

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: 18-JAN-11	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:														
2b. APPLICATION ID: 11AC124595	4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: 09ACHMN0010005														
5. APPLICATION INFORMATION																
LEGAL NAME: Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa DUNS NUMBER: 123929288	NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Eric Antonson TELEPHONE NUMBER: (651) 209-9900 11 FAX NUMBER: (651) 209-9901 INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: eric.antonson@conservationcorps.org															
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 2715 Upper Afton Road Suite 100 Maplewood MN 55119 - 4774 County: Ramsey																
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 411881102	7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit 7b. Service/Civic Organization Community-Based Organization Local Affiliate of National 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: Minnesota Conservation Corps															
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Service activities will take place statewide across Minnesota. One service component will focus on rural areas of the state. Other service components will focus on the Twin Cities Metro area, specifically St. Paul. Service components will :	11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):															
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 01/01/12 END DATE: 12/31/12	14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <u>MN 004</u> b.Program <u>MN 004</u>															
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: <u>2</u>	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;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">a. FEDERAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 598,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. APPLICANT</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 250,259.00</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;">\$ 848,259.00</td> </tr> </table>	a. FEDERAL	\$ 598,000.00	b. APPLICANT	\$ 250,259.00	c. STATE	\$ 0.00	d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00	e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00	g. TOTAL	\$ 848,259.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
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f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00															
g. TOTAL	\$ 848,259.00															
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: Eric Antonson	b. TITLE: Program Manager	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (651) 209-9900 11														
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:		e. DATE SIGNED: 05/06/11														

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Executive Summary

Conservation Corps Minnesota has set priorities through its strategic plan to utilize AmeriCorps members to engage diverse youth, mobilize more volunteers and expand service activities to include energy efficiency and community outreach. The strong partnership with ServeMinnesota and AmeriCorps allows the Conservation Corps to engage AmeriCorps members in meeting new community needs as well as continuing our legacy of natural resource service. The Conservation Corps has a long history and proven track record of engaging young people in hands-on environmental stewardship. We look forward to continuing this tradition while increasing accessibility to the outdoors for all people and preserving the delicate balance of nature.

Currently, the Conservation Corps AmeriCorps program provides four types of service opportunities for AmeriCorps members. In our Summer Youth Corps, AmeriCorps members lead crews of high school youth from across Minnesota who primarily complete their service in rural areas statewide. In the Youth Outdoors program, AmeriCorps members lead crews of low-income, high school youth from metropolitan areas who complete their service in urban communities. The third AmeriCorps role is collaborating with the MN Department of Natural Resources to recruit and manages volunteer to clean up lakes and rivers statewide and conduct scenic easement assessments to protect natural river corridors. Finally, the newest AmeriCorps opportunity is service in the Home Energy Squads. This new program provides home-energy efficiency services for local residents, thereby reducing carbon footprints and energy bills. The Conservation Corps is committed to service opportunities that meet real community needs by engaging a diverse population of AmeriCorps members, youth participants and community volunteers. In total, we propose 49 MSY (15 FT and 68 HT) be engaged in environmental service through the Conservation Corps. This total includes an expansion of 3 MSY that will be engaged in home energy-energy efficiency service.

Rationale and Approach

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COMPELLING COMMUNITY NEED

CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

While most Minnesotans say the environment is very important to them, pollution, development and neglect are threatening our natural resources and limiting outdoor-recreation opportunities. Citizens are recognizing their stewardship role but many lack the knowledge to solve complex environmental issues, and increasing numbers are lacking a personal connection to the environment that could increase understanding. Per capita declines in outdoor recreation are causing agencies such as the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to implement new strategies to connect people to parks, trails and other outdoor opportunities.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's 2004 environmental-literacy report card showed 87% of Minnesotans agree they should be involved in solving environmental problems and 33% strongly agree that individual citizens should be responsible for solving environmental problems. Yet, the 2008 environmental-literacy report card found that 54% of the state's adults have below-average knowledge of environmental issues and 64% of energy issues.

The Minnesota DNR identified connecting people to the outdoors, especially youth, urban residents and minorities, as one of three priorities in "A Strategic Conservation Agenda, 2009-2013." And in November 2009, voters passed the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage constitutional amendment that will increase sales taxes to improve the environment and preserve cultural heritage. Through this action, citizens demonstrated a strong need for environmental restoration and a commitment to stewardship.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIVERSE YOUTH

Minnesota, like the nation, is seeing an alarming trend of young people disengaging from the outdoors

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and civic participation while increasing at-risk behaviors during non-school hours. Youth ages 8 to 18 spend more time in front of computer, television and game screens than any other activity in their lives, including school. On average, American youth spend 44.5 hours per week using media (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005).

The fact that young people are absorbed in media and detached from the environment is detrimental to their health. Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, asserts that today's most disturbing trends in obesity, attention disorders and depression can be attributed in part to children not spending enough time outside. Effective after-school and summer programs can help reverse these trends. The National Youth Leadership Council's "Good to Great 2009" research report confirms that service learning positively effects academics, civic engagement and healthy behaviors.

Environmental education, particularly related to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), will lead to meaningful careers. According to a STEM Education Coalition 2008 report, "U.S. demand for scientists and engineers is expected to increase at four times the rate for all other occupations." The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development predicts an 11% job growth in natural science fields. As baby boomers retire, the DNR will need to replace as much as 50 percent of its workforce. To meet our state's needs a decade from now, we need to invest in young people today.

According to a 2006 study by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, teens unsupervised after school are 37% more likely to become parents. Juvenile crime peaks from 3 to 6 p.m., and violent juvenile crime soars the first hour after school. Also, these are peak hours for kids to get hooked on cigarettes and violent video games, be killed in a household accident, experiment with dangerous drugs and have sexual intercourse. For 16-17 year-olds, it is the prime time for car crashes, the leading cause of

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youth death. At-risk behavior continued into early adulthood is among the leading causes of failing to get and keep a job, fulfill family roles and avoid domestic violence (Child Trend Databank 2004).

Youth well being was identified as the most important issue facing Minnesota in a 2006 survey (Mason-Dixon Polling and Research). Yet youth program funding continues to fall, leaving thousands without important programs and services (MN Council on Foundations 2008 Giving in MN). Funding is likely to decrease even more with more than half of foundations likely to give less in coming years as the result of difficult economic conditions (MN Council on Foundations 2009 Outlook).

According to a Bureau of Labor Statistics' October 2009 report, unemployment is taking a toll on young people ages 18-19, as 25.6 percent are out of work. Only the 16-17 age bracket is higher with 30.2 percent unemployment. On-the-job training in practical skills and job searching, such as resume writing, improves future employment opportunities. Job Corps studies find that employment training for at-risk youth positively impacts their earnings, educational attainment and arrest record (U.S. Dept of Labor).

Summer and afterschool programs help youth supplement their education, particularly experiential learning in science. According to the American Youth Policy Forum, "Afterschool and (out-of-school time) programs provide extended learning opportunities to help youth meet and exceed academic standards and develop important social, personal, civic and employability skills. They can help 'level the playing field' for youth who are academically or developmentally behind while providing an opportunity for at-level students to broaden their skill sets."

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Energy costs and unnecessary waste are straining the financial resources of individuals and families in a time of economic stress. In fact, most energy experts agree that the best way to reduce energy use is for

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individuals to become more energy efficient. (Third Report Card on Minnesotans' Environmental Literacy 2008) Household energy waste can be controlled with simple conservation measures that many homeowners don't know how to install, or they are confused about which products are most effective.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, about 17% of all carbon dioxide emissions in the U.S. come from people's homes. The U.S. Department of Energy has identified effective methods to reduce energy, including insulating water heaters, replacing incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents, and installing weather-stripping around doors, low-flow water fixtures and programmable thermostats.

Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses threaten community health and could have long-term impacts on climate change. A 2009 report by McKinsey and Company stated that energy-efficient building upgrades, from new appliance to weatherized doorways, could reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 710 megatons per year. Simply changing from incandescent to CFL lightbulbs can reduce energy consumption by up to 70%.

Pollution and environmental degradation detract from our health and well being and impact air and water quality. People need simple, cost-effective ways to reduce their own energy use, clean up the environment and ensure a healthy quality of life for future generations.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES AND MEMBER ROLES

Through Minnesota Conservation Corps programs, a new generation of community and conservation leaders is developing and improving Minnesota's quality of life. MCC has an exceptional track record of meeting compelling community needs by engaging young people from diverse backgrounds in civic

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leadership and conservation.

MCC will engage AmeriCorps members, 46 MSY each year, to address community energy and environmental challenges and lead diverse youth in service-learning. Current community needs are complex, requiring a multifaceted approach and strong coalition to make positive impacts today for future generations. AmeriCorps members will serve as environmental stewards, conserving natural resources on public lands and improving energy efficiency in homes throughout the community.

LEADING YOUTH TO ENHANCE PUBLIC LANDS

Annually, 37 AmeriCorps members (15 FT and 22 HT) will lead 175 youth and at least 500 volunteers to complete more than 60,000 hours of hands-on environmental service across Minnesota. Members will complete an additional 25,000 hours of youth leadership, volunteer support and skills training. Service projects are identified by community organizations and carried out in partnerships with the Minnesota DNR, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Park Service, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, local governments and other public land management entities. Members receive orientation and training from MCC staff prior to leading youth and volunteers. Project partners provide technical assistance needed to successfully complete the service projects.

To promote clean water, members will lead youth and volunteers to install rain gardens, barrels and buffers to reduce stormwater runoff, restore native plants, woodlands and prairies, stabilize shorelines, collect data, monitor water quality and remove invasive species. To promote healthy outdoor recreation, they will lead service projects to improve hiking trails, parks, campgrounds, boat landings, green spaces and other natural-resource accesses.

75% of MCC youth participants come from populations that are underrepresented in green-collar and

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science fields: youth from low-income households, youth of color and youth with disabilities, particularly youth who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Offering transportation, meals, work incentives and other services to youth reduces barriers to participation.

Drawing from their own knowledge and experience, members will lead diverse youth in community service and mentor them to build practical skills, connect to the natural environment, respect themselves and others, become active citizens and prepare for meaningful careers. Youth programs focus on youth development and job training, with environmental conservation as a learning vehicle, and environmental education sessions focus on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) topics, aided by community volunteers.

MCC has operated environmental service-learning programs since 1981 and recently expanded with afterschool opportunities for urban teens. Leading youth in these programs not only furthers members' environmental and scientific knowledge, but engages them in civic leadership.

1) Summer Youth Program

Each year, 22 HT AmeriCorps members and two FT staff will lead a summer residential program, primarily in rural areas, for 80 youth ages 15 to 18. The youth represent a cross-section of Minnesota with 40% from minority backgrounds, equal numbers of males and females, equal urban and rural participants, and 15-20% who are deaf or hard of hearing.

AmeriCorps members' half term includes training and program wrap-up. MCC will recruit about six AmeriCorps members who are sign language interpreters or deaf to lead nearly half of the crews that include youth who are deaf or hard of hearing.

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The crews, each with six youth and two AmeriCorps members, will collectively complete nearly 50,000 hours of service and training as they complete environmental restoration projects in cooperation with community partners. AmeriCorps members will foster youth development and establish a strong corps community to encourage growth in interpersonal communication and cultural awareness. AmeriCorps-led service projects improve water quality, preserve biodiversity and enhance outdoor recreation areas; 95% are in rural communities.

2) Youth Outdoors program

Each year, 12 FT AmeriCorps members and two FT staff will operate a year-round, nonresidential afterschool program in urban areas for 95 youth, ages 15-18. AmeriCorps members will engage 35 youth each semester, 70 over the school year, in completing environmental-service projects after school and Saturdays. In the summer, 25 youth will complete environmental service project in state parks. Youth participating after school will be from households at or below 80% of their community's median income, and 90% will be youth of color with equal numbers of males and females.

AmeriCorps members will lead youth to complete 10,000 hours of direct service and training in leadership, civic engagement and environmental issues; 75% of all activities will occur in urban communities. When not directly engaged with youth, the 12 FT AmeriCorps members will plan educational activities, coordinate with community partners, complete hands-on service projects and mobilize volunteers.

Youth will serve on the same crew for the semester in their home neighborhoods, which are identified by a mayor's initiative, "Invest Saint Paul," as suffering from disinvestment: North End, Frogtown, Thomas-Dale and Dayton's Bluff. However, collaborative service-learning opportunities will bring crews together so youth will see their role in a larger stewardship effort. AmeriCorps members will stay at a

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location for two semesters to better understand the local area's qualities and opportunities.

Between school semesters, members will lead a new initiative to give families skills to engage in healthy, outdoor recreation activities. In overnite workshops each week, AmeriCorps members will introduce families to tent camping, teach basic camping and cooking skills, and lead educational activities such as bird and wildflower identification, geocaching, canoeing and other activities that will help families connect with the outdoors. A partnership between Minnesota DNR, REI and MCC is currently designing the program. At least 1,200 people are expected to participate annually.

Three FT members will implement an aggressive community outreach strategy to engage volunteers, young people and technology in environmental improvement. After AmeriCorps orientation and MCC training, members will receive skills training, supervision and mentoring by DNR professionals and serve at the DNR headquarters in St. Paul. They will recruit, train and supply equipment to volunteers for the Adopt-a-River program, which annually engages 4,000 volunteers in cleaning up rivers statewide. They will help protect wild and scenic river corridors by training other AmeriCorps members to use GPS/GIS technology to gather land-use data. Working with DNR staff, they will analyze data, develop plans to protect scenic river easements, work with landowners and educate the community on the importance of protecting waterways.

ENERGY-EFFICIENCY

Each year, 20 FT AmeriCorps members will complete residential energy-efficiency services to reduce costly energy waste. Home Energy Squads, each with two AmeriCorps members instructed by a professional Home Energy Auditor, will inspect homes to identify and educate homeowners about energy conservation and install up to seven energy-efficiency measures including compact fluorescent bulbs, smart power strips, setback thermostats, low-flow shower heads, aerators, door weather-

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stripping and water-heater insulation. These simple measures save each household an average of \$125 per year on utility bills.

The Home Energy Squad initiative is a partnership between Neighborhood Energy Connection (NEC), Metro Clean Energy Resource Team, Center for Energy and Environment, Green Institute, MCC and Xcel Energy, a leading electric and natural gas energy company. Xcel's policy is to be an energy-industry leader and demonstrate excellence in environmental performance. NEC works closely with Xcel to identify and contact potential energy-efficiency service recipients. Last year, MCC AmeriCorps members were engaged in a pilot program funded by a federal Recovery Act grant. Installations by four members in the pilot's first three months will result in future annual savings of \$40,375 total for 323 households.

Starting in 2011, AmeriCorps members in Home Energy Squads will improve energy efficiency in thousands of homes, including at least 1,000 low-income households. Measures will reduce natural gas consumption by an estimated 60,000 therms and electricity by an estimated 900,000 kilowatt hours annually.

Members will receive MCC orientation and will be trained and mentored by skilled energy professionals hired by NEC. They will receive accredited Home Energy Auditor certification training to fully prepare them for future green jobs.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

MCC understands the importance of complying with all AmeriCorps regulations and lists prohibited activities in both member and project host contracts, reviews the list with MCC staff and members at orientation, and ensures each project host and partner fully understands activity limitations. Non-

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duplication, non-displacement and non-supplementation requirements are included in service agreements with partnering organizations. MCC staff monitor compliance through regular site visits, quarterly progress reports and other communications. Any violations would be immediately reported to ServeMinnesota and the activities suspended until a corrective action plan is approved.

MEASURABLE OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

The program will address Clean Energy/Environment and Opportunity priority areas and will use standard performance measures identified below. Outputs and outcomes will be tracked with attendance logs, project accomplishment forms, and database tools to compile data. All outputs and outcomes relate to the mission and long-term vision of the Conservation Corps, to restore resources for future generations and change participants' lives so they will be engaged citizens who carry forth ethics of stewardship and service.

LEADING YOUTH TO ENHANCE PUBLIC LANDS

MCC's youth programs will engage the equivalent of 23 FT AmeriCorps members as leaders for 175 youth participants as they complete more than 28,000 hours of environmental service-learning. As a result, youth will better understand how they impact their community's environment, and public lands will be preserved and enhanced. The program will use standard performance measures and complete 400 miles of trail improvement and 2,000 acres of public land enhancement each year.

Standard Performance Measure: Number of students and youth receiving education or training in energy-efficient and environmentally-conscious practices, including but not limited to sustainable energy and other natural resources, and sustainable agriculture.

Standard Performance Measure: Number of acres of national parks, state parks, city parks, county parks, or other public lands and tribal communities that are cleaned or improved.

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Standard Performance Measure: Number of miles of trails and rivers that are cleaned, improved, and/or created.

HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY

AmeriCorps members will conduct home-energy services for more than 1,000 low-income households annually in Ramsey and Washington counties. They will install energy-efficiency measures and provide households with additional information about energy-saving options available to them. The program will use standard performance measures and reduce energy consumption by 60,000 therms of gas and 900,000 kilowatts hours of electricity per year.

Standard Performance Measure: Number of housing units of low-income households and structures weatherized or retrofitted to significantly improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

Standard Performance Measure: Annual energy usage reduction for housing units and structures from weatherizing and retrofitting (in units).

JOB TRAINING FOR ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED INDIVIDUALS

AmeriCorps members will lead youth crews to complete environmental restoration service projects. Youth will receive on-the-job training and work experience, exposure to career panels and guidance on resume writing and interviewing. At least 100 of the youth participants will be economically disadvantaged.

Standard Performance Measure: Number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving job training and other skill development services.

HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY 2

In addition to the 1,000 houses outlined above, members will complete energy efficiency projects in 3,000 houses that do not meet income guidelines. Measures will reduce natural gas consumption by

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130,000 therms and electricity by 1,900,000 kilowatt hours annual.

MOBILIZING VOLUNTEERS

AmeriCorps members will recruit, train and supervise community volunteers to build capacity and sustainability for environmental restoration. As a result, 500 community volunteers recruited by AmeriCorps members will provide 1,500 total hours of service to communities through environmental service projects (Year 1) and will expand to 1,000 volunteers contributing 3,000 hours (Year 3).

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Members will participate in program-specific civic engagement training throughout the program year, including reflection sessions facilitated by trained staff, voter registration and visits by local legislators. As a result, 90% of members who complete their service term will report that they possess core skills/attitudes for effective civic engagement.

PLAN FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT OR IMPROVEMENT

MCC undertakes a variety of self-assessment and continuous-improvement measures driven by partner organizations and corps members. Project partners complete written evaluations, used to improve service delivery. Members help guide and improve MCC through the Sounding Board, a representative advisory body that discusses concerns and members' suggestions for improvements such as better insurance coverage, a mid-year retreat, and professional development and mentoring opportunities. Alumni are engaged in strategic planning by providing feedback and ideas for program improvement.

MCC participates in the Corps Network's Excellence in Corps Operations (ECO) evaluation, which includes internal and external reviews. We are also part of an 18-month National Youth Corps study

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commissioned by CNCS on the impacts of serving vs. not serving in a corps. 87 MCC program applicants are participating.

Member performance evaluations, further discussed in this proposal's evaluation section, also identify MCC growth areas and improvement goals.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Every initiative that MCC designs includes community stakeholder involvement. For example, in 2006 MCC's three-year strategic plan called for expanding opportunities for urban youth. MCC gathered community input through online surveys, focus groups and stakeholder "listening sessions" to assess the needs and interests of Twin Cities' youth, youth workers and natural-resource managers. In the process, the City of Saint Paul expressed interest in engaging youth in low-income neighborhood service projects. Partnering with the city's Youth Jobs Corps, MCC piloted Youth Outdoors in fall 2008 and officially launched the program in spring 2009.

MCC regularly communicates with policy makers, civic institutions and citizens who have identified environmental and energy issues as significant challenges facing Minnesota. Priority issues of the state's Department of Agriculture, Pollution Control Agency, DNR and Office of Energy Security, include addressing environmental threats such as habitat loss from invasive species, contamination of lakes and streams and loss of public land to urban development, and the need to reduce home-energy consumption. MCC partners with these agencies and more than 80 others, including local governments, youth service programs, schools, nature centers and other nonprofits. Our youth programs engage hundreds of community volunteers in environmental restoration that improves neighborhoods.

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The new Home Energy Squad program was developed through meetings with community members interested in contributing their knowledge and connections to address local conservation needs. After initial meetings, more organizations joined and the program was designed with a broad base of support.

On-going partnerships will continue to collaboratively design service projects with community partners and stakeholders throughout the three-year program period. Continued communication and feedback following service projects will strengthen relationships and set the stage for future collaboration.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS

MCC has built relationships with many conservation corps throughout the country by attending the Corps Network's annual forum and participating in Excellence in Corps Operations evaluations and professional conferences. MCC has participated in the annual Corps Rendezvous since its inception and will host it in 2010. Also, MCC's executive director serves on the Corps Network board.

MCC and only two other U.S. service corps received grants to operate inclusive crews for people with disabilities and develop a best-practices tool kit for other corps. The grantees presented their work at the National Service Inclusion Project conference, sponsored by CNCS.

Since 2005, MCC has collaborated with the state CNCS office to host AmeriCorps VISTA members who have built capacity in recruitment, participant diversity, alumni connections, education programming and youth program development.

Currently, an MCC AmeriCorps member is participating in the Minnesota InterCorps Council, a member-led organization with representative AmeriCorps members from state, VISTA and national

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programs. This is a leadership and development opportunity for members who want to have broad-reaching impact on the Minnesota AmeriCorps experience. Minnesota ICC goals are to improve all members experience through communication and collaboration, service opportunities to unite members and community volunteers, networking and social opportunities, and AmeriCorps service promotion through outreach.

MCC collaborated with the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service to initiate an environmental program in Iowa, using MCC's model. The Commission coordinates AmeriCorps grants and state RSVP funds and provides MCC direct access and collaborative opportunities with all 14 AmeriCorps programs in Iowa. A similar approach is currently being discussed with ServeWisconsin representatives, as the state's conservation corps was eliminated in 2003.

POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

Community needs exist throughout Minnesota and in surrounding states that could be addressed by MCC's unique service delivery, which is conducive to replication and geographic growth. With the experience and ability to operate crews in disperse and primarily rural locations, MCC is prepared to establish more rural residential sites or urban programs throughout Minnesota. MCC's ability to leverage additional resources makes growth and replication possible in the near future as relationships are strengthened with community partners.

Organizational Capability

SOUND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

ABILITY TO PROVIDE SOUND PROGRAMMATIC AND FISCAL OVERSIGHT

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HISTORY AND RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

MCC's roots trace back to the 1930s Civilian Conservation Corps public works program. In the 1970s, the federally-funded Youth Conservation Corps and Young Adult Conservation Corps were launched to continue the tradition of employing young people in conservation work. When federal support ended in 1981, the Minnesota Legislature established MCC in the DNR to administer youth and young adult programs. In 1999, Friends of the Minnesota Conservation Corps was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization by community supporters and program alumni and assumed operation of MCC in 2003 to carry forward the mission of youth development and environmental restoration.

The residential Summer Youth Program began in 1981 and since 1984 has been based at the historic St. John's Landing in St. Croix State Park. In 1989, the Minnesota DNR operated a Youth in Natural Resources program to engage Twin Cities urban youth in conservation. This 8-week summer program was eliminated from the state budget in 2002 and left a vacancy that MCC is addressing with the new Youth Outdoors program.

Increasing public awareness of environmental degradation has expanded the definition of conservation to now includes energy, clean water and other areas. By building on program management and member development success, MCC will partner with local experts and community organizations to address critical needs in energy-efficiency and related areas.

In our history, Conservation Corps crews have helped preserve and protect nearly every state and national park and forest in Minnesota. We partnered with the Superior Hiking Trail Association early on and have built or maintained nearly every foot of the 235-mile trail. The environmental stewardship and learning that young people experience changes their lives. With our roots in the past, we tackle today's problems and prepare tomorrow's leaders.

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MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

MCC has responsibly managed funds and met performance measures as a grantee of ServeMinnesota AmeriCorps formula funding and other AmeriCorps funding. MCC's Young Adult Program was a Corps Network subgrantee of an AmeriCorps National Direct grant for Rural Response Homeland Security, which expired in 2007. Currently, the Young Adult Program is an AmeriCorps National Direct grantee with members serving in Minnesota and Iowa. Our management capacity has improved and increased through close working relationships with State Commission and CNCS program officers. With CNCS support through an AmeriCorps State Competitive grant, MCC can continue to provide service opportunities for members to lead youth participants and volunteers to enhance public lands, increase home-energy efficiency, and participate in civic engagement activities that lead to a lifetime of service. With experience and a track record with AmeriCorps grants, MCC has all the staff and systems in place to administer an AmeriCorps*State grant with ServeMinnesota.

MCC's record-keeping system documents outputs and outcomes, fulfilling all CNCS reporting requirements. MCC also prepares detailed activity and accomplishment reports for the State Legislature, DNR and other hosting agencies. MCC's accounting and financial policies and procedures have earned high audit ratings by Eide Bailey in every annual audit since MCC became a nonprofit. Both the Corps Network and CNCS regularly monitor MCC operations, resulting in excellent reviews.

In February 2006, MCC earned the Corps Network Excellence in Corps Operations status, reserved for programs that meet or exceed criteria in various categories including organization and management, and will complete another review in 2011. Since becoming a nonprofit in 2003, MCC's annual organization budget has grown from \$2 million to \$6 million. MCC's board includes an active finance committee that oversees the organization's budget and monthly statements. Also, MCC has instituted

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sound written financial policies that include separation of duties, financial controls and regular reporting.

The State Competitive AmeriCorps grant will enable MCC to expand its programs, engage more youth, complete more community-service projects and mobilize more volunteers.

BOARD, ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF

MCC's 17-member board provides strategic and fiscal oversight and a conduit to potential funders and project hosts. The current board is diverse and talented, including lawyers, accountants, educators, public officials, managers from the private and nonprofit sectors, an environmental scientist and a Civilian Conservation Corps alumnus.

Under the board's direction, MCC has increased opportunities for AmeriCorps members and youth, increased the number of partnering organizations, emphasized staff development to improve service delivery and utilized strategic planning.

The MCC board programs committee helped develop Youth Outdoors by participating in community meetings, staff dialogue and reports at board meetings. The committee provides ongoing support through sharing best practices, identifying community resources and acting as program spokespersons. The finance committee reviews monthly financial statements, annual budgets and audits.

MCC's management team, listed below, meets weekly and reports at each board meeting. They implement the organization's strategic plan, evaluate its quarterly progress, design annual budgets for board approval, evaluate staff and programs, and plan outreach to the state legislature, current and

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potential project partners, community leaders, other service organizations, funders and the public. The management team will provide oversight of the AmeriCorps*State Competitive grant and update the board on its implementation.

Len Price, Executive Director

Len provides overall leadership and strategic direction for MCC, supervises the management team and conducts outreach to potential project partners, funders and the public. As a former teacher (34 years) and state legislator (20 years), Len uses his public relations skills, knowledge of government agency operations, and numerous contacts at all levels of government to ensure the continued success of the organization. He served on the MCC board during its transition from a state agency to nonprofit, and serves on the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and Corps Network boards.

Tim Johnson-Grass, Operations Manager

Tim oversees young adult program staff and operations. A former MCC AmeriCorps member, Tim has been involved in the management and operation of conservation corps for 11 years. He was instrumental in strengthening volunteer programs and managing community restoration projects in Seattle, WA with EarthCorps. He has strengthened MCC programs, operational efficiency and member development. He also established MCC as an emergency response leader under the Rural Response grant.

Cindy Green, Development Director

Cindy leads MCC's communications, marketing and fundraising activities. She is implementing a strategic plan to diversify funding sources and secure more support from corporate, foundation and individual donor sources in addition to state and federal agencies. She has more than 20 years experience directing development and communications activities for various nonprofits and serving as a volunteer fundraiser for schools, youth and church organizations.

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Roni McKenna, Finance Manager

Roni manages finances for MCC, including AmeriCorps grant tracking and reporting. She is responsible for preparing and managing the organizational budget, preparing monthly financial statements for the Board of Directors and preparing end-of-the year financial reports for government agencies, funders and stakeholders. Roni holds a bachelor's degree in Business Management and Communications from Concordia University in St. Paul and an AAS degree in Accounting and Business Management from Rasmussen Business College.

MCC's highly-skilled central support staff includes associates in finance, development, programs and administration who will be involved in essential administrative tasks related to this grant.

KEY YOUTH PROGRAM STAFF

Eric Antonson, Youth Programs Manager

Eric, who also serves on the MCC management team, supervises the Summer Youth and Youth Outdoors program coordinators and is responsible for overall supervision of AmeriCorps members and support staff. As the former Summer Youth Program coordinator, Eric successfully managed AmeriCorps members and youth participants, including crews with deaf and hard-of-hearing youth. He has built strong working relationships with community partners during his 9 years of experience with service and conservation corps, including terms as a former National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) team leader and MCC crew leader.

Nina Eagin, Summer Youth Program Coordinator

Nina will supervise AmeriCorps members and youth participants in the Summer Youth Program. She is responsible for recruitment, hiring, service project coordination, education, and best practices. Nina

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served two terms as an AmeriCorps member with MCC and served in the Youth Outdoors pilot program. She is a former science and American Sign Language teacher, with degrees in education and American Sign Language professional interpreting.

John Stelzner, Youth Outdoors Coordinator

John will supervise AmeriCorps members and youth participants in Youth Outdoors. He is responsible for recruitment, hiring, service project coordination, education and best practices. John completed two AmeriCorps terms with MCC in 2007 and 2008. He holds a B.S. in environmental studies, with an education emphasis, from the University of Minnesota. He has served with the Upward Bound program, Bell Museum of Natural History and Dodge Nature Center.

PLAN FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT OR IMPROVEMENT

MCC completed a strategic plan in 2006 and is currently designing a new plan for organizational strategies through 2012. Both seek to diversify funding, ensure that staffing structure meets organizational needs and enhance all programs to fully reflect organizational values.

As a Corps Network member, MCC receives expert feedback and Excellence in Corps Operations peer reviews that provide technical assistance and organization assessments. MCC's first ECO review in 2006 was successful and will be completed again in 2010. MCC has strong ties to the CNCS office in Minnesota, and MCC staff regularly attend Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and University of St. Thomas training sessions. MCC has strong relationships with many community organizations such as Hands On volunteer network, environmental learning centers and the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf, which provide educational opportunities for members and advise MCC staff.

PLAN FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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MCC board program-committee members have substantial experience with CNCS programs, nonprofits and related community issues and initiatives; the finance committee also provides oversight to financial operations.

AmeriCorps members, program staff and agency partners communicate regularly to identify training and technical-assistance needs. AmeriCorps members and program staff check-in at least two times per week. Agency partners provide written feedback on MCC programs after each service project and at the program year's end. MCC's management team meets weekly to update progress, identify areas for improvement and collaborate on strategic plans.

MCC staff have developed strong relationships with CNCS and state commission staff built on open-communication and a desire to continuously improve member experience and service delivery.

SOUND RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AS AN ORGANIZATION

VOLUNTEER GENERATION AND SUPPORT

MCC includes a volunteer component in all its programs, and members dedicate time to recruiting volunteers and designing and implementing community service projects. Volunteers not only supplement member activities, they promote citizen involvement and project support, which helps sustain community service.

For example, MCC AmeriCorps members lead the DNR Adopt-A-River program with 200 community groups and more than 4,000 volunteers. AmeriCorps members also manage volunteers in trail construction and maintenance, native plantings, lakeshore restoration, Earth Day events, water-quality

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monitoring and other activities. Each community or entity requesting MCC services is asked how they will follow up, maintain and use volunteers. Proposals with solid sustainability plans receive preference.

AmeriCorps members facilitate service learning for youth volunteers. Both members and youth reflect on service and civic responsibility. Each full-time AmeriCorps member organizes a 20-hour community service project, mobilizes volunteers, implements the service activity and reflects on it. AmeriCorps members use this model as they guide youth through identifying, developing and implementing a service project of their choice in their neighborhoods.

MCC incorporated a volunteer service event into the CCC 75th anniversary celebration that was held at Phalen Park in Saint Paul in June 2008. AmeriCorps members and volunteers planted 800 native plugs in a rain garden, which is next to a monument dedicated to all who died serving the CCC nationwide. Also, several MCC service projects have involved CCC alumni.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

MCC has a strong history of community leadership and was awarded a "Minnesota Star Program Award" for service in 1993 flood recovery and Certificates of Commendation from former Gov. Arne Carlson for our youth program for four years. More recently, MCC received the Annual Achievement Award in 2005 from the Recreational Trails Project for service projects completed along the Superior Hiking Trail and in 2006 received national recognition for our efforts fighting Boundary Waters fires. MCC also supports the local CCC alumni chapter, helping to organize events, write newsletters and celebrate their accomplishments. MCC spearheaded an effort to place a nationally-commissioned CCC statue at a prominent state park and in 2008 hosted an event attended by more than 500 people to commemorate CCC's 75th anniversary. MCC has also been a key partner in the Inclusive Crew Project to help Corps

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Network members increase program accessibility to people with disabilities.

MCC staff serve on numerous boards including the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, Corps Network and faith-based organizations. Staff have served on various planning committees such as the Camp Rabideau advisory committee, which is assisting Native American communities in restoring historic buildings, developing a cultural-immersion youth camp and creating service opportunities for disadvantaged youth. MCC helped develop the Gulf Coast Conservation Corps, by participating in its advisory committee. Staff serve on the Corps Network's Excellence in Corps Operation evaluation committee and youth program staff work with the National Youth Leadership Council to select workshops for its annual National Service-Learning Conference.

Youth Outdoors program development relied on MCC's ability to bring community members together to determine needs, offer suggestions, and collaborate on program model and purpose. Input was offered by representatives of the City of Saint Paul, Minnesota DNR, South Washington County Schools, Saint Paul Public Schools, YouthCare, Minneapolis South High School, Hope Community, Eco Education, National Youth Leadership Council, Community Design Center and National Park Service. The program has also developed partnerships with Youth Farm and Market, Science Museum of Minnesota, Eureka Recycling, and elders of the Mendota Mdewakanton Dakota Community.

Home Energy Squad development was driven by MCC staff collaborating with community members with a variety of expertise. MCC staff, experienced in managing service-learning programs, identified the program model that could address energy-efficiency needs in the community. Planning sessions brought together the partners currently involved with the initiative.

CURRENT GRANTEES ONLY: SUCCESS IN SECURING MATCH RESOURCE

Narratives

MCC is currently an AmeriCorps State Formula funding grantee through ServeMinnesota. The program has met all match requirements for 20 MSY by drawing from diverse sources, including partner support, state funds, donations, foundation grants and sponsorship programs.

MCC has an established record of providing funding to meet our match requirements, including AmeriCorps State and National Direct grants, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, and cost-share agreements with various units of government. Improved funding strategies have identified new opportunities to secure matching funds for the proposed 46 MSY. Additional match sources include funding from Minnesota's Heritage tax authorized by a constitutional amendment to support the state's environmental and cultural heritage, increased donor giving through improved web-based technologies and partner support from new energy-efficiency projects.

SUCCESS IN SECURING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

COLLABORATION

MCC crews plan, implement and reflect on service projects. Through crew outreach, longstanding relationships have been formed with more than 80 local schools, community centers and public service agencies. As described in the program design section, all MCC service projects are identified and implemented in collaboration with state and local organizations. Partners also recruit participants and volunteers, share information and provide programmatic feedback.

MCC partners with Minnesota Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters and has a cooperative agreement with CNCS to provide emergency response. The Adopt-A-River program annually involves

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more than 200 community groups statewide.

The Summer Youth Program collaborates with community partners to identify service, education and outdoor recreation opportunities for AmeriCorps members and youth participants. For example, we partner with the University of Minnesota Duluth, which identifies local environmental-restoration needs and provides hands-on leadership, education and outdoor recreation opportunities, such as lake kayaking, which typically are not available to AmeriCorps members.

Youth Outdoors collaborates with Saint Paul Parks and Recreation to identify projects and meeting places for AmeriCorps members and youth participants and helps plan volunteer events. The City also provides financial support and educational opportunities. Other collaborators include the National Park Service, Youth Farm and Market Project and Eureka Recycling.

Home Energy Squad collaborates with community organizations and energy providers to complete energy-efficiency services for households that request services. Resources for additional follow-up services are also provided to households.

LOCAL FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

When MCC was a state program, 100% of its budget came from state funds. Since becoming a nonprofit in 2003, MCC has generated funding from a larger variety of sources. The AmeriCorps program in the last fiscal year received the following financial support: 19% of revenue was from the state's Natural Resource Fund, 2% from the Board of Water and Soil Resources, 32% from partner support, 9% from state general funds, 26% federal grants, and 12% from donations, foundation grants and other sources.

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MCC has cultivated relationships with organizations that provide in-kind contributions. Audubon Center often hosts MCC's week-long member orientation. St. Croix State Park hosts the Summer Youth Program in exchange for service. The Will Steger Foundation hosts alumni-volunteer events. The City of Saint Paul has worked collaboratively through the Youth Job Corps program and Parks and Recreation Department to provide youth stipends and meeting space. MCC continues to seek mutually-beneficial partnerships with other organizations.

MCC employs a full-time development director and development associate whose responsibilities include generating new funding sources, such as donations and foundation grants, and retaining current revenues. This will enable MCC to sustain and expand programs, to engage more members, youth and community volunteers, and to serve more communities.

WIDE RANGE OF COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

In 2002, MCC's board of directors identified 40 key stakeholders, including the MN DNR, Superior and Chippewa National Forests, MN Division of Emergency Management, MN Soil and Water Conservation districts, National Youth Leadership Council, and the Mille Lacs and White Earth Reservations. Over the past five years, many of these organizations have hosted crews in their communities and recruited youth. MCC also partners directly with 80 community organizations across Minnesota.

MCC has engaged diverse partners and strengthened its ties to communities of color by attending cultural events and fostering relationships with community leaders. For example, MCC has met with leaders of the Red Lake Band of Ojibwe and Minneapolis American Indian Center's Healthy Nations Program to gain insight on being responsive to the cultural perspectives of potential members, youth participants and partner organizations. MCC's executive director gave a presentation at Holy Apostles

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Episcopal Church in Saint Paul, which serves more than 500 Hmong community members from throughout the Twin Cities, and received significant interest in MCC youth programs.

MCC has developed strategic plans with input from AmeriCorps and youth alumni, parents and guardians, community partners and board members. Previous input from these stakeholders helped to identify and implement a growth plan that resulted in Youth Outdoors.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

COST EFFECTIVENESS

CORPORATION COST PER MEMBER SERVICE YEAR

MCC is requesting 46 MSYs to be funded in part with \$598,000 from CNCS. The calculation of \$13,000 per MSY is shown in the budget and includes 35 FT and 22 HT members. 12 FT members will serve in the Youth Outdoors program and lead urban youth in afterschool and weekend service projects, participate in environmental education and develop civic-engagement skills. 22 HT members will serve in the Summer Youth Program and lead youth in hands-on environmental service projects in parks and forests throughout Minnesota during summer months. 20 FT members will serve with the Home Energy Squad and complete energy-saving installations in households in the Twin Cities metro region. 3 FT members will serve with the MN DNR under the mentorship of professionals to increase volunteerism, protect natural and scenic riverways, and seek new ways to connect young people to outdoor recreation.

DIVERSE NON-FEDERAL SUPPORT

MCC has successfully raised funds and in-kind support from a variety of non-federal sources and made a smooth transition from state agency to nonprofit status, increasing its budget by over 100% in six years.

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Funds to complete service projects and provide an optimal service experience came from a variety of sources: 19% of revenue was from the state's Natural Resource Fund, 2% from the Board of Water and Soil Resources, 32% from partner support, 9% from state general funds, 26% federal grants, and 12% from donations, foundation grants and other sources. We expect those funding sources to continue, and MCC is seeking increased support from foundations, corporations, individuals, and a recently passed constitutional amendment to preserve the state's environmental heritage.

CURRENT GRANTEES ONLY: DECREASED RELIANCE ON FEDERAL SUPPORT

MCC is currently a grantee of AmeriCorps State Formula funding through ServeMinnesota. The program is entering the second year as a formula-funded program and has maintained a broad-base of financial support. Cultivation of existing and potential non-federal resources will support the program into the future.

As MCC matures as a nonprofit, we anticipate finding new project hosts and funders that will both decrease our reliance on federal funds and increase our reach. Because of MCC's diverse funding sources, federal dollars can leverage state money, partner support and private donations, making MCC a good investment. This federal support will allow MCC to engage more AmeriCorps members, youth participants and community volunteers, making a stronger case for support from other funders.

BUDGET ADEQUACY

The proposed budget is adequate to meet MCC's mission and performance measures. MCC programs serve a large geographic area with community service projects. Expenses include: orientation and training for all AmeriCorps members; leasing office and shop space in multiple locations; providing and

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maintaining tools and supplies needed for hands-on service, including trailers, canoes, chain saws and other power equipment, hand tools and safety equipment; leasing, insuring and purchasing fuel for at least one vehicle per crew and vehicles for staff travel to service sites across Minnesota; providing education opportunities throughout the members' term; and providing food and lodging for crews on spike projects. Only three staff are identified as being supported by CNCS funds, although many more play significant roles in program operations and are included in the administrative portion of the budget.

MCC is fortunate to partner with federal, state and local agencies to reduce or eliminate some operating costs through Joint Powers and trade agreements. MCC incurs an actual cost of \$29,000 per AmeriCorps member serving full-time. This cost is in line with comparable conservation corps in other states and ensures safe, reliable equipment for members, excellent program quality, and the ability to meet community needs. MCC will supplement the difference between AmeriCorps State Competitive funding and actual costs with other funding sources to provide the best possible experience for AmeriCorps members, youth participants and volunteers while sustaining healthy programs. Much of MCC's funding comes from partner support including state and federal agencies, local governments, universities and nonprofits.

For many years, MCC has successfully developed cost-effective budgets based on needs, programs and desired results. More than 89% of organizational revenue is spent on programs. Our budget is appropriate for environmental service programs committed to quality, training and safety, which is essential for members to be successful.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

MCC is currently a grantee of AmeriCorps State Formula funding through ServeMinnesota and previously developed effective tracking and evaluation procedures that are continuously improved.

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Outputs and outcomes are documented by evaluations and project-tracking procedures tied to performance measures. MCC uses Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) software, customized by the Corps Network for service corps nationwide, that has a proven track record of collecting and reporting accomplishments. Reports are generated to evaluate outcomes.

MCC is working with a Wilder Foundation research scientist to improve the quality of our evaluation tools. We are developing tools for next year to evaluate the impact of sustained program involvement on youth development and the benefits of cross-socioeconomic understanding for members and youth participants.

MCC has met all performance measures in previous grant years. Performance measures addressed engaging diverse youth in service, mobilizing volunteers, civic engagement and public land stewardship. Specific performance measures achieved during the previous grant year can be found in Member Outputs and Outcomes.

Member performance evaluations at service mid and end points highlight strengths, identify growth areas and develop goals. Members also report on their knowledge of civic engagement and suggest opportunities of interest. Youth participants complete similar evaluations tied to performance measures. Parents/guardians of youth participants complete post-service surveys that align with youth and member evaluations. All these self-assessment and improvement measures help MCC optimize members' experience, adapt to changing times and ensure continued effectiveness.

Amendment Justification

Updating National Performance EN7 from BTUs to MBTUs.

Clarification Summary

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FY10 CLARIFICATION RESPONSE

1. Clarify the roles for members in leading youth crews to enhance public lands. Explain how youth will receive training to be able to adequately perform their duties.

Members serve in pairs as they lead crews of six youth in completing hands-on environmental restoration projects. Members serve as the primary point of contact between program staff, community partners, volunteers and the youth. During the day, members serve alongside youth participants to help complete projects, provide guidance on proper tool use and restoration techniques, and offer encouragement.

Youth begin their service term with one week of training. Youth are divided into crews under the leadership of AmeriCorps members and complete service projects that focus on safety, proper conservation techniques, tool use, teamwork and incorporating applicable education sessions into the service day.

2. Provide more details for the training plan -- particularly for energy efficiency work, construction of trails, recruiting and managing volunteers.

Members begin their term with two to three weeks of training, starting with AmeriCorps, Conservation Corps and national-service orientation. Then, depending on specific service projects they will complete during their term, they receive hard-skills training such as energy-efficiency installations, advanced conservation skills, wildland fire fighting, and chainsaw safety.

Energy-efficiency service projects are completed in partnership with Neighborhood Energy Connection.

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In addition to the orientation, policies and procedures, and team-building provided by Conservation Corps staff, the members receive energy-efficiency skills training from Neighborhood Energy Connection staff. Additionally, members will receive Home Energy Audit certification from Dunwoody College of Technology. Serving as site supervisors, the staff complete energy-efficiency projects alongside members for the first month of their term.

Members who will lead youth to complete environmental restoration projects receive hands-on skills training at the beginning of their service term, including trail design and construction techniques from a professional trail builder. Additional training is provided by staff with expertise in various areas of environmental restoration. Members complete training projects prior to youth beginning their service.

Technical environmental-restoration projects, such as constructing hiking trails, typically require an assessment by a public employee before the project can begin. Although Corps staff are sometimes consulted because of their experience, they are not authorized to complete these assessments. The partnering organization is required to provide on-site training and technical assistance that is beyond the Conservation Corps' expertise.

The Conservation Corps places a member with the Department of Natural Resources to help implement the Adopt-A-River program, which coordinates volunteers from across the state in cleaning up rivers and lakes. This member receives training and resources from DNR staff on how to recruit and manage volunteers. The member is then able to provide training to other members and youth participants before they lead volunteer groups.

3. Please provide more detail regarding the member training that will represent 20% of their time and how the program will ensure that it does not exceed this amount.

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AmeriCorps members will complete a term of service that requires skills in conservation projects and/or leading youth. The staff recognizes that significant time must be dedicated to training to provide a positive member experience and ensure that the high-quality projects can be completed. Therefore, staff plan the program calendar to ensure that trainings meets member needs and will not exceed 20% of their time, and that total service hours are achievable. Hours are logged in OnCorps, a web-based data tracking system, and are tracked by program staff. If a member's training is in danger of exceeding the 20% limit, program staff meet with the member and adjust their schedule to ensure compliance.

4. Explain in more detail the types of projects that the Youth Outdoors program would undertake.

Youth Outdoors was designed to provide youth with basic conservation experiences in a safe and positive setting. Therefore, projects that members lead youth to complete are not technically challenging. Projects have included collecting and disbursing native prairie-grass seed, planting trees , hand-pulling invasive plants, cleaning up litter in parks and managing on-site recycling programs at community events.

5. Provide detail on voter registration activities and confirm that they do not violate AmeriCorps policy.

Members enrolled in the Conservation Corps are provided with a voter registration card and instructions on how to register to vote if they haven't already. In no way do members or program staff participate in voter registration drives, engage in partisan political activities or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office, or participate in or endorse events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials. These activities are prohibited and program staff

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ensures that program activities do not violate any of the aforementioned prohibited service activities.

6. Provide more information on the training for site supervisors. Elaborate on the extent of site supervisor orientation and follow-up meetings.

The Conservation Corps partners with organizations from across the state to complete more than 65 high-priority service projects. Projects typically range from one to eight weeks. Each member has the opportunity to serve on a variety of projects throughout their community and state. Program staff work closely with the members to provide information and training.

Prior to the start of a specific service project, program staff discuss project goals and members' roles with the partnering organization. The project partner receives an information packet with Conservation Corps mission and values, inclusion information, AmeriCorps overview, a list of prohibited activities, data collection process, and a procedure for feedback. Program staff call the partnering organization to review any necessary items one week prior to the start of the service project. More extensive planning and follow-up meetings are held with partnering organizations who are involved in long-term projects, such as the City of Saint Paul, Minnesota DNR and Neighborhood Energy Connection.

The program model typically requires members to complete projects lasting from one week to eight weeks. While project partners provide overviews and guidance on projects, they are not on-site with the same members for the duration of a members' service term. Additionally, multiple staff with a partnering organization may provide expertise for a limited amount of time each week, depending on schedules and other job responsibilities. Due to staff reductions in many of the partnering organizations, the Conservation Corps is often needed to provide members with training and the information necessary to complete the project after receiving orientation from partners. Conservation Corps staff provide

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direct supervision and on-site technical assistance for members on a daily and weekly basis depending on the project type.

7. Provide more details on the family camping activities members will lead between semesters, including identifying how the families will be selected, how many people will be engaged in the activity (members, family adults, youth, supervisors).

Two teams of corps members, each with two members, will travel throughout the state to host workshops at 33 state parks. Registration for a family of up to six members includes a one-day vehicle permit, use of basic camping and cooking equipment and hands-on instruction. Participants need only bring their own bedding, groceries and personal items.

Members will show participants how to set up and break down camp sites, build a campfire, and cook outdoors. Each workshop includes environmental learning activities designed to increase environmental knowledge and prepare participants for future outdoor activities. Conservation education may include bird and wildlife watching, canoeing, fishing, hiking, animal footprint tracking and geocaching.

Information about the program has been distributed to communities throughout the state, with emphasis given to regional centers where people are less likely to have been exposed to camping.

Three Minnesota DNR staff are directly engaged with this program and many others are in a supporting role. Two Conservation Corps program staff have been involved in planning from the on-set and will supervise members. REI's Outreach Specialist has dedicated time for planning and training. Four corps members will be involved at any one time in leading the workshops. In total, eight members will participate.

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8. Explain how you will raise needed match funding.

To date, the program has met all match requirements by drawing from diverse sources. Matching funds typically come from three sources: First, funds received from partner support are used as cash match. These dollars come from community organizations to help off-set project expenses. Matching funds are also received through grants and donations, typically to engage underrepresented youth in our programs. Finally, the State of Minnesota provides \$750 per MSY for match through the Youth Works appropriation. The Conservation Corps has a solid track record of receiving these matching funds and anticipates they will be stable sources of match for the grant period.

9. Provide justification for this expansion request and clearly explain how you will ensure it doesn't overlap with the national project.

Today, excessive energy consumption in homes is causing large carbon footprints and swelling utility bills for residents. Therefore, community partners designed a program model in which members play a lead role in implementing energy efficiency measures in homes throughout the Twin Cities. This expansion delivers needed services, represents a partnership between nonprofits, energy providers and residents, and provides unique and meaningful service opportunities for members. This expansion includes 20 MSY for the home energy-efficiency initiative that is not included in our AmeriCorps National Direct continuation request.

Four additional MSY were requested to increase opportunities for youth in our Youth Outdoors program. Each year, many more youth applications are received than there are positions available. This year, it is anticipated there will be five applications for each position. More members are needed so more

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high school youth can be engaged in service-learning activities that restore public land.

Two additional MSY were requested to implement an aggressive community outreach strategy.

Members will collaborate with DNR staff to design and implement best practices to address key issues, including: declining outdoor recreation, opportunities in web and social media technologies to connect with a younger audience, and utilizing GIS/GPS systems to communicate land management strategies to the public.

Conservation Corps executive team members worked closely during the application process to ensure there was no overlap in MSYs requested by the AmeriCorps State and the AmeriCorps National programs. Initiatives were divided into two areas. State members address environmental issues through engagement of the community. National members address environmental issues that require greater technical skill and therefore limit the engagement of the community due to risk management factors.

Currently, the Conservation Corps' executive team works to ensure that program collaboration occurs between the State and National programs. At the same time, measureable outputs and outcomes, program revenues and expenses, and member supervision are kept separate in all organization departments. This approach allows the Conservation Corps to address many different environmental issues.

FY10 BUDGET CLARIFICATION RESPONSE

1. Personnel: The narrative states that the Summer Youth program and the Youth Outdoors program would each have 3 full-time staff yet the budget only includes one person in each role. Please clarify whether one (or two) staff members are sufficient to adequately supervise 22 members and 80 youth at

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a summer residential program.

Although only three staff are identified in the budget, more play a role in program operations and are included in the administrative portion. The Summer Youth program and Youth Outdoors each have one program coordinator dedicated full-time to their initiative. Each program also receives support from other staff as needed. For example, finance and administrative staff assist with many areas of program operations, but are not identified as being supported by CNCS funds.

Each year, up to seven seasonal staff are hired to help administer the summer residential program and provide support for conservation projects, AmeriCorps members and youth participants. During this time of year, the program director is also able to dedicate significant time to program operations.

The aforementioned support staff that play significant roles in program operations are included in the administrative portion of the budget. Revenue used to support the difference in total cost and budgeted cost typically comes from federal sources and therefore cannot be claimed as match.

2. The narrative mentions that in some cases, project partners will provide on-site supervision yet the role and time commitment is unclear and not reflected in the budget. It is unclear which projects receive this partner supervision and which do not.

The program model typically requires members to complete projects lasting from one week to eight weeks. While project partners provide overviews and guidance on projects, they are not on-site with the same members for the duration of a members' service term. Additionally, multiple staff with a partnering organization may provide expertise for a limited amount of time each week, depending on schedules and other job responsibilities. Therefore, the collection and reporting of the project partners'

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time as "on-site supervision" for match in the budget is an unrealistic burden on program staff and partnering organizations at this time.

Partnering organizations are required to provide an overview of the project, describe how the project supports long-term sustainability plans, and provide technical assistance as needed for members. Due to staff reductions in many of the partnering organizations, the Conservation Corps is often needed to provide members with training and the information necessary to complete the project after receiving orientation from partners. Corps staff provide direct supervision and on-site technical assistance for members on a daily and weekly basis depending on the project type.

3. Travel: Describe the purpose of the vehicles and provide an itemized description of the annual lease and fuel costs.

Members are based at central locations for each initiative and travel to project sites throughout their service area. For example, in our Summer Youth program, members and youth participants are based in rural central Minnesota and complete service projects across the state. The crews travel in vans to service project locations and camp nearby until the project is completed. Crews return to the base intermittently. For the home energy initiative, members meet at a Saint Paul facility, drive vehicles with tools and supplies to homes, and complete energy-efficiency projects. Although the cost of leasing vehicles is a significant portion of the budget, it provides the only means of delivering service to multiple locations in both rural and urban areas across a wide geographic range.

Vehicles are leased from the most cost effective vendor. Leasing vehicles has proven to be more cost effective and safer than purchasing, because the leased vehicles receive regular maintenance and are replaced at specific intervals. This ensures that members, youth participants and volunteers have the

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safe and reliable transportation necessary to complete their service.

Average monthly lease per van is \$270.

Average monthly fuel and maintenance cost is \$135.

Total of 13 vans in the fleet, each retained for 12 months per year.

Total cost is 13 vans x 12 months x \$405 = \$63,180.

Revenue used to support the difference in total cost and budgeted cost typically comes from federal sources and therefore cannot be claimed as match in the eGrants budget.

4. Supplies: Itemize costs included in tools and camping supplies.

Tools and camping supplies include items necessary to ensure members, youth participants and volunteers are able to complete service projects. The total cost in this category is \$5,000.

First aid supplies (\$1,350)

Well-supplied first aid kits are provided to corps members. These are an important risk-management practice when leading youth and community volunteers. There will be 27 first aid kits that are re-filled with supplies annually at a cost of \$50 each. The total cost per year is \$1,350.

Conservation hand tools (\$1,700)

The Conservation Corps provides most of the tools needed by crews completing environmental restoration projects. Most standard trail tools, such as pruning loppers or ax mattocks range from \$25-\$55 per tool. We currently have a moderate tool supply. Budgeting for regular replacement is done per crew. Therefore a \$100 per crew cost is budgeted for 17 crews. The total cost per year is \$1,700.

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Chainsaw and safety gear (\$550)

There are currently 8 chainsaws used by crews. Chainsaws use ranges from daily to weekly depending on the time of year. Chainsaws must be in proper working order to be safe for member use. A chainsaw typically costs \$400. A new pair of cut-resistant chaps and a sawyer helmet are also needed periodically. Replacement is estimated at \$150. The total cost is \$550.

Camping supplies (\$1,275)

AmeriCorps members will spend much of their service term in the spring, summer and fall camping at or nearby project locations. Significant wear-and-tear occurs each year on tents, backpacks, stoves for cooking, and water jugs due to extended use. These items range from \$25-\$175 to replace. Therefore a \$75 cost is budgeted for 17 crews. The total cost per year is \$1,275.

Tool and supply repair (\$125)

Some power equipment is used, including chainsaws, commercial grade gas-powered drills, brush saws and similar tools to accomplish some of the service projects. Repair of these tools is sometimes reasonable from a risk management and financial perspective. A total of \$125 is budgeted for small repair parts.

5. Contractual and Consultant Services: Explain what orientations and training will be provided by consultants. Please explain the difference between these trainers and the "presenters" listed under "Member Training." Explain the purpose and source of staff training and conferences and identify how many staff would attend.

Conservation Corps programs often involve members who are deaf or hard of hearing. We typically

Narratives

contracts with sign language interpreters for trainings that involve significant technical information including first aid and CPR, rules and policies, member benefits and vehicle driver training. These costs are included in the Contractual and Consultant Services.

"Presenters" listed under Member Training are outside facilitators who present on a specific topic. Examples include: first aid and CPR training, ASL and Deaf culture, and keynote speakers. Member Training costs also include food and lodging for members during multiple-day training events.

Staff Training costs cover the expense of one conference for one staff member per year. Conferences that a staff will possibly attend during the grant period include the National Conference on Volunteering and Service, Financial and Grants Management Institute through CNCS, and The Corps Network's annual Corps Forum.

6. Evaluation: Clarify the relationship between the evaluation services requested in the budget, the work being undertaken with the Wilder Foundation, the 18-month National Youth Corps study, and MCC's participation in the Excellence in Corps Operations evaluation.

The evaluation services requested in the budget are intended to continue the Conservation Corps program evaluation and plans for improvement that were started with Wilder Foundation. Specific focus areas include evaluating the impact of sustained program involvement on youth development and the benefits of cross-socioeconomic understanding for members and youth participants.

7. Other Program Operating Costs: Criminal background checks for members and staff are not included in the budget. Confirm that background checks will be conducted for each member and grant-funded staff position.

Narratives

Criminal background checks will be conducted for each member and grant-funded staff position.

8. Specify the allocation formula and itemization for the office space, utilities, and communications budget item.

Organizational shared expenses such as central office space, communications, property and general liability insurance are allocated based on the number of staff and corps member positions in each program/department.

The following information is the current allocation formula used by the Conservation Corps. The allocation schedule is adjusted annually with the organizational budget.

All Staff and corps members - 209 people

Administrative (3%)

AmeriCorps Education Award Program subgrantee (61%)

AmeriCorps National Direct Program (16%)

-Minnesota (11%)

-Iowa (5%)

AmeriCorps State Program (18%)

-Summer Youth program (11%)

Narratives

-Youth Outdoors program (7%)

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act AmeriCorps (2%)

-Energy-efficiency program (2%)

FY10 PERFORMANCE MEASURE CLARIFICATION RESPONSE, PART 2

The 28.5 MSY outlined in the MSY Chart for Priority Area of Environment/Clean Energy will be contributing to a number of outputs and outcomes, one of which is environmental education. The members involved with environmental education will also be leading youth and volunteers to restore 2,000 acres of public land and 400 miles of trails and rivers. In total 8.5 MSY will be leading environmental education and restoring public lands and trails.

Members also included in the MSY Chart for Priority Area of Environment/Clean Energy will also completing energy efficiency improvements for 1,000 low-income households and 2,000 additional households. In total 20 MSY will be weatherizing and retrofitting houses.

EN4 and EN5 have been placed in separate performance measures. EN3 has been placed in the performance measure of Environmental Education.

FY2011 CLARIFICATION RESPONSE

Start Date and Member Enrollment Period

The Conservation Corps confirms the desired grant award start date of 01/01/2012. Furthermore, the

Narratives

desired member enrollment period start date remains 01/01/2012.

Criminal History Checks

Criminal history checks will be conducted on all members, employees or other individuals who receive a salary, education award, living allowance, stipend or similar payment from the grant, regardless of whether these costs are coming from federal or non-federal share. Criminal history background checks will include a search of statewide criminal history repositories and the National Sex Offender Public Website for all members and employees as described above. An FBI check is also required for members, employees or other individuals with recurring access to vulnerable populations. Criminal history checks will be conducted for members and staff will include an FBI fingerprint check in addition to the state registry check and the NSOPR for anyone with recurring access to vulnerable populations. In total, this will include 3 staff and 77 members identified in the grant budget (15 FT and 62 HT). The budget includes the costs associated with completing each of the identified background checks for each person.

Budget

The clarification items for the grant budget have been completed.

Performance Measures

The clarification items for the performance measures have been completed.

CLARIFICATION 2011, PART 2

National Measures EN4 and EN5

Narratives

(Note: The request for clarification was the same for both measures and the response is the same for both measures. Therefore, the clarification response below applies to both.)

Capacity is the ability of public land management to improve and maintain natural resources for the public. Projects completed by AmeriCorps members are typically an initial step or major step in an overall management plan. Successive ongoing improvements can then be completed by other, less-skilled groups in the future with minimal time. Without improvements to capacity, land management would not be able to maintain the natural resources. Examples of capacity improvement for public land habitat restoration (EN4) include: removal of invasive plants, establishment of native plants, erosion control, and public safety. Examples of capacity improvement for trails and rivers (EN5) include: trail sustainability, accessibility, and public safety. Members increase the capacity by leading youth and volunteers, who contribute 60,000 hours of time towards the conservation efforts outlined in EN4 and EN5. These groups would likely not be able to complete the projects in a satisfactory manner without the leadership provided by AmeriCorps members. When members are not leading youth and volunteers, they are completing more technical service projects, such as prescribed burning, treatment of invasive plant species, chainsawing blown-down trees, collecting GPS/GIS data, and raingarden installation.

Project partners are asked to indicate changes to capacity because of their expertise in conservation practices and the specific site on which the service is occurring. This combination gives the project partner a unique perspective on the impact of the project. Project partners assess the capacity prior to the start of the service project and submit it to the Conservation Corps staff. Projects are selected by Conservation Corps staff on the basis of need and member experience. In addition to the pre-service assessment, post-service assessments completed by project partners also indicate the capacity. To reduce the possibility of bias, the post-service assessment clearly states on the top of the page that the responses they provide will in no way impact the potential for future partnerships. Negative or positive feedback on an evaluation will not impact the project selection process. Collecting data from park users

Narratives

presents an unreasonable burden for the program because it would be prohibitively time consuming and expensive.

National Measure O2

Initially the outcome was chosen because a resume created by youth that captures their basic job skills and green industry specific training is a tangible product that demonstrates readiness to seek employment. The outcome has been changed. It now clarifies the output as training for economically disadvantaged youth in basic job skills and green industry skills. The outcome uses pre- and post assessments on basic job skills and green industry skills to identify employment readiness.

Continuation Changes

YEAR 2 CONTINUATION WITH EXPANSION REQUEST

Conservation Corps Minnesota (formerly Minnesota Conservation Corps) has an opportunity to engage additional AmeriCorps members in completing residential energy-efficiency services to reduce costly energy waste. Home Energy Squads, each with two AmeriCorps members instructed by a professional Home Energy Auditor, will inspect homes to identify and educate homeowners about energy conservation and install up to seven energy-efficiency measures including compact fluorescent bulbs, smart power strips, setback thermostats, low-flow shower heads, aerators, door weather-stripping and water-heater insulation. Three additional MSY are requested to meet the community need in 2012. The 3 additional MSY will be based in St. Paul, MN and complete service in the Twin Cities region. This would result in a total of 49 MSY (15 FT and 68 HT members).

Except for the expansion request and related activities outlined below, our continuation for year two has just one other change to member service activities. Members serving with the Home Energy Squads will serve in Half-time service terms, as opposed to the Full-time terms indicated in the original application.

Narratives

The training and hands-on experience gained by members in the first 6 months of their term prepares them to complete higher-level service projects, such as blower door testing, and take on advanced responsibilities in scheduling home visits and educating residents. After their HT term is complete, members may opt to apply again for service positions that include tasks related to the higher skill sets. Preparing members for future employment in the green-collar industry is a key component of the program. The HT term allows members to pursue the next step in their career path after six months of service.

OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND SERVICE ACTIVITIES

The Home Energy Squads are on-pace to greatly exceed performance measure targets set for 2010-2011. Even with efficient service delivery from the members, the demand in the community for reducing energy consumption is outpacing the ability of the members to deliver services. Projections completed with our community partners indicate that 3 additional MSY will help meet demand. The service completed by the additional members will reduce energy consumption, shrink the carbon footprint, and reduce energy bills for residents. Through efficiencies in service delivery and this expansion, 2,000 additional homes will receive energy-efficiency installations in program year 2011-2012. This will save an estimated at 20,000 MMBTU of additional energy.

COMPELLING NEED FOR ENERGY-EFFICIENCY

Energy costs and unnecessary waste are straining the financial resources of individuals and families in a time of economic stress. In fact, most energy experts agree that the best way to reduce energy use is for individuals to become more energy efficient. (Third Report Card on Minnesotans' Environmental Literacy 2008) Household energy waste can be controlled with simple conservation measures that many

Narratives

homeowners don't know how to install, or they are confused about which products are most effective.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, about 17% of all carbon dioxide emissions in the U.S. come from people's homes. The U.S. Department of Energy has identified effective methods to reduce energy, including insulating water heaters, replacing incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents, and installing weather-stripping around doors, low-flow water fixtures and programmable thermostats.

Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses threaten community health and could have long-term impacts on climate change. A 2009 report by McKinsey and Company stated that energy-efficient building upgrades, from new appliance to weatherized doorways, could reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 710 megatons per year. Simply changing from incandescent to CFL lightbulbs can reduce energy consumption by up to 70%.

Pollution and environmental degradation detract from our health and well being and impact air and water quality. People need simple, cost-effective ways to reduce their own energy use, clean up the environment and ensure a healthy quality of life for future generations.

MEMBER ROLES AND OUTCOMES

Each year, 46 HT AmeriCorps members will complete residential energy-efficiency services to reduce costly energy waste. Home Energy Squads, each with two AmeriCorps members instructed by a professional Home Energy Auditor, will inspect homes to identify and educate homeowners about energy conservation and install up to seven energy-efficiency measures including compact fluorescent bulbs, smart power strips, setback thermostats, low-flow shower heads, aerators, door weather-

Narratives

stripping and water-heater insulation. These simple measures save each homeowner an average of \$125 per year on utility bills.

The Home Energy Squad initiative is a partnership between Neighborhood Energy Connection (NEC), Metro Clean Energy Resource Team, Center for Energy and Environment, Green Institute, Conservation Corps Minnesota and Xcel Energy, a leading electric and natural gas energy company. Xcel's policy is to be an energy-industry leader and demonstrate excellence in environmental performance. Projections for the 2010-2011 program year indicate AmeriCorps members will complete 4,500 home visits this year. This is 500 more than originally anticipated. This will result in future annual savings of \$562,500 and reduce energy consumption by 45,000 MMBTU.

Members will receive Conservation Corps orientation and will be trained and mentored by skilled energy professionals hired by NEC. They will receive accredited Home Energy Auditor certification training to fully prepare them for future green jobs.

MEASURABLE OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

In program year 2011-2012, AmeriCorps members in Home Energy Squads will improve energy efficiency in 6,000 residences, including at least 1,000 low-income households. Energy-saving measures will reduce consumption by 60,000 MMBTU.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO SUPPORT EXPANSION

The Conservation Corps has responsibly managed funds and met performance measures as a grantee of ServeMinnesota. Our management capacity has improved and increased through close working

Narratives

relationships with the State Commission and community partners. With experience and a track record with AmeriCorps grants, the Conservation Corps has all the staff and systems in place to provide meaningful service opportunities to an additional 3 MSY who will help address critical energy needs. Working closely with our community partners, we have quickly developed the Home Energy Squads as a young, but efficient program. This has allowed us to serve more people in the community and will now allow us to engage more members.

BUDGET REVISION AND INCREASED COST PER MSY

The budget for program year 2011-2012 has been revised to reflect the additional 3 MSY. The budget also reflects the enrollment of HT members in the Home Energy Squads, as opposed to the FT members originally proposed. This has caused us to request \$13,300 per MSY. In total, 15 FT and 68 HT members will complete service. These changes impact the following:

- Supplies (includes member service gear); increase.
- Member training; increase.
- Living allowance rates for HT members and the resulting FICA; increase.
- Worker's compensation; increase.
- Health care; decrease.
- Corporation administration; increase.
- ServeMinnesota administrative fee; increase.

Other changes include:

- Member travel due to increased fleet costs, increased fuel costs, and increased number of vehicles used; increase.
- Changed match amounts and distribution among budget items; increase.

Narratives

-Program evaluation is not budgeted for 2011-2012; decrease. This will be budgeted for 2012-2013.

RETENTION

Conservation Corps Minnesota enrolled 100% of slots received in 2009-2010. One member left after half of the term was completed, due to an offer of employment. Therefore the final retention rate was 96%. The Conservation Corps will continue to emphasize the ethic of service, esprit de corps, and the lasting impact that members have during their term of service. These factors are critical in ensuring high member retention.

Performance Measures

SAA Characteristics

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

Priority Areas

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

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 46

Service Categories

Afterschool Programs

Job Preparedness/School to Work/Vocational Education/Youth ESL

Performance Measures

Service Categories and GED

Service-Learning

Drinking Water Quality and Availability Improvement

Energy Use Reduction

Environmental Awareness-building and Education

At-risk Ecosystems Improvement

National Performance Measures

Priority Area: Environmental Stewardship

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Members will lead youth and volunteers to complete environmental conservation and restoration activities for critical and sensitive habitats in order to improve water quality, preserve biodiversity, and reduce pollution.

Of the 175 youth participants, 75% of youth participants will be from typically underrepresented populations, including: low-income, disabled, or minorities. The combination of service projects and experiential education help youth build practical skills, connect to the natural environment, and become active, empowered citizens in their local communities. Conservation Corps staff and project hosts will plan and oversee implementation of projects collaboratively. Members' roles will include: a. Habitat Improvement and Restoration b. Outdoor Recreational Access Improvement c. Volunteer Recruitment and Management.

Members will be directly involved in habitat restoration projects in cooperation with federal, state and local agencies. Members will be trained in and conduct habitat restoration techniques including shoreline restoration, erosion control, invasive species removal, planting, and other ecosystem health initiatives.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

AmeriCorps members will implement projects that improve capacity to restore and protect public lands for future generations.

Indicator: Service project partners who indicate increased capacity to manage public lands via

Target : 85% of project partners completing pre- and post-assessments will demonstrate an improved capacity to restore and protect public lands. Capacity areas include: removal of invasive plants, establishment of native plants, erosion control, etc.

Target Value: 85

Instruments: Pre- and post- evaluation of individual capacity focus area completed by project partners.

PM Statement: 85% of project partners responding to a project evaluation will demonstrate improved capacity to restore and protect public lands for future generations as the result of projects completed by AmeriCorps members.

National Performance Measures

Result.

pre- and post-assessments of the service location. Capacity is the ability of public land

National Performance Measures

Result.

management to improve and maintain natural resources for the public (removal of

National Performance Measures

Result.

invasive plants, establishment of native plants, erosion control, public safety, etc.).

Result: Output

Result.

AmeriCorps members will lead youth participants and community volunteers to implement projects that enhance access to and improve the condition of public lands and waters.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) EN4: Acres of parks cleaned or improved.

Target : 2,000 acres of national parks, state parks, city parks, county parks, or other public lands and tribal communities will be cleaned or improved.

Target Value: 2000

Instruments: Database of projects and work accomplishments will be completed by staff and AmeriCorps members.

PM Statement: Annually, 2,000 acres of national parks, state parks, city parks, county parks, or other public lands and tribal communities will be cleaned or improved.

Priority Area: Economic Opportunity

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

AmeriCorps members will lead crews of youth to complete various environmental restoration service projects and participate in education activities. In the process, youth will receive on-the-job training and work experience, exposure to career panels and guidance on resume writing and interviewing. Specific instruction will be provided on how to apply for a job, including resume writing and interviewing.

Youth gain both hands-on skills that can be used on future applications and resumes. In addition, youth will receive specific training on resume writing and interviewing. The combination of skill development and application training will prepare youth to apply for a future job.

Result: Output

Result.

Unduplicated economically disadvantaged individuals receive basic job training and industry related job skill development services.

Indicator: O2: Individuals receiving job training services.

Target : 100 economically disadvantaged individuals (youth participants) will receive job training and green industry skill development services.

Target Value: 100

Instruments: Timesheets (attendance records)

PM Statement:

National Performance Measures

Result.

Annually, 100 economically disadvantaged individuals (youth participants) will receive basic job training (resume writing, interviewing, job searches, etc.) and focused green industry skill development services.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Economically disadvantaged clients (youth participants) who complete the basic job skill training and green industry training will achieve employment readiness.

Indicator: Number of economically disadvantaged clients (youth participants) completing basic

Target : 75 of the 100 (75%) economically disadvantaged clients (youth participants) that completed basic job skill training and focused green industry training will achieve employment readiness.

Target Value: 75

Instruments: Pre- and post- surveys completed by youth participants measuring perceived proficiency levels in basic job skills and green industry skills.

PM Statement: 75 economically disadvantaged youth participants (75% of the total clients) that completed basic job skills training and green industry training will become technically and personally ready to seek employment.

National Performance Measures

Result.

job skills training and focused green industry training who achieve employment

National Performance Measures

Result.

readiness as identified in the following areas:

National Performance Measures

Result.

- 1) Development of basic job seeking and other personal and interpersonal skills

National Performance Measures

Result.

(punctuality, appearance, communication, etc.) for employment;

National Performance Measures

Result.

2) Demonstrate knowledge of and proficiency (skill assessment and self-report) in

National Performance Measures

Result.

performing the required tasks to entry-level green industry.

Priority Area: Environmental Stewardship

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

Members will lead youth participants and volunteers to complete environmental conservation and restoration activities for critical and sensitive habitats in order to improve water quality, preserve biodiversity, and reduce pollution.

Of the 175 youth participants, 75% of youth participants will be from typically underrepresented populations, including: low-income, disabled, or minorities. The combination of service projects and experiential education help youth build practical skills, connect to the natural environment, and become active, empowered citizens in their local communities. Conservation Corps staff and project hosts will plan and oversee implementation of projects collaboratively. Members' roles will include: a. Habitat Improvement and Restoration b. Outdoor Recreational Access Improvement c. Volunteer Recruitment and Management.

Members will be directly involved in trail construction and maintenance projects as well as river clean up in cooperation with federal, state and local agencies. Members will be trained in and conduct river and trail improvement projects which will include clearing of natural and unnatural debris, implementing safety and environmental protection measures, new trail construction, and other recreational improvements.

Result: Output

Result.

AmeriCorps members will lead youth participants and community volunteers to implement projects that enhance access to and improve the condition of public lands and waters.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) EN5: Miles of trails or rivers improved and/or created.

Target : 400 miles of trails or rivers will be cleaned, improved, and/or created.

Target Value: 400

Instruments: Database of projects and work accomplishments will be completed by staff and AmeriCorps members.

PM Statement: Annually, 400 miles of trails or rivers will be cleaned, improved, and/or created.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

AmeriCorps members will implement projects that improve capacity to restore and protect trails and rivers for

National Performance Measures

Result.

future generations.

Indicator: Service project partners who indicate increased capacity to manage trails and rivers

Target : 85% of project partners completing pre- and post-assessments will demonstrate improved capacity to restore and protect trails and rivers. Capacity areas include: trail sustainability, accessibility, public safety, etc.

Target Value: 85

Instruments: Pre- and post- evaluation of individual capacity focus area completed by project partners.

PM Statement: 85% of project partners responding to a project evaluation will demonstrate improved capacity to restore and protect trails and rivers for future generations as the result of projects completed by AmeriCorps members.

National Performance Measures

Result.

via pre- and post-assessments of the service location. Capacity is the ability of public

National Performance Measures

Result.

land management to improve and maintain natural resources for the public (trail

National Performance Measures

Result.

sustainability, accessibility, public safety, etc.).

Priority Area: Environmental Stewardship

Strategy to Achieve Results

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

AmeriCorps members will conduct home visits in Ramsey and Washington counties. Members will then complete home energy services to reduce energy consumption and provide homeowners with additional information about energy saving options available to them.

Result: Output

Result.

Housing units of low-income households and structures will be weatherized or retrofitted to significantly improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

Indicator: EN1: Housing units weatherized or retrofitted.

Target : Low-income households weatherized and retrofitted to significantly improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

Target Value: 1000

Instruments: Project tracking sheets and database of accomplishments.

PM Statement: Annually, 1,000 housing units of low-income households will receive weatherization and retrofitting to significantly improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Annual energy usage will be reduced for low-income housing units and structures from weatherizing and retrofitting.

Indicator: (DELETED) EN7: Annual energy usage reduction (in units).

Target : Weatherizing and retrofitting will produce an annual savings of 10,000 MMBTU.

Target Value: 10000

Instruments: Database system that calculates the number of British Thermal Units saved.

PM Statement: Annual energy usage will be reduced for 1,000 low-income housing units and structures from weatherizing and retrofitting with annual savings of 10,000 MMBTU.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Sent

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable