EEO/CR program in cooperation with the OC EEO resources, emphasizing proactive resolution of EEO/CR complaints, complaint prevention strategies, and work force diversity.

I will use all and every means of evaluation to monitor and measure the implementation of the principles in this statement. Therefore, each employee at every level will be held accountable for his or her conduct and performance, as a public servant, in equal opportunity and civil rights.


ALI WEBB
Director



June 6, 1996

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

AFFIRMATIVE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (AEP)

POLICY STATEMENT

The Office of Communications (OC) is fully committed to the implementation of a strong Affirmative Employment Program (AEP). It is the policy of the OC to provide equal opportunity in employment for all persons in its work force or being recruited for its work force and to prohibit discrimination in all aspects of its personnel policies, program practices and operations, and in all its working conditions and relationships with employees and applicants for employment. I strongly promote the full realization of equal opportunity in employment through continuing programs of affirmative employment at every management level within the OC.

We are developing a strong chain of communication and coordination among all levels of management in the OC to reach and achieve the objectives of our AEP. To this end, all executives, managers, and supervisors are expected to take an active, ongoing part in promoting and implementing the plan. If all levels of supervision undertake the responsibility of affirmative employment with the same leadership and zeal as other organizational responsibilities, the result should be a system of equal opportunity as required by law.

I expect and demand full support from each executive, manager, and supervisor in meeting the objectives of OC's AEP. Periodic evaluations will be made to measure AEP accomplishments, and where imbalances or lack of progress are evident, necessary measures will be taken to remedy the problem.

ALI WEBB
Director

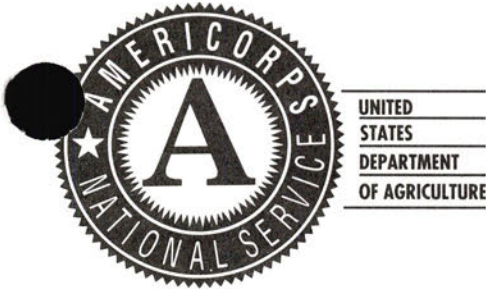
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May

Divider Title: _____



May 15, 1996

To: Harris Wofford, CNS

From: Joel Berg, USDA *JB*

Subject: **USDA AmeriCorps Projects in Missouri**

For your testimony before Senator Bond's committee, it might be helpful for you to cite USDA AmeriCorps projects in Missouri. USDA sponsored 11 full-time Members last year, is sponsoring 5 full-time Members this year, and will be sponsoring 5 additional Members this summer in a special project focused on transferring excess food to hungry people. Next week I am visiting our sites in Missouri and am scheduled to meet with Senator Bond's state staff to discuss our projects there.

Last Year (1984-1985) 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.

This Year (1985-1986) Program Year

As of the second quarter ending March 31, the five AmeriCorps Members had performed "Farm-a-Syst" water quality evaluations for 57 farm families, 74% 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 53 students and 196 adults, of whom 70% and 67%, respectively, later demonstrated improved knowledge of conservation issues.

This Summer ("Summer of Gleaning" Initiative)

As part of Secretary Glickman's personal initiative to increase the nation's commitment to recovering excess food for delivery to hungry citizens, five AmeriCorps Members will serve this summer in a project near Kansas City that is aimed at serving 400 low-income, primarily elderly, citizens.

DRAFT



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

May 9, 1996

**TO: CHERYL TATES-MACIAS,
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**FROM: JOEL BERG
DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL SERVICE**

**SUBJECT: NATIONAL KICK-OFF EVENT
AMERICORPS SUMMER OF GLEANING AND FOOD RESCUE**

As requested, listed below are several suggestions for the subject event, to be held in conjunction with the Secretary's trip to Chicago on June 7-8, 1996. As you can see, some of these suggestions overlap to some degree, and are listed in descending order of preference (from our perspective).

1. **AmeriCorps Members and the Secretary serve breakfast at a shelter or other hot meal site, and the Secretary swears in the Members there. THEN. . . .**
2. **The Secretary includes in his remarks to Second Harvest an announcement of how he spent his morning, and further announces that the other programs across the country are officially beginning that week.**
3. **The Secretary conducts a separate swearing-in activity, at a prominent location in the city, either before or after the Second Harvest speech. (If before, see #2 above).**
4. **The Secretary swears in the Members as part of his presentation at the Second Harvest conference.**

There will be up to 30 USDA/AmeriCorps Members at whichever of the Chicago-based events is selected, all of whom are working specifically with the food rescue and gleaning activities, both in Chicago proper (NRCS) and in the more rural central and southern areas of Illinois (FSA). In fact, the seven FSA Members are working with Harvesting Hope, USDA's initial AmeriCorps farm-based gleaning project; this project has essentially set the standard for the 17 new efforts that the Secretary announced in Minneapolis on April 19, plus the newest projects in Atlanta and Chicago.

We understand that the Secretary will probably be extremely busy on Friday, June 7, so all of the proposals listed anticipate an event for the following day (Saturday, June 8). We have tried to take into account the nature of the Second Harvest conference as well as what we believe would be the most worthwhile use of the Secretary's time. However, most of them can be adapted to fit into the Friday schedule of events if preferred or necessary. Also, because Chicago is one of HUD's officially designated Empowerment Zones, we would suggest that our EZ/EC counterparts at HUD be invited to attend, and possibly participate in, the event that is selected.

If none of these suggestions is appropriate or workable, please notify Donna Hines, and she will be happy to work with you to develop and implement alternative ideas. She should also be contacted (690-0693) if any clarification or additional information is needed on the above proposals.

May 1, 1995

To: Greg Frazier, Kim Schnoor

From: Joel Berg

Subject: **AmeriCorps and the Farm Bill**

As we discussed, the Administration's Farm Bill proposal could include a section that would create a USDA/AmeriCorps Foundation to raise money from private and non-profit sources for our national service programs. Given that so many of our most successful AmeriCorps projects are focused on rural development, the foundation would probably be most appropriate under the "Rural Development" title of the bill.

This Foundation would be similar in structure and legal status to the National Forest Foundation, the National Parks Foundation, and the Friends of the National Arboretum --- which are already chartered by Congress. The Foundation would receive minimal seed money from USDA and would quickly become self-sustaining and independent. The Foundation's board members, who would be appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture, would hire an Executive Director, who would work for the Foundation and not be a Federal employee. The Secretary of Agriculture and/or the USDA Director of National Service could service as ex-officio, non-voting, members of the Foundation board.

For both legal and ethical reasons, no one associated with the USDA AmeriCorps program can solicit funds from "prohibited sources" whom we regulate. Yet many agribusinesses, timber companies, and educational organizations would likely contribute to the Foundation in order to receive tax deductions, obtain favorable publicity, and generally improve the economies of rural areas in which they are located. The funds raised could be then used to expand the AmeriCorps USDA program --- or to fund specific items such as providing all AmeriCorps sites with computers and then connecting them to the Internet.

This proposal should be popular even among Republican members of Congress who oppose AmeriCorps, since it is based on the conservative notion that --- as much as possible --- programs such as national service should be funded with private, not public, funds. Still, there are some conservatives who will oppose this provision simply to hamper the success of a program so closely affiliated with the President.

I have already discussed this idea with Eli Segal's office and they are interested in discussing it further. I will work with the Office of General Counsel to write draft language.

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April

Divider Title: _____



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

April 25, 1996

INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

To: The Deputy Secretary, Under and Assistant Secretaries

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

Subject: **Sites for "Summer of Gleaning and Food Rescue" AmeriCorps Projects**

As you know, USDA will be sponsoring special AmeriCorps projects this summer focused on gleaning and perishable food rescue. The strong support provided by both yourself and your agencies is making these projects possible.

The summer program will most likely be formally launched nationwide on June 7. It would be greatly appreciated if you could visit a project on that date or any projects in the weeks that follow.

We will also likely sponsor a "National Day of Gleaning and Food Rescue" sometime in September; we will provide the exact date and solicit your involvement once we clarify the details.

Below is the list of the summer sites --- broken down by state ---- including the USDA agency that is the prime sponsor for each site, the counties served, and congressional districts in which the projects will be providing service:

Arizona

Farm Service Agency
Apache County
Rep. J.D. Hayworth (R-6)

California

Rural Development
Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Kings Counties
Rep. Sam Farr (D- 17)
Rep. Calvin Dooley (D 20)

Colorado

Farm Service Agency

La Plata County

Rep. Scott McInnis (R-3)

Connecticut

Rural Development

State-wide (Hartford, Tolland, Windham, New London, Middlesex, Litchfield, and Fairfield Counties)

Rep. Barbara Kennelly (D-1)

Rep. Sam Gejdenson (D-2)

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-3)

Rep. Christopher Shays (R-4)

Rep. Gary Franks (R-5)

Rep. Nancy Johnson (R-6)

Illinois

Farm Service Agency

Gallatin, St. Clair, Mason, and Alexander Counties

Rep. Jerry Costello (D-12)

Rep. Ray LaHood (R-18)

Rep. Glen Poshard (D-19)

Indiana

Rural Development

Benton, Blackford, Boone, Carroll, Cass, Clay, Clinton, Delaware, Fountain, Grant, Greene, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Henry, Howard, Jay, Johnson, Knox, Madison, Marion, Miami, Montgomery, Morgan, Parks, Putnam, Randolph, Sullivan, Tippecanoe, Tipton, Vermilion, Vigo, Wabash, Warren, and White Counties

Rep. David McIntosh (R-2)

Rep. Mark Edward Souder (R-4)

Rep. Steve Buyer (R-5)

Rep. Dan Burton (R-6)

Rep. John Myers (R-7)

Rep. John Hostettler (R-8)

Rep. Andy Jacobs (R-10)

Farm Services Agency

Vanderburgh County, Indiana

Rep. John Hostettler (R-8)

Iowa

Farm Service Agency
Polk County
Rep. Greg Ganske (R-4)

Kentucky

Rural Development
Laurel, Whitney, Knox, Wayne, Clinton, Jackson, McCreary, Rockcastle, Clay, Bell, Harlan,
Pulaski, Lincoln, Casey
Rep. Edward Whitfield (R-1)
Rep. Harold Rogers (R-5)

Maryland

Farm Service Agency
Baltimore City and County
Rep. Elijah Cummings (D- 7)

Michigan

Farm Service Agency
Clinton, Eaton, Ingham, Clare, Gratiot, Midland, and Shiawassee Counties
Rep. Dave Camp (R-4)
Rep. Nick Smith (R-7)
Rep. Dick Chrysler (R-8)

Mississippi

Rural Development
Bolivar, Holmes, Humphreys, Leflore, Sunflower, Washington, Quitman, Tallahatchie, Madison,
Sharkey, Issaquena, Claiborne, Jefferson, Copiah, Lincoln, and Franklin Counties
Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-2)
Rep. Mike Parker--District (D-4)

Missouri

Farm Service Agency
Rep. Ike Skelton (D-4)
Rep. Karen McCarthy (D-5)
Rep. Pat Danner (D-6)

New Jersey

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Mercer, Middlesex, Somerset, and Hunterdon Counties

Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-6)

Rep. Bob Franks (R-7)

Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-11)

Rep. Dick Zimmer (R-12)

Rep. Robert Menendez (D-13)

New Mexico

Farm Service Agency

and Rural Development

San Juan, Bernilillo, Valancia, Torrence, and Sandoval Counties

Rep. Steven Schiff (R-1)

Rep. Bill Richardson (D-3)

Oregon

Rural Development

Marion, Polk, Yamhill, Benton, Multnomah, Lane, Lin, Umatilla, Morrow, and Malheur Counties

Rep. Elizabeth Furse (D-1)

Rep. Wes Cooley (R-2)

Congressional District 3 vacant until special election

Rep. Peter DeFazio (D- 4)

Rep. Jim Bunn- District (R-5)

Pennsylvania

Rural Development

Fayette County

Rep. John Murtha (D-12)

Rep. Frank Mascara (D-20)

Rhode Island

Farm Services Agency

State-wide (Bristol, Newport, Kent, Providence, and Washington Counties)

Rep. Patrick Kennedy (D-1)

Rep. Jack Reed (D-2)

Texas

Rural Development

Brooks, Staff, Hidlago, Willacy, and Cameron Counties

Rep. Kika de la Garza (D-15)

Rep. Henry Bonilla (R-23)

Rep. Solomon Ortiz (D-27)

Rep. Frank Tejeda (D-28)

Utah

Farm Service Agency

San Juan County

Rep. Bill Orton (D-3)

Washington

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Pierce and Yakima County

Rep. Richard Hastings (R-4)

Rep. Norm Dicks (R-6)

Rep. Jennifer Dunn (R-8)

Rep. Randy Tate (D-9)



April 12, 1996

To: Paul Johnson, Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service

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

Subject: Decision Memorandum on Regional Facilitators

I have just received a copy of the attached March 20 decision memorandum asking Under Secretary Lyons to oppose the AmeriCorps facilitator positions. I was unaware that the memorandum existed until yesterday, when your staff learned that I would be meeting with Tom Hebert on this and related matters.

Unfortunately, the memorandum contains a number of inaccurate or misleading statements that were provided to you by your staff.

1) The memorandum implies that the Forest Service opposes the facilitators, when, in fact, the Forest Service supports the facilitators. The only original hesitation from the Forest Service was over whether the Forest Service should supply and pay for any of the facilitators, not over whether the positions should exist. The current Forest Service AmeriCorps Coordinator --- as well as many Forest Service staff with whom I have visited in the field --- strongly support the position and personally attest to how the facilitators have greatly improved all USDA AmeriCorps projects. In the one case in which there was greatest conflict between the facilitator and the NRCS staff --- in Minnesota --- the Forest Service field staff agreed with the facilitator and stated that the NRCS staff had acted improperly.

2) The memorandum implies that NRCS never agreed to the facilitators and states that "it was unclear what the role of facilitators would be." This is untrue. Attached are the two pages from the USDA AmeriCorps manual --- which were approved and subsequently printed by NRCS --- which specifically provide a flow chart and narrative representing the duties of the facilitators. Please also note my November 29, 1994 memo --- which was approved personally by Lloyd Wright --- further clarifying the duties of the facilitators.

3) The memorandum states that "only one State has expressed this arrangement as beneficial." This is also incorrect. Throughout my site visits across the country, many line NRCS staff involved in AmeriCorps have attested to the benefits provided by the facilitators. Please note the attached letter from the State Conservationist in Kansas to a facilitator, stating that "Your help in recruiting and arranging details for initial program implementation has been invaluable. In fact, we could not have done it without you."

4) The memorandum incorrectly states that the facilitators are full-time jobs costing taxpayers \$1.25 million. In fact, few of the facilitators are working on AmeriCorps full-time --- most only spend between 5%-35% of their time on AmeriCorps; therefore, the true cost to taxpayers is, at most, a few hundred thousand dollars.

5) The memorandum states that the facilitators have provided "micromangement." In truth, the facilitators have reported serious, sustained -- and often uncorrected problems --- with NRCS AmeriCorps sites, as well as problems with RECD, FCS, and FS sites. However, while the other agencies found this constructive criticism to be helpful to their efforts at continuous improvement of their sites, some in NRCS responded by "blaming the messenger" instead of attempting to resolve the problems.

6) The memorandum implies that the Corporation for National and Community Service finds the facilitators unnecessary. In fact, as you know from your meeting with Meg Maguire, the Corporation is very concerned that we have too little, not too much, structural support for many NRCS AmeriCorps projects. Please note the letter signed by both Meg Maguire and myself outlining joint activities for the facilitators and the Corporation's state directors. While the Corporation will not take a stand on the internal issue of whether the facilitators exist, the Corporation has continuously expressed the need for the functions of the facilitators to be carried out. The fact is that currently, many NRCS project managers do not receive the AmeriCorps information they need from the NRCS Washington office. Both the Corporation and I agree that is absolutely critical to improve the two-way flow of information between AmeriCorps Members, their local project managers, the state contacts, and Washington. My November 29, 1994 memo outlines the specific ways that the facilitators are improving that flow of information. In fact, many of your field staff have told me directly that they get their best information from the facilitators, not from the NRCS Washington office. Thus, the decision memorandum never addresses the basic issue: if the facilitators were eliminated, who would perform their duties?

7) The memorandum also implies that the facilitator reports are secret reports given only to me; that is also false --- I provide copies of the reports each week to every agency. In addition, as clarified in my November memorandum, all the reports are prepared collaboratively by all the agencies involved.

I do not want to seem confrontational with your staff, but I believe you deserve to know that you received misleading information, which easily could have been corrected had the memorandum been shared with me before it was presented to you. If you have any additional questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at any time. I am fully confident that, working together, we can promote a "Team USDA" approach to collaboratively managing AmeriCorps that also respects the unique structures of each USDA agency.

CC: Tom Weber, Lloyd Wright



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Soil
Conservation
Service

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10 (7-90)

FAX TRANSMITTAL

of pages **4**

To: Joel Berg	From: Paula Jorao
Dept./Agency	Phone # 720-1853
Fax # 720-4614	Fax # 690-0639
NSN 7540-01-317-7288 5010-101 GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION	

**DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR JAMES R. LYONS, UNDER SECRETARY
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT**

FROM: Paul W. Johnson
Chief
Natural Resources Conservation Service

MAR 20 1995

SUBJECT: AmeriCorps Program Delivery and Facilitator Positions

ISSUE:

The existing facilitator positions of the AmeriCorps projects of the NRCS are not needed and are not considered a wise use of existing resources.

DISCUSSION:

The existence of 25 USDA AmeriCorps facilitators has created both micromanagement of the program and conflict within USDA. On-site instructions are being provided from two directions: (1) through the facilitators and (2) through the NRCS line and staff structure.

In FY 94, NRCS prepared for full involvement in the USDA AmeriCorps program. We planned to implement AmeriCorps through a structure that utilizes the agency's existing delivery system. This delivery system was offered as one of the strengths of NRCS in carrying out community service work. We also expressed the importance of integrating AmeriCorps into the operations of USDA agencies as a means of institutionalizing this program.

Joel Berg, Director for National Service, USDA, proposed that facilitators be included in the structure for implementing AmeriCorps. This proposal was met with resistance from both NRCS and the Forest Service. We were concerned that we could not run a project with two people providing directions. Both agencies decided not to detail employees to this assignment. With reorganization and downsizing, we decided we had sufficient resources committed to AmeriCorps, and that the facilitators were not really needed. As this issue was discussed, it was unclear what the role of facilitators would be. It was also pointed out that the proposed role could result in conflicts, and that these positions should not be used to go around the chain of command of the agencies that had accepted the responsibility for funding and administering AmeriCorps members and project sites.



The Soil Conservation Service
is an agency of the
Department of Agriculture

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The Corporation for National and Community Service approved 1200 slots for the proposed USDA AmeriCorps programs. The 1200 slots were allocated to agencies as follows:

571	NRCS	
334	FS	
66	RDA	
66	FmHA	
150	FNS	
13	CFSA	(CFSA did not host any of the 1200 slots.)

Each participating State Conservationist has designated an AmeriCorps project director to coordinate the activities in the State and to be the point of contact with the national NRCS office. Each project site has an AmeriCorps project manager. In most cases, they are District Conservationists or RC&D coordinators. NRCS also has facilitators trained in Total Quality Management, teambuilding and problem solving and the technical, administrative, and public information staff support.

FACILITATORS

In August 1994, a group of ten facilitators were assembled to provide support in the midwest flood States. This number has since increased to 25 facilitators nationwide. Twenty-three of the facilitators are CFSA employees. Only one State has expressed this arrangement as beneficial. We have received complaints from some States due to conflicts in perceived authorities. Although most States have established a working relationship, most of the NRCS employees have expressed a preference for eliminating the facilitator position.

If we look at it in terms of cost, on the conservative side, 25 facilitators at an average cost for GS-11 at \$50,000 each makes this an additional program cost of \$1,250,000. This is the equivalent of 78 AmeriCorps Rural Development members or 119 Public Lands and Environment Corps members. It has been stated that one objective of the AmeriCorps program is to avoid building another bureaucracy. The Corporation for National and Community Service has been given the flexibility to apply AmeriCorps to a wide range of organizational settings. This is a USDA choice, not a requirement of the program.

Micromanagement has been the result of this arrangement. We do not need an additional 25 people to manage the program. With the scrutiny this program is receiving and will continue to receive, we need to deliver AmeriCorps in a cost-effective manner. The presence of facilitators also creates a potential weakness in that agencies need to be fully capable of managing AmeriCorps, should the level of support change from the USDA office.

The network of facilitators became a serious issue around November 1994, when it was exposed that the facilitators had been asked to submit weekly reports to the USDA Director for National

Service. These reports were being compiled without the input of NRCS and were not being shared with NRCS. It was assumed that the facilitators were being used as a parallel structure for the AmeriCorps program to be managed from the USDA office rather than managed fully through the agency's management system.

It is important to recognize where we are on the learning curve during this start up phase in the AmeriCorps program. In the first year, we have gone from a few people with little knowledge of AmeriCorps, to employees in 35 States and the national office with experience in designing and managing AmeriCorps projects. The needs in the second year of the program are not the same as they were for the first year. This capability needs to be factored into the decision about whether or not facilitators are needed. All agencies involved should be engaged in a process of evaluation and program improvement.

We are making the following improvements to strengthen the NRCS participation in AmeriCorps.

1. The NRCS Community Assistance and Resource Development Division will work with the Quality Management and Program Evaluation Division to develop a plan for the evaluation and improvement of NRCS AmeriCorps projects.
2. Applications from State offices to participate in AmeriCorps are to be submitted with proposed sites for teams of AmeriCorps members with no less than five members located together. This policy helps us to better meet the Corporation's requirement for AmeriCorps members support and national program identity.
3. Each AmeriCorps team, including the Public Lands and Environmental Corps and the Rural Development Corps, will have a team leader who is an AmeriCorps member. We are currently working with employees in State and field offices who are managing AmeriCorps projects to determine the skills needed for the team to be effective. The NRCS national Employee Development Staff is working with us to design leadership training. We will use distant learning to deliver some of this training to the States through satellite downlink.
4. Consistent with the six newly organized NRCS regions, we will work with our Regional Conservationists to have persons designated as Regional AmeriCorps Coordinators. They will have experience with AmeriCorps and will function to improve communication, coordination, and monitoring at the local level.

OPTIONS:

1. Eliminate all facilitators and allow agencies to be responsible for full implementation at the State and or local level. Self-directed teams can be established locally to facilitate interagency coordination and support for AmeriCorps projects or other methods as agreed to by the agencies involved.

2. Make no changes to the current USDA structure for AmeriCorps.

RECOMMENDATION:

Establish self-directed teams during FY 95 and completely eliminate facilitators by the start up of FY 96 projects, which is scheduled for September 1995.

DECISION BY THE UNDER SECRETARY:

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

Discuss with me _____

Date _____

Reviewed by _____

Regional Facilitators

Facilitators are responsible for

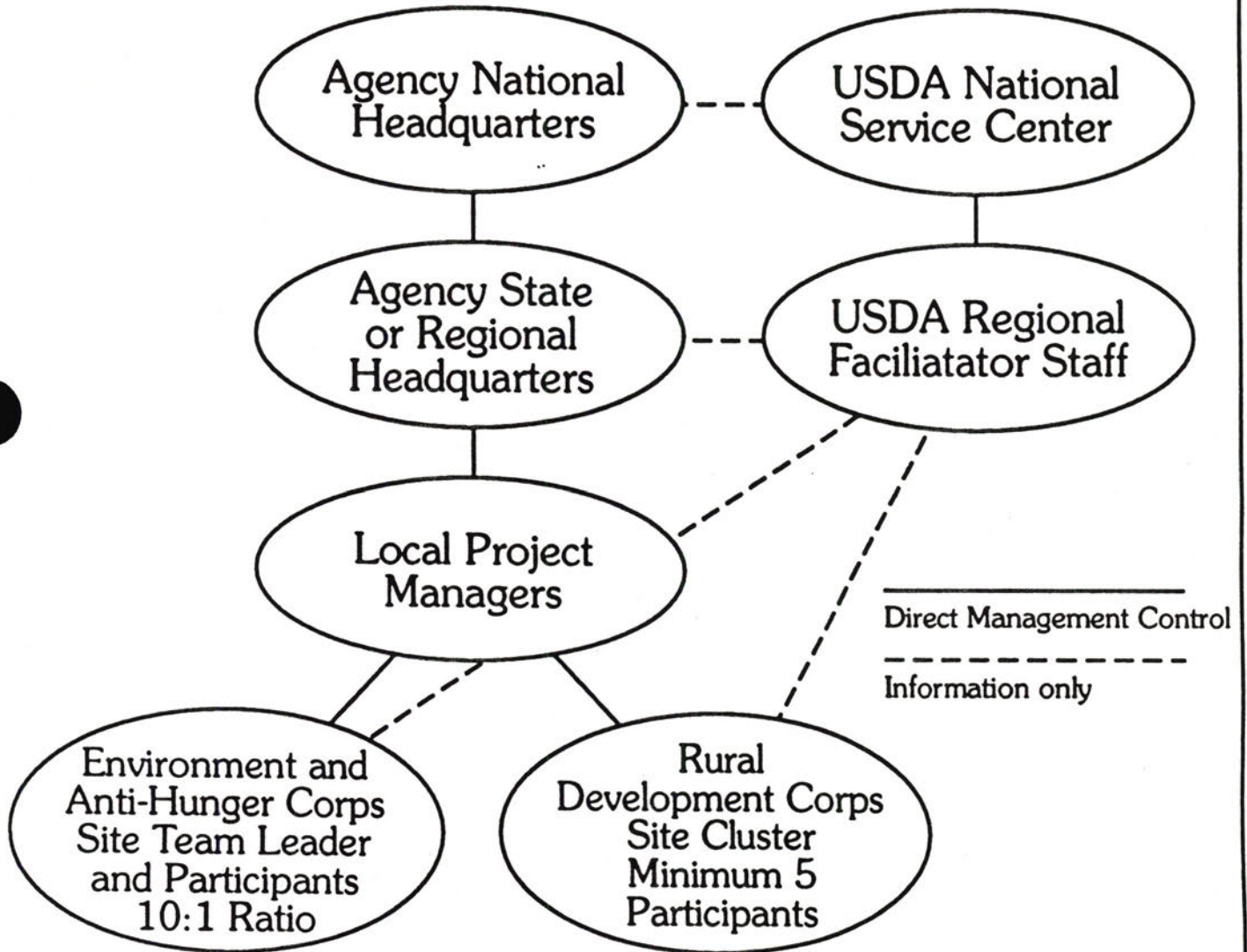
- planning and managing regional training and orientation programs,
- planning and developing regional communications activities,
- helping to ensure USDA/AmeriCorps members establish a national identity,
- providing coordination with Anti-Hunger and Public Lands and Environment Corps where appropriate,
- providing leadership in developing Internet capabilities,
- participating in identifying and recommending methods and criteria to improve USDA/AmeriCorps procedures,
- participating in planning for future USDA/AmeriCorps activities and projects, and
- consulting with state and/or regional offices and facilitating cluster meetings.

Members

Members are responsible for

- completion of assigned work plan and tasks;
- coordinating with designated community leaders; and
- attending training and AmeriCorps meetings as scheduled.

Team USDA AmeriCorps—Management Structure
Public Lands and Environment Corps
Rural Development Corps
Anti-Hunger Corps





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

November 29, 1994

To: USDA/AmeriCorps Project Managers and Regional Facilitators

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

Subject: Weekly Duties for AmeriCorps Regional Facilitators

Many project managers and facilitators have asked for clarification of the specific duties of facilitators. While the responsibilities are listed on page 31 of the USDA/AmeriCorps Operations Manual, this memorandum specifies concrete tasks that the facilitators should complete each week:

1) Help plan and execute the equivalent of a day a week in which all Members of each Rural Development Team Cluster physically get-together for training, project planning, critical reflection, or a joint service project. If once per week is too rigid, perhaps every other week they can get together for two days in a row. If weather emergencies or other rare circumstances occur that prevent a weekly meeting in person, you should schedule a conference call between the members.

2) Implement at least one "spirit building" activity --- in addition to the cluster meeting --- in at least one site weekly in the region. Some suggested activities are provided in the attached memorandum "A Dozen Things You Can Do To Build the 'AmeriCorps Spirit'."

3) Prepare a weekly report for the region that is shared with all the agencies and with myself. These reports should be prepared in consultation with all the agencies involved. The reports will be due to my office, at fax # (202) 720-4614, by COB each Thursday. These regional reports will be then compiled by my office into a weekly national newsletter sent to the Secretary's office, other key USDA policy-makers, and the Corporation for National and Community Service. This newsletter report will be made available each Friday to Members and staff via USDA computer bulletin board, Internet, and in paper copies. The reports should be general summaries of weekly highlights in each region and do not need to include every single item from every single site. In most cases, the information can be communicated from the project managers to the facilitators in brief phone conversations and should require little or no weekly paperwork. The reports should relate major developments, if they occur that week, in any of these areas:

- A) Progress towards meeting community service objectives
- B) Any major staff, structural, or service changes made
- C) List of any new members joining or quitting
- D) Primary accomplishments of our projects
- E) Primary challenges or problems at our sites
- F) Primary training, technical assistance, and equipment needs
- G) Copies of media coverage
- H) Other documentation such as photos or thank-you letters
- I) Other data occasionally requested -- such as computer inventory
- F) Plans for future team-building activities
- G) Recommendations for improving our programs
- H) Feedback from AmeriCorps Members

Again, I stress that every report does not need to have every one of the above items from any or all sites. Most reports should be, at most, two or three pages long for the entire region.

4) Visit with staff, Members, and project sponsors at service sites. Each state facilitator should generally visit one site each week, and every site at least once a month. Every regional facilitator should generally visit at least two states a month, and visit every site in the region at least four times in the year. Facilitators should spend significant blocks of time working side-by-side on the field with AmeriCorps Members, not just meeting with them in offices.

5) Work with agency public affairs personnel to set-up media events and site visits by elected officials. However, no USDA staff should speak with any members of the media before they are thoroughly trained on the philosophy and details of all our programs.

6) After consulting with agencies about their prior contacts, the facilitators should serve as the principle contacts with both the executive directors of state commissions on national service and the state staff of the Corporation for National and Community Service. It is critical that we keep both entities in each state apprised of our activities. (Contact names will be provided on request.)

7) Once computer needs are clarified in the next two weeks, facilitators will help implement our Internet communications. (Details will be provided soon).

Please also note that we want to continue building trust, respect, and cooperation between project managers and facilitators. Thus, no project manager or facilitator should exclude the other from any AmeriCorps meetings. Additionally, any reports prepared for Washington offices should be made available to all USDA agencies involved.



USDA/AmeriCorps
Soil Conservation Service
760 South Broadway
Salina, KS 67401-4642
(913) 823-4500
FAX (913) 823-4540

October 20, 1994

Mr. James D. Meisenheimer
AmeriCorps Facilitator
Agricultural Stabilization and
Conservation Service
1117 1/2 West U.S. Highway 24
Osborne, Kansas 67473

Dear Jim:

Jim, I want to thank you for your special efforts in getting the Kansas/USDA AmeriCorps projects up and running. Stepping in at the last moment to serve as emcee at the Kanopolis Lake kickoff is only one example of the special effort and excellent manner of how you have assisted the USDA Team in implementing the AmeriCorps program in Kansas.

Your help in recruiting and arranging details for initial program implementation has been invaluable. In fact, we could not have done it without you.

We appreciate you very much, Jim. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'James N. Habiger'.

James N. Habiger
State Conservationist

cc:

Adrian Polansky, State Executive Director, ASCS, Manhattan, KS
Richard Herrman, District Director, ASCS, LaCrosse, KS
Paula Jones, AmeriCorps Program Manager, Community Assistance and Resource
Development Division, Washington, DC
Joel Berg, USDA, Washington, DC
Charles Simms, ASCS, Washington, DC



The Soil Conservation Service
is an agency of the
United States Department of Agriculture

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



February 24, 1995

AmeriCorps National Service

CORPORATION

FOR NATIONAL

SERVICE

To: USDA AmeriCorps Regional Facilitators
CNS State Directors

From: Meg Maguire, Senior Program Officer, National Directs, CNS
Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA *JB*

Subject: Partnership to Strengthen USDA Rural Program

This memorandum is to establish a working relationship between USDA AmeriCorps Rural Programs and the Corporation for National Service (CNS) state offices in 35 states. We have worked closely with Mal Coles to insure that this partnership builds on the needs and strengths of both USDA and CNS.

The USDA AmeriCorps Rural Program, representing 1200 AmeriCorps Members serving in over 200 sites in 38 states and the District of Columbia, is the largest joint effort involving CNS and another federal agency. The Program has three components -- Anti-Hunger and Empowerment, Public Lands and Environment, and Rural Development.

Anti-Hunger and Public Lands/Environment Members typically operate in teams of ten or more; Rural Development AmeriCorps Members meet regularly in clusters of at least five, but on a daily basis they often serve alone in remote areas. Rural Development Program activities include boosting local economies by developing economic development plans, finding alternative uses for resource products, improving rural housing, protecting watersheds, promoting heritage tourism, preserving cultural and historic resources, and advancing sustainable agriculture.

Given the capacity of Corporation State Offices to support development and enhancement of service programs, we believe that a partnership between the USDA Rural Development and CNS field staff will strengthen the entire AmeriCorps Program. Attached please find:

- 1) Roster of 25 USDA regional facilitators for 30 states (sent only to CNS)
- 2) Roster of the Directors of the CNS State Offices (sent only to USDA)
- 3) List and map of counties in which USDA AmeriCorps Members from all 3 programs are located

1201 New York Avenue,
Washington, DC 20525
Telephone 202-606-5000

Getting Things Done.
AmeriCorps, National Service
Learn and Serve America
National Senior Service

We strongly encourage you to contact each other, but we have no specific formula for action. Activities might include:

- An initial meeting to discuss USDA Rural Development program needs and to explore opportunities to link with other CNS-sponsored efforts, including AmeriCorps* VISTA and National Senior Service Corps projects;
- A limited number of site visits to provide technical assistance or to familiarize CNS State staff with USDA programs, especially where these visits dovetail with other CNS in-state travel;
- Joint training and technical assistance;
- Peer exchange between AmeriCorps* VISTA and USDA AmeriCorps* Members; and
- Review and refinement of field program design incorporating both the Principles of High Quality Programs (previously distributed to all CNS offices) and previous experience with VISTA rural programming.

As we capitalize on the tremendous knowledge and resources of our field offices, we welcome your observations about the results of the new partnership. In late June, we will assess this joint effort. We will also keep you posted about particularly effective strategies as they develop.

You do not need to report to us on all that you are doing, but feel free to call us with any questions or comments.

Meg Maguire - (202) 606-5000 - x441
Joel Berg - (202) 720-6350

We look forward to working with you to realize the full potential of the USDA AmeriCorps program for rural America.

cc. Shirley Sagawa
Diana R. Algra
Mal Coles
Hank Oltmann



April 11, 1996

To: Tom Hebert

From: Joel Berg *JB*

Subject: Background Documents for Our Meeting

I look forward to meeting with you on Thursday to discuss media and other issues regarding the NRCS AmeriCorps program. As background to that meeting, you may want to review the attached, numbered, sets of documents.

1) A note from Rick Allen, a Deputy Assistant to the President for National Service (who is Eli Segal's Deputy) pointing out problems in an article that was generated by an agency press release that was never sent to my office for review. Rick specifically requesting my help in ensuring that our "field PR folks" correctly explain AmeriCorps.

2) A set of documents demonstrating the effectiveness and success of the regional facilitators. Contrary to what you may have been told, **every** USDA agency other than NRCS --- including the Forest Service -- supports the existence of the facilitators. Also despite what you may have been told, many NRCS AmeriCorps Project Managers, and even a few State Conservationists, strongly support the facilitators.

Please note the letter from James Habinger, the State Conservationist from Kansas, stating that "Your help in recruiting and arranging details for initial program implementation has been invaluable. In fact, we could not have done it without you."

Also please note the letter signed jointly by myself and Meg Maguire of the Corporation for National and Community Service outlining joint activities for the facilitators and the Corporation's state directors. Also attached are the two pages from the USDA AmeriCorps manual -- which were approved by and subsequently printed by NRCS -- which specifically provide a flow chart and narrative representing the duties of the facilitators. Please also note my November 29, 1994 memo --- which was also approved by NRCS --- further clarifying the duties of the facilitators. Lastly, I have attached the latest set of reports from our facilitators --- which I share with NRCS and every other interested agency every week --- so you can judge for yourself whether they provide useful information.

I understand that you have been presented with a decision memorandum on the issue of the facilitators --- which was presented to you before I had a chance to review it. The memorandum incorrectly asserts that the Forest Service opposes the facilitators. The memorandum also falsely implies that the facilitator reports are secret reports given only to me; that is totally false --- I provide copies of the reports each week to Lloyd Wright. In addition, the memorandum incorrectly states that the facilitators are full-time jobs costing the taxpayers over a million dollars. In fact, only a very few of the facilitators are working on AmeriCorps full-time --- most only spent between 5-35% of their time on the issue; therefore, the true cost to taxpayers is a few hundred thousand dollars. While NRCS has roughly almost half of the Department's AmeriCorps slots this year, it will have only between 32% - 38% of the over allotment next year; therefore, it makes no sense at all for NRCS, on its own, to make structural decisions about the entire Departmental program. Most importantly, it is totally inappropriate to ask Under Secretary Lyons to make a unilateral determination over employees who work for Under Secretary Moos, and who affect AmeriCorps Members serving agencies of three other Under Secretaries. This is more appropriately a decision for us to make together jointly or to be made by Secretary Glickman. I urge Under Secretary Lyons not to sign it until we have had a chance to fully discuss this issue.

3) A series of documents specifying serious, systematic --- and often uncorrected problems --- with NRCS AmeriCorps projects. Such problems include: projects started without the proper tools, Members not having enough work to perform on a daily basis, projects without the socio-economic diversity required by the law and expected by the President, projects that may have illegally displaced paid employees, projects that may have illegally duplicated the work of existing staff, projects that have unclear or improper community service objectives, projects in which the Members are not adequately supervised, and projects that have spent virtually all their time in training instead of actual community service.

In one case, Senator Daschle --- one of the country's most committed and most important defenders of AmeriCorps --- asked his state director to call me personally to complain that the NRCS Members in South Dakota were performing routine NRCS office work in violation of the law; according to the State Director, Daschle said: "That's not the AmeriCorps program I voted for." In addition, Eli Segal and his staff have raised strong concerns about some of these problems.

I have not raised these issues with you or Under Secretary Lyons in the past because I have continually made a good faith effort to work with NRCS staff to fix these problems. However, it is my understanding that some in NRCS are now somehow blaming my office or the facilitators for these problems, so I believe it is important to set the record straight.

In the months in which the Corporation for National and Community Service and myself have been asking NRCS staff to help correct these serious problems, some NRCS staff have tended to "blame the messenger" instead of taking concrete steps to fix the problems.

4) A memorandum I recently sent to Chief Johnson outlining ways to address these challenges. As you know, Chief Johnson is a fervent and effective champion of AmeriCorps. In almost all instances he and I agree on the direction of NRCS AmeriCorps projects. The Department's policies regarding the media and the regional facilitators seem to be issues pushed by some on his staff, but, in our numerous conversations, the Chief has never once raised any concerns regarding either of those issues. Chief Johnson, Under Secretary Lyons, and yourself have provided invaluable aid in ensuring that the USDA AmeriCorps program is not only the largest in the nation, but fully meets the vision of the President. Working together, we can ensure that continues.

I hate to again bury you in paper, but I believe all parties involved need to make our judgments about the USDA AmeriCorps program based on documented facts, not upon conflicting personalities.

As always, I seek not to debate who is at fault for problems, but seek to agree upon constructive ways to address those problems. I hope this information provides helpful background for our meeting on Thursday.

April 5, 1996

To: Martha Phipps, Charlie Rawls, Dave Carlin
From: Joel Berg JB
Subject: **Letter from Senator Leahy to Senator Bond**

I thought you might be interested to see the attached letter from Senator Leahy to Senator Bond --- chair of the appropriations sub-committee that funds the Corporation for National Service --- specifically praising the USDA portion of AmeriCorps.

The letter seeks to clarify Leahy's understanding that, under the compromise recently passed by the Senate to restore funding for the overall AmeriCorps program, the USDA component of AmeriCorps will be able to continue.

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4502

ATTACHMENT E

April 5, 1996

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

Dear Kit,

I am writing to clarify my understanding of the ability of federal agencies to sponsor AmeriCorps projects once the Corporation for National Service ceases providing direct grants of operating funds to such agencies.

I am most concerned about the future of the AmeriCorps program sponsored by the Department of Agriculture (USDA). In Vermont, the USDA sponsors an Anti-Hunger Team, a Rural Development Team and a Public Lands and Environment Team that have received bipartisan support throughout the state. I understand that the USDA also has well-functioning AmeriCorps projects in over 40 other states, including Missouri. In many of these states, the USDA provides virtually the only AmeriCorps presence in rural communities.

While I fully understand your position that the Corporation no longer make direct grants to federal agencies, I would like to explore with you an approach that will provide effective AmeriCorps projects sponsored by the USDA the opportunity to continue.

I strongly believe that the USDA should continue to be able to use its own appropriated funds to support AmeriCorps projects, with no grant funds to the Department from the Corporation involved. AmeriCorps participants in these projects, upon successful completion of service, would be eligible for the educational awards directly from the National Service Trust Fund.

This approach has three important advantages. First, it adheres to the position that no Corporation funds be awarded to federal agencies. Second, it is consistent with the agreement of Members of the Senate and the Corporation that partnerships be expanded to provide "education awards only" to AmeriCorps projects, while the projects themselves provide all operating funds. Third, since the projects would be funded from current USDA appropriations, additional expenditure of tax dollars would not be required.

The Honorable Kit Bond
April 5, 1996
Page 2

I have asked the USDA and the Corporation to comment on this approach and put together a proposal on how it could be best executed. I look forward to working with you to continue a strong AmeriCorps program.

Sincerely,


PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator

PJL/mew

MESSAGE CONFIRMATION

04/24/96

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UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

USDA AMERICORPS FAX

TO: Legislative Assistants Working With AmeriCorps

FROM: Joel Berg, Director
USDA National Service

RE: Summer of Gleaning

On Friday, April 19 Secretary Glickman announced that 17 states, including yours, would participate in the USDA AmeriCorps Summer of Gleaning effort. Attached is a news release explaining the project.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Dee:

FYI - I Faxed
this. - Jan

April 23, 1996

TO: Paul Johnson, Chief
Natural Resources Conservation Service

FROM: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

SUBJECT: **New NRCS Program Manager for AmeriCorps**

I have just learned that Paula Cole Jones, the AmeriCorps Program Manager, has resigned from the Federal government. As you know, Paula has served in this position for the past 2 ½ years and has been a great asset to the program. I have nominated Paula --- as well as other key NRCS employees involved in AmeriCorps --- for a Secretary's honor award. Her work on behalf of AmeriCorps has exemplified her long-standing commitment to public service. Her resignation is a great loss to the AmeriCorps program, but am certain she will do well in future endeavors.

While I am fully aware that NRCS now faces complex personnel issues, I hope you will seriously consider making Dee Defiore, who is now on detail to my office, the new manager for the NRCS AmeriCorps program. As you know, Dee began working on this program at the same time as Paula; thus she has 2 ½ years of experience. She has proven to be a tremendous asset to the program and is able to do whatever tasks need that need to be done with minimal supervision. She is well respected by NRCS field staff and has a very strong working relationship with them. She is totally familiar with all aspects of the program.

I would urge you to consider converting the NRCS AmeriCorps manager position into an GS-11/12 position and placing Dee in that position. This action would save NRCS money, while --- at the same time --- maintaining the critical institutional knowledge needed to effectively manage this complex program.

If you have any questions about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact met at 720-5746.

CC: Pearlie Reed, Ann Carey



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

April 3, 1996

Marion R. Newbold
Assistant Dean for Admissions
Widener University School of Law
4601 Concord Pike, PO Box 7474
Wilmington, Delaware 17110-9450

Dear Dean Newbold:

I am immensely pleased that an AmeriCorps Member from Utah, Charles Wade, has been accepted into the School of Law at Widener University. It is an honor to the AmeriCorps Program to have members of Charles' caliber.

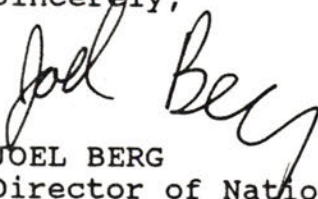
Charles is now involved in a program that is extremely valuable to both his community and his country. It is an experience that will change his life and the lives of those he serves. The skills and knowledge he gains through his AmeriCorps experience will be of tremendous benefit to him as he enters law school and the law profession.

Charles is required to complete 1700 hours of direct national service with AmeriCorps. He entered the program in February 1996 and is expected to complete his assignment in December 1996. It is Charles' desire to delay entrance to law school until the fall of 1997 in order to permit him to complete his AmeriCorps experience. I support Charles' request and urge you to grant a deferral of his admission until 1997. At such time as Charles successfully completes his 1700 hours of service, he will receive an educational award to help finance his law school venture.

The AmeriCorps Program provides young people like Charles an opportunity to gain valuable experience and to have a positive impact on the communities they serve. Charles' commitment to national service is commendable, and I am certain he will be an asset to the Widener University School of Law.

We look forward to a positive response from you. Please contact me with any questions you may have concerning the AmeriCorps Program. My phone number is (202) 720-6350 and my mailing address is AG Box 1301, Room 538A, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joel Berg". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

JOEL BERG
Director of National Service
United States Department of Agriculture



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

April 3, 1996

John J. Noonan
Dean of Admissions
Quinnipiac School of Law
275 Mount Caramel Avenue
Hamden, Connecticut 06518-1948

Dear Dean Noonan:

I am immensely pleased that an AmeriCorps Member from Utah, Charles Wade, has been accepted into the Quinnipiac School of Law. It is an honor to the AmeriCorps Program to have members of Charles' caliber.

Charles is now involved in a program that is extremely valuable to both his community and his country. It is an experience that will change his life and the lives of those he serves. The skills and knowledge he gains through his AmeriCorps experience will be of tremendous benefit to him as he enters law school and the law profession.

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Sincerely,

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JOEL BERG
Director of National Service
United States Department of Agriculture



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

April 3, 1996

James K. Miller
Associate Dean for Students
University of Arkansas School of Law
Robert A. Leflar Law Center
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701

Dear Dean Miller:

I am immensely pleased that an AmeriCorps Member from Utah, Charles Wade, has been accepted into the School of Law at the University of Arkansas. It is an honor to the AmeriCorps Program to have members of Charles' caliber.

Charles is now involved in a program that is extremely valuable to both his community and his country. It is an experience that will change his life and the lives of those he serves. The skills and knowledge he gains through his AmeriCorps experience will be of tremendous benefit to him as he enters law school and the law profession.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joel Berg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joel" and last name "Berg" clearly distinguishable.

JOEL BERG
Director of National Service
United States Department of Agriculture

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.

March

Divider Title: _____



March 27, 1996

U.S. Department of Agriculture
AG BOX 1301
Washington, D.C. 20250-1301

Charles Gale
Director, Grants Policy Oversight Division
U.S. Health and Human Services
Room 517D
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Mr. Gale,

During the past year I initiated a USDA Office of Inspector General (OIG) audit of a program to whom I made a sub-grant of Corporation for National Service funds for the operation of an AmeriCorps program. The USDA OIG has given me preliminary indications that the terms of our grant were not met by the sub-grantee, the Greater Jackson Youth Corps, of Jackson, Mississippi. I think it only prudent to bring this to your attention because I have learned from the USDA OIG that the Greater Jackson Youth Corps also receives a Community Development Block Grant from the Department of Health and Human Services. I want to stress that the USDA OIG has only developed preliminary findings and has not published a final report, but the accounting problems they indicate exist with respect to our sub-grant to Greater Jackson Youth Corps seem to be substantial and may warrant your determining whether or not you wish to review your grant with the Greater Jackson Youth Corps.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, you may contact me at (202) 720-5746.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Joel Berg', is written over a light-colored background.

Joel Berg
Director, USDA National Service



March 27, 1996

U.S. Department of Agriculture
AG BOX 1301
Washington, D.C. 20250-1301

Edward A. Tomchick
Director, Office of Grants and Contract Management
U.S. Department of Labor
Room 4671
200 Constitution Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Mr. Tomchick,

During the past year I initiated a USDA Office of Inspector General (OIG) audit of a program to whom I made a sub-grant of Corporation for National Service funds for the operation of an AmeriCorps program. The USDA OIG has given me preliminary indications that the terms of our grant were not met by the sub-grantee, the Greater Jackson Youth Corps, of Jackson, Mississippi. I think it only prudent to bring this to your attention because I have learned from the USDA OIG that the Greater Jackson Youth Corps also receives a Jobs Training Partnership Act grant from the Department of Labor. I want to stress that the USDA OIG has only developed preliminary findings and has not published a final report, but the accounting problems they indicate exist with respect to our sub-grant to Greater Jackson Youth Corps seem to be substantial and may warrant your determining whether or not you wish to review your grant with the Greater Jackson Youth Corps.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, you may contact me at (202) 720-5746.

Sincerely,

Joel Berg
Director, USDA National Service

March 20, 1996

To: Ali Webb, Bonnie Wolf, Dave Warren

From: Joel Berg

Attached is my first draft of the Secretary's talking points for the AmeriCorps video teleconference on Monday. It includes heavy emphasis on specific accomplishments at specific locations.

Please provide me with comments as soon as possible so I can get it to the Cage for review.

TALKING POINTS FOR SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DAN GLICKMAN

USDA AMERICORPS NATIONAL VIDEO TELECONFERENCE

MONDAY, MARCH 15, 1996, 11:00 A.M.

Introduction

- Good morning. For those of you on the West Coast, good *very early* morning.
- On behalf of President Clinton and Vice-President Gore, I welcome all the USDA AmeriCorps Members, project managers, and representatives of partner organizations who are participating in this teleconference. I especially welcome the Rural Economic and Community Development-sponsored AmeriCorps Members from around the nation who are now at their national training in Jackson, Mississippi.
- I have already met a few of you in my travels across the country --- and plan to meet many more. I wish I could meet with all of you personally, but unfortunately, the press of business often keeps me in Washington. For instance, we are now engaged in intensive discussions with Congress over how the final Farm Bill --- covering virtually all USDA programs over the next five years --- will impact upon farm programs, rural development initiatives, and our ability to fight hunger and improve nutrition.

Congressional Update

- As I'm sure you know, AmeriCorps is another issue that is currently undergoing vigorous debate in this Congress. Congress is now debating funding and authorization for the THIRD year of AmeriCorps - -- you should know understand that the current, SECOND year of AmeriCorps, in which you are now enrolled, is ALREADY FUNDED. Your stipends and educational awards for this year are already paid for.
- AmeriCorps is a top personal priority of President Clinton and he has vetoed appropriations bills that would have eliminated the program. However, given the ever-increasing bi-partisan support for the program, we deeply hope we can move towards cooperation rather than confrontation with Congress. After all, community service is neither a Democratic or Republican issue --- it is an American issue.

- I am extremely pleased that AmeriCorps is receiving greater and greater support from Senators, Congresspeople, Governors, businesspeople, and local government and community leaders from ALL Political parties.
- The momentum is clear in favor of AmeriCorps. Harris Wofford, who now heads the entire AmeriCorps program for President Clinton, has reached an agreement with Senator Grassley, one of the leading critics of AmeriCorps, to improve the program while saving it.
- I am confident that AmeriCorps will not only continue, but that it will flourish. Hopefully, some day, it will be a right of passage for all Americans to provide a year or two of service to their country through AmeriCorps.

USDA's Role in the Overall AmeriCorps Program

- In its first year of operation, AmeriCorps --- the domestic national service program proposed by President Clinton and passed with bipartisan support by Congress --- engaged 20,000 Americans of diverse backgrounds in service that filled unmet human, environmental, educational, and public safety needs. In its first year, AmeriCorps was larger than the Peace Corps was in its height. This year, the overall AmeriCorps program will have up to 25,000 Members.
- As you know, in exchange for such service, AmeriCorps Members receive an award that can be used to pay for college, job training, graduate school, or to repay student loans.
- Most AmeriCorps projects are funded through state commissions appointed by each state's governor and managed by non-profit organizations and local government organizations --- most projects are *not* funded or managed directly by Federal agencies. However, a highly competitive process coordinated by the Corporation for National Service allowed a small portion of AmeriCorps to be managed by Federal agencies.
- I am proud that the largest Federal agency award was granted to USDA, allowing us to sponsor Members hundreds of urban and rural projects. In the first year, USDA sponsored 1,200 Members in 38 states. This year, we will sponsor up to 1,350 members in 45 states.
- The USDA program is the largest single component of AmeriCorps.

The Overall Philosophy of the Program

- AmeriCorps is focused on four, basic goals:
 - * **"Getting things done"**
 - * **Strengthening communities**
 - * **Expanding educational and economic opportunity, and**
 - * **Encouraging personal responsibility**

"Getting Things Done"

- All USDA AmeriCorps Members should achieve concrete, measurable results directly aiding communities. "Getting things done" is more than just a slogan you wear on your uniforms --- it should be the basis of everything you do in the program. USDA AmeriCorps Members fight hunger, protect the environment, and boost rural development.
- In just the first year of the program, USDA AmeriCorps Members provided services to over 828,000 citizens and performed environmental work on more than 234,000 acres.
- These projects provided taxpayers with double the "bang for the buck" by furnishing USDA with a mechanism to better utilize funds that would have otherwise been spent by the Department. For instance, USDA Forest Service projects utilized funding from pre-existing budget line items; for each dollar spent by the Forest Service on AmeriCorps, the American taxpayer received at least \$1.50 worth of service.

Specific Examples of How AmeriCorps/USDA "Got Things Done" Around the Nation

- While virtually all USDA AmeriCorps Members performed outstanding work in the first year, some of their accomplishments are particularly impressive.
- In the **Galveston Bay area of Texas**, Members planted provided coastal and shoreline protection by creating an 220 acre island that serves both as habitat for an endangered species and as a demonstration of the productive uses of dredge material.

- Members in **Vermont** project initiated and implemented an effective food salvage program with the cooperation of local grocery chains in the Burlington area.
- In **New Mexico**, a Member in **El Rito** helped 2,000 local residents to obtain safe drinking water.
- In **Belleville, Illinois**, Members stabilized over 4,000 feet of stream and road damaged by massive flooding in 1993.
- In **West Virginia**, a Member performed archaeological site investigations on over 100 acres of historic sites in seven communities.
- Members based on the **Olympic National Forest in Washington State** constructed and maintained 110 miles of trails; rehabilitated 14 campground sites; maintained 278 boxes for threatened and endangered species; conducted 750 acres of habitat surveys; improved four miles of watershed; pruned 30 acres of trees; and planted 253 acres of trees.
- In **Yazoo City, Mississippi**, a Member designed and instituted a micro enterprise program to assist low-income residents become self-sufficient through entrepreneurship.
- In **Chicago, Illinois**, the Members provided environmental education to over 1,100 students and recruited 500 volunteers to help improve the environment and increase public safety near public housing.
- In **Los Angeles**, Members reclaimed and revitalized neighborhoods through community garden projects and farmer's markets; sheltered and provided job training and employment information to thousands of homeless individuals; and increased the number of children across the city receiving lunches during the summer months by 6,000.
- In **Denmark, South Carolina**, a Member established a tutorial program run entirely by AmeriCorps, worked with local churches to establish a local drug prevention program, and worked with the community to establish a non-profit development corporation.
- In **Arkansas**, a Member in **Fargo** helped the town to obtain street lights in town for the first time, reducing the risk of traffic accidents and crime --- and increasing the improving emergency response.

- In the **Atlanta, Georgia** area, Members installed an irrigation center at a community greenhouse and potted 25,000 plants for use in schools, parks, and beautification projects for the Olympics.
- In **McCreary County, Kentucky**, Members helped establish a 911 emergency system.
- In **Western Oklahoma**, Members worked in 10 counties to restore 44 windbreaks that totaled 19.5 miles, in the process planting over 64,500 trees.
- A Member serving in **Barbourville, Kentucky** developed and presented a series of life-skill classes to 92 low-income families.
- In **South Dakota**, Members completed a 23-county land-use survey to identify areas that may negatively impact the Big Sioux, Vermillion, and James rivers.
- Members in **West Virginia** helped run a Summer Food Service Program that provided a total of 48,159 meals at 69 sites.
- In **Maine**, Members provided conservation education to 7,726 students and 3,109 adults; raised and stocked 26 million soft-shell clams for, resulting in a positive economic impact of \$3 million; converted 19 miles of railroad into multi-use recreational trails; improved water quality on 1,006 miles of coastal habitat; and established 149 acres of Integrated Pest Management to reduce pollution and save costs for cranberry and blueberry farmers.
- In **Tennessee**, Members implemented measures to help one county increase its volume of solid waste recycling by 25% ---- they also organized four regional household hazardous waste collections during which 7,500 pounds of hazardous materials were removed from 120 households.

Strengthening Communities

- USDA AmeriCorps projects strengthen communities. By bringing together Americans of all races, ages, classes, genders, religions, and physical abilities to work side-by-side, USDA AmeriCorps projects create bonds of "sweat equity" that helped bridge the divisions of society. Furthermore, by designing and implementing projects at the lowest possible grassroots level, the projects empower communities to help themselves.

Expanding Educational and Economic Opportunity

- USDA AmeriCorps projects expand educational and economic opportunity. The program provides college aid for students from middle class families who would normally be ineligible for such aid, as well as to students from low-income families for whom existing levels of student aid are inadequate. The program also allows some citizens to leave public assistance in order to serve their communities; thus, AmeriCorps rewards work rather than welfare. There is no economic needs test required to join AmeriCorps --- the only requirement is a desire to serve the nation.

Encouraging Personal Responsibility

- USDA AmeriCorps projects encourage personal responsibility. All USDA projects require extremely hard work in exchange for educational benefits, while helping AmeriCorps Members build a life-long commitment to community service. The program reminds us that all Americans have responsibilities as well as rights. AmeriCorps renews the civic compact, created by the original G.I. Bill, in which citizens serve the nation in exchange for benefits that increase their ability to earn their own upward mobility.

Reinventing Government

- USDA AmeriCorps projects reinvent government. The projects allow USDA to work better while costing less, reduce the levels of government bureaucracy needed to provide assistance, empower local communities to run programs without national micro management, and demand concrete results. Moreover, by harnessing the idealism and energy of AmeriCorps Members and community volunteers dedicated to public service, the program helps diminish the gap between the government and the people we serve.

New Gleaning Initiative

- The whole area of gleaning presents another opportunity to find innovative ways to marshal citizen activism into solving social problems. It is another important priority of mine.
- Gleaning generally means one of two things: working with farmers to collect extra food that cannot be marketed or working with restaurants and institutions to rescue perishable food. In both cases, the food is delivered to the hungry families.
- This summer, special USDA AmeriCorps projects will be created to focus on gleaning.

- In addition, all the Members now at the RECD training in Jackson, Mississippi will receive special training on gleaning this week.
- I urge all USDA AmeriCorps Members to make an extra special effort --- whenever practical --- to add gleaning activities to their already existing community service objectives.

Thanks to AmeriCorps Members, Staff, and Partner Organizations

- I would like to close by thanking USDA AmeriCorps Members, staff, and representatives of partner organizations.
- I want to thank the AmeriCorps Members for your willingness to work hard as you make history in only the second year of this program. You are building a legacy about which you will be able to proudly tell your children and grandchildren.
- I want to thank all the USDA employees who have made AmeriCorps a reality. I understand that most of you have taken on additional AmeriCorps duties without losing any of your old duties. By reinventing government and by moving the "Team USDA" concept from theory to reality, you have provided the finest example of public service.
- I want to thank all the representatives of non-profit organizations and state and local government agencies who have built unique new public/private partnerships with USDA to manage AmeriCorps projects. Due to your diligent efforts to anchor the program at the grass roots level, AmeriCorps will thrive for years to come.

Closing

- Thank you again for your time. I would like to hear briefly from each site as to how many members are at your site and what service you have been performing in your community. Then I will take questions.

Tom:

Approximately 30 USDA-sponsored AmeriCorps Members will be at the Secretary's Portland speech, sitting in the back in uniforms. I asked Bonnie to include a brief mention of them in his speech. Also in attendance will be our project managers, some of whom are Forest Service and NRCS employees and some of whom work for non-profit organization. The Members are expecting to take a photo with the Secretary following the speech; I asked our project managers to bring a camera. Clark, Martha, and Mary are all aware of this.

Half of the Members in attendance will be affiliated with EnviroCorps, which is directly sponsored by NRCS, and the other half of the Members will be affiliated with the Northwest Service Academy, which is partially sponsored by the Forest Service.

Attached is some information of the Northwest Service Academy of Members to be in attendance, about flood relief work recently performed by both projects, and USDA AmeriCorps clips from around Oregon.

- Joel



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

RESPONSE DUE COB, MARCH 31, 1996 --- PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

March 13, 1996

TO: AmeriCorps USDA State Coordinators

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

FROM: *Joel* *RND* Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA

SUBJECT: **INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING AMERICORPS 2ND QUARTER
REPORT AND RENEWAL APPLICATION**

Enclosed is the second quarter progress report format. **The report is due back to my office completed by COB March 31, 1996.** You will note that most of the information submitted in the first quarter progress report has been incorporated into this progress report. Only information that did not properly meet AmeriCorps community service objectives was omitted. .

You will also note that question 13 now asks whether you intend to renew each site, and whether the community service objectives will continue to be the same. If the objectives will be changed, the new objectives --- labeled clearly for each operating site --- must be attached.

Due to our own lack of clarity, virtually no states properly understood our intended purpose for the "success measurement" on questions 13 or 14. We fully admit that this was entirely our fault because the instructions were not clear enough. 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," then 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 encountered in some of the first 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.

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.

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. Or 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 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.

For the most part the States did very well and we want to thank you. Your efforts will help us avoid most the problems we have had with last year's roster of members. But please remember that if our office does not have the proper forms for a Member, that Member maybe 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. **Because the second quarter's reports will play a critical role in the Department's renewal process with the Corporation for National Service, state's that have not submitted their reports by the March 31 deadline may jeopardize their project renewals.**

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

AmeriCorps *USA

USDA State Progress Report (CNS Grant No. 95ADFD047)

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

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 "1st QTR Quantity" and the column marked "1st 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

"1st 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

"1st QTR Success" - Provide a hard number indicating progress towards the "Year's Success Target"

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 "1st QTR Success," provide a hard number indicating progress towards the "Year's Success Target" that was accomplished during this reporting period.

[illegible]

- 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}

From: Joel Berg
To: BBURKE
Date: 3/5/96 1:16pm
Subject: Obtaining Communications From the FS Regions on AmeriCorps

First, the good news. While in Portland, the Secretary briefly met with AmeriCops Members from the NRCS-sponsored EnviroCorps and the FS-sponsored Northwest Service Academy. I understand that he personally added comments to his speech text on timber issues specifically praising AmeriCorps and calling on Republicans to support the program. Also, as you may have read, the Secretary's weekly report to Panetta explained that the FS transferred \$170,000 in funds to the Northwest Service Academy.

The other good news is that neither the Senate nor the House committees have yet opposed the Secretary's February 16 reprogramming request. If they do not respond by the end of a 30 day period --- ending March 16 --- than the FS clearly has full legal authority to proceed with AmeriCorps. (Assuming a new CR or a permanent Interior appropriations bill passes.)

Now the rest of the news: I spoke with Stephanie this morning and asked her to relate to you the difficulty I have had in obtaining critical documents from the Forest Service, as well as my increasingly grave concerns over the funding mechanism for the program insisted upon by the national office.

As you will recall, Chief Thomas' last memo to the regions on AmeriCorps asked them to specify, by February 29, exactly how they would fund and operate projects under the new funding guidelines. I have repeatedly asked the FS to provide me copies of those original responses from the regions, but they have outright refused. They have told me that those responses are "internal" to the agency. Rather than provide me with the original responses, they claim they want to provide me, at some later (unspecified) time, with their summary of the responses. I reminded them that I have been formally and legally directed by the White House, the Corporation for National Service, and the Secretary to coordinate the entire USDA AmeriCorps program -- including the portion run by the Forest Service --- and that I needed to see the original documents so I could accurately communicate the status of the program immediately to my superiors. When they again refused to provide me copies of the correspondence, I informed them that I would raise this issue with your office.

In contrast, every other USDA agency rapidly provides me any information I request regarding AmeriCorps. Only the Forest Service continues to insist that a representative of the Secretary is somehow "external" to their agency.

In any case, through my contacts in two of the regions (6 and 8), I have, confidentially, received copies of their region's response to the Chief's request. Based on the content of just these two responses, it is no wonder that the FS leadership doesn't want us to see them. Both responses confirm that the current plan to fund AmeriCorps from the regions and the individual forests, rather than to keep the original promise to fund it "off the top" of the national budget, would have disastrous impacts on both AmeriCorps and the rest of the Forest Service. In many cases, highly successful projects throughout the nation would either be cancelled outright or severely reduced.

I urge you to read the communications from the two regions, which Stephanie now has, carefully.

I would also greatly appreciate your help in directing the Forest Service to provide both your office and my office with copies of each of the original responses from the regions to the chief's latest message.

After we receive that information, perhaps we could meet with the Forest Service leadership to discuss their most updated plans for proceeding. If you have any questions, please call me at 720-5746.

Thank you again for your help.

CC: SHAGUE

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.

February

Divider Title: _____

MEMORANDUM

To: Martha Phipps, Charlie Rawls

From: Joel Berg *JB*

Subject: Call From the Deputy Secretary or the Chief of Staff to OMB

A number of weeks ago, Steve Dewhurst sent a memorandum to the Deputy Secretary suggesting that the Deputy call T.J. Glauthier at OMB to push for immediate approval of the Forest Service AmeriCorps reprogramming letter. At the time, Glauthier's staff implied to me that they would quickly approve the letter, so I then suggested that the Deputy would not need to make such a call. Senator Leahy's office, as well as the White House Office of Domestic Policy, have since called OMB about approving the letter. Unfortunately, OMB has held onto the letter for weeks --- never outright rejecting the request but questioning why we have to take the unusual step of sending a reprogramming letter before an appropriations bill is signed.

OMB continues to drop hints to the Department that they would be much more likely to approve our request if Mr. Rominger or Mr. Frazier personally called T.J. to ask for the letter to be released. I just met with David Unger of the Forest Service and we both agreed that such a call should be made as soon as possible.

If either Rominger or Frazier do call, I suggest they make the following points:

1) Sending the letter now would likely improve, not damage, the overall budget negotiations with Congress. Restrictive language against AmeriCorps was originally placed in the Interior Appropriations bill mostly as a result of Congressional frustration that last year's AmeriCorps reprogramming letter from the Forest Service was sent at the end of, not the start of, the Fiscal Year. At our urging, Senator Murray convinced Senator Gorton to support an amendment in the Senate --- which was later included in the House/Senate Conference reports --- to allow the Forest Service to spend funds on AmeriCorps if it followed "appropriate re-programming guidelines." In a meeting with myself and AmeriCorps CEO Harris Wofford, Senator Murray personally made it clear that she, Senator Gorton, and Senator Byrd would take it as a sign of good faith if the Forest Service sent such a request as soon as possible --- even if the appropriations bill had not yet been signed. Their appropriations staff are now expecting the letter.

2) The Corporation for National Service (CNS) , the lead agency for AmeriCorps, strongly supports sending the letter immediately. Gene Sofer, head of Congressional Affairs for CNS, also believes that sending the letter now would aid, not harm, their ongoing negotiations.

3) It is perfectly legal to send the letter now. While it is certainly usual to send a reprogramming letter before appropriations are enacted, the USDA Office of General Counsel has made it clear there is no legal prohibition against doing so.

4) Delaying the letter now could permanently end many Forest Service AmeriCorps projects. In order to meet the requirement of the National and Community Service Act that mandates a 1,700 hour term of service for AmeriCorps Members, the USDA agencies (other than the Forest Service) who are sponsoring AmeriCorps projects started their projects in October or November of 1995. In order to meet the requirement of ending before next Winter, most Forest Service AmeriCorps projects are now planning to start operation in January of 1996. It is likely that our supporters in the Senate would prevail upon the sub-committee in the House to support such an effort, particularly given that the largest single Forest Service AmeriCorps project is in the district of Congressman Jerry Lewis, who oversees the VA-HUD appropriations sub-committee. However, if the reprogramming letter was delayed significantly by us, they the Forest Service projects might either be prevented from starting or would be shut-down. If these projects were to stop mid-stream, the projects would undoubtedly lose both their AmeriCorps Members and any temporary staff that may have been hired --- making it impossible to ever re-start.

5) If Forest Service AmeriCorps projects were terminated by an action of the Administration rather than of Congress, this could have negative consequences for the Administration in the 21 states in which these programs will be located. The projects will be located in: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Kentucky, Idaho, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee, Wyoming, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

These projects are critical because they are among the most successful of all projects in AmeriCorps. These projects provide the Forest Service with a very effective alternative mechanism to carry out work. In their first year of service, Members in these projects constructed or maintained 680 miles of trail, reforested 638 acres of land, constructed or completely rehabilitated 456 campground sites, prepared 42 campground sites for accessibility for people with disabilities, improved 668 acres of timber stand, and improved 2,019 acres of wildlife habitat. For each dollar spent on AmeriCorps, the Forest Service would have to have spent between \$1.50 to \$2.30 to perform such work through traditional means.

The White House and the Corporation for National service have repeatedly praised the Forest Service portion of the overall AmeriCorps program. In speech in San Bernardino, California that was given adjacent to the site of a Forest Service AmeriCorps project, President Clinton stated: " If you look at what this national service project does --- they're working in the San Bernardino National Forest; people who are helping to maintain it, strengthen it, keep it there for our children and our grandchildren, make sure its an important resource... For a small amount of Federal money , we have increased opportunity with no bureaucracy."

Please call me at 720-5746 if you have any questions about this matter.

cc: David Unger

February 26, 1996

To: Martha, Clark, Tom
From: Joel *JB*
Subject: **Two Possible AmeriCorps Events for Friday Morning**

1) Event in Downtown Portland- The Secretary would meet and/or work alongside NRCS-sponsored AmeriCorps Members engaged in planting native species in a city park. All these Members engaged in a wide variety of flood relief efforts during the worst part of the disaster. (See attached pages 2-4 for more information on Friday site as well as the previous flood relief work).

2) Event in a Portland Suburb- The Secretary would travel about 30-40 minutes from Portland to Oregon City to meet and/or work alongside Forest Service-sponsored AmeriCorps Members planting trees at the Hopkin's Memorial Tree Farm in a project facilitated by Forest Forever, Inc, a local non-profit group. (See page 5). The event could reinforce the message of the Secretary's lunch speech by communicating the message that AmeriCorps --- like many of the Administration's efforts --- protects the environment at the same time it promotes economic growth. These Members also engaged in disaster-relief work.

Unlike the Charles County, Missouri AmeriCorps event a few months ago that showcased technical assistance planning by the Members that was hard to physically demonstrate, both Portland events would show the Members engaged in actual physical work that will provide a compelling "shot" for tv and print cameras.

Given that Senator Wyden is a very strong supporter of AmeriCorps and that Senator Hatfield was one of the few Republicans in the Senate to vote for the bill creating the program, I believe we should work hard to get both to attend the event with the Secretary. As Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Hatfield will have a particularly important role over the next few weeks in determining the future of the entire AmeriCorps program.

Given that our AmeriCorps projects have worked closely with the Department of Interior, perhaps Secretary Babbitt could also be invited to either event. (See page 6.)

Even if the Secretary does not do a separate AmeriCorps event, I would suggest inviting a few Members to his lunch speech and placing a brief mention of them in his speech text.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

February 26, 1996

To: Harris Wofford, CNS

From: Joel Berg, USDA *JB*

Subject: **Suggested Guidelines for "Educational Awards Only" Programs**

As USDA moves towards an "educational awards only" program, permit me to make a suggestion that would seemingly go against our self-interest: **DON'T let USDA --- or any other organization applying to run an educational awards only program --- off the hook by lowering the standards for what constitutes an acceptable AmeriCorps project.**

All "educational awards only" projects should be expected to achieve concrete, measurable results that get things done while strengthening community partnerships, expanding educational and economic opportunity for the AmeriCorps Members, and encouraging an ethic of civic and personal responsibility. In other words, **"educational awards only" projects should have should have the exact same high level of accountability as all other AmeriCorps projects.**

Normally you would expect a project manager such as myself to want *fewer* externally mandated guidelines. However, my experience has proven that CNS policies and regulations have provided tremendous leverage in our continuing efforts to ensure that all of our projects meet the vision of AmeriCorps.

In particular, I hope CNS guidelines for all projects would continue to focus on the following:

1) Site specific diversity - Continue to insist that all projects are fully diverse at each site by race, educational background, physical ability, family income, and gender. I do not believe that "diversity in the aggregate" is real diversity if the individual locations are not diverse. Thus, hypothetically, if projects in the major city of a state were composed mostly of African-Americans while projects in the rest of state were composed mostly of white Americans, the program would be "diverse in aggregate" but would, in fact, simply be reinforcing the segregation inherent in our current society.

2) Living stipend, health care, and child care - Continue to require that all full-time Members be provided the minimum stipend, as well as health care and child care benefits. Conservative rhetoric about the spirit of service aside, these bare bones benefits are absolutely critical in allowing low-income and middle class Members to serve; without these benefits, full-time service in AmeriCorps would be available only to the rich.

3) National identity - Continue to require that all projects clearly identify themselves as AmeriCorps projects, ensure frequent interaction between project Members, and coordinate with other AmeriCorps projects. It is vital that all AmeriCorps Members continue to understand that they are part of an historic national movement.

4) Focus on results - Continue to require that all projects meet tightly focused community service objectives in human, educational, environmental, and public safety needs.

Without extreme vigilance from CNS in enforcing such guidelines, grantees will believe that, without operating funds from CNS, they will be able to run projects however they wish. I understand that some currently existing "educational awards only" AmeriCorps projects have demonstrated some tendency to hold this attitude. If such an outlook spreads through much of AmeriCorps, the program will disintegrate into a hodge-podge of activities barely distinguishable from other types of service.

While it is true that non-compensated "Points of Light"-type volunteer projects perfectly compliment stipended AmeriCorps-type national service projects, it is also true that these two different streams of service perform different functions. Well functioning national service projects still provide the best vehicle for focused efforts to seriously tackle community problems. Thus, all AmeriCorps projects should continue to be preserved as entirely distinct from other types of service.

If there is any assistance I can provide to CNS in clarifying such guidelines, please do not hesitate to contact me.

CC: Shirley Sagawa, Steve Waldman, Diana Algra, Hank Oltman



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Amy

From: Joel

4 PAGES, including this cover

Per your request, information on Vermont USDA AmeriCorps projects

USDA AMERICORPS PROJECTS IN VERMONT

Vermont has, by far, the highest per-capita concentration of AmeriCorps Members in the nation funded by USDA. All three USDA AmeriCorps team types --- the Rural Development Team, the Anti-Hunger Team, and the Environmental Team --- have sites in Vermont. Assuming this year's Forest Service AmeriCorps project starts soon on the Green Mountain National Forest, Vermont will have a total of 76 AmeriCorps Members sponsored by USDA.

Projects Last Year (1994-1995 Program Year)

36 Members of the anti-hunger project initiated and implemented an effective food salvage program with cooperation with local grocery chains in the Burlington area. The project also implemented a unique cooperative food donation project; inmates the maximum security prison voluntarily raised and harvested thousands of pounds of fresh produce that were picked up by the truckload by volunteers from a community action agency and then donated to low-income citizens (mainly senior citizens) in the county. This effort was so successful that the AmeriCorps Members began work to expand the prison-garden concept throughout the state. The Members also provide outreach of the WIC program and the Farm to Family program, and for all Federal nutrition assistance programs. The members have achieved particular success expanding use of the Earned Income Tax Credit, thereby giving tax breaks to working poor families to help them leave public assistance through work.

Three AmeriCorps Members in the rural development team helped fire departments in 11 Vermont communities create plans for accessing water supplies, thereby both improving fire protection and decreasing municipal insurance rates. Two additional Members served in the Winooski River Watershed studying old measures and designing new measures to protect the water quality of the river.

20 USDA AmeriCorps Members serving on the Green Mountain National Forest developed campground sites, removed hazardous trees at high use recreation sites, removed an unsafe bridge, provided recreation area information to forest visitors, created recreation guides for two trails, aided the growth of blueberry bushes, maintained trails, protected wildlife habitat, conducted watershed improvement surveys, improved timber stands, mapped and preserved archeological sites, and provided environmental education to local school children. The Forest Service has calculated that the services provided by AmeriCorps Members would have cost taxpayers far more if the services had been performed through traditional Forest Service means.

Projects This Year (1995-1996 Program Year)

The projects in this second year are almost identical to the first year projects.

This year, three Rural Development Team Members continue to work on rural fire protection (see attached letter send by the Senator to Vermont communities) and two Members continue to work on improving the Winooski River.

The anti-hunger project continues to have 35 Members.

The Forest Service project has not yet started due the lack of an Interior Appropriations Bill. If the Senate and House Interior Appropriations Sub-Committees approve Secretary Glickman's Forest Service AmeriCorps re-programming request, roughly 36 AmeriCorps Members will serve for a **half year** on the Green Mountain National Forest starting this June.

Praise for the Anti-Hunger Project From Vermonters

"(The USDA AmeriCorps Anti-Hunger project in Vermont) is respectful, open-minded, community-based, worthy...Its attributes are precisely what government should be doing. For from a know-it-all approach, the corps devises local solutions to local problems...The merit of this strategy is that the program's beneficiaries learn skills and develop systems that they can sustain themselves, without outside help...These goals replicate those of many of Washington's fiscal conservatives." - Editorial, *Burlington Free-Press*

"I appreciate the model you have created for a multi-faceted community effort to teach people about agriculture, promote good nutrition, and foster a sense of community pride and empowerment. The fact that so many community members and agencies have come together to make this project a success is a powerful example to us all." - Dr. Vern Grubinger, Director of Vermont Center for Sustainable Agriculture

"I don't know how the job would have gotten done without (the anti-hunger team's) help. This gives us the motivation to go on and face some other tough issues." - President of the Board, Greater Vermont Senior Citizen Center

(SUMMIT ORGANIZED BY USDA AMERICORPS)

Congress of the United States**Washington, DC 20515**

February 22, 1996

Dear Vermonter,

We are pleased to invite you and your colleagues to the 1996 Fire Summit, "Collaborating to Enhance Fire Protection." This year's session will be held in the Pavilion Auditorium, Montpelier, March 18, 1996.

The purpose of the summit is to discuss rural fire protection initiatives that are underway in Vermont and other states. We hope that learning about these experiences will help Vermont's fire service organizations develop a plan to coordinate policies for fire prevention in rural communities.

Topics to be discussed include: Collaboration and Cooperation Success Stories presented by Nathan Kirk, Fire Supervisor, Columbus, Ohio; Russian-American Fire Fighters Exchange Program presented by Jeffrey W. Spencer, J.D., Chief of Training, New Hampshire Fire Academy; Funding Opportunities presented by Mary Miller, Staff Assistant to Senator Patrick Leahy. Two workshops will be presented in the afternoon. These workshops are: Recruitment of and Maintaining Volunteers Workshop and the Importance of Community Outreach. A full agenda is enclosed.

Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m., moving to the Agenda at 9:00 a.m. Coffee and donuts will be provided at no charge. Lunch is available at the cafeteria.

We encourage you or a representative of your organization to attend "Collaborating to Enhance Fire Protection." Your participation will help shape rural fire prevention policies in Vermont.

Sincerely,

Patrick Leahy
PATRICK LEAHY
State Senator

James M. Jeffords
JAMES JEFFORDS
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
BERNARD SANDERS
U.S. Representative

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UNITED
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DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

February 23, 1996

TO: USDA AmeriCorps Project Directors, Project Managers, and
AmeriCorps Members

FROM: Joel Berg, Director, USDA Office of National Service

SUBJECT: Award Nominations

This year during the AmeriCorps Annual training, the USDA AmeriCorps Taskforce has decided to present a number of awards. The categories for these awards are:

Individual AmeriCorps Member Award

USDA Manager of the Year

USDA Project Director of the Year

AmeriCorps Team Award

AmeriCorps Community Award

State Award

Attached are the nomination sheets for these awards. If you wish to nominate someone for one of these awards, complete the appropriate sheet and either mail or fax to my office. Awards must be received NLT April 1, 1996.

The USDA AmeriCorps Taskforce will review each award and select the best nominees.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

February 22, 1996

Dear State Service Commission Executive Director:

Because **an AmeriCorps/USDA project is located in your state**, I am enclosing an annual report outlining the national accomplishments of our program in its first year of operation. Some report highlights:

- * 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 coastal land.
- * USDA AmeriCorps Members in nutrition and 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.

As we continue to further improve the quality of our projects, we plan to work even more closely with state commissions.

If you have any questions about or suggestions for our program, please do not hesitate to contact me at phone # 202-720-5746, fax # 202-720-4614, and e-mail address "jberg@USDA.Gov".

Sincerely,

Joel Berg
Director of National Service



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

February 21, 1996

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR JAMES R. LYONS, UNDER SECRETARY
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

FROM: Joel Berg, USDA Director of National Service

SUBJECT: Project for the National Day of Service

ISSUE: A project for the National Day of Service in memory of the victims of the Oklahoma bombing.

BACKGROUND: April 23, 1996 has been designated as the National Day of Service. The National Day of Service is celebrated annually and is meant to focus attention on AmeriCorps and private projects service to others and to the country.

April 19, 1996 marks one year from the day the Federal building was bombed in Oklahoma City killing 169 people. Some of those victims were USDA employees.

I would like to propose that USDA conduct a project that links these two dates. I propose, working through the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Forest Service, that USDA sponsor a tree planting project throughout the nation. USDA AmeriCorps Members will participate in the tree planting and work alongside community volunteers. Signs would be placed at all sites stating that the trees have been planted in memory of the victims of the Oklahoma City bombing.

OPTIONS:

1. Approve the project
2. Disapprove the project.

RECOMMENDATION:

Sign the letter to Chief Johnson and Chief Thomas giving your support to this project.

DECISION BY UNDER SECRETARY:

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

Discuss with me _____

Date _____

Reviewed by _____



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

TO: Paul Johnson, Chief, NRCS
Jack Ward Thomas, Chief, FS

FROM: James R. Lyons
Under Secretary
Natural Resources and Environment

SUBJECT: National Day of Service

The USDA Office of National Service has proposed a tree planting service project in memory of the victims of the Oklahoma bombing. This project will be conducted on April 23, the National Day of Service.

USDA Office of National Service will provide signs to be placed at all tree planting sites.

I support this project and ask for your support to implement it. NRCS and FS provide a perfect vehicle for implementation. Attached is a memo addressed to NRCS State Conservationists and FS Regional Supervisors. Request that each agency assign someone to work with Mr. Berg's office on this project.

Attachment



TO: NRCS, State Conservationists
FROM: Paul Johnson, Chief, NRCS
SUBJECT: National Day of Service

April 23, 1996 has been designated as the National Day of Service. The purpose of this designation is to encourage people to focus on the concept of service and thus strengthen the "ethic of service" in this country. Many people will take time off from their jobs or their normal routine to give service to those in need. I wholeheartedly support this idea.

USDA plans to dedicate this year's "Day of Service" to the memory of those who lost their lives in the Oklahoma bombing. In their memory, trees will be planted across the country. USDA will provide metal signs to be placed at each planting site.

I ask for your support and cooperation for this project. Let us take this opportunity to remember those who lost their lives in that needless tragedy and to demonstrate our national unity.

This project is being coordinated by Joel Berg, USDA Director of National Service. Point of contact in his office is Dee DiFiore. You can contact her at (202) 690-3051. Please complete the attached form and fax to Dee at (202) 720-4614. Forms are due in by March 15.

Thank you for your support.

Attachment

TO: Dee DiFiore, Program Analyst, USDA AmeriCorps Program
FROM:

SUBJECT: State Information for the National Day of Service

Below is listed the information needed for the National Day of Service Project:

STATE NAME:

POC NAME:

POC PHONE:

SITE LOCATION FOR
TREE PLANTING



TO: Regional Supervisors

FROM: Jack Ward Thomas, Chief, FS

SUBJECT: National Day of Service

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Attachment



TO: Dee DiFiore, Program Analyst, USDA AmeriCorps Program
FROM:

SUBJECT: State Information for the National Day of Service

Below is listed the information needed for the National Day of Service Project:

STATE NAME:

POC NAME:

POC PHONE:

SITE LOCATION FOR
TREE PLANTING

2 QTR 06



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

URGENT NOTICE

February 21, 1996

TO: USDA AmeriCorps Project Directors and Managers
THRU: Agency Program Managers
FROM: Joel Berg, Director of National Service, USDA *JB*
SUBJECT: AmeriCorps Renewal Application, Second Quarter Report and Annual Training

This memo is to inform you about the renewal process for AmeriCorps FY 97. The request for renewals is late due to the confusion of Congressional intent. Therefore, it is going to be a very short fused process, but I believe it will be much less work on your part. **The renewal application is being combined with second quarter reports.**

The Corporation for National Service has agreed to allow USDA to have an "educational awards only" program. With the exception of the Anti-hunger Program, this is essentially the type of program we are currently running.

Here is how the application for renewal is going to work this year.

1. We will only submit renewals at this time.
2. You will receive your 2nd quarter report format during the first week in March.
3. There will be two items added to question 13 for each site:
 - a. Do you intend to renew this site. If yes, check the box.
 - b. Will the objectives will change. If yes, check the box and attach the new objectives.
4. The report will be due back to us by **April 1, the day after the end of the reporting period.**
5. Do not add new sites to the list. We will deal with new sites after the CNCS has informed us of the number of members we will be authorized.
6. Our application is due to the Corporation **April 8, 1996.** Second quarter reports must be part of the application.

I realize this is very short notice, I am hoping this memo will give you sufficient time to gather your information and have it

Page 2

ready to return to me.

It is critical that you have your 2d quarter report back to this office on time, because the Corporation requires that 2d quarter reports be submitted along with the renewal application. Late reporting will result in a failure to be included in the renewal application.

Staff Training

The next item for discussion is this year's training conference. We would like to have the training sometime the 3rd week in June if possible. Top spot we are considering is Minneapolis, MN. We will let you know as soon as possible the final date and site.

I would like to take this opportunity to solicit thoughts and ideas from you as to what you would like to see at this training session. This is your training, and it should meet your needs. So if you have any ideas, please submit them to this office as soon as possible.

One idea we are considering is to set up displays to demonstrate projects that are currently going on across the country. For instance, Louisiana has developed a display for Dry Fire Hydrants. Some states have as part of their objectives display development. I would like to see these displayed at the training. We are also going to pursue the possibility of setting up displays of new technology.

Anyone who has a display and would like to set up at the training, should contact Donna Hines at (202) 690-0693 or Dee DiFiore at (202) 690-3051. Information may also be faxed to (202) 720-4614.

Again, I urge you to submit your ideas for training. Let us know how we can help you. Your ideas should be submitted to us no later than March 1.

If you have any questions, you may contact me at (202) 720-6350.

February 15, 1996

To: Hank Oltman
From: Joel Berg *JB*
Subject: **Proposed "Summer of Gleaning" Program**

Given that our gleaning pilot project in Illinois seems to be succeeding marvelously in recruiting farmers and other volunteers to help feed hungry people, and given that gleaning is such a high priority for Secretary Glickman, we are proposing that CNS allow USDA to join with partner non-profit organizations to sponsor a special summer program focused on gleaning.

We propose operating sites in ten different states with roughly five or six AmeriCorps Members at each operating site. They would serve twelve weeks (480 hours), receive the same minimum rate stipend required by law, and an educational award of \$1,000.

This proposal would NOT require any additional operating funds or educational awards from CNS --- we would count each educational award as one fourth of a slot towards the Department's total of 1,350 slots.

Every project would be a "volunteer generator" model, utilizing a handful of AmeriCorps Members to recruit many more non-compensated volunteers. The goal is for most of the sites to continue gleaning in future years even without an AmeriCorps project. Projects will also focus on K-12 nutrition and agricultural education.

At each site, non-profit organizations will be engaged in a cooperative agreement with USDA to help with training, farmer recruitment, volunteer recruitment and management, food distribution, etc. USDA will actually payroll the Members.

In determining the sites, we will give top priority to the five states in which we do not currently have programs: Rhode Island, Connecticut, Delaware, Alabama, and Nevada.

The second priority areas will be: upstate New York, Indiana, Texas, Michigan, Florida, Missouri, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland, Iowa, New Mexico, California, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Shaun, Victor

From: Joel Berg *JB*

3 pages

Attached is memo outlining my proposal for new AmeriCorps gleaning projects to be run this summer in ten states. **While my memo suggests some possible states, we could certainly ensure that EZ/EC and Champion Communities --- both urban and rural --- have priority.**

We already have the funds in my account to go ahead with this proposal. The Farm service Agency will play a lead management role in the field, and FSA Administrator Buntrock has pledged enthusiastic support. Martha and Cheryl from the Secretary's office are sure Glickman will love the idea.

Also attached is a one page summary of gleaning projects already taken by AmeriCorps.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

February 15, 1996

To: Hank Oltman, Corporation for National Service

From: Joel Berg, USDA *JB*

Subject: **Proposed "Summer of Gleaning" Program**

Given that our gleaning pilot project in Illinois seems to be succeeding marvelously in recruiting farmers and other volunteers to help feed hungry people, and given that gleaning is such a high priority for Secretary Glickman, we are proposing that CNS allow USDA to join with partner non-profit organizations to sponsor a special summer program focused on gleaning.

We propose operating sites in ten different states with roughly five or six AmeriCorps Members at each operating site. They would serve twelve weeks (480 hours), receive the same minimum rate stipend required by law, and an educational award of \$1,000.

This proposal would NOT require any additional operating funds or educational awards from CNS --- we would count each educational award as one fourth of a slot towards the Department's total of 1,350 slots.

Every project would be a "volunteer generator" model, utilizing a handful of AmeriCorps Members to recruit many more non-compensated volunteers. The goal is for most of the sites to continue gleaning in future years even without an AmeriCorps project. Projects will also focus on K-12 nutrition and agricultural education.

At each site, non-profit organizations will be engaged in a cooperative agreement with USDA to help with training, farmer recruitment, volunteer recruitment and management, food distribution, etc. USDA will actually payroll the Members.

In determining the sites, we will give top priority to the five states in which we do not currently have programs: Rhode Island, Connecticut, Delaware, Alabama, and Nevada.

The second priority areas will be: upstate New York, Indiana, Texas, Michigan, Florida, Missouri, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland, Iowa, New Mexico, California, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

USDA/AMERICORPS GLEANING ACTIVITIES

The Illinois Rural Development Team sponsored by the Farm Services Agency plans to provide peas, green beans, potatoes, and sweet corn to some 25 needy families in the Mason County area, through a gleaning program. Representatives from food processing companies and vegetable farmers will be consulted. The 5-Member USDA AmeriCorps team will recruit area volunteers to harvest and distribute the vegetables, and an Extension Service course on the proper care and freezing of these foods will be offered to the recipient families. Rod Atterberry ((309)543-2583) is the Project Director in Illinois for the USDA/FSA AmeriCorps projects.

In Washington, D.C., USDA's AmeriCorps Anti-Hunger team will continue for the second year its very successful gleaning project in partnership with the Washington Area Gleaning Network (WAGN). During the first year, hundreds of bushels (512 bushels on one day alone!) of fresh produce were picked and distributed to local soup kitchens and shelters, such as Bread for the City, Martha's Table, So Others Might Eat, and the DC Central Kitchen. This year's gleaning project has already expanded to include the harvest of fresh fruits (apples) in the distribution process, and has established a regular monthly commitment to work with WAGN during harvesting seasons. The 10 Members of the DC/USDA Anti-Hunger Team also plan to encourage area residents to participate in the gleaning efforts, and to teach local children about the purpose and importance of gleaning in general. Joshua Yates ((202)547-7022) is the Project Director from the Congressional Hunger Center in D.C.

Other USDA/AmeriCorps anti-hunger programs are also involved in various types of food rescue and distribution operations across the country, such as salvaging thousands of loaves of day-old bread from grocery stores in Burlington, VT to be donated to local food shelves (pantries) there, or helping to allocate foods, collected through massive food drives, to the Milwaukee area pantries.

For further information regarding gleaning/food rescue operations underway through AmeriCorps projects, please contact Joel Berg, USDA's Director of National Service, at (202) 720-6350, or Donna Hines, USDA's AmeriCorps Anti-Hunger Program Coordinator, at (202) 690-0693.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

TO: Steve Selby , Corporation For National Service

From: Joel Berg

3 PAGES, including this cover

Proposed USDA response to Walters op-ed. Our press secretary wants to know if CNS is planning your own response and, if so, would ours compliment, duplicate, (or worse) conflict with yours? He wants to make sure we have one unified Administration response.

Could you please check with Jay and/or Waldman.

DRAFT

February 15, 1996

Letters to the Editor
The New York Times
229 W. 43rd Street
New York, NY 10036

To the Editor:

In his Feb. 10 editorial column, John P. Walters claims that government-run AmeriCorps projects are "helping government help itself rather than genuine grass-roots organizations." As head of the Department that supports the largest AmeriCorps program sponsored by a Federal agency, I feel compelled to explain that Mr. Walters has his facts wrong.

Virtually all AmeriCorps projects ---including those sponsored by our Department --- are run *in partnership with* grass-roots organizations, including chapters of Habitat for Humanity, the American Red Cross, and the Girl and Boy Scouts. Groups have been effusive in their praise for the process through which AmeriCorps provides them significant additional resources to help local communities help themselves. For instance, Bill Mook, Chairman of the Damariscotta River Tidewater Watch in Maine has written: "We would not have as credible a water monitoring program without the assistance of AmeriCorps Members who provide training, organizational, and technical assistance to our community."

In its first year of operation, our 1,200 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. This fact alone disproves Mr. Walter's claim that AmeriCorps somehow dilutes the American spirit of volunteerism.

AmeriCorps projects directly aid people, *not* government. For instance, in their inaugural year of service, our Department's AmeriCorps Members performed flood recovery work on 75,300 acres of land, cooked and served 40,155 meals at soup kitchens, brought running water or modern bathrooms for the first time to 3,484 families, constructed or maintained 715 miles of hiking trails, and performed many other vital tasks.

In total, the USDA AmeriCorps program directly aided over 828,000 citizens and over 234,000 acres of land. The total cost to the Federal government was only \$62 for each acre and \$17 for each person aided.

Given that such remarkable results were achieved through the sweat and commitment of dedicated citizens ---- not through a cumbersome government bureaucracy --- I would hope that conservatives such as Mr. Walters would embrace AmeriCorps, rather than contrive reasons to oppose it.

Sincerely,

Dan Glickman
Secretary of Agriculture



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

February 9, 1996

Dear Friend of National Service:

As you may know, a relatively small part of the overall AmeriCorps initiative is managed by Federal agencies, of which the largest component is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) program, which now operates in 45 states. Enclosed is the first annual report of AmeriCorps/USDA, which documents many remarkable accomplishments. Some highlights:

* 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 coastal land.

* USDA AmeriCorps Members in nutrition and 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, and helped 152 community gardens.

* 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.

If you have any questions or would like more information about the program, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 720-5746.

Sincerely,

Joel Berg

Director of National Service, USDA

To: Tom

From: Joel

Subject: **Inviting the First Lady to an AmeriCorps Event in LA**

Attached is a letter sent by the Southern California Interfaith Hunger Coalition to the First Lady inviting her to an AmeriCorps anti-hunger event in LA.

Also attached is a draft memo I would like to send to Patti Solis, whom I know from the campaign, recommending the event.

Do you have any problem with this? If its ok with you, does this have to go through the Cage?



February 7, 1996

To: Patty Morris

From: Joel Berg

Subject: **Successes Documented by the USDA/AmeriCorps First Annual Report**

Attached is the first annual report of the USDA/AmeriCorps, which documents remarkable accomplishments of the program. Some highlights:

- * USDA AmeriCorps Members in nutrition and 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 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 coastal land.
- * 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. These non-compensated volunteers provided a total of 134,899 hours of service.
- * 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.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

To: Maureen Kennedy

From: Joel Berg *JB*

7 PAGES, including this cover

Per your suggestion, I met with the Under Secretary to discuss options for staffing the AmeriCorps function for RECD. She asked me to provide her with a decision memo containing my recommendations on the matter.

For your review, a draft of the memo is attached. As you will read, the recommendations have relatively small staff and budget implications for RHCDS.

Please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions before I present the memo to the Under Secretary.

Thanks for your attention.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

February 1, 1996

DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNDER SECRETARY

FROM:

Joel Berg **JB**
Director of National Service, USDA

SUBJECT:

INSTITUTIONALIZING THE RECD AMERICORPS PROGRAM

ISSUE:

There is a need to institutionalize the AmeriCorps national service program within RECD, clarifying exactly where in the mission area the function should be housed and providing that management function with a minimal staff and budget.

BACKGROUND:

Providing service in the most persistently poverty-ridden rural areas of the nation --- including most EZ, EC, and Champion Communities --- the RECD AmeriCorps program is obtaining remarkable results "getting things done" helping families obtain running water and/or modern bathrooms for the first time, providing early childhood development services to children, helping counties improve their emergency preparedness and response, providing families with assistance for health and safety hazard repairs in their homes, saving and creating jobs, and delivering technical planning assistance to farmers. At the same time, the program is strengthening communities, expanding educational opportunity, and encouraging opportunity.

Given the effectiveness of the program, it is not surprising that AmeriCorps is one of the top personal priorities of President Clinton. The USDA portion of the program has been strongly supported by Secretary Glickman and by most RECD state directors. Moreover, the program has received enthusiastic support from rural community leaders and residents throughout the country.

OPTION 2. Place the function for managing the entire RECD AmeriCorps program under the umbrella of your Deputy Under Secretary.

PRO: I understand that your Deputy Under Secretary, Art Campbell, has responsibility for long-term strategic issues. By having AmeriCorps in his portfolio, he would be able easily bridge the gaps between the two RECD agencies significantly involved and to integrate AmeriCorps more fully with other high priority Administration initiatives.

CON: Ironical as it may be, it would likely be more difficult to attain support staff and management funds at the Under Secretary level than at the agency level. I have not discussed this suggestion with the Deputy Under Secretary, so I do not know either he has the time and/or inclination to perform this additional function.

OPTION 3. Place the function for managing the entire RECD AmeriCorps program under the umbrella of the rural EZ/EC initiative, while authorizing the RECD AmeriCorps staff to report through the head of that initiative directly to both the Under Secretary and the USDA Director of National Service.

PRO: Victor Vasquez and I agree that, given that the majority of RECD AmeriCorps sites are in Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities or Champion Communities, there are compelling reasons to strengthen the administrative ties between the two high profile Presidential initiatives. Combining certain management functions could save funds by utilizing economies of scale.

Additionally, given the fact that the RECD portion of the program crosses traditional agency lines and that Secretary Glickman has delegated legal authority to me to manage all the Department's program, it makes sense for the RECD AmeriCorps staff to report directly to us. This approach would simplify the duplicative dual approval process that has, to date, significantly inhibited RECD's ability to work on this project cooperatively as one team.

CON: This option would require a significant change in the way the traditional chain-of-command is viewed and could give the false impression that RHCDS will have less of a role in AmeriCorps than RBCDS. If the EZ/E.C. initiative continues to face significant management changes, this could negatively impact upon AmeriCorps.

OPTION 2. Place the function for managing the entire RECD AmeriCorps program under the umbrella under your Deputy Under Secretary.

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RECOMMENDATION FOR ISSUE #1: While both option #2 and option #3 would be significantly better than the status quo, I believe that, on balance, option #3 would allow AmeriCorps to best opportunity for institutionalization. Working closely with your office, I believe that the head of the EZ/EC initiative and myself would be able to make careful judgements about which issues need to be more fully discussed with the agency administrators.

DECISION BY THE UNDER SECRETARY:

Approve _____ Date _____

Disapprove _____

Discuss _____

ISSUE # 2 - TRAVEL FUNDS FOR RECD AMERICORPS STAFF

OPTION 1. Maintain the status quo in which none of the current RECD AmeriCorps staff have approved travel budgets.

PRO: This option would save travel funds, which are scarce for all of RECD.

CON: The option would virtually eliminate the ability of RECD AmeriCorps staff to visit sites and represent the program at conferences.

OPTION 2. Provide a \$20,000 travel budget to the RECD AmeriCorps staff, supplied equally from the travel budgets of RHCDS and RBCDS.

PRO: RECD now has AmeriCorps sites at over 100 locations in 19 states. Given the nature of the program, sites visits by staff are critical. Such site visits improve project management, build community support for the program, increase our

ability to effectively evaluate successes and challenges, boost Member morale, and create media coverage. This minimal travel budget suggested would allow the RECD AmeriCorps staff to personally visit a representative sampling of states and sites. The staff would be advised to pay particular attention to possible negative public perceptions and would be asked NOT to travel to popular vacation destinations during peak seasons.

CON: The funding would take resources out of already strapped agency travel budgets.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ISSUE # 2 - I recommend that you approve option 2.

DECISION BY THE UNDER SECRETARY:

Approve _____ Date _____

Disapprove _____

Discuss with me _____

ISSUE # 3 - PROVIDING STAFF TO MANAGE THE RECD AMERICORPS PROGRAM

OPTION 1. Continue current staffing pattern in which RHCDS provides one full-time staff and RBCDS provides on part-time staff, with no support staff being provided directly to the program.

PRO: This option would require the fewest staff resources from RECD.

CON: This option would allow critical administrative tasks to continue to go unperformed, thereby jeopardizing the future existence of the RECD portion of AmeriCorps.

OPTION 2. Approve a management structure with two professional staff and one support staff working full-time on AmeriCorps, working under the direction of a new political appointee who would work part-time on AmeriCorps. Victor Vasquez is currently working to obtain a political appointee on detail who would oversee AmeriCorps and other critical projects for the EZ/EC Initiative. Reporting to this person would be a career employee, David Gibson (currently with RBCDS), with the title of RECD Director of USDA AmeriCorps. A draft position description is attached. Reporting to Mr. Gibson would be Jim Coyle, who is currently the AmeriCorps coordinator for RHCDS. Also reporting to Mr. Gibson would be a support staffer at a GS-7 through a GS- 9 level, selected from somewhere in RECD.

PRO: This approach would allow us to benefit from the vision and leadership of a political appointee while maintaining institutional knowledge from career employees. I have worked extensively with David Gibson in conceptualizing and implementing the program and can personally attest to his professionalism, dedication, and sophisticated strategic planning skills. His continued leadership will be critical in maintaining the program under future Under Secretaries and Secretaries of Agriculture and in the (exceedingly unlikely) event that Administrations change next year. Jim Coyle would also continue to build upon his great institutional knowledge of RECD. A qualified support employee would round-out the team.

CON: This approach would require slightly more staff resources from RECD during a period of great budgetary stress.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ISSUE #3: I recommend that you approve option 2.

DECISION BY THE UNDER SECRETARY:

Approve

Date

Disapprove

Discuss with me

RECD DIRECTOR OF USDA AMERICORPS - DRAFT 10-5-94

A. INTRODUCTION

This position is responsible for the planning, designing, implementing and supervising USDA's AmeriCorps program within the Rural Economic and Community Development Mission Area. This will include development of program policies, operational procedures, budget development and administration and creation of systems necessary for operating RECD's AmeriCorp program. Program scope currently includes 125 AmeriCorps Members serving over 100 communities in 19 states. RECD AmeriCorps program responsibilities involves use of support staff and oversight of the 19 State Rural Development Coordinators and/or AmeriCorps State Contacts who are responsible for monitoring and supervising their states' program. This position works closely with the USDA Office of National Service to coordinate program development, delivery and administration, as well as four other USDA agencies with AmeriCorps programs. RECD Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community staff will assist this initiative in development of agency policies consistent with RECD's rural development mission.

B. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Builds an effective RECD AmeriCorps Rural Development Team by: Inculcating a high level of community development knowledge expertise among the AmeriCorps participants - enabling them to make the most effective use of their technical competence; Assisting communities and RECD state contacts to select participants with the requisite technical skills to make them effective in responding to community needs and for RECD's program requirements; Responsible for building an esprit and identity among EZ/EC AmeriCorps participants which will enhance their effectiveness and commitment; Implements and maintains a system of communication among EZ/EC AmeriCorps participants; Requests, evaluates and approves EZ/EC community's AmeriCorps Site Plan objectives and workplans for consistency with RECD mission and goals; Compiles and evaluates Member Progress Reports; Contributes the RECD AmeriCorps annual accomplishments to the USDA report to the Corporation for National Service (CNS); Responsible for training design and delivery for RECD AmeriCorps Members and State Coordinators and AmeriCorps State Contacts; Responsible for the timely compilation and reporting of information required by USDA and CNS as well as maintenance of Member and Program records and databases.

Integrates AmeriCorps into the EZ/EC program by: Working closely with EZ/EC staff to ensure that the AmeriCorps program goals and objectives are consistent with Empowerment Zone Enterprise Community program goals and objectives; Designs and implements the RECD AmeriCorps Strategic Work Plan; Incorporates AmeriCorps resources into the EZ/EC Community Service Plans (CSPs) and benchmarks; Monitors and evaluates AmeriCorps

participant's responsibilities in carrying out their portion of the CSP; Performs bi-annual evaluation of AmeriCorps participant workplans to ensure consistency with EZ/EC objectives; Work with EZ/EC staff to ensure maximum effectiveness of AmeriCorps participants in helping communities implement their strategic plans;

Incorporate AmeriCorps into the RECD's Strategy Program by: Integrating AmeriCorps resources into the community outreach portion of Strategy field staff (Coordinators) work program; Build a program in which SRDCs serve as mentors and resources to AmeriCorps participants.

Establish strong linkages to RECD Financial Programs by: Working with Financial Program Leaders to incorporate the AmeriCorps resources into program planning; reflecting Financial Program priorities in the RECD/AmeriCorps strategic plan and participant work plans; Assist Financial Programs in meeting their management and servicing goals through the use of AmeriCorps RDT resources.

Promotes the mission of RECD by: Focusing the resources of AmeriCorps on the issues of poverty, economic improvement, and increasing the capacity of rural communities to address pressing problems; Fostering the development of information resources and inter-agency networks which will provide support to the effort; Promote the integration of AmeriCorps resources into state strategic plans; And, works with the USDA's Office of National Service to develop support for RECD's AmeriCorps program objectives.

1. **KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY THE POSITION**

Demonstrated knowledge and experience in rural and community development principals, techniques, and practices sufficient to act as technical expert in training design, evaluating AmeriCorps project design, and supervision of local implementation.

Knowledge of rural, economic and industrial development practices, strategies, principals, and methods.

Knowledge of planning and growth management concepts, principals, techniques and practices.

Knowledge of RECD loan and grant programs and working knowledge of USDA and other US government financial and technical assistance programs.

Working knowledge of RECD, USDA, and Corporation for National and Community Service policies, objectives, and missions and ability to translate these complimentary goals into a single effective rural development program.

Knowledge of supervisory, personnel, and EEO principals and practices.

Ability to develop extensive and complex resources (human, informational, and technical) into a functioning system for support and enhancement of a nation-wide AmeriCorps field staff.

Knowledge of socioeconomic and cultural diversity factors nation-wide.

Ability to effectively express complex technical ideas, issues, problems or proposals, both orally and in writing to a wide variety of audiences through various means and in various settings.

2. SUPERVISORY CONTROLS

The incumbent reports directly to the RBS Deputy Director for Community Development who provides broad policy guidance. The incumbent independently carries out official assignments following existing practices and delegated authorities. He/she is considered the technical expert in the Corporation for National and Community Service and AmeriCorps initiatives. Within a framework of priorities, funding, and overall agency objectives and mission, the incumbent insures that AmeriCorps projects are developed, coordinated, and implemented using Federal, regional, state, local, and public sector funds and/or resources and involving broad private and public sector commitment to rural community and economic development.

The incumbent works independently and through regional and state staff to develop a supportive network of USDA organizations, rural development experts and national rural policy experts, community leaders, nonprofit organizations, colleges and universities, and business and industry in order to insure implementation of this national initiative. Decisions, plans, activities and recommendations are routinely accepted as presented. The incumbent is responsible for informing the RBS Deputy Director for Community Development of potentially controversial issues or problems with widespread impact.

The incumbent coordinates closely with the Director of the USDA Office of National Service as well as the other USDA agencies with AmeriCorps programs.

3. GUIDELINES

Guidelines include laws, broad agency and departmental policies on rural development, agency and departmental goals and objective, Corporation for National

and Community Service policies, laws and regulations of states and communities hosting AmeriCorps projects. Policies and guidance on rural development are broad in nature and incumbent must use extensive discretion in achieving AmeriCorps project success within this framework. Work is carried out independently, but the incumbent may seek assistance from the RBS Deputy Director for Community Development on complex policy issues. The work is evaluated by the Deputy Director in terms of effectiveness in carrying out the AmeriCorps initiative. Recommendations are, therefore, routinely accepted within the confines of national priorities and funding availability.

4. **COMPLEXITY**

Assignments involve the study, synthesis, and application of information from a wide variety of Federal, State, and local sources, legislation and regulations regarding the AmeriCorps initiative, EZ/EC, and agency priorities on national rural development. The incumbent is responsible for ensuring that these needs are met within a framework of providing critical services to local communities, meeting the experiential needs of AmeriCorps volunteers, as well as responding to the agency's mission. This will entail gaining consensus at the local community, RECD State and National Offices, the Department, and with the Corporation for National and Community Service.

5. **SCOPE AND EFFECT**

The purpose of this work is to develop, in conjunction with a variety of interested organizations, State Directors, the Deputy Director of RBS, and the USDA AmeriCorps Director, an effective rural development initiative within which valuable services are provided to rural communities. These services will enhance efforts to improve the social and economic quality of life of rural citizens and provide opportunities for the growth and development of rural youth.

6. **PERSONAL CONTACTS**

Contacts are with top management levels within RECD, high ranking officials of other Federal agencies at the national level, high ranking state officials and members of legislative bodies, and members of Congress and their staffs. Contacts also include college and university professors and business leaders.

7. **PURPOSE OF CONTACTS**

The purpose of the contacts is to work with all appropriate sources in order to develop and implement a national rural development strategy, in the context of the RECD mission and AmeriCorps. Contacts with state legislative and executive branch personnel is to obtain their commitment to the AmeriCorps program and to this approach to rural development. Contacts with top management levels in RECD are to help develop and clarify policy and regulations. Contacts with members of Congress are to provide input on the AmeriCorps initiative and obtain their commitment to AmeriCorps.

8. PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The work is primarily sedentary, although some slight physical effort may be required.

9. WORK ENVIRONMENT

This is a National Office, Rural Business Services Staff appointment with the work typically performed in a remote setting. It is anticipated the incumbent will allocate up to 25% staff time for State Office strategic planning assistance and program outreach. Communications will be maintained via RECD E-mail, Internet, Fax, land line and cellular phone, and electronic beeper service.

Work at National Office site will be approximately 25% of total staff time in order to attend RECD staff meetings and liase with USDA AmeriCorps office and other Federal agencies. Additional travel and work at State Offices and AmeriCorps sites on a regular basis.

Moderate to heavy travel is anticipated.

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.

January

Divider Title: _____



UNITED
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DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

January 30, 1996

To: AmeriCorps USDA State Coordinators

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

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

Subject: **INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING AMERICORPS QUARTERLY REPORTS**

As promised, enclosed is the quarterly progress report format for you to use each reporting period for the rest of the year. Even if you have already completed the first quarter report in the old format, please take a few minutes to adopt the information to the new format.

Changes in the New Format

Also as promised, the new format should take considerably less time and effort to complete. **We have made questions 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22, and 23 optional.**

Rather than continuing to require each operating site and/or cluster to complete lengthy written narratives, the new format will focus more on obtaining accurate numerical data for the entire state, as certified by each agency's state AmeriCorps coordinator.

Individual Site Progress Reports

Because your state reports should include basic Member enrollment and community service objective progress information for each operating site, **we no longer require that you submit individual reports for sites within the state.** However, you may, on your own, choose to require your sites to complete all or part of the new report format in order to help you compile the state report. In particular, you may want to fax or mail each of your sites the instructions for question 13, as well as that site's question 13 chart for reporting progress on the community objectives. You may find this process useful in your state for your own internal evaluation and continuous improvement efforts, but we again stress that we are no longer requiring you to collect such individual site reports.

The Two Most Critical Questions on the New Report

In exchange for significantly reducing your workload, we ask you to please pay extra attention and effort to the two portions of the report that are most critical:

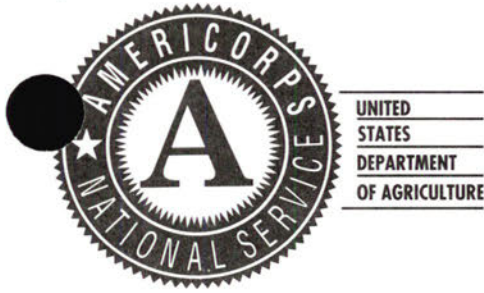
QUESTION 10. MEMBER DATA - It is vitally important for you to compare your list of enrolled Members with our list of Members for whom we have received enrollment forms. If we do not have a enrollment form for a Member, that Member is **NOT** formally enrolled and may **NOT** be able to receive health care, child care, and student loan forbearance during the program. In addition, make sure to fill out the hours of service performed by each Member and a code for their current status; this is necessary to meet our legal requirement to document Member hours served and to notify the Corporation for National Service as soon as Members enter and leave the program.

QUESTION 14. PROGRESS TOWARDS ACCOMPLISHING ORIGINAL COMMUNITY SERVICE OBJECTIVES - Rather than continuing to require lengthy written narratives explaining each project's progress, the new format asks you to simply fill in blank columns that report numerical accounting of each operating site's progress towards completion of the approved community service objectives. This is the single most effective way to measure the progress of every operating site.

First Submission Deadline February 26

The deadline is February 26 for submitting your state's completed report covering the first period (10/1/95 - 12/31/95) of the 1995-1996 AmeriCorps program year. Given this lengthy extension, we fully expect each state to meet the new, firm deadline.

We apologize again for the changing formats and late notification. Thank you for your understanding and assistance. If you have any questions about the new format, please contact your agency's national AmeriCorps coordinator or myself at (202) 720-5746.



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:

Attached are sheets concerning AmeriCorps Member data. The first type of 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 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 --- indicate 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 weeks. 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.

January 23, 1996

To: Arabella

From: Joel

Your revised version looks great! Thanks.

In addition to typos and minor style changes marked in red in the attached copy, please make the following changes to ensure that the final draft is consistent with my original:

- 1) Increase the point sizes throughout. Although the sizes you used might be the Departmental standard, but given the audience for our report --- which is likely only to skim it --- I think larger types would help. Please make the base font in the text of the two pages "Summary Highlights" and "Key Report Findings" in 13 points. Please make the base font size throughout the rest of the report in 12 points. (Obviously, the larger headings on those pages will increase proportionately.) I understand that this will increase the total number of pages.
- 2) Correct spelling of AmeriCorps in header on each page by making the "C" upper case and adding an "s" at the end of the word.
- 3) Add correct pages into table of contents.
- 4) Correct spelling of AmeriCorps in the charts, the map, and in the first headline on page 4.
- 5) Make chart "AmeriCorps/USDA Boost Volunteerism" into a full page on page ii.
- 6) Place chart "AmeriCorps/USDA 'Gets Things Done'" over chart "AmeriCorps/USDA is Cost-Effective" on page iv.
- 7) Make map into full page on page v. My staff will provide you with corrections on the counties to be shaded or not shaded. Please also place the headline "1994-1995 Program Year" on a separate line under the headline "AmeriCorps/USDA Site Locations."
- 8) Ensure that all questions and answers in the "Report Findings" section are bolded uniformly. Place all the questions in italics.
- 9) In the "Note to Quote" boxes on pages 6, 15, 16, 27, 29, 32, and 36, the attributions for the quotes expand beyond the margins of the box. Please keep all the text within the box margins by expanding the vertical length of the boxes and/or eliminating the centering on the attributions and instead making them left justified.

10) Ensure that all "Note to Quote" boxes have uniformly thick line on top.

11) Make chart "AmeriCorps Cost-Effectively Engages Citizens" into full page between pages 31 and 32. The right bar needs to be changed to the amount \$1,906.

12) Add "Quote to Note" box from Congressman Bereuter that was accidentally deleted from page 37.

13) Add official EEO/non-discrimination statement on back cover.

Thanks again.



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

January 18, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR USDA AMERICORPS/NATIONAL SERVICE
PROJECT MANAGERS

FROM: JOEL BERG *JB*
DIRECTOR, USDA NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM

SUBJECT: Acquisition of Clothing, Tools, etc for AmeriCorps Members

The Department's Office of the General Counsel determined in March of 1994 that the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, Pub. L. No. 103-82, 107 Stat. 785 confers upon the Department the authority to "conduct national service programs." (References are to Subtitle C, Part I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended.) The Act itself confers authority on those conducting programs to purchase uniforms, tools, equipment, etc. for members. Because AmeriCorps is a relatively new program, some procurement officials may not be aware of these authorities. Specifically, many USDA AmeriCorps projects require the members to have specific safety equipment/clothing or unique clothing and tools necessary because of the outdoor nature of the work such as wading boots, gloves, coveralls, steel toed shoes, etc. Some procurement officials may consider some or all of these items to be "comfort" items and therefore they will not approve the procurement of them. Please notify your procurement officials of the unique nature of AmeriCorps projects and that such items are considered normal and customary expenses related to the operation of the program, which means their procurement is covered under the authorities cited above.

Project managers are also reminded that they may accept donations from non-restricted sources (interested parties as defined in 7 CFR 0.735-12), in accordance with the provisions of Subpart 104-43.80 of the Agriculture Property Management Regulation, Amendment H, 12/9/86.

OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-90)

FAX TRANSMITTAL

of pages *1*

To <i>Mike Price</i>	From <i>Dee</i>
Dept./Agency	Phone #
Fax #	Fax #

NSN 7540-01-317-7368 5099-101 GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION


January 15, 1995

To: ~~Harris Norton, Shirely Segawa, Gene Sefer, Terry Russell~~

From: Joel Berg, USDA

Subject: Suggestions for Re-Authrizing Legilsation

Saving Federal Agenices

Would meet concerns of Grassley and Borden, while allowing the best Federal agency programs to go forward:

- unsaved*
- 1) Only serving areas that would otherwise go underserved, provide service unable by a non-profit, technical assistance, or cheaper.
 - 2) Never taking money from competing organizations, double preference, Federal agency required to provide technical assistance to competing organization
 - 3) Never Federal employees
 - 4) Increased matching requirement while set-up private foundations to do so
 - 5) Other other funds from Federal Government _ see Waldman
- Auth*

~~Long-Term~~ Strategy for expansion of All AmeriCorps

- Now 1 of 25% more*
- 1) matching funds for Universities
 - 2) Individual AmeriCorps Accounts
 - 3) School, to work transition money - jobs with companies
 - 4) Annual self-athon
 - 5) Clarify surplus military stuff

As you are better aware than anyone, the current program --- while bigger than the Peace Corps at its peak --- engages only a small fraction of the Americans who want to serve. Thus, for AmeriCorps to continue to

dramatically transform our entire society by eventually becoming a "right-of-passage" for all interested Americans, I believe we need to continue to work towards a program that engages a minimum of 100,000 citizens each year.

Yet even assuming that the President wins re-election and that the Democrats win back control of both houses of Congress in 1996 (which, of course, I do assume) --- the deficit makes it unlikely that an expansion to 100,000 Members yearly could be funded with mostly Federal money.

Consequently, even as we fight tooth and nail to maintain and expand Federal funding, I suggest that we give serious attention to bold new ways a to develop significant new funding streams.

To date, CNCS has done a remarkable job leveraging private and non-profit resources. Thus, my suggestions would only expand upon your successful work to date. Some of these suggestions would require legislative changes, but others could be accomplished administratively by CNCS:

1) Propose a new budget arrangement in which every two dollars of private or non-profit money raised by CNCS would be matched by one dollar of Federal money. Perhaps the Administration could propose a compromise in which CNCS' base funding would be leveled out at the amount already appropriated for FY95, but that all additional funds --- up to \$1 billion --- would be contingent upon a 2/1 ratio of private funds to Federal funds. *Chun*

2) Call Upon Universities and Corporations to Meet a "One Percent For Service Challenge." I understand that some universities have already begun matching the educational award with their funds --- this could be encouraged and expanded. Perhaps the President could challenge all universities, colleges, and trade schools to reserve one percent of their incoming Freshman classes for AmeriCorps graduates --- and then give the graduates full scholarships, thereby saving the Federal government from having to pay for use of their educational awards. Perhaps the President could also challenge all corporations to reserve one percent of their new hires for AmeriCorps graduates --- and then repay their entire student loan debts, thereby also saving the Federal government from having to pay for use of their educational awards. If even a sizable minority of higher education institutions and corporations take up this challenge, they could pick up the full costs of tens of thousands of educational awards.

3) Current AmeriCorps Members could be asked to contribute a very small amount of money to fund future AmeriCorps Members. Perhaps Members could be given the option of having \$1 dollar taken out of their stipends every pay period to fund AmeriCorps in future years. Even though most Members can now barely survive on their current living allowance, I believe that many would nevertheless make a special effort to donate their own funds to help save the program. While this effort would be unlikely to earn significant new revenue, it could send an important symbolic message.

4) Create AmeriCorps Savings Accounts (ASAs) to allow families to save money now to ensure that their children would get a future spot in AmeriCorps. Perhaps we could ask for legislation that would allow families to have a tax-free way to save money for a special account for them to fund part of the AmeriCorps service year for their children. Their children would still have

* to apply for --- and get accepted by ---- individual AmeriCorps projects and would still have to successfully complete 1,700 hours of service to receive the educational award. Both working poor families obtaining Earned Income Tax Credits (EITCs) and welfare families obtaining AFDC could agree voluntarily to save money for such an account by putting aside a small fraction of their yearly Federal payments; in order to increase their incentive, the Federal government could match the dollars they set-aside. These accounts would maintain the "no benefit without service ethic" of AmeriCorps while giving millions of families a direct stake in ensuring the long-term survival of the program.

5) Turn subsequent "National Days of Service" into Serve-A-Thons to raise money. If we engage only one in 200 Americans to perform a day of service sponsored by their friends and neighbors --- and if they raise only \$50 each -- then they would raise \$50 million for AmeriCorps while garnering tremendous public goodwill for the program.

Please let me know if I can be of any assistance further in fleshing-out or implementing any of these ideas.

Technical Amendments

1) Clarify diversity

2) Clarify transfer of PLUS Loans

3) ~~Clarify workmen's comp, liability~~ in sub

4) ~~Federal~~ hire preference Federal

5) End taxation of educational awards - treated same at the GI Bill benefits - dullutes idea that it is not pay

6) ~~Clarify child care - some way to make it more equitable~~

7) ~~Eliminate AFDC downside in exchange for two year cut-off~~

Sub PLUS military

Job Training

Q

(Clarify Food Stamps)

Feb. 21st

Feb 14

2.

79th

Relatively

1) Leg Politics

— 75%

Dommonhpi

Jeffrey Lewis — fat Leahy
JEFFORDS

Cohen —

SNOWE

~~scribble~~ Hatfield

~~scribble~~
Leahy Graig

BOND — Grassley

Nickels

Policy ~~scribble~~ ~~cheaper~~ Biller

Political

— Mikulsk

non-probit

2) Legal Point - Leg

3) message Point
Cheaper / Better / Rural