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Executive Summary

Twenty-eight Wisconsin AmeriCorps Farm to School members, will leverage an additional 500 volunteers to implement farm to school strategies in 14 high-need Wisconsin communities. 6,000 students in grades K-12 will participate in nutrition education activities with the purpose of decreasing childhood obesity. At the end of each school year, 50% of students engaged in program activities will show a measurable shift in attitude toward healthy foods. Schools engaged in our program will show a measurable shift toward a healthier school food environment. This project will support the CNCS focus area of HEALTH FUTURES. The CNCS investment of \$196,131 will be matched by \$197,307.

Rationale and Approach

NEED: Obesity has become wide spread, and experts refer to it as an epidemic; it is not a localized problem but is seen in all communities both rural and urban and in all social classes. Unless the obesity epidemic can be curbed, today's children will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) ranked Wisconsin's obesity as the 25th highest in the country (1). Moreover, 64.1% of Wisconsin's adults are either overweight or obese mirroring national averages.

Data on childhood obesity and overweight is very limited, including county level and school district data, however the epidemic is evident and alarming. The most recent national data gathered on childhood obesity was in 2007-2008, and showed that 17% or 12.5 million children between the ages of 2 and 17 are obese with an additional 15% classified as overweight (2). The same report showed that approximately 23% of WI high school students were found to be overweight or obese (2). Since data on childhood overweight and obesity is limited, the formula funded AmeriCorps Farm to School Program gather BMI data at partner-site locations which showed a higher prevalence of obesity among WI children in 3rd to 5th grades than the national average for 6-11 year olds (3). Obesity rates at our current site locations are 23.5% compared to the national average of 19.6% (3). Additionally, 15.6% of these students were considered overweight. Just over 39% of WI 3rd-5th graders at our current site locations are either obese or overweight (3).

The dramatic increase in the prevalence of overweight and obese children and its resultant comorbidities are associated with significant health and financial burdens, warranting strong, immediate, and comprehensive prevention efforts (4). Long considered one of the central causes of being overweight, poor nutrition is prevailing in today's youth. In fact, poor dietary patterns are substantial and widespread (5). Consumption of fruits, vegetables, and calcium-rich foods is low while

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consumption of fat is high (6). Additionally, American children only eat an average of three and half servings of fruits and vegetables daily (7). In Wisconsin, only 19.1% of Wisconsin high school students eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day (2). Furthermore, the typical adolescent today consumes one half of all his/her vegetables as French fries or some other form of potatoes (6).

Schools are in a unique position to influence and promote fruit and vegetable intake and healthy eating choices among youth by changing the school food environment. Eating habits, good or bad, are formed early in a person's life. Once unhealthy habits are formed, changing the behavior is difficult. The school food environment is an important setting for such interventions, since youth eat up to two meals and snacks there every day. Farm to School programming is identified by the CDC as one of the recommended strategies to prevent obesity in the United States (8) because it aims to change the school food environment. Farm to school programs promote healthy local food in meal programs and provide students with a hands-on approach to learn about healthy eating choices.

The WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and its partners created the AmeriCorps Farm to School Program to use this framework to tackle the obesity epidemic while at the same time creating new markets for WI farmers. The program's primary target population includes students grades K-12 at participating school sites. The secondary target population is school districts within 14 high-need communities in WI. Communities targeted by the program were selected based on rates of free and reduced lunch as data from the CDC shows that the lower a family's income level, the more likely a child is to be overweight or obese. As seen from the data collected, the program has targeted sites with higher than average obesity rates.

The geographic and demographic area of the 14 high need communities the program is targeting is predominantly rural with 57% of the participants living in a non-metro county, Beale Codes 6-9. Adult obesity rates in the targeted communities are all above state averages (27.9% - 32.1%) with the exception of one site (23.9%), (1). Poverty is a risk factor of special concern and 57% of the counties have poverty rates from 13.6-21.9%, which is higher than the state average of 13.2% (9). Subsequently, 65% of the counties poverty rates for children range from 21.2 to 34.6% while the state average is 19% (9). In addition, 71% of the school districts in which AmeriCorps members are placed also have free and reduced lunch rates that are higher than state averages ranging from 43.9% to 83.4%.

The AmeriCorps Farm to School (AC F2S) Program, built on the Serve Wisconsin formula funded program, has been designed by collaborative efforts between multiple stakeholders including DATCP, the Department of Health Services (DHS), the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), UW-Center

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for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS), Research, Education, Action, Policy Food Group (REAP), and Wisconsin Rural Partners (WRP), hereinafter referred to as the F2S Team. The F2S Team is active in working on statewide farm to school programming, policy, and barriers and is working in multiple capacities to address obesity prevention in WI and to create rural economic development opportunities.

B. AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS: The obesity rates among children in all WI communities are alarming and changes in the school food environment through comprehensive F2S programming will provide and expose students to healthier food options during the school day. A barrier identified by communities in implementing farm to school programming is not having enough time or staff capacity to do it. The AmeriCorps members provide that extra capacity to organize and implement comprehensive farm to school programming. The program will address the focus area of HEALTHY FUTURES using a three prong approach. Members will serve their communities by: 1) Aiding school staff in changing the school food environment by promoting, procuring, and educating students about healthy local foods, including creating and maintaining school gardens; 2) Serving in a direct capacity teaching nutrition education to students K-12 in the classroom and/or lunchroom; 3) Recruiting and mobilizing volunteers to participate in a F2S task force and program activities.

The members' service will allow WI students and communities to have a better understanding of where their food comes from, how food is grown, and how their food choices affect their bodies, environment, and community. Since farm to school is a place-based program it will reflect the resources and needs of the local community. However, all AC F2S service sites will provide in-class nutrition education, feature local food in themed lunchroom events, provide local food sampling in the classroom or lunchroom, create and manage school gardens, incorporate school gardens into the school curriculum, and organize a Farm to School Task Force in the community and/or school.

This will be accomplished by placing at minimum two half-time or one full-time service member at each host site: a community outreach member and a nutrition education member. Based on feedback from current partner sites, having two half-time members focused on different aspects of the program allows for sites to recruit members with the skill sets needed to perform different F2S activities and support each other. However, some sites would prefer to manage one member. In total the program is asking for 15 MSY to support 2 full time members and 26 half time members.

Community outreach members will serve as the main liaison between the schools and the community. They will coordinate with the food service director and network with farmers to identify

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the opportunities for purchasing local foods and will create an action plan laying out the steps necessary to procure local food into the school meal programs. They will organize at least three events held in the lunchroom or as an assembly to complement nutrition education activities promoting local foods in the school. They will also be responsible for recruiting and managing volunteers to enhance and increase the capacity of the AC F2S program. This will include organizing a F2S task force within the school or community, recruiting farmers to present in the schools, organizing farm tours, and organizing snack preparation or food tastings.

The nutrition education members will focus on building relationships with teachers and school administrators. They will serve in a direct capacity teaching nutrition education in the classroom to the same students for at least five 30 minute consecutive sessions. Members will develop and implement educational curriculum that encourage students to try new foods, to regularly eat healthy local foods and teach them the importance of local food in their community. The program will be integrated with the academic school year and other activities such as farm field trips, garden based education, themed lunchroom events and tastings will occur to complement and enhance nutrition educational activities. The nutrition education members will be trained and use the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Standards as a guide to prepare their lesson plans. They will implement the aligned curricula, "Nutritious, Delicious Wisconsin", Linking People, Land and Food, and/or Got Veggies?, which all aim to teach students about healthy eating choices. The nutrition educator will also be responsible for starting and maintaining school gardens and working with teachers to incorporate garden activities into current classroom curriculum.

Members will also participate in other service activities, for example to support efforts in natural disasters or to serve and organize national service days like Global Youth Service Day. Approval from the program director and site supervisor must be obtained prior to engagement in service activities outside the scope of the farm to school project. Members will be responsible for submitting timesheets on a biweekly basis, update program activities weekly, including volunteer mobilization efforts, and submit quarterly reports. Weekly program activities will be tracked using an excel file and will be maintained at the program sites. The program director, site supervisors and members will all have access to these files to monitor progress. Both members will also be responsible for collecting data and disseminating evaluation tools which measure students' attitudes toward fruits and vegetables.

A great example of the value added by AmeriCorps members is how the AC F2S Program has been a catalyst for a county-wide local foods movement in the rural town of Prairie du Chien in Crawford County. A group of producers and local food enthusiasts, organized by an AmeriCorps

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community outreach member, collaborated to form DRIFTLESS WISCONSIN GROWN (DWG) with the goal to expand markets of local producers into schools and institutions. Unfortunately, this isn't as easy to do as most schools no longer have the staff or equipment to prepare whole fresh fruits and vegetables. Conversation about these constraints led to the development of the Crawford County Economic Opportunity Center's Kitchen Incubator-a partnership between the Opportunity Center (an organization creating opportunities for persons with disabilities), the City of Prairie du Chien, and the county. The Kitchen Incubator's certified kitchen now allows farmers to process their foods into a form that the schools can use and to prepare value added products without the investment in expensive operating equipment. DWG, the Opportunity Center, and Prairie du Chien's Mainstreet Organization have also partnered to revitalize the downtown farmers market. Without the AmeriCorps community outreach member organizing the first meetings for DWG, communication between these community partners would have never occurred. The AC F2S Program members are assembling the pieces of the puzzle, making connections in their communities, and creating significant lasting results.

C. EVIDENCE BASED AND MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT: It is evident that obesity prevention efforts need to start early as increased obesity rates are occurring among all aged children. Key obesity prevention strategies identified by the CDC include increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables, as well as implementing farm to school programs (8). The main goal of the AC F2S program is to increase the exposure and consumption of local foods, including local fruits and vegetables through comprehensive farm to school programming. The AC F2S program will measure a change in attitude towards fruits and vegetables through pre and post surveys annually. Being willing to try new fruits and vegetables is the first step toward liking fruits and vegetables, and liking fruits and vegetables is a step in the direction of choosing and consuming fruits and vegetables over energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods. Furthermore, food preferences and eating patterns in childhood have been shown to carry into adulthood.

Research shows that programs promoting fruit and vegetables, including farm to school programming, have a positive impact on students' knowledge, attitudes, and dietary behaviors (3, 16, 11, 12). Research specifically on farm to school also shows a positive impact on teachers, parents, and the community as a whole (10). The AC F2S program partnered with the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Department of Family Medicine and Nutritional Sciences and the Department of Health Services, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Program to evaluate the program. Data was collected at 9 host-site locations on student's knowledge and attitudes pertaining to food, nutrition,

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and agriculture as well as fruit and vegetable consumption and availability during school lunch meals.

Results revealed that the AC F2S program increases knowledge and attitudes as well as consumption of fruit and vegetables among children through improved access to fruit and vegetables in school meal programs. Improvements in student behaviors tended to increase incrementally with more years of F2S programming which implies that F2S programs may have gradual, yet sustaining positive impacts on student behavior (3). The AC F2S program will continue to partner with the UW Research Team to collect pre and post surveys focusing on changes in attitudes. Specifically, the program will use the "Fruit and Vegetable Neophobia Scales", adapted from the validated food neophobia scale, and created to evaluate Farm to School programming by the Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (13). The "Fruit and Vegetable Neophobia Scales," was also used to evaluate attitudes in the previous AC F2S evaluation.

In addition, feedback from parents, teachers, and food service staff clearly demonstrates a positive impact on students' attitudes and consumption of fruits and vegetables. For example, at a parent-teacher conference, two mothers approached an AC F2S member separately to tell him their children sampled spinach through a taste test and are now asking for spinach at home, in the grocery store, and even when they go out to eat. At another site location, a member received a letter from a parent expressing her gratitude; her daughter ate raw beets at school through a taste test event and cannot stop asking for them. At the farmers market, she begged her mother to buy beets, much like a child begs for candy at the supermarket. These are only two examples, of many comments from teachers, food service directors, and school staff who indicated an increased consuming of fruits and vegetables by students after program activities.

COMMUNITY IMPACT: The AC F2S Program addresses the HEALTHY FUTURES FOCUS AREA and will be using one standard performance measure and one applicant determined measure. The AC F2S Program will track the number of unduplicated students receiving nutrition education with the purpose of reducing childhood obesity (MEASUREMENT H6). By the end of the three year grant cycle, the AC F2S goal is for participating students to have increased access to and consume more healthy foods. The AC F2S Program will impact the communities in which it serves by providing at least 6,000 students with hands on nutrition education and a connection to local food. To measure program impact, the program will track a measurable change in attitudes of students towards healthy foods yearly. A sub-sample of students participating in the program will take the "Fruit and Vegetable Neophobia Scales" pre and post survey. Each host site will participate to ensure a representative sample across program sites.

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MEASUREMENT H6: NUTRITION EDUCATION: During the 2011-2012 AC F2S program year 5,144 students received nutrition education lessons. Data showed that 79% of students increased their knowledge about food, nutrition and agriculture and 56% of students had a measurable change in attitude toward consuming more fruits and vegetables exceeding program goals and targets. The AC F2S Program will continue to aim to have at least 50% of the students that take the pre and post surveys demonstrate a measurable change in attitude towards healthy food. This target was determined by stakeholders, experience with the current funded program, and by aligning measures with FOODCORPS, an AmeriCorps National Direct program working on the same focus area and issue and modeled after the formula funded AC F2S Program.

CHANGE IN SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENT: By the end of the year, the program would like to see an increase in local food being purchased for school meal programs thereby increasing student exposure to fresh local food and supporting local farmers. Program impact will be measured through post surveys given to food service personnel and school administrators assessing a measurable change in the school food environment. In the past program year, 100% of the food service directors and school administrators felt: 1) more positive about purchasing local foods, 2) their school food environment changed, and 3) they were more connected to local farmers because of the AC F2S Program, surpassing our target of 80%.

PERFORMANCE TARGETS: The AC F2S formula funded program met all performance measure targets in 2011-2012 program year. In addition to meeting the above stated measures, the program had performance targets associated with member development, volunteer recruitment and management and citizenship training. All members completed citizenship training and participated in member career enhancement training. As a result, all members who completed their term of service transitioned to gainful employment, a second term of service, volunteer work or secondary education. In addition our program recruited and managed more volunteers than anticipated, recruiting 1,628 volunteers who served 4,655 hours toward program activities.

D. MEMBER RECRUITMENT: The AC F2S Program will continue to use the systems that helped achieve 100% enrollment rates the past two years. Recruitment will begin three months prior to the start of the member's term of service. The AC F2S program director in conjunction with the site supervisors will send press releases to media outlets, colleges, and multi-cultural offices, stores, and e-mailing lists and will develop and disseminate program information for use at community events. Web sites including the AmeriCorps, DATCP and list-serves including the WI-Local-Food-Network and WI-Farm-to-School will be utilized. As the majority of our program host sites are in rural

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communities, recruitment efforts will focus on advertising in local media outlets, community centers, and volunteer centers to ensure applicants are reflective of the local community. To this end, our program places rural residents of WI in program positions and as many as half of our member placements were served by rural residents. Since our recruitment is locally focused, our program will continue to recruit rural residents. The host-site supervisors will be responsible for interviewing and selecting AmeriCorps members. DATCP and the host sites will use non-partisan, non-political, and non-discriminatory policies when selecting and enrolling members.

The AC F2S program director and host site supervisors will screen qualified applications for the skills, education, and interests that best match the community outreach member and nutrition education member positions. Members in this program will be working with school-aged children and will need to possess a high school diploma or G.E.D. and agree to a state and FBI fingerprint criminal background check. Moreover, these two positions require different skill sets. The community outreach members must have an understanding of budgeting principals; interest in agriculture, schools and/or economic development; and a proven ability to overcome barriers. The education members must have knowledge of agriculture/health/nutrition as well as experience working with K-12 aged youth. Additional criteria for selecting all members includes: motivated/self-driven, independent worker; ability and proven performance working with diverse groups; strong leadership/project management qualities; and oral and written communication skills.

E. MEMBER TRAINING: Members will be trained by AC F2S program director, by WI F2S content experts, and site supervisors to ensure they are ready to perform program activities. The AC F2S program director will organize a four-day training, two weeks after members' start date. This event allows members to get to know each other and includes training on AmeriCorps policies/rules, citizenship/civic engagement, conflict resolution, recruitment and retention of volunteers, comprehensive F2S strategies, and team building. Members will receive a training manual in addition to multiple educational resources including local food curricula, WI Farm to School toolkits, and volunteer recruitment and management resources. The training manual was developed with input from previous members, site supervisors, and the F2S team. In addition, each year the training is evaluated to ensure members are prepared for their term of service.

During the first day of the training members will participate in team building activities, go over an introduction to AmeriCorps including viewing the AmeriCorps orientation video, reviewing the AmeriCorps prohibited activities, the member contract, as well as program goals and expectations. During the second day of the training the nutrition education members and community outreach

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members will be split to dive deeper into their specific roles. Nutrition education members will be trained on curricula and the WI Nutrition Education Standards while the community outreach members will be trained on the State of Wisconsin's food service and producer farm to school tool kits. On the third day, members will receive training on and practice elevator speeches, and learn about recruitment and retention of volunteers. Elevator speeches are a tool used to effectively communicate a person's role in an organization to stakeholders. During the fourth day, members are trained on conflict management and will be given time to create an action plan for their service year to share with their site supervisors upon return to their sites. At the end of the training members will take a quiz to make sure they understand the Corporation for National and Community Service rules and prohibited activities.

Moreover, site supervisors will train members by providing a site orientation, give an overview of community resources, and introduce the program and members at the school in-service training. This will allow teachers and school staff to be introduced to the program and to the new members serving their schools. Being part of the in-school service training allows members to be trained about the school environment, school expectations and school norms.

Members will be provided training throughout their term of service as well. The AC F2S program has leveraged resources and developed relationships to create opportunities for members to attend conferences, summits and additional trainings. Furthermore, members are encourage to create and submit presentations to the WI Local Food Summit, and are required to attend the annual WI Farm to School Summit. Additionally, members participate in monthly conference calls and/or webinars to receive additional training and reflect on their service experience. For example, midway through the member service term members are trained on how to write effective cover letters and resumes as well as how to highlight the transferrable skills they gained through their service experience.

F. MEMBER SUPERVISION: Overall supervision will be provided by the AC F2S program director who will review weekly service reports, monitor and document service hours, ensure that living allowances meet the minimum specified by the Corporation for National and Community Service, provide program and policy updates, conduct site visits, and review member performance evaluations. Host site supervisors are critical to the success of the program and will be responsible for day-to-day supervision of the members. They will help members work through daily conflicts that might arise, assist with the F2S Task Force, volunteer recruitment and management, and facilitate meetings and network opportunities with the schools and community members. Host site supervisors will also be responsible for reviewing members weekly updates, approving timesheets, and conducting mid-term

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and end-term evaluations.

HOST SITE SUPERVISION SELECTION, TRAINING, OVERSIGHT, AND SUPPORT: Identified host-site partners will receive a host-site training manual and participate in a webinar detailing program expectations, procedures, and policies including prohibited activities. Host-site supervisors are self-identified by host-site partners and must make a commitment to meet with members weekly and have experience supervising. The AC F2S program selects host-sites that have clearly outlined qualifications of host-site supervisors indicating that the program will be successful. The AC F2S program director as well as the new Statewide Farm to School Program Coordinator housed at DATCP will be available to provide technical assistance and provide site supervisors with best practices.

G. MEMBER EXPERIENCE: Members will have opportunities to develop a strong ethic of service and civic responsibility as they fulfill their term of service. The AC F2S experience has been designed for members to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to be active in our democracy as well as to ensure a great member experience. In addition, Members will be part of a larger team working on improving the health of Wisconsin communities. During AC F2S training members will have an orientation to AmeriCorps, how they fit into the fabric of service and what it means to be an AmeriCorps member. They will view the AmeriCorps orientation video, read the AmeriCorps Pledge and receive AmeriCorps member gear which they will wear while serving at their sites. They will also be trained and practice giving elevator speeches so that they are prepared to communicate with community members, partners and the general public about their role as AC F2S members. Members will also organize service projects throughout the year, including celebrating Global Youth Service Day.

The structure of our program creates a supportive environment for members and a connection to AmeriCorps. The placement of two members at each site not only allows sites to recruit members with different skill sets, it also allows members to work together and share ideas feeling more connected than if they were serving alone. In addition members will stay connected through member focused events such as monthly conference calls, connecting at the WI Farm to School Summit, meeting at the Opening Ceremony and sharing information via dropbox. The monthly conference calls will allow members to reflect on their service on a regular basis and includes topics such as citizenship and AmeriCorps member reflections as well as sharing success stories and challenges. For example, Serve WI requires that members write a reflection piece due in March which is the topic of the April conference call. In May, members reflect on citizenship and how AmeriCorps has shaped

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their current view of what it means to be a citizen.

Members will also have an opportunity to interface with other AmeriCorps programs at the Serve WI opening ceremony. In the past our members have collaborated with the WI Department of Public Instruction's corps members to organize events, such as MLK Day and Global Youth Service Day and strengthen our programs efforts. The member experience allows members the opportunity to build a lifelong ethic of service. Subsequently, each year roughly a quarter of our members return for an additional term of service.

H. VOLUNTEER GENERATION: In alignment with Serve Wisconsin's State Service Plan to increase the number of volunteers recruited, retained, and managed in WI, the AC F2S program expects to recruit 500 episodic and on-going volunteers who will donate 5,000 hours to implement F2S activities at partner site locations. In the 2011-2012 program year, members exceeded program goals, mobilizing and recruiting 1,628 volunteers. The program is uncertain if it can obtain this level of volunteers in the future years as the majority of these volunteers were episodic and managed through a collaborative opportunity during Global Youth Service Day.

Site supervisors and members will work together to target volunteer recruitment with assistance from the AC F2S program director. Members will receive training on volunteer recruitment and management to support their host site in developing and implementing a volunteer recruitment plan which will be a part of their overall action plan. Members will network with volunteer centers in their areas, already established volunteer programs in their schools and communities, and advertise volunteer opportunities in the newspaper, e-mail lists, and bulletin boards. Members will work closely with site supervisors to develop a volunteer database which members can easily access for program activities from one program year to the next. AmeriCorps members will track volunteers and their hours through monthly reports. Data will be tallied, reviewed, and evaluated by the AC F2S program director on an ongoing basis.

VOLUNTEER ROLES: Volunteers are integral to the success of this program because they increase it's capacity by providing community connections to the school and helping in a direct capacity with farm to school activities. Some volunteers will be a part of the local F2S Task Force and will assist with the creation of the AC F2S action plan. The F2S Task Force will be organized by the community outreach member and will include diverse community members such as nutritionists, farmers, economic development consultants, local food businesses owners/workers, parents, and school administrators. These volunteers will commit to two hours per month for meetings. For example, in Vernon County the F2S task force helps organize a local food cooking competition called "Harvest

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Challenge." The Challenge is a menu planning and cooking contest for high school students highlighting the many delicious benefits of including fresh and nutritious foods in school lunch programs. The AC F2S program also utilizes volunteers to help prepare healthy snacks to be distributed in schools. For instance, in Waupaca County each week approximately 20 volunteers meet at the UW-Extension office to process and pack snacks for more than 1,500 students. Volunteers will also be called on to help create and maintain school gardens, provide nutrition education to students, present on farming practices and local foods, and host students on their farms. Without volunteers the program will not be successful. Volunteers will not participate in prohibited activities as part of this program.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION: From the inception of the AC F2S program in 2008, the program has been dedicated to branding National Service and has intentionally incorporated AmeriCorps in its program title. By incorporation AmeriCorps in the program title members, the public, and program recipients know that the program is supported by AmeriCorps. The AmeriCorps logo is shared with host sites and used on all communications with site supervisors and members. Partner host-sites are required to post signs indicating they are AmeriCorps sites. The logo is also utilized on member service gear, websites associated with our program, application forms, recruitment brochures, on-line postings, orientation materials, signs, press releases and publications related to our program. In addition, all members and program staff use the AmeriCorps Farm to School Program as a tag line in email communications.

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Organizational Capability

A. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING: DATCP was established in 1929 to address a broad array of agricultural issues. DATCP's Bureau of Agricultural Market Development (DAD) staff will lead the implementation of this program, with the input and assistance of the F2S Team. Mike Powers, division administrator, will be the primary contact and Camilla Vargas, the AC F2S program director will be the secondary contact. DAD is starting its fifth year of successfully administering the AC F2S Program with a formula funded grant from Serve WI. Beyond the AmeriCorps program, DAD has administered other federal programs including the USDA's Specialty Crop Block Grant and the USDA's Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Grant.

The AC F2S Program is integrated and supported throughout DATCP's divisions and organizational structure. The AC F2S program director reports weekly on program activities and presents year end results to the board of directors. DATCP has created and appointed members to the Farm to School Advisory Council with representatives from multiple stakeholders. The AC F2S program director, as part of the F2S Team will report quarterly on program activities to the council. Staff from DAD will work closely with the AC F2S program director to provide technical assistance needed to ensure success for the program. DATCP staff also support member training efforts by providing conflict management and resume building training. DATCP has well-established rules and guidelines concerning administration of grant funds. Fiscal and program staff review all expenditures to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state cost policies. Annual audits by third party audit firms are conducted. DATCP reserves/obligates funds when the appropriate parties within the department have approved a contract or amendment. These obligations are entered and maintained in the automated Community Aids Reporting System and the Department's Financial Management

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System (FMS). Contractual obligations are encumbered on purchase orders in the FMS system. Payroll and travel reimbursements will be centrally managed through the Wisconsin State Payroll System.

STAFFING: The AC F2S Program will have a program director dedicated to managing and making sure the program is in compliance with CNCS rules and regulations. The program director will be Camilla Vargas, who will have five years' experience managing this particular AmeriCorps program. CamillaVargas has attended workshops on CNCS's rules and regulations at the National Conference of Volunteering and Service as well as the Financial and Grants Management Institute and attends all Serve WI program director meetings which update program directors on any changes in policies. The AC F2S program director will also conduct site visits each year to monitor host-site program compliance, identify trouble spots, and provide comments on corrective actions. If corrective actions are necessary the AC F2S program director will follow up with sites to ensure compliance. DATCP is in the process of hiring an Agriculture Program Supervisor who will also be available to provide technical assistance, best practices, and strategic planning support to site supervisors as well as members. This new addition to the DATCP staff will enhance program efforts by providing a full-time person to work on farm to school issues statewide, secure further funding for farm to school in the state and manage the farm to school advisory council. GLEN HANSON, Accountant Senior at DATCP in the division of Management Services will work with the program director to complete financial reports including the Periodic Expense Reports and Aggregate Financial Reports. SHIRLEY LAFONTAINE, Training Officer, certified by the Mediation Training Institute International, will provide training on portfolio development and conflict management.

In-kind staff capacity from the F2S Team includes time for program development, implementation and evaluation from the following people:

- 1) Amy Meinen, MPH, RD, is the Nutrition/State Fruit and Vegetable Coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention Program. Amy's responsibilities include coordinating statewide nutrition efforts to prevent overweight and obesity; providing technical assistance; and coordinating, designing, and disseminating evidence-based nutrition interventions, education, and resource materials statewide. Amy provides consultation on the development of the program, evaluation methods, and provides resources for program activities such as the Got Veggies? Curriculum.
- 2) Vanessa Herald, Great Lakes Regional Coordinator for the National Farm to School Network, is based out of the University of Wisconsin Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems. Vanessa is able

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to share best practices and help train the members.

3) Sara Tedeschi, Wisconsin Farm to School Director, works at CIAS providing technical assistance to communities implementing farm to school activities. Sara is a key presenter at the AC F2S school training, providing an overview of farm to school resources as well as best practices.

4) Nathan Larson, garden education coordinator at Community Ground Works at Troy Gardens, has implemented garden-based curriculum for ten years and is the co-author of Got Veggies? curriculum. Nathan provides training and insight on garden-based nutrition education. Nathan is a leader in garden education and also provided training to FOODCORPS members.

B. SUSTAINABILITY: Given that community health problems must be solved locally and that schools play a major role in a community's environment, more schools in Wisconsin are looking at farm to school strategies as a way to provide a better school food environment and enhance learning opportunities for their students. This momentum is creating AmeriCorps placement opportunities, expanding the need for programming from 9 to over 23 sites in WI. Through the F2S Team efforts, communities throughout WI are changing their school environments and continuing these efforts long after any specific funding or project ends. Sustainability is addressed in a number of ways:

1) Food service directors and farmers are connecting, establishing long lasting purchasing relationships. 2) Farmers and community organizations are partnering finding solutions to the barriers of selling products to schools. 3) Schools are building and maintaining gardens, creating educational opportunity for students. 4) Teachers are learning creative ways to incorporate school gardens into their pre-existing curriculums.

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION: In the summer of 2009, the F2S Team and stakeholders came together to create the AC F2S Logic Model, which led to the creation of a Statewide Farm to School Logic Model identifying key steps the State of WI needs to take to impact both the health and agricultural economic development of WI communities through farm to school strategies. The current formula funded AC F2S Program was identified as an essential component to help the state meet the intermediate and long-term objectives of improving childhood nutrition of students as well as creating new markets for WI farmers. Using the logic model as a reference, the F2S Team created the AC F2S Program design and performance measures. In addition, the F2S Team is an active partner in the implementation of the AC F2S Program. More specifically, the F2S Team provides experts in the field of obesity prevention, farm to school strategies, nutrition education, and local food procurement to train members.

Furthermore, our program sites, through the work of the community outreach members, have

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been able to make local partnerships to establish sustainable solutions. In 2010, two of our host-site partners received the Standing Up for Rural Communities Award established by Tony Evers, State Superintendent of DPI. This is a prestigious award given to recognize partnerships between and among schools, libraries, and communities that have resulted in programs or projects which demonstrate the great potential and spirit of rural WI.

The current formula funded AC F2S Program serves as a model for the National Direct FOODCORPS program which received a planning grant from CNCS in 2009-2010 and is currently funded. The F2S Team members, the AC F2S program director, and the AC F2S members have provided guidance on performance measures, program structure, and program activities through work groups and conference calls. AC F2S program director and AC F2S members participated in the FOODCORPS Summit, held in 2010, where they presented on program best practices and successes. The AC F2S Program will continue to collaborate with FOODCORPS to share best practices, successes, and evaluation tools.

DIVERSIFY FUNDING: In 2009, state legislators passed Act 293 which provides a framework for farm to school in WI. This bill mandates a new permanent position at DATCP for a Statewide Farm to School Program Coordinator who will organize an appointed F2S Council, create the vision for the F2S program in WI and provide technical assistance. This bill complements the AC F2S Program by providing resources to overcome barriers associated with purchasing, processing, and storing local foods while the AC F2S Program provides human capacity to engage communities in farm to school efforts.

Furthermore, the F2S Team is poised to apply for grant opportunities using the Logic Model which outlines WI's farm to school goals. Using this logic model, DHS already secured additional funding to provide technical assistance to communities implementing farm to school strategies, to create and disseminate farm to school tool kits, and to evaluate farm to school impact at the current AC F2S sites.

C. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: The program director has five years' experience managing the AC F2S Program and understands AmeriCorps rules and regulations. The AmeriCorps rules and regulations are outlined in the host-site handbook, (which is updated yearly), the host-site contract, and member contracts and are reviewed at the host-site orientation and member training. The AC F2S program director will conduct site visits each year to monitor host-site program compliance, identify trouble spots, and provide comments on corrective actions. If corrective actions are necessary the AC F2S program director will follow up with sites to ensure compliance. Program

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site selection will take into account repeated noncompliance issues in the selection process and will discontinue partnerships if corrective actions cannot be made.

Additionally, the AC F2S program director will monitor member timesheets and reports, and will keep updated on program activities through monthly conference calls to assure members are not engaging in prohibited activities as part of their service.

DEMONSTRATED COMPLIANCE: In 2011-2012 program year 16 of 17 members had enrollments approved on or before the 30 day deadline; one was approved late. All members were exited on or before the 30 day deadline. All fiscal and progress reports were submitted on-time. The enrollment approved late was due to staff error. A better system for reminders will be established using the online reporting system OnCorps.

ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION: The ACF2S formula funded program had 100% enrollment and retention rates during the last two full program years.

MULTI-SITE PROGRAMS: DATCP's AmeriCorps Farm to School Program has identified 14 partner site locations through a request for partnership process conducted in 2012. This program will build on the relationships it has established with 7 partner host sites and will expand to incorporate more sites for a total of 14 host-sites. Partner host sites include non-profit organizations, UW-Extension Offices, County Health Departments and school districts. Partner sites are selected on the following criteria: balance of rural and urban counties, based upon federal definitions, extent to which urban sites meet the definition of distressed communities under AmeriCorps regulations; the extent to which local programs will build on existing programs; the site offers a strong local supervisor with previous experience with nutrition education or local food efforts; the site demonstrates potential for sustainability through school and food service support; innovation and proven community involvement; and cash and in-kind match capabilities.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

A. COST EFFECTIVENESS: The AC F2S Program will enroll 2 full-time and 26 half-time members and requests 15 MSY. Corporation funds requested to support this program total \$196,131 or \$13,075/MSY, which is similar to past years. DATCP is funded through general purpose revenue (GPR), program revenue (PR) fees, federal funds, segregated funds and bonds. In fiscal year 2012, DATCP's expenditures were \$103,696,744: \$29,314,315 (GPR), \$23,862,822 (PR fees), \$15,072,595 (federal funds), \$31,001,793 (segregated funds), \$4,445,159 (bonding). In fiscal year 2012 this project represented 0.12% of DATCP's expenditures. The base budget for fiscal year 2013 is \$103,543,000. DATCP has received \$125,240, \$134,036, \$134,036, \$117,819 and \$117,819 for 2008,

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2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively, through formula funded grants from Serve WI. The budgeted Grantee Share is 50%, which is greater than the required match rate of 34%.

DIVERSE NON-FEDERAL SUPPORT: In addition to federal funds, this program utilizes \$197,307 which will be supported through a combination of cash and in-kind match. In order for host sites to participate in this program, they must provide a cash match accounting for \$63,000 operational dollars. Over the past four years, host sites have contributed a total of \$32,000, \$38,500, \$45,000, \$33,500, \$39,000 for the 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 program years, respectively. In addition to the cash match, host sites also provide in-kind contributions to support AC F2S efforts including supervisor time, meeting expenses, travel, office space, and supplies. DATCP has also utilized cash match of \$10,000 in 2008, \$16,000 in 2009, and \$20,000 in 2010, 2011 and 2012 from DATCP's Buy Local Buy Wisconsin (BLBW) budget, which was allocated through state government funds. DATCP has agreed to continue to support the AC F2S Program as it complements BLBW efforts by providing a focused and comprehensive emphasis on local foods in schools. Since 2008, DATCP has provided in-kind commitments for indirect costs and staff time contributions to this program. The F2S Team is also committed to supporting this program as it complements obesity prevention program in the state. DHS has contributed up to \$7,500 yearly and plans to continue supporting program activities with a cash match of \$2,500. The F2S team provides invaluable in-kind match contributions to develop and implement member training, program evaluation, and provide technical assistance to the sites.

The economic costs for obesity are startling and it has been projected that the U.S. spent \$190 billion on obesity-related health care expenses in 2005. In a review of the economic costs of obesity published by the Harvard School of Public Health, it was cited that the per capita medical spending was \$2,741 higher for obese individuals than for individuals who were not obese. The AC F2S program has impacted 5,000 students and 23.5% or 1175 students are obese. If program is able to decrease obesity by 5% it would reduce the number students that are obese to 925 students. This would result in a savings of \$685,250 per program year. The yearly investment of this program has been \$236,899. The return in investment is approximately 3:1.

CITATION: (1) The Obesity Prevention Source: Economic Costs. Harvard School of Public Health. Downloaded November 27, 2012. <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/obesity-prevention-source/obesity-consequences/economic/>

DECREASED COST SHARE TO MEET/EXCEED GOALS, OR DEEPER IMPACT OR BROADER REACH: Each year, the host-site partners must provide a cash match in order to host AmeriCorps

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members. The community contribution has increased to support program costs from \$1,750 per half time member to \$2,000 per half time member and from \$5,000 per full time member to \$5,500 per full time member. In addition, DATCP and the F2S Team will continue its strong support of this worthwhile program as part of their overall strategic plan.

B. BUDGET ADEQUACY: With the AC F2S Program in its fifth year, DATCP has experience with the financial and programmatic information needed to develop a budget that will support program activities. This budget includes monies to support the costs for personnel (program director), travel for both members and program staff (training, conferences, site visits), member living allowances and criminal history checks.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

EVALUATION: The DATCP AC F2S Program is currently in its fifth year of operation. The F2S Team worked with UW-Madison Research Team to evaluate the health impact, community impact, and economic impact of farm to school initiatives at nine AC F2S sites. Members and school staff worked to collect data on the health impacts of the program through pre- and post-surveys, a plate waste study, and, where permitted, BMI. Members also interviewed food service staff, farmers, school administrators, community volunteers, and parents, plus student focus groups. The data collected was analyzed by the UW-Madison Research Team. Evaluation summaries were reported in September of 2011 (3).

The F2S team has also been taking measures to evaluate the AC F2S program. Members evaluate program training sessions, allowing the program to make improvements from year to year. A subgroup of the F2S team will conduct host site and member evaluations to assess program design and management each program year. The results from these surveys will be summarized and shared with DATCP, Serve WI, the farm to school advisory board, and CNCS. Results will guide program improvements, and performance measures and goals will be re-evaluated.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

N/A

Continuation Changes

N/A