

PART I - FACE SHEET

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction														
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to conform to the Corporation's eGrants System)																
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):	3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE: 24-JAN-11	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER: N/A														
2b. APPLICATION ID: 11AC124450	4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: 09ACHCT0010002														
5. APPLICATION INFORMATION																
LEGAL NAME: Knox Parks Foundation DUNS NUMBER: 085068328	NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Ericus Adams TELEPHONE NUMBER: (860) 951-7694 19 FAX NUMBER: (860) 951-7244 INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: ericusa@knoxparks.org															
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 75 Laurel Street Hartford CT 06106 - 1345 County:																
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 060985421	7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit 7b. Community-Based Organization															
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box). <input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> A. AUGMENTATION B. BUDGET REVISION C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER (specify below):	9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: Corporation for National and Community Service															
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER:94.006 10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps State	11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Green Crew															
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Hartford, Connecticut, with some activities in immediate surrounding area	11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):															
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 09/01/11 END DATE: 08/31/12	14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="CT 001"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="CT 001"/>															
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: <input type="text" value="2"/>	16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS? <input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON: DATE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372															
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; font-size: small;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">a. FEDERAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 155,462.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. APPLICANT</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 380,309.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. STATE</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d. LOCAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e. OTHER</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f. PROGRAM INCOME</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g. TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 535,771.00</td> </tr> </table>	a. FEDERAL	\$ 155,462.00	b. APPLICANT	\$ 380,309.00	c. STATE	\$ 0.00	d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00	e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00	g. TOTAL	\$ 535,771.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
a. FEDERAL	\$ 155,462.00															
b. APPLICANT	\$ 380,309.00															
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e. OTHER	\$ 0.00															
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00															
g. TOTAL	\$ 535,771.00															
18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.																
a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Ericus Adams	b. TITLE: Program Director	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (860) 951-7694 19														
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:		e. DATE SIGNED: 05/17/11														

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Executive Summary

N/A. Told this was only for new organizations by Connecticut Corporation for National and Community Service.

Rationale and Approach

a) COMPELLING COMMUNITY NEED:

During the grant period, Knox's Green Crew will meet critical environmental needs in Hartford. Hartford is the capital city of Connecticut with a 350-year history of being the center of life in the region. It has tremendous cultural and architectural attractions and one of the most extensive and honored urban parkland systems in the country. Since the 1970's, the city has engaged in revitalization. It began to intensify in the 1990's, focused on downtown and the riverfront. For example, Adriaen's Landing now includes a major convention facility and a multi-million dollar science center as well as lodging, entertainment and retail operations that will make the site a local, regional and national destination. This revitalization focuses on high-level infrastructure work. The Green Crew attends to the needs of neighborhoods and general appearance of the city, which are not being addressed by the revitalization. According to the Mayor's Future Workforce Task Force Report, there are approximately 3,000 out-of-school youths in Hartford. This population is low income and at high risk of criminal activity, gang participation, drug abuse and violence, with most having been involved with the juvenile justice system at some point. The Green Crew provides 54 out-of-school youth the opportunity to improve their lives. There is also the deterioration of the urban forest as evidence of need. According to the acting City Forester, Hartford loses over 200 trees annually. Due to the city's budget crisis, the tree planting budget has been eliminated. The lack of resources to plant new trees and maintain thousands of aging street trees has compelled the city to encourage public stewardship of the urban forest. To better understand the deterioration of Hartford's urban forest, Knox Parks Foundation conducted an Urban Forestry Effects study in partnership with the City of Hartford, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Division of Forestry. This study confirms the City

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Forester's observation that not only is Hartford's tree canopy shrinking, but also presents evidence that many of the trees currently dying are Hartford's oldest, largest, and most valuable. Over the next three years, Knox Parks and the Green Crew will be an integral part of reversing this trend.

Nonprofit organizations in Hartford want to develop effective urban landscapes, but they cannot afford market-rate assistance and/or they appreciate the value of including Green Crew members and volunteers in the effort. They often ask the Green Crew to assist with landscaping and grounds maintenance at their facilities and historic property sites.

Knox has the only AmeriCorps program in Connecticut that covers environmental restoration and clean up efforts and are the only non-profit organization in Hartford that conducts environmental projects on a citywide level. This program has received multiple national, regional, and local awards, which we highlight throughout the narrative.

b) DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES AND MEMBER ROLES:

Through the Green Crew, Knox provides service opportunities for 18 AmeriCorps members annually for a total of 54 over the three-year grant period. By the end of the period, we will have recruited, supported and managed well over 5,000 volunteers from the neighborhoods, schools and community groups surrounding the environmental projects (at least 92 volunteers per member served). Members work alongside, assist and support these volunteers.

Most members will be older youth and young adults ages 17 to 24 who are out of school. Our experience is that nearly all members will be minority (African American and Hispanic) with 75% male and 25% female. Many will have children of their own. This is a needy population experiencing unstable living situations and a lack of purpose and self-esteem, because they believe they have little to offer. The Green Crew helps members overcome these hurdles, providing them with a safe and stable work environment, an opportunity for service and a chance to obtain job readiness and job skills that will serve them after they leave the program. Through their Green Crew experience, members derive a sense of self-esteem

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and civic pride in serving their community.

There are two enrollment points during each program year. We will begin our first enrollment for this three-year grant cycle in September 2010, taking in six full time members who have already completed one term under the previous grant. They will continue service work during fall and winter when the workload is more limited (September to February). These members receive special leadership training, planning responsibilities and guidance in preparation for the second enrollment point when they become crew leaders, taking on leadership roles among the crew. In March 2011, the second enrollment will occur to fill 12 part time slots. This brings the total to 18 members (6 full-time and 12 part-time). From March through August, the Green Crew will operate at this capacity. In September 2009, the program design was modified to provide leadership training opportunities to three additional returning crew members. The number of part-time spots changed from 18 to 12 to accommodate this.

The Green Crew operates year-round with members serving their community full time, typically from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The crews are on the road to their worksites after a morning meeting where the projects of the day are discussed. We provide members with on-the-job and life skills training and 40 hours of career-readiness workshops, civics training, and horticultural training to aid them in implementing the environmental projects and to provide them with job skills. Member development includes how to work with volunteers. Members will be paid a living allowance and receive basic benefits, including FICA, and Worker's Compensation. Full time members receive health insurance. The Green Crew offers members an opportunity to earn AmeriCorps Education Awards. Knox works with members to encourage them to complete high school or obtain their General Educational Development Certificate (GED) so they can redeem their AmeriCorps Certificate of Awards and attend a trade school or institute of higher education.

Knox aligns member slots with program design and activities. The first enrollment consists of 6 crew leaders. These crew leaders work with the Green Crew Manager and crew supervisors to complete service commitments through the fall while engaging in team building efforts, leadership training, and

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preparation for the new "class" of half-time members. Once the new class is recruited (the second enrollment), the crew leaders help guide the crews and serve as peer mentors for new crew members. Member training includes bi-weekly crew meetings with a portion of each meeting devoted to direct training in the areas of the world of work, life skills, and job training. Due to the nature of our work and the typical learning styles of our members, most training is on-the-job, begins with direct instruction, and is followed by a high level of supervision. Formalized classroom training topics over the course of a year include civics, leadership, team building, conflict resolution, small engine repair and maintenance, CPR/first aid, energy conservation, diversity, sexual harassment, recycling, environmental awareness, pesticide safety, food & nutrition, resume writing, and job search/interviewing. Starting in 2010, we will also provide training sessions in money management, general computer skills, and more extensive career counseling. The training, supervision, and personal development we provide is tailored to prepare members for their service projects and life after the program and often altered to fit the specific needs of each class.

Members perform direct service activities in order to advance the goals of the Green Crew program and Knox's mission that will result in specific services and improvements that otherwise would not be provided. These direct service activities address local unmet environmental needs.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES and MEMBER ROLES detail:

- (1) Neighborhood environmental projects - clean up, redesign, enhance, maintain, and plant over 30 neighborhood spaces annually. This includes development and maintenance of 14 community gardens, as well as Green Team and Helping Hands projects where government, community organizations and residents identify blighted areas that need improvement. Members help plan and design the projects. They carry out the work while assisting and neighborhood volunteers recruited to help.
- (2) Trees for Hartford Neighborhoods/ Other Tree Planting Initiatives - tree planting in Hartford neighborhoods to improve those areas and reforest the city. Members will work alongside neighborhood

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volunteers in concentrated tree planting efforts. The Green Crew helped to plant 623 trees through this program during the grants' previous three-year cycle. In 2010, the green Crew will plant hundreds of trees through collaborations at the regional and state level, planting 2 trees for every 1 removed by the MDC, partnering with the CT Urban Forestry Council and the DEP, and providing the workforce to plant trees for an initiative, 350 Trees for Greater Hartford.

(3) Hartford Blooms - enhancement of the downtown area and 7 neighborhood corridors with hundreds of flowering planters annually. Members raise seedlings, transplant, install and maintain them along city streets, and assist volunteers recruited to help.

(4) Landscaping for nonprofit organizations - improvement of land and historic sites managed by nonprofits. Members will work together on 26 projects annually.

(5) Through an agreement with the City of Hartford Department of Public Works (DPW), the Green Crew is now responsible for graffiti abatement and landscape management throughout the city. This past year, they removed graffiti from 295 sites and maintained 30 separate public green spaces.

All projects aim to provide direct measurable benefits to the community and occur in Hartford, CT. Trees are planted, thereby revitalizing the urban forest. Gardens are cleaned and improved. Grounds of nonprofit organizations are maintained and in better condition. Planters are placed and maintained in important community locations for beautification purposes. Acres of parkland are cleared of invasive plants. Tons of trash are collected from vacant lots and other public spaces.

Prohibited activities are carefully described during orientation, and all work is carried out under the supervision of trained staff to ensure members comply with rules on prohibited service activities. During training sessions, activities that are prohibited by AmeriCorps guidelines will be outlined to our members, and as trainings and activities are planned, careful consideration will be taken to avoid engaging in any of these prohibited activities while members are earning service and training hours or wearing the AmeriCorps Logo.

Members have not and will not be required to participate in any political campaigns. Members will not

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be involved in religious activities. However, members will work with and alongside faith-based groups such as the Christian Activities Council (which develops affordable housing) in carrying out service activities.

c) MEASURABLE OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES:

All graduating members will have completed an editable resume to assist them in life after AmeriCorps. Each will have a better understanding of how governments work and how to bring about change in neighborhoods. This outcome will be measured by civic scales filled out upon enrollment and exit. Members will be proficient in the operation of the tools and knowledge of commercial horticulture. This training will be accomplished through formal and on-the-job experience as the Green Crew provides landscaping. Tools include commercial mowers, trimmers, blowers, and hand tools. Proficiency will be measured by demonstration of skills. Members will be taught tractor operation and safety. They will learn the importance of trees through formal and on-the-job training as the Green Crew works with volunteers in tree plantings. All members learn proper graffiti abatement techniques and are certified as Graffiti Abatement Specialists by a representative from Sherwin and Williams. Crew members also will receive first aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation(CPR) training by Red Cross instructors and will receive certification cards on completion. A training program and certification for pesticide safety will be taught to 6 crew leaders. This will allow them to legally apply pesticides when employed by a licensed company, greatly improving their chances of employment after they graduate.

d) PLAN FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT:

Green Crew trainings and activities are logged daily. The log tracks progress toward performance measurement goals.

Green Crew staff meetings take place every morning and the work log is reviewed before daily schedules are made. Information pertaining to performance measure goals is discussed and schedules are adjusted

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accordingly to ensure that goals are met. Attendance sheets, volunteer sign in sheets, the results of questionnaires and monthly reporting are all valuable tools to keep track of progress toward program goals.

For continuous improvement, Green Crew program staff meet with the members every 2 weeks. Prior to this meeting, staff members encourage members in a brief writing exercise to share positive and negative experiences that they have had in the program during the previous two weeks. An ongoing dialogue keeps staff informed of any issues members have regarding the program. Team building sessions facilitated by a paid trainer enable members to provide anonymous feedback about a staff person, peer, or the program itself. This information is collected by the trainer, and first discussed with the program director. The director then discusses the issue with staff in the daily meetings. If the comments warrant it, a special meeting is called. Members are also involved in dialogue regarding program changes. Positive feedback is provided to members through certificates of achievement.

Since the Green Crew program provides community service, direct feedback from fee-for-service clients and community partners will be used to identify strengths and weaknesses. The program director will solicit feedback from community partners and clients and share this feedback with staff. The feedback will then be shared with the entire crew and staff during the bi-weekly meetings.

e) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

Community residents and organizations generally initiate neighborhood environmental projects by approaching Knox. Knox then publicizes and promotes the projects through its Green Thumb Print newsletter, circulation 12,000, brochures distributed to potential partners and participants, and flyers posted around the city by members. We also utilize the United Way's Volunteer Solutions Website and our own. Knox's page on the United Way's website is among the top five (out of 400) in number of "hits" received in 2009. We enlist residents from neighborhood-based groups who contact Knox for assistance in arranging their own work projects.

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Community volunteers have been involved in Hartford Blooms since its inception. A community review of the program was overwhelmingly positive and recommended further expansion. In 2007, property owners in Hartford's Business Improvement District (BID, or Downtown) approved establishment of a special services tax district to enhance services in the downtown area. As the long-time provider of beautification services in Hartford, the Knox Parks Foundation and the Green Crew are directly involved with BID's committees in planning and implementing enhanced improvement efforts, including managing the Hartford Blooms program.

For Helping Hands, Knox's partner is Hartford's DPW. The DPW is a stakeholder with a distinct interest in the program, because of its general responsibility for maintenance, improvement and use of all green spaces and parks in the city. Knox corresponds regularly with DPW staff to ensure that volunteer activities coordinate with DPW priorities. Ultimately, the DPW must render approval in order for the service projects to move forward. Their roles are to: (1) provide a list of green spaces for Helping Hands to target; (2) consult with Knox on the specific work to be accomplished; and (3) give permission for Knox to be at the green space site to carry out the proposed work. The DPW also assists Knox with logistical matters such as hauling trash away, providing wood chips for mulching and supplying dumpsters for litter pick up. Beyond this partner, Knox utilizes businesses and community groups as collaborators along with the Green Crew to ensure completion of Helping Hands' projects. With Knox oversight and support, the collaborators have extensive involvement in identifying, planning and carrying out the volunteer service projects benefiting Hartford's public spaces.

Ongoing community involvement throughout the three-year program period will happen naturally, because nearly all Green Crew projects develop at the impetus of community partners, stakeholders, and individuals. Community gardeners approach the Green Crew for help in improving gardens. Park groups approach the crew to assist in clean-ups and plantings. Neighborhood groups apply for participation in Trees for Hartford Neighborhoods. Merchant groups approach the Green Crew to provide planters and other beautification efforts. Nonprofit groups ask us to improve and maintain their

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landscapes.

f) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS:

The Green Crew is the only youth conservation corps in Connecticut. There is no danger of the program duplicating services provided by other Corporation-supported programs in the state. The crew collaborates by offering and supporting massive service opportunities for other AmeriCorps programs as needed (e.g., Hartford AmeriCorps/OPP, LEAP, and ASPIRACorps). We are the only Connecticut program that customarily provides such services.

g) POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION:

The Green Crew program was not designed specifically to be replicated, but it is viewed as a model. Many of its activities can be adapted by other groups. In 2005, it was recognized by The Global Service Institute as one of the 50 most innovative AmeriCorps programs, specifically in light of its ability to mobilize volunteers. Many of our programs which involve the Green Crew are replicable, including Helping Hands, Greater Hartford Green Team (monthly city/suburb volunteer project), Community Gardens, and Trees for Hartford Neighborhoods. The Connecticut DEP recently selected Trees for Hartford Neighborhoods for statewide replication. Materials are available describing each of these efforts and providing guidance on how they function.

Organizational Capability

1. SOUND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

a) ABILITY TO PROVIDE SOUND PROGRAMMATIC AND FISCAL OVERSIGHT:

Knox was founded in 1966 when Betty Knox established a trust fund to help improve the City of Hartford. For 40 years, Knox has carried out environmental projects, including park and street plantings and neighborhood beautifications and clean-ups. A listing of our programs can be found under Rationale and Approach, Description of Activities and Member Roles.

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Knox has been running crew-based efforts to improve and maintain city landscapes since the early 1980's. We expanded to a year-round program for adults in 1995 when we developed our first horticultural job-training program for welfare recipients. This program evolved to a full-scale youth conservation corps model in 2001 to serve out-of-school youth. The program offered full time year-round service opportunities for 2 crews of 8 youth, serving 40 youth over 18 months. The program provided crewmember development, employment skills, and life skills training. Seven youth received AmeriCorps Education Awards through the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps. Knox then operated an AmeriCorps Green Crew program from September 2003 to August 2004 with CCNCS discretionary funds. From September 2004 to the present, Knox has operated the AmeriCorps Green Crew program with CNCS funding and local CCNCS oversight. Knox is highly experienced in operating a youth conservation corps as described in this proposal. In fact, Knox Parks' AmeriCorps Green Crew was honored for Excellence in Corps Operations by the CorpsNetwork, which our program director received at a ceremony at the Capital Building in Washington.

Knox has developed a high capacity to manage federal grants. We are in the third year of our second three-year competitive AmeriCorps grant. We have received high marks during all AmeriCorps audits and site visits, and our state commission has used some of our systems as models for other grantees. We have successfully managed other federal grants from the EPA, the USDA Forest Service, Community Development Block Grants, and the Dept. of Labor.

The AmeriCorps grant will add value to our existing service activities by enabling them to continue and enabling us to provide more service. The Green Crew is essential for making the environmental projects happen, for providing volunteers with critical logistical support, and ensuring the projects are completed in a timely and professional manner.

b) BOARD OF DIRECTORS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND STAFF:

The Knox Parks Foundation has 12 board members responsible for overseeing the health of the organization and its focus on mission. It reviews the Green Crew's program direction to see that it

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maintains a close connection to Knox's overall mission. It also reviews financial performance, particularly to make sure the Green Crew is properly supported within the organization and that necessary resources are directed toward its operation.

Knox has six full-time staff members, three of whom work full time in the Green Crew program. We plan on hiring an additional Green Crew supervisor and a Development manager before the influx of part-time members this spring to ensure the Green Crew is adequately supervised and funded. The program director has general oversight of the program, setting direction, including business development, screening recruits, setting policies, developing projects, organizing training, and increasing member retention rates. Two supervisors provide day-to-day supervision of the Green Crew work crews (we are currently hiring a second). The Green Crew Manager also supervises a crew, but has responsibility for coordinating the work of the crews and building their productivity. Other staff, including the executive director, the finance operations manager, and the community network builder engage with the Green Crew as needed, providing administrative and financial/HR record keeping, assistance with training, liaison with the community, supervision, and program support. Fundraising staff includes the executive director and an associate who are responsible for donor relations and cultivation.

Key program and fiscal positions responsible for the Green Crew program include the following:
RON PITZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Ron has a degree in horticulture, a degree in business, and is a Master Gardener. Ron served as the Program Director of the Green Crew since its inception. Before the Green Crew, he coordinated welfare-to-work programs for Knox. Mr. Pitz expanded the fee for service, horticultural programs and strategic partnerships exponentially which helped to make Knox and the Green Crew sustainable. Under Mr. Pitz's management, the Green Crew AmeriCorps Program has received National and regional recognition as one the 50 most innovative AmeriCorps programs and the Excellence in Corps Operations Award from the CorpsNetwork.

MARY ORCUTT, FINANCIAL OPERATIONS MANAGER, joined Knox in 2009. She manages

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AmeriCorps grant funds. Mary is responsible for monitoring and reporting on finances, expenditures, and payroll (member living allowances and payroll for supervisory staff). Mary is highly experienced at managing federal grants. Before Knox, she managed U.S. AID Grants for several international non-profit organizations. She was hired for this experience as well as her extensive knowledge of financial planning and oversight.

ERICUS ADAMS, GREEN CREW AMERICORPS PROGRAM DIRECTOR: Ericus enrolled in the Green Crew Program as a member in 2003 and was promoted to Crew Leader in 2004. In 2005, she was hired as a Green Crew Supervisor and served under that title with ever-increasing responsibility. She was promoted to the position of Program Director in November of 2009 for her intimate knowledge of the Green Crew Program, her ability to be a role-model to crew members, and her vision for improving the program.

NIC WILLARD, GREEN CREW MANAGER, has a BS in Horticulture and 6 years supervisory experience. He is experienced in a wide range of work from tree maintenance to garden center operation to patio construction and planting. As supervisor, he has experience in getting the most out of the people who work for him and knows how to maximize resources. His management style works well with members and his range of experience will expand the offerings we provide the community.

NEFTALI MEDINA, GREEN CREW SUPERVISOR. Mr. Medina came to the Green Crew through Knox's job training program. He is fluent in Spanish. In the AmeriCorps program, he serves as crew supervisor, directly supervising members and volunteers on service projects. He provides training and supervision of members and volunteers at all work sites and assists Mr. Willard with the daily logistical details of running the crews.

CHARMAINE CRAIG, COMMUNITY NETWORK BUILDER, has been a community organizer, a staff person for a city councilwoman and an engaged community leader for many years in Hartford. For the AmeriCorps program, she is responsible for recruiting members and volunteers and facilitating member and volunteer service opportunities.

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c) PLAN FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT OR IMPROVEMENT:

Continuous self-assessment and redesign are hallmarks of Knox programs and operations. During bi-weekly meetings, staff are free to bring up issues and work out problems that have arisen. We extend that opportunity to the Green Crew, offering open discussion during bi-weekly crew meetings and weekly Team Meetings.

Ongoing assessment is strengthened by periodic formal planning processes. The most recent full scale process was a strategic plan completed in 2004. That was followed by a financial assessment and plan, a technology plan, and a revenue development plan, all completed in the past five years. Knox completed an assessment of the viability and growth potential for our fee-for-service activities during 2007.

d) PLAN FOR EFFECTIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

Knox has established relationships with several technical service providers who are prepared to assist as needed. Perhaps more importantly is one funder, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (HFPG) that has ongoing programs of funding technical assistance, capacity building, and organizational assessments to nonprofits. We are in the midst of a financial management improvement project funded by HFPG which should be complete in February 2010. The Foundation has reserved up to \$25,000 for this purpose. Additionally, we recruited a board member, Camille Livsey, who manages a business technology consulting firm. She has been instrumental in working with Knox and HFPG to identify and implement necessary technical upgrades for Knox Parks.

Training and technical assistance needs have been identified through assessment processes involving staff, the board, community members, and consultants. In addition, individual staff identify emerging needs for such assistance during the bi-weekly staff meetings. We budget some money for training each year.

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2. SOUND RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS AN ORGANIZATION

a) VOLUNTEER GENERATION AND SUPPORT:

For neighborhood volunteers living in the neighborhoods where we are developing a community garden or working on a restoration or beautification project, Knox recruits through existing networks within the targeted area. These networks may include the neighborhood development or beautification committees, community based non-profits, and park groups. We will sponsor Volunteer Days at several community sites, which draw in volunteers from the neighborhood and from organizations that want to participate.

We also recruit middle and high school students who have service learning requirements. We recruit such groups through the local school system and through our network of teaching and guidance staff who help us make those connections on other projects. We also have ongoing relationships with several high schools whose students work with us on various environmental projects.

For local college students and employees from service and nonprofit organizations, we use our existing connections with these groups to recruit volunteers. Trinity College's Community Service Office is a primary contact, resulting in three to four annual service opportunities with groups of 10 to 25 Trinity students per project.

Knox began utilizing the local United Way's Volunteer Solutions Website in 2006. This website attracts thousands of prospective volunteers annually.

There are no formal position descriptions for volunteers, because they are asked to perform different tasks. Such tasks include transplanting flowers, picking up litter, trimming planting bed edges, building raised garden beds, planting trees and shrubs, etc.

Support includes providing volunteers with an orientation to Knox at the beginning of each project. The orientation includes a description of the work and its value to their community. Volunteers are trained onsite to safely carry out their work. The crew supervisor assigns appropriate tasks to each volunteer. There is self-screening among volunteers who are free to decide whether they can or want to participate

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once expectations are made clear. We do not screen volunteers out, but screen them for different tasks by making the physical requirements for a project clear. For the school groups, the group leader decides who is appropriate to attend. The orientation combined with the close monitoring of members and volunteers by crew supervisors ensures a safer, supportive, and more positive citizen service experience.

Knox always obtains volunteer contact information at the start of every project. Knox's Community Network Builder will follow up with the volunteers after their service activity has concluded in order to express appreciation, offer additional volunteer opportunities, and ask for feedback on individual experiences.

The projects that members are involved in are highly appropriate for volunteer participation. Therefore, volunteers enhance the city's physical and environmental condition. They will further support Knox's mission by multiplying the impact of members who are working on the projects. By engaging 5,000 volunteers and 54 members over a three-year period, the Green Crew will meet local needs, increase civic engagement and civic pride, increase volunteerism, strengthen communities, and educate more people about horticulture. This growing pool of volunteers expands the capability of Knox and the Green Crew to improve Hartford.

b) ORGANIZATIONAL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP:

Knox is the only organization in Hartford providing leadership in the area of environmental beautification. We are consulted whenever there is a project involving parks, rivers, gardens, tree planting, or related subjects. Knox staff serves on such groups as the National Youth Service Day task force, the landscape planning committee for the Ancient Burying Ground, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, the Hartford Neighborhood Environmental Partnership, the board of Hartford Areas Rally Together, and so forth. We have taken on responsibility for running the citywide spring clean-up program and the Hartford graffiti removal program. In 2010, Knox and the Green Crew will lead the reforestation of Hartford through various tree-planting initiatives in Hartford. We will be

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coordinating funds, support, and projects with the City of Hartford, MDC, DEP, the Center for Serenity (local non-profit) and the InterReligious Eco-Justice Network to halt the deterioration of Hartford's forest and begin reversing (instead of slowing) this trend. These partnerships and projects all fall under "2010: The Year of the Urban Tree," a highly visible outreach campaign to educate the Greater Hartford area about the importance of city trees and what is and can be done to help them.

c) SUCCESS IN SECURING MATCH RESOURCES

In general, we have had little difficulty securing the match for the Green Crew grant. Most important is fee-for-service revenue that has provided the most significant portion of the match. Nonprofit organizations have been happy to work with us. Our prices have been competitive, our responsiveness is high, and the quality of our work surpasses that of "low-bid" contractors commonly used by nonprofits. Further, they are happy to support a group of local young people with their landscape maintenance dollars. We have found a number of grant funders who feel the Green Crew meshes well with their funding priorities. The addition of a development associate (and the soon to be hired development manager) will allow Knox to market the Green Crew to a wider pool of funders.

3. SUCCESS IN SECURING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

a) COLLABORATION:

Nearly all of our work involves collaboration with other organizations. The numerous park friends groups are very happy to host the volunteer groups that come to us looking for service opportunities. The City of Hartford, DPW and the City Forester are constant correspondents as we identify community needs and focus Green Crew and volunteer efforts on them. The Downtown Business Improvement District is our partner in making Hartford a more beautiful and better maintained city. Civic groups and local non-profits seek us out for assistance when they want to improve their neighborhoods, and we rely upon them to assist in reaching neighborhood residents. Several local groups have become significant

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partners around volunteer activities. Most notable are Trinity College, Hands on Hartford, and the insurance companies, ING and Travelers. Each can be counted on for providing several groups of volunteers each year.

b) LOCAL FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS:

With the exception of the AmeriCorps grant itself, nearly all support for the Green Crew and its activities has been local. Fee-for-service revenue is from local groups, and all but a few thousand grant dollars a year comes from local grant makers. We have managed to add new funders each year on both the grant side and in fee-for-service. As previously stated, we have diversified our fee-for-service support through a 10 year partnership with the MDC. In the past year, we have increased individual and held grant revenue almost steady despite the economic downturn and its affect on giving. We have also brokered partnerships with two major corporations located in Hartford, ING and The Hartford. ING approached us first as a source of volunteers. During 2008, we added them as a program funder. ING has also made substantial contributions toward tools and supplies connected with their volunteer days. The Hartford has agreed to host our annual fundraising gala, CityScapes, on the top floor of their tower for free, and we are currently working with their community support staff to add The Hartford as the title sponsor of the event. Timberland provides the Green Crew with water-proof work boots every year, which allows the Green Crew and Knox to avoid this necessary expense.

c) WIDE RANGE OF COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS:

Knox is over 40 years old and has a long and positive relationship with a wide range of community stakeholders. We benefit the entire community through our beautification efforts and we directly assist all kinds of groups including neighborhood groups, schools, service organizations, and so forth. The Downtown Business Improvement District is our partner in beautifying the downtown area. We have developed a strong partnership with the DPW, taking on maintenance of over a dozen public spaces that

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could not be maintained by City crews. As a result, Knox/Green Crew efforts will be greatly expanded, and we have also taken over graffiti removal and spring clean-ups. As circumstances change, our relationships shift and grow.

d) SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The Green Crew operates in Hartford, a city consistently ranked among the poorest cities in the Nation, and Knox complete many of the landscaping projects City governments routinely do in other areas. As previously stated, we serve a particularly needy subsection of Hartford's population, out-of-school youth, who require more training, support, and services than other AmeriCorps programs.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

1. COST EFFECTIVENESS

a) Corporation Cost per Member Service Year (MSY):

Knox is cultivating local corporations and foundations to provide support for elements of the Green Crew. Through this and fee for service work, the Green Crew becomes more self-sustaining each year. Despite these efforts, we would be unable to operate the Green Crew at its current level of success without funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service. Knox builds its community connections, becoming a key to neighborhood and city wide improvements. This year, we will work with five neighborhood groups to improve the urban forest. We will lead seven community organizations to host 10 monthly volunteer efforts. We will link to efforts to rebuild neighborhoods, improve schools, and encourage citizens to take stronger roles in their community.

The Green Crew has secured over \$350,000 in fee-for-service work and program grants for the current program year. Nearly all funding is renewable. We have initiated promotional efforts to increase community landscaping efforts. With the Crew in place, we are able to offer a responsive team to carry out a wide range of projects and are able to attract all sorts of interest.

Narratives

b) DIVERSE NON-FEDERAL SUPPORT:

Although we characterize support for our program as largely fee-for-service contracts and private grants, the nature of that support is diverse. Grants for the program have included support for our efforts to improve retention, living allowances for crew members, program staff to enhance programming, and money to purchase vehicles and equipment. Grants have ranged from \$2,500 to \$65,000 .

Fee-for-service revenue has ranged from small contracts under \$1,000 primarily for service to private individuals to a \$75,000 contract that supports our efforts around downtown beautification. A nonprofit group has hired us to mow around the colonial era stones in the Ancient Burying Ground, because we do a particularly careful job including much hand work. The YWCA employs the Green Crew to maintain their properties' landscapes because we provide the service at a lower cost and supporting disadvantaged young people complements thier mission. In many cases, nonprofits know that they need to take good care of their grounds in order to be good citizens and welcome their clients, but they have nobody on staff who is knowledgeable. They come to Knox because they feel they can trust us to provide good advice and good service.

At this point we have significant non-Corporation resource commitments that extend into the 2009-10 program year. We have developed substantial funding that is readily renewable, and we are on track to increase that. The primary source of match funds is fee-for-service contracts to improve and maintain landscapes for nonprofit organizations and government agencies. Committed funds for 2009-10 approach \$200,000 with more contracts in discussion. Private grants are the other source of matching funds. This program year, committed funds exceed \$26,000 and our development associate applies for support for the Green Crew at least twice monthly. For in-kind support, we received boots donated by the Timberland Company for the new crew and we receive large quantities of mulch and compost for landscaping projects.

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c) CURRENT GRANTEES ONLY: DECREASED RELIANCE ON FEDERAL SUPPORT.

The Green Crew program has been operating at a cost sharing level far beyond that required by the corporation. We recognize the limit on the cost per MSY, but we also recognize the cost of providing a program that addresses environmental needs and serves young people facing challenging circumstances. We have always provided more than 100% match of the Corporation share of the program. Following completion of a Revenue Development Plan in 2007, we determined to refocus our efforts on expanding fee-for-service revenue and support from individuals. We have stepped up generation of fee-for-service contracts and continually re-assess the potential for continued expansion in that area.

2. BUDGET ADEQUACY:

Our budget is definitely adequate to carry forth the program. Last year we added an additional staff person to help build self sufficiency and strengthen retention.

Compared to other AmeriCorps programs in Connecticut, Knox's cost per Green Crew member is higher. Although it does not directly affect the cost of the program, it is worth noting that it operates in Hartford, which is among the poorest cities in the U.S. in terms of per capita income. City government is dependent upon property taxes to support services, and 44% of property in the city is tax exempt (government, non-profit, open space). This affects the viability and cost of the program in two ways.

First, the City needs Knox and the Crew to take responsibility for efforts that might be considered municipal services in other cities. Recognizing that fact, the city has committed to Community Development Block Grant funding for crew member living allowances. The City has also allocated \$100,000 during its 2008-9 fiscal year to engage the Green Crew in maintaining and improving public spaces that City crews are unable to manage.

Second, we are serving an especially difficult-to-serve population, out-of-school, inner-city youth. We have chosen to recruit our crew members from among a difficult to serve population within the generally low-income population of the city: out-of-school youth. Not only do these young people come

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from an environment of limited resources, but most of them have dropped out before completing high school, most of them were raised in single-parent households, and most of them suffer from very unstable living situations when they join the crew. We have had several crew members who were effectively homeless at times during their terms of service. To serve this group, we have made some program decisions that in other circumstances might seem unnecessary or excessive. In particular, we provide all work clothing and equipment, far beyond the basic T-shirts and such that some other programs provide. This not only creates a uniform appearance for the crew, but it relieves members of the burden of providing appropriate work clothing. We provide bus passes for all crew members. Although Hartford is a small city, transportation is often a challenge. The passes not only enable crew members to get to work on time, but they help them deal with life challenges that occur outside the work day. Finally, life stresses are significant distractions from the crew. Last year, we promoted a former green Crew member to Program Director. Since she has been in the same shoes, she knows what tools members need and can identify with and counsel them on a more personal level.

We have significantly modified the program budget this year to include all expenses related to Green Crew activity. In the past we have not included all program supplies and incidental costs related to projects because they seemed incidental to the overall operation. For instance, although tree planting was always a significant part of the crew's work, we never included the cost of the trees themselves or the rental of an excavator necessary to dig the planting holes. However, because many of these expenses are covered by fee for service income and rules have changed around accounting for those funds, we have included them all in the budget.

The other affect on the cost and viability of the program is the competition for private grant funds. The demand for funding for basic needs like food and shelter have captured the attention of many local and national funders. In the current funding climate, it is difficult to make a compelling case for funding environmental improvements or even programming for older youth and young adults. Knox has met this difficulty by hiring a development staff to communicate our message and merits to funders more

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professionally, and in in-person meetings with corporate, private, and individual funders. We have already seen positive results from this and expect to be able to publicly share the results of this over the next few months. Although we have been able to create a financially sound program, we are operating in a particularly challenging environment.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

During 2007, Knox worked with the National Executive Service Corps to produce a business-oriented evaluation of the program. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the potential for growth and self-sufficiency of the program. Although the research indicated solid potential for increasing fee-for-service income, growth models suggested that a significant level of grant support would be required for the foreseeable future. This is because we endeavor to serve the complex social needs of disconnected, inner-city youth who will always require a high level of attention and support. It appears unlikely that a program funded entirely by fee-for-service income would generate enough "surplus" to cover all associated costs. Further, as we have learned from our current expansion efforts, growth requires infusion of substantial amounts of capital for purchases of new equipment and for the working capital necessary to support an operation that relies on billings and serves nonprofits and governments, entities that are notoriously slow to pay their bills.

Current evaluation plans include renewal of our Excellence in Corps Operation (ECO) certification through the Corps Network. This will particularly focus on two important aspects of our operation. One is our ability to adequately meet the needs of our target corpsmember population, specifically our ability to increase retention and to find suitable work placement at the end of their terms of service. The other is our ability to further professionalize both the work components of our program and the training and member development components.

Finally, we have contracted Whitley and Hadley to audit to the AmeriCorps Program.

Amendment Justification

N/A

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Clarification Summary

CLARIFICATIONS FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2011-2012

1.) We corrected the calculation. We changed the original \$49,087 to \$48,709.

2.)

FICA. PD: $44,000 \times 7.65\% = 3,366$; GCMM: $(40,425 \times 75\%) \times 7.65\% = 2,319$; JS: $(30,335 \times 75\%) \times 7.65\% = 1,740$; SS: $(35,000 \times 75\%) \times 7.65\% = 2,008$; CNB $(50,000 \times 25\%) \times 7.65\% = 957$

WORKERS COMP. PD: $44,000 \times .32\% = 141$; GCMM: $(40,425 \times 75\%) \times 6.46\% = 1,960$; JS: $(30,335 \times 75\%) \times 6.46\% = 1,469$; SS $(35,000 \times 75\%) \times 6.46\% = 1,695$; CNB $(50,000 \times 25\%) \times .32\% = 40$

UNEMPLOYMENT: PD: $44,000 \times 5\% = 2,200$; GCMM $(40,425 \times 75\%) \times 5\% = 1,516$; JS: $(30,335 \times 75\%) \times 5\% = 1,138$; SS: $(35,000 \times 75\%) \times 5\% = 1,312$; CHB $(50,000 \times 25\%) \times 5\% = 625$

HEALTH INSURANCE. PD: $517/\text{month} \times 12 = 6,201$; GCMM: $311/\text{month} \times 12 \times 75\% = 2,799$

DISABILITY INSURANCE, PD: $225/\text{month} \times 12 = 2,700$; GCMM: $255/\text{month} \times 12 \times 75\% = 2,300$

3.) The snow shovels are used all 12 months of the year. Additional uses include: debris removal, fall clean up, spring clean up, and sand removal.

4.) Tool counts exceed the number of members due to loss, breakage, and to replacement parts.

5.) Each uniform has AmeriCorps Connecticut logo prominently displayed on the right sleeve of each shirt.

6.) Due to heavy usage, the landscaping tools are rotated out on a schedule that includes a predictable two-year life expectancy. Therefore, over a three-year period, a proper tool inventory ensures an

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appropriate number of tools for each member's needs.

7.) Consultant Costs for Member Training has been moved to Section F in the budget.

8.) Consultants provide the training materials. We have included the cost of lunch in the \$500 figure for each day of training.

9.) Background checks are conducted by the CT Dept of Public Safety and fulfill the criminal background check requirements. No budget adjustments are necessary on this line item.

10)

FICA. FT Members: $(12,100 \times 3) \times 7.65\% = 2,777$; HT Members: $(6,050 \times 18) \times 7.65\% = 8,331$

WORKERS COMPENSATION: FT Members: $(12,100 \times 3) \times 6.46\% = 2,345$; HT Members: $(6,050 \times 18) \times 6.46\% = 7,035$

HEALTH CARE. FT Members: $(140/\text{month} \times 3) \times 12 = 5,040$

11) Section I Total: 316,361 + Section Total: II 170,728 = Total: 487,089 x 10% = 48,709

12) There are different graffiti remedies for different surfaces, with rough or porous surfaces like brick being the most difficult and time consuming to clean. The only way to remove this graffiti is to apply a professional grade solvent, wait two hours, and then pressure wash the solvent and graffiti off. For non porous surfaces, Knox utilizes a power sprayer and/or paint.

This is a service project that is a natural part of the work week for the crew, connecting them intimately with blight clean up and beautification of the city, thereby increasing each crew member's civic pride. We do not have a designated amount of time dedicated to graffiti remediation, but respond

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to calls for remediation reported to a hotline.

13) We are not taking work away from municipal workers; nor does our work replace the work of city arborists. Crew members do not operate the excavator.

14) Training provided by the City of Hartford Youth Services Department is on-going and fulfills the requirements for our program.

15) All members are trained on safety and power equipment operation prior to using each tool. Daily supervision is provided by supervisors at job site at all times.

16) Our first narrative no longer reflects actual enrollment figures. Originally the program represented 6 full-time and 12 half-time crew members. In 2011, we were able to modify the participant count to represent 3 full-time and 18 half-time. The new total number of members improving their lives for these two years is 39; this represents 24 MSY for two years. The new total for the number of members improving their lives for three years will be 60, and 36 MSY.

17) The GED program is tailored to fit each individual member. Each crew member enters the program with different levels of education. We are able to sync each member with GED training through enrollment which runs simultaneously with work; typically we adjust the individual's work and training schedule to accommodate GED needs. Others are referred to Hartford Adult Ed for evening GED programs.

We had a total of 5 members from last year's program who needed to complete their GED. One member is still enrolled in GED training. Another has obtained her high school diploma. One was re-incarcerated before the program ended. The other two members have not responded to our repeated

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attempts to contact them.

18) The purpose of the money management is focused on personal finances management: creating a budget, managing cash flow, using a check register. The skills learned are applicable to business money management as well. We are working with a local bank to provide specialized training appropriate to the needs of the crew members.

19) The program includes ongoing community development: coordination and participating in volunteer initiatives, opportunities to work one on one with community leaders (the mayor of Hartford, city council members, clergy leadership, etc.), and training specific to the impact green initiatives on the community.

Evaluation surveys to measure impact and success are given to each member prior to beginning the program, mid-way through the program and at the end of the member's term. The surveys measure the impact the program has had on crew members' life view, job skills, career goals and citizenship.

20) Volunteers participate in many ways: committee participation, strategic planning, marketing and in the field providing landscaping, tree planting and litter clean up. We track the volunteers through a paper registration form filled out on site at each event. The paper forms are then entered into a computer. We can track attendees as individuals and have the capacity to run a report based on participation by name, automatically eliminating duplications.

21) We have chosen to keep the beautification measure which describes maintaining plants in the city in the application. This outcome is tied to teaching responsibility for job tasks. The outcome is more than just planting flowers and putting a pot on the street, we are teaching responsibility for living things, the need to continually nurture and monitor work projects and the ethics of maintaining responsibility for

Narratives

one's job.

22) We have chosen to leave in the volunteer generation and management piece. This component is on-the-job training critical for civic involvement, leadership development and confidence building. The majority of the team members have limited involvement in community improvement projects and the volunteer piece is the way we communicate this to the crew. The crew sees volunteers willingly participate, (not as a result of court ordered sentence) and this sets a strong example of citizenship for the crew members. The crew practices new leadership skills during volunteer projects, sometimes advising on correct tree planting procedures and sometimes demonstrating how to mulch, etc. They also gain confidence as they become leaders in the field. We cannot remove this section, as it builds the leadership and civic responsibility for each crew member.

23) We feel strongly about leaving the volunteer component in the program. It is a core value at Knox, and is part of our mission statement. We have integrated volunteerism through out the AmeriCorps Green Crew program. It is through volunteerism that we teach civic involvement. It is through relationships with volunteers that leadership skills are developed in each crew member. It is through volunteers that we connect our crew members to a variety of cultures, ages and opportunities. In addition, crew members are often working side by side with college professors, nonprofit leaders, municipal employees, and entrepreneurs. They are exposed to a wide variety of career paths and to people from many walks of life. We cannot imagine our program functioning as well as it does without a core volunteer component.

24) Knox Parks Green Crew has opted to NOT participate in the National Performance Measure Pilot. We will change the program outcome (25% increase in ITree Canopy Coverage) to an intermediate outcome.

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25) Invasive species compete with native plants, choking them out of the habitat. Invasive species rob the soil of nutrients and space, and prevent re-growth of native species. We anticipate removing invasive species on 50-75 acres of park land. Removal of these invasive species will enable native species to thrive and provide natural habitat and food for native wildlife.

26) Rather than create a new performance measure, we will clarify expectations to the performance measure already written for resume building, and we will add intermediate outcomes regarding high school diplomas and job placement.

27) In 2011, we were able to modify the program count to represent 3 full-time and 18 half-time. The total number of members improving their lives for one year is 12 MSY.

Continuation Changes

YEAR 2

I. Applicant Info and Application Info: No changes

II. Narrative

We have made changes to the program either at the request of the Connecticut Commission on National and Community Service (CCNCS), or to comply with the Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity and CCNCS guidelines and application instructions, or to improve the quality of our program. We provide the following information in order to give a full and accurate accounting of the current status of our program.

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1) Change in number of members served annually or total number of members for 3 year period: During the final year of our last 3 year grant (2009-2010), we shifted 6 of our part time member slots to 3 full time member slots to provide more members the opportunities full time slots provide (namely more extensive training and a wider variety of service opportunities). Although this change did provide more training, the majority of green service projects occur outside during warmer weather. We reverted to the old member slot structure (18 part time and 3 full time) for this 3 year grant cycle in order to accommodate this and provide more inner city young adults the opportunities the Green Crew provides. The budget now reflects these changes (63 members served over a 3 year period instead of 54 or 21 members served annually instead of 18).

2) COMPELLING COMMUNITY NEED: During last year's clarification period, Knox was advised to clarify the community needs addressed by the Green Crew program. The community need is not due to the City of Hartford's lack of funding to care for its green spaces. Knox Parks (Knox) provides fee-for-service work to the City of Hartford to provide funding for the Green Crew program and to provide program participants job experience. The community needs met by the Green Crew are the out-of-school young adults in Hartford who lack the education and job skills to lead self-sufficient lives (as evidenced by the Mayor's Future Taskforce Report, see narrative) and Hartford's environmental decline (as evidenced by the City Forester's observation that Hartford is losing its trees at an alarming rate and a tree canopy study conducted by Knox in conjunction with the City of Hartford, U.S. Forest Service, and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Forestry, see narrative). By providing the opportunity to receive life skills, workforce skills, and real world experience to this population, Knox and this AmeriCorps grant help them overcome life's setbacks, many of which are not their fault. Members then provide environmental stewardship to Hartford through tree plantings and green space management and creation. The trees they plant through many of Knox's programs especially contribute to reducing the effects of climate change and Hartford's extremely high rate of respiratory

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illness. For independent research on these community needs please see last year's clarification summary.

3) MEMBER OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES: These narrative sections were removed from eGrants between the 2010 and 2011 application process. Pertinent information required by the application instructions is provided below:

Member Recruitment: Knox will recruit members from STRIVE/SAND (Support and Training Results in Valuable Employees/South Arsenal Neighborhood Development), Connecticut Job Corps Academy, the Department of Children and Families, and Our Piece of the Pie. All have agreed to serve as referral sources. Caseworkers for these agencies will recruit and refer prospective members to the program. Knox and the caseworkers will communicate about potential candidates approximately two months before the March enrollment point.

Care will be taken when reviewing Green Crew applicants and special note will be taken when it is learned that the person has performed community service or has completed volunteer work. Questions will be asked regarding civic duty and the importance of "giving back" to one's community. Green Crew leaders will participate in the interview process as peer representatives of the program and provide feedback. We have had 100% enrollment every year, an ever rising number of applicants, and an increased retention rate of 89% for the most recent program year.

Measuring Success of Trainings: We award certificates of achievement as members reach training benchmarks. As training sessions are completed, members demonstrate the acquired skill and receive a certificate when they are deemed proficient by a supervisor.

Training sessions on horticultural subjects and life skills are held regularly so members can improve their skills and self-esteem and build esprit de corps. Regular team building sessions and group

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meetings are held every two weeks. Finally, we coordinate with CCNCS to ensure all trainings and trainers meet their requirements.

4) Staff Changes: Knox replaced its Financial Operations Manager, hired a Green Crew Supervisor, Laborer and Development Director. We now have 9 full time staff members. We include brief descriptions of the new Financial Operations Manager and Crew Supervisor (who are included in the budget) below:

NAN ARNSTEIN, FINANCIAL OPERATIONS MANAGER, joined Knox in 2010. Ms. Arnstein has a Masters of Science in Professional Accounting. She has 25 years of public and private accounting experience. She has worked as the CFO for several multi-million dollar medical communications firms, the Controller for personal service corporations, and as the Principal in a financial consulting business.

JOHN THOMPSON, GREEN CREW SUPERVISOR, Mr. Thompson came to Knox through the City of Hartford, DPW. There, he was responsible for parks maintenance and horticultural work. He is a Hartford resident and relates well to crew members on both a personal and professional level.

6) PLAN FOR SELF ASSESSMENT OR IMPROVEMENT UPDATE: Knox is currently creating an updated 3 year technology plan with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving who will also fund a full strategic planning and rebranding effort to begin in 2011 (Causality, a non-profit marketing firm, has awarded Knox \$15,000 in grant funding towards the rebranding efforts as well). These efforts will include input from and ways to improve the Green Crew program and its visibility in the community.

7) PLAN FOR EFFECTIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE UPDATE: We have completed our financial improvement project and begun work with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving to create a

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strategic technology plan. We expect grant funding from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving in April 2011 upon completion of this plan.

8) SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Although we state this in the narrative, Knox would like to more clearly reiterate the circumstances facing our program participants and organization because of our location in an economically distressed city:

The Green Crew operates in Hartford, a city consistently ranked among the poorest cities in the nation even though Connecticut has the highest income per capita in the nation. This results in a high cost of living (or of program operation), which especially strains resource poor individuals and organizations. As previously stated, we provide the opportunity to serve a particularly needy subsection of Hartford's population, out-of-school youth, who require more training, support, and services than other AmeriCorps programs. Furthermore, like many low-income cities, Hartford receives the brunt of negative environmental impacts and environmental injustice.

9) DESCRIPTION OF BUDGET and BUDGET ADEQUACY: We provide rationale for the creation of our budget, an updated description of funding sources, and an explanation of our cost per member service year (MSY) below:

Our budget is definitely adequate to carry forth the program. Last year, we added an additional fundraising staff person to ensure Knox's mission and program goals are adequately funded. For any program budget at Knox, we envision the desired outcomes, build a plan to reach them, and then design a budget to follow that plan. For the Green Crew, this means providing funding for the people, places, and things that ensure a successful impact on program participants and Hartford's environment.

The match provided for CNCS funding greatly exceeds any requirements set forth. For the application

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year, we match 71% of CNCS funds. 16% of Knox's \$980,000 budget comes from CNCS. Annually, CNCS funds a smaller portion of our overall operations.

Our cost per MSY (\$12,957) is relatively high compared to some other AmeriCorps programs, an increase of a negligible \$2 from last year. This arises from providing the best service realistically possible to an inner city, out-of-school population (see: Continuation Changes, SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES).

We train these young men and women in horticulture, landscaping, and environmental stewardship. This requires a considerable amount of expensive equipment, supplies, and safety gear. For instance, we train members on equipment such as commercial lawnmowers, which are both expensive to purchase and repair. Furthermore, we include all costs related to the Green Crew's fee for service activities (such as plants, soil, and mulch). Our budget includes all obvious costs such as living allowances, benefits for staff and members, criminal history checks, trainer costs and the like.

We need to raise roughly \$377,000 in matching funds each year to meet the CNCS match, which we have been able to accomplish. We already have over \$275,000 committed for the current program year, and \$212,000 for the 2011-12 program year. Sources of funds include \$160,000 from the City of Hartford for green space management and graffiti abatement services (both years), \$52,000 from the Metropolitan District Commission for tree plantings (both years), \$52,000 from Hartford's Business Improvement District (current year), \$25,000 grant from Common Sense Fund (current year), \$10,000 grant from the Bissell Foundation (current year), \$12,000 grant from Lincoln Financial Foundation (current year), with many of the smaller non-profit fee-for-service contracts for spring still in negotiation (Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance- \$18,800, Ancient Burying Ground- \$6,000, Growing Tree- \$3,200, YWCA- \$5,200, Christian Activities Council- \$6242, and Whitman Close- \$1,010). If all are renewed, this would total another \$40,452. We will continue to apply for CDBG funding for the Green Crew through the City of Hartford, which granted the program \$26,000 last year. All of the funding sources listed above are committed or renewable for the 2011-12 program year. We

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will seek new funders as needed.

We provide a listing of specific changes to our budget in Section IV of continuation changes.

10) Miscellaneous: We refer to the Program Director in the narrative as the program manager in the budget.

ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

Enrollment for this year was 100%. Retention rose significantly to a recent high of 89%. Although Knox strives for 100% retention, we understand that we work with a population facing especially challenging circumstances that include teenage parenthood, drug abuse, and involvement in the criminal justice system. We are making every effort to improve the quality of our trainings and overall program to better serve this population; however, not every member will either follow AmeriCorps rules or be able to complete the required number of service hours to graduate.

III. Performance Measures

No changes.

IV. Budget (Budget Section)

- 1) Personal Expenses: Raises were given to various Green Crew personnel for performance or longevity. We now include 25% of the Community Network Builder's salary in the budget to recognize that she spends a quarter of her time performing duties for the Green Crew: recruiting members and volunteers, facilitating member and volunteer service opportunities, and coordinating between the two groups. The Community Network Builder is already included in the narrative.
- 2) Personnel Fringe Benefits: The Program Manager's health insurance was added to the budget because

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she now receives health insurance. We have adjusted Disability Insurance, FICA, Workers' Compensation, and Unemployment Insurance figures to reflect staff salary changes.

3) Staff Travel: The Green Crew Manager is now expected to travel to 9 meetings a year with CCNCS. The budget reflects this and has increased from \$415 to \$595. Vehicle insurance was reduced from \$700/month to \$542/month to reflect the cost of next year's insurance. This decrease is the result of our vehicles aging and becoming less valuable. The cost of bus passes has risen from \$10/week to \$11.25/week and the budget reflects both these changes.

4) Supplies: Clothing costs increased due to the increase in half time members we serve and a recognition that we must provide each crew member a greater quantity of each item due to wear and tear. Clothing costs have risen from a total of \$6,300 to \$7,200. Many of the large purchases for commercial landscaping equipment (3 mowers, 3 trimmers, a trailer, an air compressor, blade sharpener, a jump starter, 2 filing cabinets, a paint sprayer, and power washer) were made. They were removed from the budget. We also purchased a time clock, but still must budget the time cards we must purchase each year and the installation of the time clock into the Financial Operations Manager's computer (\$40 for time cards and \$300 for installation on new computer). We have added in new supplies that will be required for the upcoming program year. These are a pruning saw, 3 string trimmers, and a push snow blower. In addition, we included plant materials and related expenses. These are trees, shrubs, mums, mulch, and soil. These changes were made in order to provide the most accurate budget possible.

5) Other Program Costs: The CorpsNetwork membership now costs \$1,800. We increased the allocation for background checks from \$585 to \$810 because we now have 18 new members a year (as compared to 12).

6) Living Allowances: We increased living allowances to meet the minimum amount set by CNCS, \$12,100 for full time members or \$6,050 for half time members. Furthermore, shifting the number of full time (6 to 3) and half time (12 to 18) members we enroll caused the allocation of these funds to shift.

Narratives

7) Member Support Costs: FICA and workers compensation have changed to compensate for the raise in living allowances. The Green Crew's health insurance has reduced because of a reduction in cost from the service provider and reduction in the number of full time members we serve. This allocation was also reduced because we sought to provide all half time crew members with health insurance as part of our matching funds, but this became financially unfeasible.

8) Corporation Fixed Amount: We budget 5% of total revenue for the corporation fixed amount. Since our total revenue for the application's program year is \$980,000, this amount has increased to \$49,087 from \$47,889.

9) Source of Funds: As is true with any non-profit that relies on grant funding and fee-for-service work, our sources of funding are constantly shifting. For Knox, they have also been growing. A complete list of funding sources for the 2011-12 program year can be found in the Continuation Summary, BUDGET ADEQUACY and the Budget Narrative. Most notable are the addition of 3 grant funders (the Common Sense Fund, Lincoln Financial Foundation, and Bissell Foundation) and the loss of small fee for service contracts (Town and Country, Connecticut Children's Medical Hospital, and Hartford Job Corps).

V. Increasing Grantee Overall Cost Share of Total Budgeted Costs

Our match for CNCS funding has increased from 59% in 2007-08 to 71% this year.

Performance Measures

SAA Characteristics

- AmeriCorps Member Population - None
 Geographic Focus - Urban
 Geographic Focus - Rural
 Encore Program

Priority Areas

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Futures
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans and Military Families
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other
<i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 36

Service Categories

Community Restoration/Clean Up Primary Secondary

Horticultural Beautification Projects

Service Category: Community Restoration/Clean Up

Measure Category: Needs and Service Activities

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Green Crew members along with community volunteers, will plant trees along city streets and parking lots. 18 Green Crew members are involved in the preparation work for planting day, planting day activities with volunteers and aftercare. 18 Green Crew members will be trained in basic horticulture and will be involved in raising 15,000 flowering annuals and perennial plants in our greenhouse. These plants will be planted in large pots and placed throughout the City Of Hartford. Raising these plants and planting the planters involves 18 Green Crew members and requires 8 hours per day and 5 days per week from March through May. 300 of these pots will be placed throughout Hartford and maintained by the Green Crew. Watering the pots takes 2 Green Crew members an average of 2 days and each pot is watered twice per week. Green Crew members also provide landscape maintenance for 26 Hartford non profit organizations, 14 community gardens and city landmarks and 30 City of Hartford Green Spaces. This service is provided from April through November. Three crews of 6

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

members per crew, working 8 hours per day , 5 days per week provide these services.

Results

Result: Intermediate Outcome

70% of 100 people polled will agree that the projects completed by the Green Crew and volunteers have made the city of Hartford a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

Indicator: Number of trees planted, planters placed and maintained, number of non profit

Target: 70% of 100 people polled will agree that the projects completed by the Green Crew and volunteers have made the city of Hartford a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

Target Value: 70%

Instruments: A survey poll (questionnaire)

PM Statement: Trees will be planted in Hartford's neighborhoods and downtown area, the landscapes of Hartford's non profit orgs, community gardens, City of Hartford Green Spaces and Hartford's landmarks will be maintained. Flowering plants will be raised, planted in planters and placed throughout Hartford by Green Crew members and the volunteers that they recruit .

70% of 100 Hartford city residents, business owners and visitors will agree that the projects completed by the Green Crew AmeriCorps members and the volunteers that they recruit to assist them have improved the appeal of Hartford to live, own a business in and visit.

Prev. Yrs. Data

Result: Intermediate Outcome

organizations, community gardens, City of Hartford Green Spaces and city landmarks

Result: Intermediate Outcome

that are provided with landscape maintenance.

Result: End Outcome

Urban forest restored, the landscapes of non profit organizations are maintained and City of Hartford

Green Spaces such as traffic islands and parks are better maintained.

Indicator: UFORE tree canopy survey, done by Knox and the Ct DEP

Target: increase in canopy cover (portion of the target area covered by tree foliage)

Target Value: 25%

Instruments: I-Tree canopy survey (U.S. Forest Service designed canopy measure)

PM Statement: I-Tree canopy survey will demonstrate 25% increase in tree canopy in target areas due to new plantings

Prev. Yrs. Data

Result: Output

Trees will be planted on public and private property throughout the city, flowering planters will be planted and placed along city streets and landscape maintenance will be provided citywide to non profit orgs, community gardens, City of Hartford Green Spaces and city landmarks.

Indicator: Number of trees planted, planters planted, placed and maintained and the number of

Target: 200 trees planted, 300 planters planted and maintained, 26 landscapes of non profit orgs

maintained, 14 community gardens maintained and the landscapes of 30 City of Hartford Green Spaces and landmarks maintained.

Target Value: 570

Instruments: Daily work logs

PM Statement: Daily work logs will indicate that 200 trees have been planted, 300 planters planted and maintained, 14 Community Gardens, 26 Non Profit orgs and 30 City of Hartford Green Spaces provided with landscape maintenance.

Prev. Yrs. Data

Result: Output

non profit orgs, community gardens, City of Hartford Green Spaces and landmarks

Result: Output

maintained.

Volunteer Recruitment

Service Category: Community Restoration/Clean Up

Measure Category: Strengthening Communities

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Green Crew members train volunteers in the task that they are about to undertake and work with them until the project is completed. In some case the Green Crew will take on the supportive role of finishing a project that, due to time constraints could not be finished on the day that the volunteers are present.

Results

Result: Output

Volunteers will be recruited to increase the capacity of the Green Crew.

Indicator: Volunteer logs and sign in sheets.

Target: 1800 volunteers per year will be recruited to work with the Green Crew to increase their capacity for getting things done.

Target Value: 1000

Instruments: Volunteer logs and sign in sheets.

PM Statement: To build the capacity of the Green Crew to get things done, 1800 volunteers per year will be recruited by the Green Crew.

Prev. Yrs. Data

Resume

Service Category: Community Restoration/Clean Up

Measure Category: Participant Development

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

18 Green Crew members will receive training and coaching sessions where their employment and experience histories will be documented and formatted into a current, comprehensive resume. These activities will take place from the mid point of the program until the end of the program year where training sessions will take place once per week for two hours per session.

Results

Result: Output

All Green Crew members will receive training and support in resume completion

Indicator: The number of members that receive training and resumes.

Target: 18 Green Crew members will receive training and resumes.

Result: Output

Target Value: 18

Instruments: Daily and training sign in sheets.

PM Statement: Green Crew members will receive training and support in resume completion. 18 Green Crew members will receive training and resumes.

Prev. Yrs. Data

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Not Applicable

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable