

PART I - FACE SHEET

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to conform to the Corporation's eGrants System)

1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION:

Application Non-Construction

2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):

3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:

17-JAN-12

STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:

N/A

2b. APPLICATION ID:

12AC134705

4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:

FEDERAL IDENTIFIER:

12ACHME0010001

5. APPLICATION INFORMATION

LEGAL NAME: Maine Conservation Corps

DUNS NUMBER: 002221286 - 8815

ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county):

124 State House Station
Augusta ME 04333 - 0124
County:

NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes):

NAME: Mick Rogers
TELEPHONE NUMBER: (207) 287-4962
FAX NUMBER: (207) 287-3342
INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: mick.rogers@maine.gov

6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):

016000001

7. TYPE OF APPLICANT:

7a. State Government

7b.

8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box).

NEW NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE
 CONTINUATION AMENDMENT

If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es):

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:

Maine Conservation Corps

12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc):

State of Maine

11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):

13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 01/01/13 END DATE: 12/31/15

14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant b.Program

15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #:

a. FEDERAL	\$ 351,583.00
b. APPLICANT	\$ 915,531.00
c. STATE	\$ 0.00
d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00
g. TOTAL	\$ 1,267,114.00

16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?

YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON:

DATE:

NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372

17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT?

YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. NO

18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAAPPLICATION 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:

Sara Knowles

b. TITLE:

Program Coordinator

c. TELEPHONE NUMBER:

(207) 624-6090

d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:

e. DATE SIGNED:

08/03/12

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Executive Summary

81 AmeriCorps members, including 6 Maine veterans, will serve with the Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) to focus on creating and improving recreational trails and leading community volunteers in environmental service activities throughout Maine. Based on past successes, AmeriCorps members will leverage hundreds of volunteers annually. At the end of the 3 year period, there will be a reduction in environmental degradation and erosion from human and natural causes; an expansion of employment opportunities and community involvement for Maine veterans; and the creation of a sustainable, skilled community volunteer base to conduct local trail construction and rehabilitation projects. This project will focus on the CNCS focus areas of environmental stewardship and veterans. The CNCS investment of \$351,583 will be matched with \$915,531.

Rationale and Approach

A. NEED

The MCC will address 3 identified community needs: a sustainable and effective recreational trail system; community involvement for Maine veterans; and a skilled, sustainable community volunteer base trained in trail construction and maintenance.

Trails are an extremely important aspect of life in the State of Maine. A 2009 study by the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences relayed many insights on the conditions of trails in the Northeast. Namely, Maine's trail systems face environmental degradation and erosion from human and natural causes. According to a recent field study by the same group, over 95% of northern New England trails experienced significant soil erosion. This trail degradation impacts water quality, user safety, and ecological stability. The MCC target community is the entire state of Maine, as over 80% of Maine is forested (The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 2007). Nature-based travel, one of the fastest-growing sectors of global tourism, holds great potential to strengthen Maine's economy without the environmental costs associated with other industries. Tourism provides roughly 58,000 jobs and generates nearly 5% of all Maine's economic activity (The Public Benefits of Conserved Lands, 2005). A University of Maine study found that hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing alone contribute \$1 billion of the state's total tourism revenues of \$2.5 billion. Furthermore, the Maine Office of Tourism states that two-thirds of the top 36 Maine information requests involve outdoor recreation opportunities. Much of Maine's appeal to year-round residents and its lure as "Vacationland" lie in the recreational possibilities offered by its spectacular natural settings. Many of Maine's 48 million annual

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visitors come to enjoy the state's natural beauty. According to Maine's 2009-2014 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), "Maintaining the special character of Maine's places helps protect economic, environmental, and community values. Thus, protecting 'quality of place' is a major concern as Maine seeks to ensure that its woods and waters, along with its outdoor recreation infrastructure such as trails and parks, continue to recharge residents and inspire visitors."

Maine veterans are in need of community involvement. A 2009 study, "All Volunteer Force: From Military to Civilian Service" depicts the importance of engaging veterans. The study demonstrated that volunteering is a key activity for returning veterans for physical and mental well-being, employment, and their overall family environment. In fact, 92% of surveyed veterans stated that serving their communities is important. In addition, the document conveys that the transition to civilian life is more successful for veterans who volunteer. Veterans, the target population, are a self-motivated and highly skilled group who want to serve their communities. Moreover, Maine has approximately 150,000 veterans, one of the highest per capita in the nation. (Peter Ogden, Director of the State Bureau of Veterans Services). Yet, "All Volunteer Force" shows that the majority of veterans have not been contacted about serving or have not been provided with sufficient information regarding service opportunities.

In Maine there is a need for a skilled, sustainable community volunteer base trained in trail construction and maintenance. A 2009 MCC survey found that community trails organizations and their volunteers need training in both basic and technical trail practices, including volunteer management, trail maintenance, and trail design and layout. The target community is Maine citizens. According to the Maine Commission for Community Service (MCCS), Maine citizens volunteer at a rate significantly higher than the national average with each citizen giving an average of 46 hours a year to volunteer service; this places Maine fourth in the United States in terms of hours per volunteer. Furthermore, Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies research indicates that one of the main reasons volunteers of all ages stay committed to an organization is the availability of ongoing training and skill building. Especially with the recession, volunteerism is now seen as a way to try out a new career path, network with peers, and gain the skills and training to become more marketable. Therefore, there is a need to leverage the dedication of Maine citizens by providing a structured volunteer environment.

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With an exceptional trail building reputation across Maine, the MCC is perfectly positioned to address these compelling needs by delivering tested programs. In particular, the MCC Field Team has just completed its 28th year of operation, while the MCC Trail Training Academy is gearing up for its 6th consecutive year.

B. VALUE ADDED: AMERICORPS MEMBER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The MCC program trains and provides top quality members to support partners' natural resource, trail building and restoration project, and volunteer recruitment needs. The overall structure of the MCC is a staff of 1 Director, 2 Program Coordinators, 2 Training Coordinators, 3 Senior Team Leaders and 1 Recruitment Associate with the support of 1 Assistant Resource Administrator. The AmeriCorps program is comprised of 1 Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator, 6 Regional Planners, 6 Veteran Community Leaders, and 68 Field Team members. Veteran Community Leaders will be selected from a pool of Maine veterans. Field Team members will be composed of Team Leaders, Assistant Team Leaders and Team Members.

The Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator will conduct outreach and marketing activities for the MCC and will coordinate volunteers for the MCC program by recruiting volunteers and managing the MCC volunteer calendar. In addition, this position will work with the other members to implement sound volunteer management practices.

The 6 Regional Planners will serve individually and focus on implementing land management plans, conducting trail assessments, and recruiting, training and sustaining a skilled community volunteer base. They will support MCC Field Teams by coordinating supplies and materials, securing permitting, and providing general on-site assistance. The Regional Planners will also work to secure funding and develop proposals for future projects.

The 6 Veteran Community Leaders will be recruited from and placed with local organizations in their own communities to recruit, train and lead volunteers in trail construction and maintenance projects. They will focus on recruiting and training other Maine veterans as volunteers. The Veteran Community Leaders will serve within their communities to build local volunteer capacity, prevent and ameliorate trail degradation, work on planning and funding for future local conservation projects and provide additional leadership and assistance to Field Teams serving in their placement sites.

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68 Field Team members will serve on either a full team composed of 1 Team Leader, 1 Assistant Team Leader and 5 Team Members or a mini-team that has 1 Team Leader and 2 Team Members. Terms of service for Field Team participants include either the entire 6-month term (May--November), a 3-month summer term (May--August), a 2-month summer term (June--August) or a 3-month fall term (August--November). MCC will operate 9 teams during the summer and 6 teams in the fall. Typical projects will include constructing boardwalk, creating new trails, restoring trails to reduce human and natural impacts, constructing accessible trail, and installing erosion control structures.

AmeriCorps members will be a highly effective means for solving identified community needs due to the training that MCC will provide. Throughout MCC's history, AmeriCorps members have had a passion and intensity for service. Through training and support, the MCC members will acquire the skills, knowledge and abilities to meet the needs of Maine communities. The MCC will host 2 Trail Training Academies each February. The 6 Veteran Community Leaders will participate in one, while 6 Field Team members will train to become Team Leaders in the other.

AmeriCorps members make limited fiscal resources go further, in part by providing an opportunity for organizations to receive matched funds. The MCC AmeriCorps program provides the organizational framework necessary to accomplish extensive conservation projects and create a skilled, sustainable community volunteer base. The added value of AmeriCorps members as a human resource to community projects is expressed by TammyJo Girard, Waterboro Land Trust Project Manager, who stated "the improvements made to Ossipee Hill would have taken a few years to finish if volunteers only worked a few hours each weekend, but the MCC team's persistence made the trail possible within a couple weeks."

The MCC program design supports 81 AmeriCorps members. MCC is requesting 7 (1700 hour), 33 (900 hour), 36 (450 hour), and 5 (300 hour) positions.

C. EVIDENCE BASED

The MCC Field Team program has been building trails and accomplishing conservation projects since the early 1980s. Since collaborating with AmeriCorps, MCC has been able to expand member numbers, training, and community impact. MCC Field Teams possess an exceptional level of technical skill and have a solid reputation as some of Maine's most effective trail builders. MCC's

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reputation for effective trail building is reiterated by support from Maine's Congressional leaders including Congresswoman Chellie Pingree, who stated in a recent letter that MCC members "have cut miles of trails to guide hikers surely through the woods, built thousands of bog bridges to save us from those mud holes, and constructed rock-steady steps to give us sure-footing where none could be found. These improvements have helped thousands, if not millions, of Mainers and visitors get much closer to our beautiful places than a postcard image."

In the 2011 MCC Partner Survey, 100% of MCC partners agreed that trails were improved as a result of MCC AmeriCorps members' service. In the same survey, MCC partners commented: "The project brought a lot of excitement to the renovation of the lighthouse site and involved year-round residents as well as summer residents who enjoyed volunteering, learning new skills, and being outdoors with others," Fern Burns, Swan's Island Lighthouse Committee. "Absolutely the most positive aspect of the project was obtaining the high quality work and dedication of the trail construction crew to perform this work for the town. From initial consultations, to trail layout, to final construction and trail adjustments, we could not have done this work without MCC," Douglas Beck, Town of Monmouth Improvement Committee.

The time for engaging veterans is now. Nearly 13,000 veterans have served as AmeriCorps members nationwide, according to the Corporation for National & Community Service. On a local level, approximately 10.5% of Maine residents are veterans (U.S. Census Bureau) giving Maine one of the highest number of veterans per capita. In the past 3 years, 53 of the MCC's community volunteers were veterans. The MCC will follow in the footsteps of recent national, state and local organizations focused on expanding and utilizing the talents of veterans. Specifically, Washington Veterans Corps and the Southwest Conservation Corps efforts to engage veterans will be used as a model for the MCC.

In late 2008 MCC recruited a Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator to increase MCC's community outreach and volunteer capacity. This member wrote press releases; planned, coordinated and participated in outreach and promotional activities; and increased awareness and understanding of MCC services and activities by writing and delivering presentations to civic and service organizations. In addition, this AmeriCorps member participated in several volunteer management trainings focused on best practices of volunteer management and retention. This public awareness led to a 48%

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increase in community volunteers over a 3-year period. During this same 3-year period, the MCC engaged 1,097 community volunteers who contributed 10,724 hours to local MCC projects. Regional Planners and Veteran Community Leaders, whose principle responsibilities will include the training and retention of local volunteers, will build upon this current framework of success by increasing community volunteer capacity.

D. MEMBER EXPERIENCE

Teamwork and collaboration are prime MCC program components. Members will gain valuable life skills from living with a small team in challenging conditions. As they live, learn and serve together members will have powerful service experiences as evidenced in the following quotes from 2011 MCC members:

"I enjoyed most the fact that by working with the MCC I was able to fully involve myself in the world around me. I was able to live and work in my environment like most people never have a chance to do. I will never forget how much I learned about myself and those around me. It was truly a life changing time that made me feel closer to what the human experience is all about."

"I like working outside and working with my hands. I also enjoy the relationships that develop from working and living so closely with individuals that I didn't even know existed before our paths crossed at MCC. MCC also helped me gain a great deal of confidence in myself and helped me realize that I can do anything that I put my mind to!!"

The following statistics, collected through a recent MCC survey, further illustrate MCC member satisfaction regarding member experience, community impact and civic participation. 95.6% of 2011 MCC Field Team members said that they felt they made a contribution to the community. 100% were satisfied with their AmeriCorps term regarding helping other people. 100% were satisfied with their AmeriCorps term regarding establishing a relationship with other MCC members. 93.3% were satisfied with gaining an understanding of the communities in which they served. 100% of MCC members felt that their ability to value people different from themselves improved. In addition, according to the Maine Commission for Community Service Maine AmeriCorps Exit Survey, 100% of MCC members were likely to volunteer in their communities in the future and 100% of MCC members stated that if a friend was thinking of joining AmeriCorps, they would encourage the friend to join.

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MCC members will reflect on their service by journaling in daily timesheets. Members will receive a pre-, mid-, and post-term evaluation. These evaluations help members learn and develop during their terms of service. MCC members will also have the opportunity to submit exit evaluations of the MCC program. These evaluations provide a format for members to reflect on their service and enable the MCC to improve the AmeriCorps experience for future program members. The MCC Recognition Ceremony will bring all MCC members together to recognize their accomplishments and contributions to the communities where they served and celebrate their service. The MCC Recognition Ceremony is often attended by Maine State and Congressional representatives.

To ensure that members are aware of their AmeriCorps identity, all MCC members will receive a detailed introduction to the AmeriCorps program during orientation. Members will be taught to inform any media that they are part of an AmeriCorps program and the MCC will require members to wear MCC shirts featuring the AmeriCorps logo during service hours. MCC members will also be encouraged to promote their service by utilizing MCC and AmeriCorps gear provided by the MCC.

MCC members will participate in several service and educational days throughout the year, including Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, the Maine AmeriCorps Member Conference, National AmeriCorps Week, and the Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism. During these events, MCC members will have the opportunity to network with other Maine AmeriCorps and National Service participants. MCC members will also have the opportunity to collaborate with other Maine AmeriCorps and National Service members on service projects throughout their terms of service. The MCC will support a Facebook page where members can connect with each other and an alumni page on the MCC website for support and resources after their terms have ended. MCC members will be connected to other Maine AmeriCorps members via the Maine AmeriCorps Google Group and will be encouraged to join AmeriCorps Alums, which is dedicated to serving the needs of AmeriCorps members and alumni. All of these events and resources foster a strong connection with AmeriCorps.

At the national level, MCC is an active member of the Corps Network which is the voice of the nation's 158 Service and Conservation Corps. The MCC received the Excellence in Corps Operations (ECO) award in 2008. ECO is a national peer assessment process which recognizes Corps that make a commitment to high-quality standards and continuous improvement. At the State level, MCC participates in monthly grantee meetings and quarterly staff council meetings hosted by the MCCS.

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These meetings include VISTA, National Direct as well as other State AmeriCorps programs and provide an opportunity to share information and collaborate in trainings and service events.

E. OVERALL PICTURE

Maine needs a sustainable and effective recreational trail system; community involvement for Maine veterans; and a skilled, sustainable community volunteer base trained in trail construction and maintenance. Interventions will include creating and improving recreational trails and enrolling and training Maine veterans to become community leaders and recruit volunteers, specifically other Maine veterans. All aspects of the MCC program will include the recruitment and training of a sustainable community volunteer base. According to the MCCS, AmeriCorps members are particularly well-suited to address these needs because the funds provided in National Service grants, "not only leverage local resources (\$1 federal to \$0.70 local) but also provide the foundational training, supervision, materials, tools, and support required for any volunteer to be effective in their assigned work." The anticipated outcomes will be a reduction in environmental degradation and erosion from human and natural causes leading to safer trails and increased use. By expanding community involvement for Maine veterans, the transition to civilian life should become more successful, thereby improving overall well-being. Maine veterans will also be exposed to greater networking and employment opportunities. By engaging community volunteers, communities will be able to continue and sustain local trail construction and rehabilitation projects.

F. AMERICORPS MEMBER SELECTION, TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

The MCC adheres to numerous recruitment methods recommended by AmeriCorps' publication, "Recruiting AmeriCorps Members: Creating a Strategy & Making It Work". The MCC will continue this practice by posting opportunities at career centers, schools, local non-profits, and volunteer organizations. The MCC will also contact past members, local guidance counselors, and other AmeriCorps programs in the area that have members exiting from their organizations.

The MCC will send out hometown newspaper press releases for each member, highlighting their AmeriCorps service. The MCC regularly highlights service opportunities in its newsletter. The MCC also promotes AmeriCorps service opportunities on social networking sites, online employment resources, and the MCC website. The MCC finds that word of mouth and community visibility

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through AmeriCorps branding is an extremely successful recruitment method. By employing multiple recruitment strategies, the MCC is able to recruit and retain a diverse population of members.

The MCC will employ many of the same tactics to recruit Maine veterans. Additionally, the MCC will target Maine veterans by reaching out to organizations tailored to this population. Specifically, the MCC has contacted the Maine Director of Veterans Services. He is very supportive of our initiative to incorporate Maine veterans into the MCC program. Based on his recommendation, the MCC will also contact the Maine Veterans Coordinating Committee. The MCC will also utilize its contacts with career centers aimed at employing veterans for recruitment purposes. Finally, the MCC acknowledges that word of mouth is sure to be the most impactful strategy in Maine veteran recruitment, as "All Volunteer Forces" indicates that veterans are most likely to volunteer based upon recommendations from other veterans. By selecting and training 6 Maine veterans each year, the number of veterans involved in the MCC program, whether as members or community volunteers, will expand exponentially.

The MCC orientation complies with the pre-service orientation or training required by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). It is designed to enhance member security and sensitivity to the community. Orientation covers the history of AmeriCorps, the origins of MCC, and prohibited program activities. Members are oriented to local communities and service sites upon placement. MCC collects frequent feedback from members on orientation and training to continually improve the program and increase members' ability to succeed. As a result of this feedback, MCC has lengthened orientation and training for all members.

The MCC program operates January through December. Typically, (1700 hour) positions will start in February, (900 hour) positions will start in May, (450 hour) positions start in May or August, and (300 hour) positions start in June. The MCC has a Master Training Program Plan. The MCC Trail Training Academies' 11-week curriculum includes over 30 training topics, such as chainsaw operation and safety, Wilderness First Responder certification, general trail maintenance and construction, team dynamics, Griphoist and rigging operations, and leadership skills. Portions of May, June, and August are dedicated to training as additional members join the MCC. Training topics include conflict resolution, diversity, First Aid/CPR certification and Leave No Trace. In addition, members participate in 2 education days per 450 hour term as well as weekly educational activities.

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Upon selection, members receive a member agreement which outlines prohibited activities. Prohibited activities are reviewed during member orientation and are posted in the MCC office and on the MCC website.

To ensure that veterans have a positive experience in the MCC program, the MCC will offer additional support and trainings to enable the veterans to be successful in their positions. Veteran Community Leaders will participate in the aforementioned trainings as well as an online course in volunteer management and a grant writing workshop. Staff will work with military advisors to identify any additional training needed to support the veteran population.

MCC members will be supervised by 1 Director, 2 Program Coordinators, 2 Training Coordinators and 3 Senior Team Leaders. The Program Coordinators are State employees with a 6 year combination of education and professional experience in program administration to include at least 2 years experience in organizing, supervising, and/or coordinating a volunteer program. The Director, who has experience in a supervisory or management position with responsibility for grant writing, preferably to include work experience with federal programs, oversees the Program Coordinators. These staff supervisors attend ongoing training and events at national, state and local levels. The 2 Training Coordinators will conduct 2 simultaneous 11-week Trail Training Academies. MCC will continue to measure the impact of these trainings. Once the Trail Training Academies are complete, 1 of the Training Coordinators will conduct trail assessments, plan future projects, and support the Regional Planners and Veteran Community Leaders. This position will also develop and implement a training program to build capacity of local trail organizations in volunteer management and technical trail skills. 3 Senior Team Leaders will support the Program Coordinators and MCC Field Teams by assisting with site visits, orientation, trainings, partner relations, safety practices, tool maintenance and on-site assistance for teams. Training Coordinators and Senior Team Leaders aid the Program Coordinator in training and participate in training as needed to renew certifications such as First Aid and CPR or Chainsaw Safety. In other words, training topics vary by participant needs. The MCC utilizes a tiered leadership organizational structure which provides varying levels of responsibility and guidance to members. In turn, this structure provides members with leadership and guidance opportunities.

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G. OUTCOME: PERFORMANCE MEASURES

At the end of 3 years, the MCC will see a reduction in environmental degradation and erosion from human and natural causes; an expansion of community involvement for Maine veterans; and the creation of a sustainable, skilled community volunteer base to conduct local trail construction and rehabilitation projects. MCC will demonstrate impact by creating or improving trails and engaging Maine veterans as National Service participants who will lead community volunteers. Impact will be measured by performance measures reported to the MCCS on a quarterly basis. The MCC will also conduct a program evaluation during the 3-year period. Targets have been determined by past experience and the MCC's current program design. MCC performance measures track multiple program elements, exceeding CNCS requirements and include: trail restoration, environmental education, member development, and volunteer generation. MCC has met or exceeded all targeted performance measures during the current 3-year grant cycle. For instance the MCC currently administers the following performance measures: 1. MCC AmeriCorps members will improve access to public properties (target = 25 miles of trail will be improved each year). In year 2, the MCC exceeded the target by improving 95 miles of trail. 2. MCC members will work with partners to move toward full implementation of the essential practices of volunteer management (target = 60% of partners will increase implementation of the essential practices annually). In year 2, 70% of MCC partners increased implementation of volunteer management practices.

H. VOLUNTEER GENERATION

Volunteers are recruited utilizing many of the same methods as AmeriCorps member recruitment, such as local press, attending career fairs, reaching out to alumni, and outreach to local community members, organizations, and businesses. The MCC utilizes VolunteerMaine, a state-wide volunteer resource which is connected to serve.gov on a national level. In addition, the MCC has a website page designated to Volunteer information and opportunities and regularly recognizes MCC Volunteers of the Month. The MCC will support its partners in the recruitment and recognition of community volunteers.

Volunteers will be recruited and trained in the field by the Field Teams, Veteran Community Leaders, and Regional Planners. The Training Coordinator will also be dedicated to training organizations and volunteers to support the essential practices of volunteer management. Veteran Community Leaders will be well versed in the essential practices of volunteer management and focus on recruiting other

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Maine veterans for volunteer positions. By initiating a concerted effort with knowledgeable members to recruit and train community volunteers, the MCC will create a sustainable, skilled volunteer base to conduct quality trails projects.

Organizational Capability

A. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING

The mission and mandate of the MCC is "...to improve public property for the increased use and enjoyment of the public, to provide conservation education, to promote and manage volunteer opportunities related to natural resources and to assist public and non-profit organizations with projects that serve a valid public purpose." The MCC was established by Maine's governor and legislature in 1983 and since then has recruited and placed hundreds of members who have accomplished countless natural resource projects all over Maine.

The MCC is a division of the State of Maine Department of Conservation, Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL), Outdoor Recreation Program. The primary contact for the administration of this contract is Mick Rogers. Mr. Rogers is the supervisor of the Outdoor Recreation Program. He administers over 2 million federal dollars on an annual basis. The secondary contact for the program is Brenda Verrill. Ms. Verrill is the Assistant Resource Administrator for the BPL. She is responsible for the financial management of all federal funds within the BPL.

The Department of Conservation successfully manages an annual budget of over 28 million dollars. The BPL provides management oversight and fiscal support to the MCC. The MCC has managed an AmeriCorps program for over 15 years. All programmatic and financial systems within the MCC have been designed to thoughtfully carry out the AmeriCorps grant provisions and the State contract for federal funds.

MCC has successfully raised all of its match resources. The MCC provided a minimum 60% cash match for the AmeriCorps funding exceeding the statutory minimum. Matching funds are raised at the local level through a variety of methods, including application to the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), municipal funds, and local fund raising efforts.

MCC is administered by nine key staff and the support of the Assistant Resource Administrator at the BPL. MCC staffing includes 1 Director, 2 Program Coordinators, 2 Training Coordinators, 3 Senior

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Team Leaders and 1 Recruitment Associate. The MCC Director has oversight of the entire program. The Program Coordinators have a combined AmeriCorps management experience of 8 years. The Recruitment Associate has 10 years of experience with MCC. Senior Team Leaders have previously served as MCC Team Leaders and possess internal knowledge of rules, regulations and Field Team protocols. The MCC recruits for Training Coordinators with at least 3 years of trail construction and maintenance experience, former experience teaching trail skills is preferred. The Recruitment Associate is responsible for all recruitment support, payroll, file management, and record keeping. The Assistant Resource Administrator for the BPL has over 10 years of experience working with Federal and State programmatic and fiscal reporting requirements.

In 2010, the Assistant Resource Administrator attended the Financial and Grants Management Institute training sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service. This training provides the knowledge to ensure the requirements for administering an AmeriCorps program are met. In addition, the MCC staff and Assistant Resource Administrator attend training events sponsored by the MCCS to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations. Partner site compliance will be ensured through site visits, orientations, and evaluations.

B. SUSTAINABILITY

This grant application continues, expands and focuses the efforts of previous grants on sustainability. The MCC will recruit and train 6 Veteran Community Leaders and 6 Regional Planners whose training and primary focus will be on recruiting and training community volunteers to develop a consistent, skilled and sustainable volunteer base. By having Veteran Community Leaders serve in their own communities, MCC anticipates that its projects will continue to be maintained in the communities. Additionally, volunteer recruitment will be focused on a local level to create a vested group of community volunteers.

Community partners include State Parks and Lands, local land trusts, and municipalities. These organizations have been surveyed to identify community needs. 71% of surveyed MCC partners reported they do not have a dedicated group of community volunteers to maintain trails. Members of these groups have attended partner meetings to brainstorm new ways to address community needs.

C. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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The MCC requires partners from service sites to attend a partner orientation. At this orientation, sites are given a detailed overview of the AmeriCorps program, including prohibited activities, the MCC program, and the rules and regulations. The MCC receives weekly timesheets from members that provide information on member activities. This document will allow MCC to detect and prevent issues that might lead to noncompliance. In addition to the timesheets, on-site monitoring will be conducted by MCC staff. If instances of risk or noncompliance are identified, the MCC staff will contact the program officer at the MCCS immediately to discuss the issue and establish an appropriate corrective action.

D. ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

The MCC operates on a calendar year and is just completing its 2nd year of funding (2010 funds).

Enrollment Rate

2010 - 100 %

2009 -- 100 %

Retention Rate

2010 -- 100 %

2009 -- 98.7 %

In 2010, e-grants is reporting a member leaving without an education award, however, the member had already received two full time education awards and was serving a third term and not eligible for the award. Therefore, over the past two year grant period, MCC had 2 members exit without an award and has a retention rate of 98.7%.

Two members exited early in 2009. One was released for cause according to the rules and regulations established by the MCC and AmeriCorps. The second member received the opportunity to do research for her master's degree. She did try to postpone the start date of the research but was unsuccessful and chose to leave the MCC program to return to college.

Through meetings with partners and written evaluations from partners and AmeriCorps members, MCC constantly evaluates its program to better meet the needs of its AmeriCorps members and the

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organizations and communities in which they serve.

E. PERFORMANCE TARGETS AND DEMONSTRATED COMPLIANCE

The MCC currently administers 3 Performance Measures. Improved access to public properties & environmental education activities; member development; and increased retention of volunteers through stronger management practices. The MCC has consistently exceeded the objectives of these established performance targets. No compliance issues or areas of weakness/risk have been identified at the MCC.

F. OPERATING SITES AND MEMBER SERVICE SITES

MCC places its AmeriCorps members at multiple service sites throughout the State. As the intermediary for AmeriCorps funding, these sites do not incur programmatic or fiscal responsibility. As the operating site, MCC adheres to the selection criteria outlined in section §2522.475. During the RFP process for selecting service sites the MCC looks for projects that support community involvement, provide educational opportunities and promote impactful member experiences. The MCC's RFP is distributed via an extensive marketing strategy, which regularly results in a mixture of new and long-standing partners.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

A. COST EFFECTIVENESS:

Although MCC is changing its program design, it is maintaining its prior years' MSY allocation. MCC is requesting \$10,316 per MSY. The MCC estimates it will need approximately \$900,000 in non-Corporation sources. MCC has successfully secured a minimum of 60% cash match contributions in prior grant years. MCC will work with community partners to help secure grant funding. Many community partners fundraise for matching funds in order to work with the MCC. The MCC maintains a diverse partner base and regularly expands its partnerships. For instance, in 2010 and 2011 the MCC Field Team served in 92 locations. 16% of these sites were with new partners.

The MCC receives federal matching funds from the Department of the Interior for work on federal lands such as the Appalachian Trail and Acadia National Park. MCC also receives Federal Highway funds via the Recreational Trails Program and is Maine's recognized Youth Conservation Corps for this funding. On a state level, MCC receives funds through the state-bonded Lands for Maine's Future Program and the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund. Financial support for the MCC's staff also comes

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from the State of Maine's General Fund. MCC receives additional funds from county and municipal sources. Many local non-profits, also support MCC through private fundraising.

B. CURRENT GRANTEE:

Building on prior successes, the MCC will expand training and incorporate new positions to broaden the program's impact at the community level without a commensurate increase in funds.

C. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Since collaborating with AmeriCorps, the MCC has exceeded CNCS cost-effectiveness criteria. The MCC serves poor communities in a poor state and is an essential service provider of hiking trails, particularly in low income areas. 62.5% of Maine counties are considered more rural than urban according to the 2003 Beale codes and the 2010 population for Maine's largest city, Portland, is just over 66,000. 50% of Maine counties exceed the national poverty level, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Poverty Estimates. According to the Maine State Planning Office, 89% of Maine businesses have 19 or less employees.

D. BUDGET ADEQUACY

This budget supports the goals of the MCC and its members. AmeriCorps grant funding and partner cash match will adequately support member living allowances and health insurance coverage. Partner cash match will support all activities of the MCC program including: orientation and training; purchase of tools and equipment; staff salaries and general operating expenses.

The operating budget will allow MCC and its members to address identified community needs that form the basis of the performance measures and future program evaluations.

Criminal history checks and FBI fingerprint background checks are covered within the Other Program Operating Costs.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

EVALUATION PLAN OVERVIEW

The MCC evaluates 3 components of its program and will continue this evaluation process. The current internal evaluation was conducted in year 2 of the award period. This evaluation was formative and exploratory in nature and meant to provide information to improve the MCC program, confirm community needs and guide future evaluation initiatives. In year 3, the MCC will seek to evaluate the program in more depth to disclose a greater level of impact and demonstrable outcomes.

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EVALUATION TOPICS

Under direction of the MCCA, the MCC explored 3 evaluation topics:

1. The change in the community level of need or type of need as a result of the MCC program;
2. An element of the program that is of particular interest to the MCC organization; and
3. Changes in the capacity of partners to meet the community need as a result of AmeriCorps.

EVALUATION APPROACH

The MCC's internal evaluation was devised to meet the MCCA's evaluation topics, while simultaneously exploring all facets of the MCC organization. The first topic, "the change in the community level of need or type of need as a result of the MCC program", was addressed by evaluating the need for the continuation of the MCC Field Team Program. Specifically, the MCC transferred a field assessment tool used to analyze environmental degradation and erosion to written format and administered the written assessment to Maine Department of Conservation Park and Public Lands Managers. The assessment was meant to gauge the level of trail degradation and erosion within Maine parks and lands, a major partner of the MCC. Member satisfaction and development was the target of the second evaluation component, "an element of the program that is of particular interest to the MCC." In particular, 2011 MCC/AmeriCorps members were asked to complete an anonymous survey highlighting various aspects of their term of service. Finally, the MCC assessed the third evaluation topic of "changes in the capacity of partners" by having individually placed AmeriCorps members (a current component of the MCC Program) review the degree to which their host site organizations implement the Essential Practices of Volunteer Management at the beginning and end of their terms of service.

DATA COLLECTION

The MCC used 3 surveys to address the 3 evaluation topics: Environmental Degradation and Erosion Survey, MCC Member Exit Survey, and Essential Practices of Volunteer Management Survey. All surveys were dispensed using an online survey tool, SurveyMonkey. The MCC used the same device to produce a trend analysis of survey results.

Overview of Environmental Degradation and Erosion Survey:

-70% of respondents reported that either a portion of trails or the majority of trails consist of grades

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exceeding 12%. This may positively correlate to the majority of respondents stating that erosion is a problem on their hiking trails. However, a similar percentage of managers reported that erosion is only a minor or moderate problem.

-A larger portion of respondents (82%) reported that hiking trails are subject to wet and muddy sections, with 88% classifying wet and muddy sections as minor or moderate.

-Finally, 76% of respondents reported that their trail systems are in need of repair.

Overview of MCC Member Exit Survey:

-When thinking about their experience with the MCC, members either agreed or strongly agreed to the following statements (percent of agreement):

oYou felt that you made a contribution to the community (97%)

oYou re-examined your beliefs and attitudes about yourself (84%)

oYou were exposed to new ideas and ways of seeing the world (88%)

oYou felt like part of a community (85%)

oYou felt you made a difference in the life of at least one person (90%)

oYou did things you never thought you could do (66%)

oYou changed some of your beliefs and attitudes (75%)

oGaining skills for a better job/career (93%)

-The majority of members were either satisfied or very satisfied with their terms of service in terms of:

oHelping other people (95%)

oEarning money (70%)

oWorking with people who have different backgrounds/cultural experiences than my own (93%)

oExploring future job interests (89%)

oHaving a experience that would look good on your resume (97%)

oEstablishing a relationship with other MCC members (93%)

oGaining an understanding of the community where you served (93%)

-90% of MCC members were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall MCC experience.

Overview of Essential Practices of Volunteer Management Survey:

In general when looking at the survey results as a whole, the rate at which essential practices were implemented in partnering organizations increased during the 2011 terms of service. However, in-depth analysis relays that the data is not always consistently reported by individual members.

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Therefore, the MCC will reassess the implementation of this measure.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

Budget Clarification Items:

B. Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) staff are state employees. The State of Maine does not withhold Social Security for employees who elect to participate in the state employee retirement system. All the MCC staff have made this election. The breakdown of FICA is generally 6.2% for Social Security and 1.45% for Medicare. Therefore, the 1.45% on the FICA line represents the Medicare assessment.

C. MCC's travel policy is based on Maine's Travel Reimbursement Principles, which states that lodging expenses may exceed the maximum per diem rates by 10% in specific incidences. Maine per diem rates are set using the US General Services Administration schedule posted at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>. The budgeted rate of \$300 per person per night is the product of an analysis of major city per diem rates rounded up to account for exceptional costs. The MCC is aware that the budgeted lodging rate is high and included a low standard per diem rate for meals and incidentals as an offset. The MCC and state have strict travel reimbursement policies and will ensure that all expenses are reasonable and allowable.

Please discuss the intended use of the vehicles that will be leased and please confirm that they will be used only for AmeriCorps program purposes. If not, please pro-rate the costs.

Leased vehicles are used to transport AmeriCorps members to and from service projects and training events. MCC staff also operate vehicles to visit service sites for supervision and monitoring purposes. Under state laws and MCC program rules, the vehicles are not for personal use and will only be used for AmeriCorps program purposes.

Explain why the member travel vehicle costs are based on 12 months when 5 are seasonal vehicles and field work is curtailed during the winter.

The budgeted cost of vehicles is based on a multi-year analysis of annual expenses. Monthly rates fluctuate above and below the budgeted monthly average with cost being less in winter months and greater the remainder the year. The MCC must lease vehicles year-round through Central Fleet Management (CFM) to sustain the fleet from year to year. CFM is a state agency that leases vehicles

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to other state departments. The state does not allow an agency to go to another vendor to lease vehicles. The MCC must lease specific types of vehicles capable of transporting multiple members, towing a trailer and traveling on any type of road in the state. Over the years MCC has developed a relationship with CFM to keep all of the vehicles over the winter at a reduced rate and have these same vehicles available the next year for the teams. If MCC discontinues its leases each year, there is no guarantee that CFM will return the vehicles that are needed for these teams the following year. CFM would likely require MCC to order new vehicles which would significantly increase the total cost to MCC. Furthermore, CFM does not order new vehicles to an agency unless that agency signs a multi-year agreement with CFM to keep that vehicle all year for at least 4 years.

G. MCC Staff receive formal state evaluations, which include suggestions for training. Trainings are selected through a collaborative effort and tailored to individuals based on responsibilities and organizational needs. Trainings are not preselected, but will be related to job tasks and the professional needs of individuals. Topics may include, but are not limited to: volunteer management, field-based technical skills, computer-based skills or financial coursework.

Please explain what the partner orientation costs cover.

Partner orientations are typically scheduled from 10am to 3pm and require partners to travel from all over the state. The MCC provides a meal to partners during orientation. The daily rate is set between the allowable per diem rate for breakfast and lunch. The MCC works the meal into orientation by utilizing this time for networking and fielding questions.

I. All staff working on this project will receive the CNCS required criminal background checks. Specifically, MCC staff will be checked through the NSOPR and Maine state repository, which entail no costs.

If possible, please itemize the advertising and recruiting costs. Please explain what is covered by \$4,700 in internet subscription costs and explain how this cost is reasonable.

The MCC recruits on multiple internet sites tailored specifically to environmental service opportunities. Subscription costs vary by year, number of postings and duration of advertisements making itemization difficult. Consistent subscription costs include: backdoorjobs.com at \$475 per year; coolworks.com at \$1,000 per year. The MCC posts on 20 other sites with variable fees. The MCC also

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recruits on over 30 free websites, including AmeriCorps. Applications are tracked and the MCC posts according to the popularity of sites and number of applications received. MCC has found web based recruitment to be the most successful method of advertisement and allocates costs accordingly.

Part B: MCC partners fundraise to contribute fees for service. The local match cost structure outlines the MCC cash contribution rates from nonfederal resources. The weekly cash contribution rate for a Field Team is \$3,750. Partners will provide cash contributions for Veteran Community Leaders and Regional Planners at a rate of \$15,000 and \$12,000 respectively.

Programmatic Clarification Items:

1. Member slot allocation is designed to utilize ideal times for training and field service activities while meeting the needs of members and the community. The 7 -- 1700 hour slots will be filled by 1 Volunteer and Marketing Coordinator and 6 Veteran Community Leaders. The Volunteer and Marketing Coordinator will serve from January to December to sustain a consistent and constant volunteer recruitment effort. The 6 Veteran Community Leaders will serve from February to December to maximize the duration of service and skills training for veterans, as one of the premiere issues facing this demographic is unemployment. 12 -- 900 hour slots will be filled by 6 Trail Training members and 6 Regional Planners. Trail Training members will receive training between February and April then go on to serve as Team Leaders from May to August with possible extensions to November. Members in Trail Training will begin service with Veteran Community Leaders and participate in many of the same trainings. Regional Planners will serve from April to November, allowing time for training, planning with peak service time during the summer and fall seasons. The remaining slots: 21 -- 900 hour, 36 -- 450 hour and 5 -- 300 hour are allocated to additional Team Leaders, Assistant Team Leaders and Team Members. The variety of slots is ideal for a diverse group of participants and allows members to serve from May to November (900), May to August (450), June to August (300) or August to November (450).

2. As a division of the Department of Conservation (DOC), the MCC seeks to expand its impact within the state by filling a void in the current organizational structure. The DOC employs staff to write management plans for public parks and lands. However, progress stops once the plan is written. The DOC has no staff to aid in the implementation of management plans. Regional Planners are a new addition to MCC and positioned to fill this deficit by acting as liaisons between partnering agencies and

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field teams to accomplish projects outlined in management plans. Regional Planners will also play a key role in expanding community volunteer participation by recruiting, training and leading volunteers. Regional Planners will serve in the field directly with volunteers, distinguishing them from the Volunteer and Marketing Coordinator.

3. Many efforts underlie the making of a field project. In the past, the MCC has expected partners to coordinate materials, acquire permits and fundraise. The MCC does not provide these services and not all partners have the capacity or knowledge to accomplish these expectations, resulting in delayed or canceled projects due to absent materials, lack of permits and/or insufficient funds. The MCC will expand meaningful service and development opportunities for members while providing additional services to community partners who lack the capacity to coordinate projects by engaging members in various elements of project planning. Multiple measures are taken to ensure that member activities do not duplicate or displace any staff and/or volunteer efforts. Rules on non-displacement and non-duplication are communicated to partners and members verbally at orientations. These rules also exist in the MCC handbook, website, request for proposal documents, partner agreements and member agreements.

4. MCC staff are responsible for member supervision and remain in contact with members from the recruitment phase throughout their terms of service. From June to November, peak service months, Program Coordinators, the Training Coordinator and Senior Team Leaders will conduct weekly site visits. The MCC Director will also conduct site visits during peak field seasons. There are also daily check ins to ensure work is going according to plan. In comparison to similar types of Corps, the MCC is a small organization, allowing for heightened levels of communication and supervision. Comments from previous members relay their appreciation for staff responsiveness, commitment to service and care for members. Moreover, the MCC is very fortunate to have highly engaged partners who meet with members and provide guidance and oversight.

The Field Team exhibits a tiered leadership structure that allows returning members to take on increased leadership roles by becoming Assistant Team Leaders, Team Leaders and Senior Team Leaders. This configuration provides opportunities for members to learn additional leadership, communication and presentation skills, as they work more directly with community partner and volunteer organizations.

This system of support and staff oversight creates an encouraging, safe, efficient and appealing

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environment for members.

5. Teams are in contact with staff on a weekly basis. Staff has the sole responsibility of performing key supervisory tasks. While Regional Planners and Veteran Community Leaders will interact with and support teams, they will not engage in the selection, discipline or evaluation of members. All members are oriented to supervisory procedures and policies. Many hands make light of work and the MCC wishes to create a unified organization and expand learning opportunities by having a variety of positions interact during their terms of service.

6. Fundraising is a potential component of service for the Regional Planners and Veteran Community Leaders, but is not a mandatory element of their terms. All fundraising activities will be prescreened by MCC staff. Partners will submit potential fundraising projects to the MCC as an element of the project proposal. Staff will review proposals and ensure that funds are not raised for living allowances, general program operating expenses or endowments. Additionally, members will not write a grant application to CNCS or any other Federal agency. MCC staff will ensure that fundraising activities will not exceed 10% of the member's service term. This is a new component of the MCC program; if questions arise, MCC will consult the Maine Commission for Community Service before activities are approved.

7. a. All members receive an orientation to AmeriCorps and MCC, including prohibited program activities, a form of First Aid and CPR, and Safety training. Members also obtain training in Communication, Conflict Resolution and Diversity (except for 300 hour members). Members approved to drive state vehicles will participate in a course on Maine Driving Dynamics, hosted by the Maine Risk Management Division at no cost. All 900 and 1700 hour members will complete the National Incident Management System (NIMS) online course. Members enrolled in service in the spring and fall will attend the Maine AmeriCorps Member Conference and Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism, as required by the Commission. Members/slot types will receive additional training as follows:

*900 hour Trail Training participants obtain training in: Team Logistics, Team Building Techniques, Leadership, Sanitation and Hygiene, Wilderness First Responder, Leave No Trace, GPS and GIS, Trail Tools, Power Tools, Chainsaw Safety, Chainsaw Milling, Griphoist and Rigging Operation, Stone Shaping, Construction with Stone and Timber, Trail Layout and Design, Drainage Systems, and Trail

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Corridor Definition. Please note that this list is not exhaustive, but relays the mixture of interpersonal and technical skills that will be offered.

*Veteran Community Leaders will participate in many of the same courses as 900 hour Trail Training members such as: Safety Protocols, Wilderness First Responder, Leave No Trace, GPS and GIS, Trail Tools, Power Tools, Chainsaw Safety, Chainsaw Milling, Griphoist and Rigging Operation, Stone Shaping, Construction with Stone and Timber, Trail Layout and Design, Drainage Systems, and Trail Corridor Definition. Veteran Community Leaders will also take a grant writing course and online Volunteer Management Course.

*Regional Planners participate in: Leadership Training, Working with Community Volunteers, Leave No Trace, GPS and GIS, Trail Tools, Power Tools, Chainsaw Safety, Griphoist and Rigging Operation, Stone Shaping, Construction with Stone and Timber.

*Team Leaders participate in: Team Logistics, Team Building Techniques, Leadership, Sanitation and Hygiene, Working with Community Volunteers, Leave No Trace, GPS and GIS, Trail Tools, Power Tools, Chainsaw Safety, Griphoist and Rigging Operation, Stone Shaping, Construction with Stone and Timber.

*Assistant Team Leaders and Team Members (900 and 450 hour slots) may participate in Skills Training (Chainsaw Safety and Griphoist and Rigging) based on the availability of members during this time period and number of allowable participants. These members also receive training in Hygiene and Sanitation, Camp Life, Pack Your Pack, Leave No Trace and Introduction of Trail Construction during orientation.

b. 6 Veteran Community Leaders will be enrolled in 1700 hour slots and participate in one Trail Training Academy. An additional 6 members will be enrolled in a simultaneous Trail Training Academy to become Team Leaders during the summer and/or fall seasons. Please see 7c for a breakdown of hours spent in training for Academy participants.

c. The MCC uses OnCorps Reports, an electronic system maintained by the Maine Commission for Community Service, to record member hours. Member hours are recorded as direct service, training and/or fundraising. This breakdown allows for up-to-date monitoring and automatically calculates the time members have accrued in each category. Program Coordinators carefully plan the amount of time members will spend in training prior to the onset of enrollments to ensure member training does not surpass the 20% limitation. In general, 300 hour members receive 30 hours of training; 450

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hour members receive 80 hours of training; 900 hour members receive 90 hours of training (with the exception of Trail Training participants); and 1700 hour members will receive approximately 300 hours of training.

Members attending Trail Training to become Team Leaders will be assigned to 900 hour slots and will surpass 900 hours of total service time. These members will accrue 1100 to 1500 total hours during their terms. This allows for an increased number of training hours. Moreover, over half of Trail Training for these members is dedicated to technical trail skills and takes place in the field as direct service projects. Therefore, hours constitute direct service. Trail Training members who go on to become Team Leaders will receive approximately 200 hours of training.

d. On-site training is the primary means for members to learn technical trail skills such as stone step construction, splitting and shaping rocks, accessible trail construction, bridge building and rigging techniques. On-site training allows members to receive hands-on learning opportunities while performing service projects for partnering organizations. On-site training is not an expectation of MCC partners, but does occur on occasion. For instance, the project liaison for the Maine Appalachian Trail Club is a former MCC Field Team Program Coordinator and often assists teams in setting up advanced rigging systems or guides members to perform best practices in remote trail restoration settings.

8. The MCC leverages an average of 500 volunteers per year. By engaging multiple members in volunteer recruitment and training, the MCC will work to increase the number of volunteers by at least 10% each year. Veterans currently comprise a small fraction of volunteers on an annual basis. Statistics show that veterans are more likely to engage in service through the recommendation of other veterans. MCC expects to leverage a higher percentage of veterans via Veteran Community Leaders. The MCC will aim for a minimum of 20% of total community volunteers to be veterans.

9. Each summer and fall, the MCC issues requests for proposals from an internal database of over 900 contacts, consisting of federal, state, non-profit and municipal agencies. The MCC has many long term partners and adds new partners each year. Potential service sites for the 2012-2013 season include: Baxter State Park, Mahoosuc Land Trust, Swan's Island, Cobscook Bay State Park, Vaughan Woods State Park, Pineland Public Land Unit and the Town of China. The MCC is currently working with the US Forest Service and Maine Appalachian Trail Club to renew a 5 year cooperative

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agreement for projects on the National Appalachian Scenic Trail. Requests for Proposals have not yet been issued for the 2012-2013 seasons.

At minimum members must be at least 18 years old, United States citizens, United States nationals or lawful permanent residents of the United States, have a high school diploma or equivalent and pass a criminal background check. Veteran Community Leaders must have a DD-214. Team Leaders must be at least 20 years old. In addition to minimum requirements, MCC seeks members with a variety of backgrounds and skills based on position responsibilities. For instance, MCC recruits for Team Leader applicants with 1 season of trail work experience in an outdoor leadership role; previous experience with construction work; and the ability to teach trail skills. Regional Planners will preferably possess experience in trail construction, planning and volunteer management. Finally, the MCC looks for all members to have a desire to learn, serve others and make a difference.

10. The MCC recently appointed an Acting Director who has oversight of the programmatic elements of the organization. The Acting Director has served with MCC for 6 years and has experience in policy writing, statistics, evaluation methodologies and formerly operated and managed the Field Team program. The Acting Director is employed through December 2012. Should there be a gap in refilling the position, the Supervisor of Outdoor Recreation who supervises the MCC Director, will assume full responsibilities in the interim. The Supervisor of Outdoor Recreation has over 30 years experience managing all aspects of a state park operations including supervising employees, creating new programs, instituting a volunteer in parks program, and building and rehabilitating recreational trails. The Outdoor Recreation Supervisor has participated in an intensive state leadership institute and currently administers all aspects of the Recreational Trails Program in Maine and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Supervisor of Outdoor Recreation is currently the supervisor for the Program Coordinators and also conducts site visits to members. This position is not listed in the AmeriCorps budget given that the Supervisor for Outdoor Recreation is funded through external sources. The Acting Director and Supervisor of Outdoor Recreation are attending the 2012 Financial and Grants Management Institute to further their knowledge of fiscal and programmatic procedures.

One Program Coordinator has served with MCC to supervise and oversee all aspects of the Field Team program since 2010. The other Program Coordinator has been employed with MCC for 6 years to supervise and manage an AmeriCorps Environmental Educator program. The second Program Coordinator will transition to serve as the supervisor for Veteran Community Leaders, Regional Planners, Training Coordinators and the Volunteer and Marketing Coordinator; the first Coordinator

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will retain oversight of the Field Team. The Program Coordinator's combined experience includes: recreational trail construction and maintenance, volunteer management, environmental interpretation, project coordination, equipment maintenance, and programmatic reporting. Together the Program Coordinators have 42 years of experience in program management. The Director, Program Coordinators, Training Coordinators, Senior Team Leaders and Supervisor of Outdoor Recreation will all be responsible for the supervision of members.

The Recruitment Associate has worked with MCC for 10 years and the position's duties consist of member recruitment, record retention management, member payroll processing, managing member benefits, updating databases, ensuring that member files are compliant and conducting criminal background checks. The Program Coordinators also aid criminal background check procedures. The Assistant Resource Administrator has an Accounting degree and 18 years of fiscal experience, including: grant management, contract development, procurement, financial account reconciliation and analysis and management of financial reporting. The Resource Administrator has worked with MCC over the past 2 years and has financial responsibility for the current AmeriCorps grant and completes monthly periodic expense reports.

Continuation Changes

1. The proposal states that 81 individuals will be AmeriCorps members although the application outlines 86 roles because 5 individuals will not qualify as AmeriCorps members due to the 4 term limitation. Given other descriptions, it appears that these 5 individuals will fill the roles of the 2 Training Directors and the 3 Senior Team Leaders. The proposal narrative describes them as if they were AmeriCorps members yet they are not a part of the 81 members listed in the proposal budget.

a. If these five positions (2 roles) are not AmeriCorps members, what are they? They are not included as staff and the budget does not contain any compensation for these positions. Why does the program design include positions that are neither AmeriCorps members nor staff?

MCC reserved the personnel section of the proposal budget for employees of the State of Maine. Participants of the MCC that do not qualify as AmeriCorps members due to the 4 term limit are eligible to serve with MCC as "Corps members" under Maine Statute Title 12, §1891-E which states that "Corps members are not considered employees of the State." MCC anticipates that the Training Coordinators and Senior Team Leaders will no longer qualify as AmeriCorps members, but still be eligible to participate in MCC under the rules of the aforementioned statute. The program design includes positions that lie outside the boundaries of AmeriCorps members and staff to promote participant retention and provide opportunities for increased skills, knowledge and abilities over

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multiple years. The MCC refers to these participants as Non-AmeriCorps members.

b. Will these roles receive criminal background checks?

Yes, Non-AmeriCorps members will receive a criminal background check, which will be covered under the grantee share.

c. What kind of agreement does the program have with these positions and how are they held accountable?

Members no longer eligible for AmeriCorps sign an agreement to be Non-AmeriCorps members with the MCC for a specified period of time. All benefits provided to Non-AmeriCorps members will cease if the participant leaves prior to his or her end date.

d. How does the program protect itself in terms of liability with these positions?

With regard to programmatic policies, Non-AmeriCorps member agreements outline the same policies and provisions as AmeriCorps members, including prohibited activities. MCC Staff supervise these members and are responsible for their actions and service.

e. Will they receive any kind of compensation or benefits and if so, why is that not included in the budget?

Non-AmeriCorps members receive a stipend, health insurance and workers' compensation insurance. The Non-AmeriCorps member stipends are accounted for in the proposed budget under the grantee share of Section IIA. The proposed living allowance costs represent an average of member stipends. Multiple positions and living allowance rates may be represented within each item, as stipends vary by position responsibilities and level of training. MCC was uncertain of where to place Non-AmeriCorps members within the confines of the eGrants system. Unfortunately, the parameters of eGrants do not allow for applicants to count Non-AmeriCorps members without increasing the total requested MSYs. Should funding be awarded, MCC will revise the budget to include Non-AmeriCorps members within the personnel section of the budget. At present, FICA and Worker's Compensation are included for Non-AmeriCorps members in the proposed budget under the grantee share. Insurance for Non-AmeriCorps members will also be covered by the grantee share and is currently included as an administrative (indirect) cost.

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2. The clarification states that six 900-hour Trail Training members will serve 1100-1500 hours as Assistant Team Leaders, possibly serving an additional three months, yet their living allowance is the same as other 900-hour members. Please explain the rationale of the program design to create a position that greatly exceeds the required hours and yet is not a full-time position?

As previously stated, the proposed living allowance costs represent an average of member stipends. Multiple positions and living allowance rates may be represented within each item and vary according to member position and associated responsibilities. For instance, Team Leaders receive a stipend above that of a Team Member although both may serve 900 hour terms. Trail Training members who become Team Leaders receive a stipend throughout their term of service at the equivalent level of a 900 hour Team Leader. The grantee share covers the cost of stipends that exceed the average living allowance for each slot type under Section II, Part A of the budget. The program design for trail training members is based on the range of months conducive to service projects and trail construction and maintenance on a large scale. MCC Staff is engaged in recruitment, programmatic planning and selection in winter months. Trail Training begins in mid-February and service projects can commence in late March. These members serve as Team Leaders from May to mid-November. This timeframe does not include ample hours to enroll Trail Training members in full-time positions nor will MCC establish enough partners/projects to continue trail work at a level that would support multiple teams beyond mid-November.

3. Please provide additional information about the role of the Regional Planners.

a. Please outline the specific member tasks in implementing the plans.

Regional Planners will review the management plans of placement sites and project proposals. If and only if the placement site does not have the capacity to begin implementing projects to fulfill the plan in place, the Regional Planners' service will entail the coordination of funds, materials and/or permits while simultaneously seeking volunteers to train and take over these tasks after their term of service is complete. The Regional Planner responsibilities outlined in the original application concurrently promote an increase in environmental service activities, organizational capacity and member development by providing leadership and training opportunities. The tasks discussed are a proposed element of service; they are not a necessary element. The vast majority of Regional Planners' service will surround the recruitment and training of volunteers to accomplish environmental service projects.

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b. Are any of these tasks performed currently or have been recently performed by staff, whether someone at the DOC or employees of the partner organizations.

MCC partners, whether DOC employees or other, are expected to fundraise, coordinate materials and obtain permits. Yet, many organizations never accomplish these tasks and are unable to bring proposals to fruition. Regional Planners will focus on projects which lack employees to take the necessary steps in setting up projects and help to build capacity in the future. MCC will screen placement sites to ensure that Regional Planners are not duplicating the tasks of current employees or displacing employees. For instance, MCC will affirm that members do not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to: any current or recent employee, an employee with recall rights, an employee on leave, strike, etc.

c. How has implementation of management plans been handled in the past?

Within the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, employees research assigned areas to determine existing situations; interpret the situation to develop recommendations and policies; and write reports to summarize research and present findings and recommendations. These employees do not implement management plans nor do MCC staff members. Many municipalities and non-profits operate along the same lines in their creation of management plans. Reports and recommendations are not accomplished to their full extent due to the lack of organizational capacity. Conversely, MCC members and staff do not and will not create management plans.

4. Please verify that all program staff as well as members will receive the required criminal background checks, including a three-part check for anyone with recurring access to vulnerable populations.

All covered individuals will receive the required criminal background checks, including staff, members and Non-AmeriCorps members. All covered individuals deemed to have reoccurring access to vulnerable populations will receive a heightened three-part check consisting of NSOPR, statewide criminal registry/registries, and FBI nationwide Criminal History Record Information. The MCC will periodically review determinations and perform the required checks accordingly.

5. The program will ensure that fundraising activities will not exceed the 10% limit but please describe how you will ensure this requirement is met.

Prior approval of fundraising activities by MCC Staff will include an estimate of time needed to

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complete proposed fundraising activities. Fundraising activities by members will not be laborious in nature, but instead be focused on the process of fundraising from a member development perspective. Activities that exceed or appear to draw too near the 10% limit will not be allowed. Should activities be approved, the MCC will use OnCorps Reports to record member hours, including fundraising activities. This breakdown allows for up-to-date monitoring and automatically calculates the time members have accrued in each category.

6. You state that teams are in contact with staff on a weekly basis.

a. Please explain how you ensure that communication between staff and crew is adequate to ensure programmatic progress, member safety, and the resolution of member problems.

The assurance of programmatic progress, member safety, and resolution of member problems begins with training. All members receive technical skills training; some form of First Aid training; safety training which includes but is not limited to how to proper use and maintenance of tools, body ergonomics, appropriate use of personal protective equipment and the importance of stretching. Members also receive training on the code of conduct, communication, conflict resolution and disciplinary procedures. From day one, members are fully aware of expectations surrounding progress, safety and behavior. Planning is the second phase of assurance. Pre-site visits outline project goals; emergency response plans are created for each project; and communication protocols and site visits are scheduled to give adequate supervision to all teams on a regular basis while engaged in service.

During the field season, teams will communicate with MCC to ensure progress, safety and resolve any issues by one of the following methods:

*Telephone (when available)

*Email (when available)

*Cell phone (all members are required to find cell phone coverage area for each project location)

*Radio (used when cell phone coverage is not available near service site)

*MCC staff site visits

*When Senior Team Leaders are providing technical assistance

*Field visits by project partners (a requirement of partnership)

*Office meetings with teams -- for teams that return to the headquarters at the end of individual service session

Other important communication devices are timesheets, team session reports, member and partner

Narratives

surveys and monitoring forms. All documents are assessed and act as added measures to ensure progress, safe practices and appropriate behavior.

Weekly communication is a worst case scenario and would be most common only among backcountry team. Please see 6c for further information on backcountry project. Staff are "on call" at all times and available to members.

During communication, if it is learned that the team requires additional technical assistance, a MCC staff member or Senior Team Leader is sent to the project site. If additional supervision is needed a MCC staff member will respond immediately. The MCC takes the supervision and safety of members extremely seriously. MCC strictly enforces rules and has demoted, suspended and released members for cause.

b. If Senior Team Leaders are not members, what is their role in supervision of teams? Please explain the construct of field teams -- how many field team members, how many team leaders, assistant leaders, senior leaders or other are engaged with each team.

Senior Team Leaders will exercise in a supervisory capacity; provide leadership and guidance among all teams by visiting, monitoring and training teams in the field. MCC typically engages 3 Senior Team Leaders in the summer and 2 in the fall. The MCC operates two types of teams: Mini Teams and Full Teams. Mini Teams consist of 1 Team Leader and 2 Team Members. Full Teams are composed of 1 Team Leader, 1 Assistant Team Leader and 4 Team Members. The MCC typically operates 9 teams in the summer and 6 teams in the fall. On average, 1 to 2 teams are Mini Teams with the remainder being Full Teams.

c. Do they operate as daily teams or do they camp/ do backcountry stints? How does the type of activity match to the type of team assigned to it?

MCC characterizes service sites by 3 types: backcountry, scenic front country and community. Backcountry sites are typified as remote sites. Scenic front country sites are in semi-remote settings. Community sites are in residential settings. The majority of MCC projects are in front country or community settings. Mini teams are reserved for small scale projects and/or front country and community settings. Full teams may serve in any type of service site, but are the only type of team operating in the backcountry. All MCC teams camp at their service sites. MCC ensures that teams in the backcountry are frequently visited and possess members with high skill sets.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Sent

Labor Union Concurrence

Sent