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UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

June 10, 1996

To: Dee DiFiore

From: Michigan USDA/AmeriCorps

Re: Member termination

Recently, one of our AmeriCorps members left our program. The reason she left is to pursue a career related job offer in New York City. She met the goals set for her at the beginning of the program and performed her duties in an exemplary manner. This same situation occurred last year with another of our members. He is now employed by a Soil Conservation District working on groundwater protection.

While filling in the exit forms, it became apparent that there is no appropriate category for members leaving for reasons other than what is defined by the Corporation as "compelling circumstances" or "cause". These members left to pursue career related activities, performed their AmeriCorps duties in a satisfactory manner and were a benefit to the AmeriCorps program. Although they did not fulfil their commitment, they did not violate any rules. It seems there should be a category for this circumstance, as there is in the military. If a soldier leaves duty prior to the end of his or her enlistment, the discharge is not necessarily "dishonorable". There are many types of discharge, including a general discharge. A sort of "general discharge" from AmeriCorps may be appropriate if the terms of the "enlistment" are not satisfied.

The spirit of AmeriCorps is to serve communities while in turn helping the AmeriCorps member pay for college. It would seem fair that if the member did achieve the set goals, thereby serving the community as intended, a pro-rated education award should be given. It does not seem fair to penalize the member for pursuing career goals if they did what they set out to do.

We at the state level are encourage by your interest in the welfare of our AmeriCorps members. Thank you for your support.