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USDA [Department of Agriculture]/AmeriCorps-Request for Members

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LOWER YUKON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
PO Box 242126, ANCHORAGE, AK 99524

September 26, 1995

To: Joel Berg
Director of USDA AmeriCorps Programs

Fr: Susan Anderson
Executive Director

Dear Joel,

I am writing to request your assistance in establishing a fourth slot for the Lower Yukon AmeriCorps project. Another Economic Development organization in the region is offering to pay the stipend for this slot. This would require only an educational award and provision of AmeriCorps training by the USDA.

Thank you for considering our request. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

PHONE 907-271-2424 OR IN-REGION 1-800-438-2213 FAX 907-271-3951

*Benjamin's
Fenu*

Facsimile Cover Sheet

To: Jim Coyle
Company: USDA
Phone: (703) 305-2218
Fax: (703) 305-2982

*Rosen**Demme*

From: John Thomas Jr.
Company: Rural Development
Phone: (505) 761-4960
Fax: (505)-761-4976

*Ann**Baker**308-340*

Date: 16 May, 1996

**Pages including this
cover page:**

Comments: I am requesting assistance from AmeriCorps members that would like to assist the AmeriCorps team in New Mexico provide assistance to victims of the Lama Forest fire. In this fire some 7,500 acres of forest was burned. Some 40 structures were completely destroyed or severely damaged. Some 30 families have been displaced. There is a need for approximately 40 volunteers to assist in the cleanup of the burned out homes. The USDA New Mexico AmeriCorps team is spearheading this effort. We would appreciate any assistance that can be provided. The boy scouts have provided tents to live in and the communities around the Lama have donated food to feed the families and volunteers. We would appreciate any assistance that could be provided to assist us with this effort.

*-735**Minimum of 5 Members**Sam
Westa*

path

602-514-7510



UNITED
STATES
DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

*** URGENT ***

REQUIRES IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

*** URGENT ***

5-16-96

TO: Victor Vasquez, Director,
Office of Community Development, Rural Development

FROM: Jim Coyle, Rural Development/AmeriCorps
National Coordinator

SUBJECT: Request for USDA/AmeriCorps Assistance

Attached is a request I just received from the Rural Development/AmeriCorps State Contact in NM requesting large-scale AmeriCorps assistance in the wake of the recent devastation in NM due to the Lama Forest fire.

Although the memo does not mention it, Rural Development/AmeriCorps Members are already working on site.

I am bringing this to your attention as I bring it to the attention of the USDA/Director of National Service, Joel Berg, for your mutual consideration.

Please call me at your earliest convenience regarding this at either (703) 305-2606 or -2218 (fax: (703) 305-2982).

Attachment

cc: Joel Berg

August 4, 1995

P. O. Box 547
Gonzales, Texas 78629

Mr. Joel Burg
USDA/Office of Communications
Administration Building
14th St. & Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

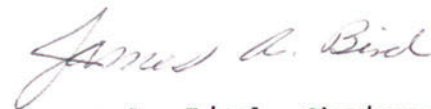
Dear Mr. Burg:

Very soon Congress will be considering funding for Americorps. A portion of this funding would be dedicated to use in Rural America. You are well aware of the inequities of Federal funds going to urban areas vs. rural areas and need no sermons on the conditions which make rural poor more disadvantaged than urban poor.

Should the rural portion of Americorps be funded Gonzales is likely to have the services for one year of an Americorps participant. This Champion Community plans to utilize such a person in the implementation of a housing plan. Such a person will be utilized in the collection of field information on specific homes to be upgraded, lots available for competitively priced homes, and families eligible for assistance in upgrading or building. A copy of the preapplication for Americorps volunteer is enclosed for additional information.

When this funding is being considered, please keep rural communities and specifically Gonzales, Texas, in mind.

Sincerely,



James A. Bird, Chairman
Gonzales Community Empowerment
Board

JAB:sfm
encl.

Hard copy follows facsimile transmission

AmeriCorps Pre-Application

City of Gonzales

1. OBJECTIVE

AmeriCorps member will work on implementing a program of upgrading substandard housing and a program of new housing construction for first-time home owners, will work on scheduling and recruiting local contractors and skilled laborers as participants for three (10 clock-hour) programs of instruction relative to renovation and construction of family dwellings, and will work with the local economic development coordinator in collecting data, writing proposals and making presentations to prospective industry expansion or relocations, .

2. Measuring the Success

The program will be judged successful based on the following anticipated results:

- * Plan of action for identifying prioritizing and recommending funding for units of substandard housing.
- * Development and implementation of a three-year plan for constructing houses for first time home owners on lots made available through the local taxing entities.
- * Write a minimum of five presentations for industry expansions or relocations.
- * Complete three programs of instruction relative to renovation and construction of family dwellings.
- * Write and submit three economic development related grants.

3. Accomplishing the Objective

The City Economic Development Coordinator, Sandra F. Mauldin, will provide day-to-day supervision for the Americorps Volunteer in conducting the activities described. The ED Coordinator will report to the City Manager and City Council on the progress of the program. The Community Empowerment Board, Inc. composed of community representatives will meet monthly with the AmeriCorps volunteer and the ED Coordinator for updates and planning.

The Community Empowerment Board, Inc. volunteer Board of Directors are:

City of Gonzales - Sandra F. Mauldin
Gonzales Memorial Hospital - Joni Dreyer
Gonzales Independent School District - James Bird
Housing Authority, City of Gonzales - Jeanette Green
Edwards Association - Clara Fryer
Chamber of Commerce - Dr. G. T. Kappmeyer
Members at large from original Enterprise Community Board
and representing each of the four council districts:
R. Kreis Alyea
John Carroll
Robert Rodriguez
Weldene Ehrig

The City of Gonzales will provide office space, equipment and supplies necessary to accomplish the proposed objectives. The office space will be provided at a City Office. Resources of the Texas Rural Development Council and the Central Texas RC&D will be accessed. The Community Empowerment Board will offer resource support based upon their professional abilities.

The Economic Development Coordinator and the Community Empowerment Board will assess progress and update the action plan on a quarterly basis.

In Closing

The AmeriCorps volunteer can bring the necessary communication and coordination time needed to pull together efforts that are presently underway by the local Community Empowerment Board, Inc. This program will allow the objectives to move from a volunteer base of limited time into a program of work on a daily basis. This program is expected to focus on primarily one or two aspects of the four points of accomplishment of the Community Empowerment Board, Inc. The focus is projected to be housing and economic development. The volunteer Board of Directors will then place their priorities on education and recreation. Much planning and organization has already gone into the four program initiatives. A summary follows:

EDUCATION - Volunteers and City Staff participate in a regional program for interactive video learning. The school district is in its second year of a five year program for establishing fiber infrastructure. The goal is to bring continuing educational opportunities to the work force and the potential work force.

HOUSING - Volunteers and City Staff are very involved in all areas of housing needs. Education of the citizenry to the problem that exists has been successful. A survey is being completed to gather data to substantiate the need. Programs are being researched and accessed that may be of benefit to the community. A rehabilitation grant has just recently been received. Plans will be implemented for a strategic planning process to develop a program of work. The statistics and information gained in the original survey by the enterprise grant volunteers will be used. The Community Empowerment Board feels that housing is the more appropriate area of work to make the greatest impact considering the resources available and the constraints on us.

RECREATION - Volunteers and City Staff have identified several areas of possibility for recreational development. Funds have been identified and are being sought. Support and assistance has been given to two new organizations in the community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - The City Economic Development Coordinator with the assistance of many volunteers has been involved in many community and economic development projects. These include several opportunities for doing better business in Gonzales.

The approval has been received to pursue an enterprise zone for Gonzales. Additionally a competitive electric rate for commercial/industrial customers has been approved. An ordinance is proposed to be passed. The City leadership is in the process of proposing a 1/2 cent sales tax assessment to the public in order to obtain the feelings of the citizenry. An educational process will be organized to determine how the community would want the money used.

Quality of life issues are a daily consideration and housing is a major issue to be accomplished before more jobs can be brought in. People are commuting to Gonzales for the jobs at present, because there is a lack of sufficient housing. Little if any building is taking place.

An AmeriCorps volunteer would enhance our ability to coordinate with the RECD offices and other allies in order to implement a program of work. On the other hand we feel the AmeriCorps volunteer will also benefit from working with the community volunteers, city government, school administrators and State and Federal agencies. Through this participation the volunteer will gain valuable experience in community and economic development that has been learned over the years.

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

610 Gold Avenue, SW - Suite 111
Albuquerque, NM 87102

TEL: 505-843-7643

FAX: 505-246-2232

September 28, 1995

FAX DELIVERY TO: 202-720-4614
ORIGINAL MAILED

Mr. Joel Berg
Director of National Service
USDA
14th and Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 200250-1300

RE: REQUEST FOR AMERICORPS VOLUNTEER

Dear Mr. Berg:

The Community Assistance Foundation has queried communities throughout New Mexico regarding program priorities. These communities indicate a wide range of specialized needs some of which are listed below:

Roy, New Mexico	Assistance with landfill closure Wetland liquid waste system Water lines are old and need replacement Other water system upgrades Basketball courts
Logan	Landfill closure assistance Location and removal of underground storage tanks Need new ambulance New liquid waste disposal system Assistance in obtaining water rights
Truth or Consequences	Landfill closure
Tucumcari	Locate old underground storage tanks
Springer	Landfill closure
Los Ranchos de Albuquerque	Liquid waste disposal - wetlands

The list is intended to convey the kinds of projects that some of our small communities require funding for. The potential funding sources are many and the communities require assistance in preparing funding applications. All of the projects

require some degree of community organizational effort to gain the necessary support for the community improvements.

New regulations in New Mexico require each community water association to have a certified operator. This will increase the cost of operating rural water systems by at least \$6000 per year per organization. It is feasible, however, for a single individual to operate 15 to 30 systems within a region of the state. Though assistance is presently available from the New Mexico Rural Water Users Association (which is funded in part through RUS TAT grants) their assistance comes only in training and is stop-gap at best in the field. CAF will seek funding for non-profit system maintenance personnel. The CAF trustee was a Peace Corps Volunteer many years ago in Cyprus and carried out similar functions for about 30 communities on the island of Cyprus. He also carried out extensive training programs among Cypriot nationals in both Greek and Turkish. He also quantified the water resources of 56 spring systems. The paradigm for this activity is already in place. These personnel will be under the direction of the CAF engineer and hydrologist.

We have identified another significant problem for many of our small communities that have been in existence for hundreds of years. Two decades ago, their engineers, understanding little about water rights, applied for permits for water for the communities instead of protecting their water rights by filing Declarations of Water Rights. This problem is now coming to haunt many communities that we have been in contact with such as Vallecitos and Punta de Agua.

We anticipate assisting many New Mexico communities in rectifying this problem and we have already discussed this matter with the New Mexico State Engineer whose father, ironically, was one of the engineers who created the problem. CAF personnel, some years ago, were instrumental in performing this service for 13 northern New Mexico communities in conjunction with Northern New Mexico Legal Services. The paradigm for this effort is already in place.

These activities are harder to implement than they may appear on paper because as an individual trained in community development and who has worked in community development throughout northern and central New Mexico, even small changes in a community are seen as a major threat by many residents. It is necessary to move slowly and it is necessary always to involve the communities in the planning of the project. The heavy-footed approach has resulted in burned homes and other vandalism in New Mexico in the past. While we as planners may envision wonderful improvements for rural New Mexicans only they can choose improvements and make them lasting improvements.

I have summarized below work to be done, the results, and the basis for measuring performance.

WORK TO BE PERFORMED AND SERVICES PROVIDED

- Establish contacts with beneficiary communities and identify their comprehensive programmatic needs.
- Identify potential water rights problems in 30 communities
- Work with community consultants to establish funding levels
- Identify funding sources such as:
 - The McCune Foundation (Private)
 - State of New Mexico Human Services Department, Income Support Division
 - State of New Mexico Environment Department, Rural Infrastructure Program
 - U.S. Rural Development Administration, Emergency Water Grant Program
 - State of New Mexico, Community Development Block Grant Program
 - The New Mexico, Community Foundation (Private)
- Submit at least 10 funding proposals to funding agencies
- Work with Punta de Agua and other communities to create non-profit entities where none exist.
- Work with communities in developing community support for projects
- Identify three operation and maintenance personnel.

SOUGHT RESULT OF ACTIVITIES

- Award of funds for identified projects
- Involvement of community residents
- Development of on-going planning process

- Training of community facilitators to continue the efforts of the Americorps volunteer
- Fund acquisition for full-time system operators.
- Filing of appropriate paperwork with the New Mexico State Engineer to secure water rights for old, pre-basin, communities.

CRITERIA FOR MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

- The award of funding to carry out identified projects is a quantifiable measure of success.
- The involvement of the community in projects and in future projects is a measure of success
- A quantifiable measure of success will be the number of community residents who benefit from the program.
- The number of communities for which water rights are secured will be enumerated.
- The employment of system operators to undertake multi-community system operation and maintenance.

STANDARDS FOR GAUGING SUCCESS

- Before and after analysis of beneficiaries served
- Improvement in health from improved quality water supply and liquid and solid waste disposal.
- For projects oriented toward youth, crime statistics may be evaluated.
- The creation of local expertise to continue the process after termination of Americorps assistance.

NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES REACHED BY AMERICORPS MEMBER

- Communities served have minimum populations of 100 people. For 10 communities, a minimum of 1000 people will be reached. It is

September 28, 1995

Community Assistance Foundation

more likely that the Americorps volunteer will benefit more than 10,000 people.

- The planning process within communities should be on-going and will result in assisting beneficiaries after project termination.

We hope this meets your needs in evaluating our application for an Americorps volunteer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "William M. Turner", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

William M. Turner
Trustee

cc: Mr. John Thomas



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Rural Economic
and Community
Development Services

4949 Kirschling Court
Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 341-0023
TDD (715) 345-0341
FAX (715) 341-4095

TO: Susan Anderson
SUBJECT: Additional AmeriCorps Positions
DATE: December 12, 1995

At the current time the Lower Yukon Economic Development Council, is sponsoring three Rural Economic and Community Development (RECD) Service AmeriCorps Members. At your request, both RECD and the USDA Office of National Service, give their permission for the Lower Yukon project to hire an additional AmeriCorps Member. It is understood that all costs associated with this Member will be borne by Lower Yukon. This will include the \$12000 living stipend, workman's compensation, liability, health insurance, child care (if required), and all other administrative and training costs associated with this Member. In return, the Corporation for National Service (CNS) will award the Member a \$4725 post service education award - if the Member completes the 1700 hours of service requirement.

It is further understood that the Lower Yukon Economic Development Council will follow all CNS and USDA policies regarding AmeriCorps Service. This will ensure a quality experience for the Member and the host community. Any questions regarding this arrangement can be directed to me.

Thank you and we look forward to a great project in Alaska.

David Gibson

cc: Joel Berg
Alvin Brown
Frank Muncy
Jim Coyle

PHOTO COPY
PRESERVATION



RAILS - to - TRAILS

CONSERVANCY

Pennsylvania
Chapter

September 13, 1995

Joel Burg
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Room 538-A
14th Street and Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Burg:

I hope this letter comes at a time when Congress has wised up and is intending to fully support the AmeriCorps program. Our programs are also under fire, and we anticipate a busy fall.

If your budget stays intact, I hope you give favorable consideration to creating an Empowerment Zone in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. This is home to our most important and most visited rail-trail corridor in the state - the Youghiogheny River Trail. When completed, the YRT will link up with the C & O Canal in Maryland and the Steel Heritage Trail in Pittsburgh to create the D.C. to Pittsburgh Trail. Stretching over 300 miles by 1999, this "interstate" trail will be a nonmotorized gateway to Pennsylvania and a national attraction.

While many think that recreation is the main purpose for building trails, actually the greater impetus is economic and quality of life. Rail-trails result in immediate economic gains and, more importantly, long term sustainable economic growth for the small towns they pass through. Bike shops, restaurants and related services spring up immediately around the trailheads. Besides increasing jobs, these communities capture again a part of their heritage, lost when the railroads shut down.

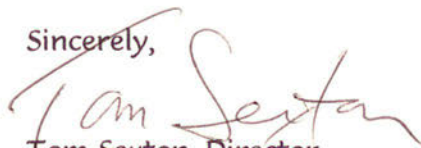
By creating an Empowerment Zone in Fayette County, you will facilitate the creation of viable businesses along this corridor and foster additional "spur trails" that will connect with this main corridor and create a network of trails in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Please call me if you have any questions or I can provide additional information.

Pennsylvania Chapter Office:
105 Locust Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-238-1717
FAX: 717-238-7566

National Office:
1400 Sixteenth Street, NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036
202-797-5400
FAX: 202-797-5411

Sincerely,



Tom Sexton, Director

TS/pdh