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Executive Summary

Earth Care (EC) will have 27 AmeriCorps Members who will deliver food security and environmental stewardship services in nonprofits, schools, and government agencies including the Food Depot, the Santa Fe Farmers Market Institute, La Familia Health Services, Cooking with Kids, Adelante Program for Children Youth and Families Experiencing Homelessness in the Santa Fe Public Schools (Adelante), Reunity Resources, the New Mexico Land Conservancy, the United World College, Earth Care's Youth Allies, the City of Santa Fe, Salazar Elementary School, Agua Fria Elementary School, and Nava Elementary School. At the end of the 1st program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for providing improved food access and self-reliance for low-income families, increased collaboration across the food security sector, and raised awareness about food choices and their impact on health and the environment. Member service will result in emergency food distribution and hunger relief services for at least 1750 community members in need, food and health education reaching at least 500 children and families, environmental stewardship and natural resource conservation education for at least 1000 community members, and the conservation, recycling, or reuse of at least 50 tons of food and solid waste. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 600 volunteers that will be engaged in hunger relief, development of school and community gardens, restoration of land, recycling and conversion of waste into compost, and the conservation of energy. This program will focus on the CNCS focus areas of Disaster Services, Healthy Futures, Environmental Stewardship and Capacity Building. The CNCS investment of \$191,034 will be matched with \$103,681, \$11,000 in public funding and \$92,681 in private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

PROBLEM/NEED

The Earth Care Food Cadre (ECFC) program addresses the most pressing community issues resulting from food insecurity: health, hunger, and environmental sustainability. Community food security is defined by the USDA as: access of low-income households to healthful, nutritious food supplies; the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs; and comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues. The development of local food systems improves food security. This development requires education about and access to fresh healthy food that meets dietary needs for all local residents at a price they can afford as well as expansion of fresh local food supplies and programs that make these foods available to people in need.

In 2012 the economic Research Service at the United States Department of agriculture (USDA)

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released its most recent report on food insecurity, indicating that just over 50 million people in the United States are living in food insecure households, nearly 17 million of whom are children (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2012).

Studies show that food insecurity can have wide-ranging detrimental consequences on the physical and mental health of adults. Lack of access to a nutritious and adequate food supply has implications not only for the development of physical and mental disease, but also behaviors and social skills. (Stuff et al., 2004). Food insecurity can be particularly devastating among children due to their increased vulnerability and the potential for long-term consequences. According to the 2013 Kids Count report, New Mexico (NM) had the highest levels of childhood food insecurity of any state in the country. Inadequate nutrition can permanently alter a child's brain architecture and stunt their intellectual capacity, affecting the child's learning, social interaction and productivity. Several studies have demonstrated that food insecurity impacts cognitive development among young children and is linked to poor school performance in older children. (Gundersen et al., 2011).

The primary target community for the ECFC program is Santa Fe County (SF) children, youth, and families characterized by high food insecurity, high poverty rates, lack of an affordable food supply, and minority status (Hispanic, Native, Immigrant) residing in south and west side neighborhoods where over 47 percent of the children and youth in the community reside and poverty rates are the highest in the City (US Census, 2010). These high-density, high poverty neighborhoods are important communities to reach and 100% of our AmeriCorps placements provide services in these neighborhoods. However, food security is a state-wide issue that requires a systemic approach to hunger relief, food production, and food quality/education at a regional scale. Therefore, a number of our placements including the SF Farmers Market Institute, the NM Land Conservancy, and the Food Depot help to improve local food production at a regional level.

HUNGER: The most recent figures from the USDA Food Security Survey shows that from 2008-2010 21% of NMs had "low or very low food security" meaning they are forced to skip meals, not eat so their children can, or worry about where their next meal comes from. In SF County there are at least 21,270 individuals (14.9 %) who do not know where their next meal comes from. Food insecurity is a multifaceted issue, though poverty is an undeniable determinant. The 2010 US Census Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates show a poverty rate of 16.5% for Santa Fe County, higher than the national rate of 15.3%. The poverty rate among families with children in Santa Fe is 20.1% (U.S. Census Data, 2011). 63.1% of SF Public Schools (SFPS) students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Poverty rates and food insecurity in SF pose an even greater challenge to families and children when

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considered against a backdrop of a high cost of living which is 18% higher than the U.S. average (Sperling, 2011). Additionally, the rates of food insecurity in NM are substantially higher for Hispanic households (USDA 2009). In SF, 47% of the population is Hispanic and 63% of the Hispanic population receives food stamps.

OBESITY: In addition to hunger, a consequence of limited access to fresh food is obesity. Many children and families in SF struggle not just to get enough to eat, but also to access the resources needed for a healthy diet and lifestyle. Many studies show that barriers to access to nutritious food and relatively easier access to less nutritious food may be linked to poor diets and, ultimately, to obesity and diet-related diseases. (Nelson et al. 2001; Seligman et al., 2007). Following national trends which have seen childhood obesity rates in America triple over the past three decades, the 2012 report "The Weight of Our Children" from the NM Department of Health shows that obesity is occurring at very young ages among children. Currently, 16.7% of NM 3rd graders are considered overweight and 21.9% are obese. According to a NM Department of Health Survey conducted in 2007, SF youth have higher levels of obesity, poorer nutrition, and lower occurrences of physical activity than the state average.

FOOD PRODUCTION & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: According to the USDA, our food travels an average of 1500 miles from farm to plate (USDA: 2012) contributing 25% of global carbon emissions (Center for Global Food Issues). Dependence on the global food supply cycle has impacts on our health and the environment. According to the 2012 Climate Change and the SF Watershed study conducted by the City of SF, changes in climate pose a serious threat to our local food system.

Predictions include an increase in water demand, a decrease in water supply and damage to crops and rangeland. These changes will impact the food system as a whole and lead to an increase in food prices and additional barriers to food access. Within the last five years, New Mexicans have already faced prolonged drought, record winter cold, and intense wildfires associated with climate change.

(NM Climate Change Impact Report 2012). In the face of climate destabilization, it is important for our community to increase environmental stewardship and build our local food system to reduce our dependence on imported foods and increase community resilience. An opportunity identified by the Sustainable SF Plan to simultaneously mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and create ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change is to divert food waste from the landfill and convert it to compost in order to restore nutrient-depleted soils. According to a waste analysis completed by the City of SF in 2012, over 1,000 tons of food waste currently goes to the landfill that could be diverted for compost (City of SF: 2012).

The ECFC program is designed to address community food security by educating community

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members about food and nutrition, increasing the availability of and access to healthy fresh local food supplies, addressing hunger through emergency food distribution and education and support services, and providing the environmental stewardship education and resource conservation activities needed to develop a sustainable local food system.

MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT

FOOD PRODUCTION AND ACCESS: Full-time Members placed with the Farmers Market Institute, the NM Land Conservancy, La Familia Health Services, and the United World College's Sustainable Farm Program and Quarter-time Members placed at school gardens work to increase the local food supply and the availability of fresh foods to low-income communities. For example, at the SF Farmers' Market Institute, the FT Member serves at the Markets to assist food stamp users and process transactions. He/she also develops outreach materials to increase food stamp patronage. Interventions include: school and community gardens, land restoration workshops, farmer support through professional development trainings, microloans, farmers market support and expansion, land easements, and service projects at area farms to generate food for local schools, food banks, and low-income residents. Full-Cadre service projects are also hosted at area community gardens and farms in order to increase production and community participation.

HUNGER RELIEF & FOOD SUPPORT SERVICES: Full-time Members placed with the Food Depot and Adelante and Quarter-time Members placed with Youth Allies' Los Amigos Del Parke Sunday Meal Project work to address hunger by supporting the region's food bank, providing food assistance, and healthy meals. Our FT Member placed with the Food Depot works to support Food Depot's 135 partner agencies in nine northern NM counties to create a network of food distribution that supports community resiliency in times of disaster and provides regular hunger relief as well as referrals and support services to community members in need. FT Member with Adelante coordinates food drives with the SF Public Schools, a food pantry, and weekly meals for clients. Members also support case management and referral resources for families experiencing homeless and high levels of food insecurity. QT Members prepare a Sunday breakfast for the homeless and serve them at the Labor Park through a partnership with Los Amigos Del Parke. Interventions include emergency food collection, storage, distribution, food pantries, community meals, referrals to social service agencies and case management to address long-term hunger.

NUTRITION & HEALTHY EATING: Full-time Members placed with Cooking with Kids, Adelante, La Familia, the SF Farmers Market Institute, and QT/MT Members placed at school gardens and Youth Allies work to educate children and community members about healthy meal preparation and

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benefits of fresh fruits and vegetables. FT Member placed with Cooking with Kids provide weekly cooking lessons in elementary schools and host monthly family nights exposing students and their families to local produce and healthy meals. FT Member with Adelante prepares healthy meals for clients. FT Member with SF Farmers Market Institute (SFFMI) coordinates the Children's Nutrition Program which brings public school students to market to meet farmers and taste-test fresh fruits and vegetables. SFFMI Member also coordinates the Healthy Organic Meals on a Budget workshop series led by local chefs and farmers serving community members on a tight food budget. FT Member with La Familia provides cooking classes, educational workshops on wellness, and community health outreach and assessment. QT/MT Members placed at school & community gardens/farms provide lessons about vegetables and taste-testing opportunities. Interventions include: healthy cooking classes, wellness classes, vegetable garden lessons, community health outreach & assessment.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS: Full-time Members placed with the City's Environmental Services Division, Reunity Resources, and PT, QT, and MT Members placed with EC's Youth Allies program divert waste from the landfill for recycling and composting, assess and document community resource use/conservation through Sustainable SF scorecard, and provide environmental stewardship education and awareness outreach, workshops, and events. For example, FT Member with Reunity Resources works with local restaurants and hotels to collect food waste and convert it into compost in partnership with a local nursery. Interventions include: recycling, re-use, and compost, community education workshops on resource conservation, and community assessment.

EVIDENCE BASE: According to a report released by the SF Food Policy Council this year, regional food security depends on a multi-tiered approach that simultaneously addresses the availability, affordability, and the quality of food sources. (SFFPC: 2012). The ECFC program focuses on four overarching categories of intervention that provide this multi-tiered approach: 1) Increasing local food production and access for low-income community members; 2) Providing emergency food and support services to community members experiencing hunger; 3) Providing food and nutrition education; 4) Increasing environmental sustainability and community resilience through resource conservation and environmental stewardship. Because our program places Members at partner agencies employing diverse interventions -- we do not have a single model program to draw from but instead cite evidence supporting strategies that are integral to our Member placements and the direct services they provide.

LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION AND ACCESS: ECFC Members support farmers markets, school and

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community gardens, and market outreach and incentive programs directed at low-income residents. According to a multi-level study of 15,538 subjects living in 327 neighborhoods, surveyed between 1998 and 2002, individuals with access to a greater abundance of healthy foods consume more fresh produce and other healthful items (Lopez, 2007). Local food environments influence the choices made by children, families, and community members. Programs that increase the availability and visibility of healthy food options such as mobile markets, farmers markets, community gardens, and fresh fruit and vegetable school programs, have resulted in higher levels of consumption of healthy foods among community members in adjacent communities (Morland et al., 2006; Powell et al., 2007). According to a study conducted with a random sample of 5,000 market customers, shopping at the Farmers Market can have a positive impact on food choices. 73% of respondents surveyed say they are eating more fresh fruits and vegetables each day since they started shopping at the market, 72% of respondents say they are being more physically active and 67% say they have reduced the amount of fat in their diet.

Another intervention the ECFC employs is school and community gardens and garden workshops. A comprehensive read and review study analyzing more than 15 studies on the impacts of community and school gardening programs found that participation in a garden activity improve access and consumption of healthy foods, nutrition knowledge, increase science achievement and environmental attitudes, and increase preference for a greater number of types of vegetables (Draper et al: 2010). Our own pre-post surveys conducted at seven local schools that have benefited from our ECFC program administered to youth participants suggests that over 75.0% of participating students made at least one positive change in food attitudes or habits. A positive correlation was found between participation in the program and increases in fruit and vegetable intake. Results also show an increase in the percentage of participants who identified fruit or vegetables as their favorite food, as well as decreases in the percentage of participants who identified junk food (i.e. candy, cake, etc.) as their favorite food.

HUNGER RELIEF: The ECFC also supports emergency food distribution pantries, soup kitchens, and food banks. A comprehensive assessment of national food banks published by Feeding America called *Hunger in America 2010* presents evidence from more than 37,000 food bank partner agency surveys and 61,000 client interviews conducted with randomly selected recipients at food pantries, shelters, soup kitchens, and food assistance programs nationwide found that 72% of recipients receiving services reported increased food security. Respondents receiving case management or social service referrals were more likely to report gains in food security. Members receiving support services also

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reported that they or their families were prepared to deal with hunger should it arise in the future (from 8% at the pre-test to 69% at the post-test); and increased engagement in emergency preparedness activities--on the final post-test, 100% of participants reported to have thought about or discussed with their families the need to develop an emergency plan (compared to 23% and 33% respectively, on the pre-test); More than 90% of participants reported to have stored water, food, and other supplies at the final post-test.

NUTRITION & HEALTHY COOKING & GARDEN EDUCATION: The ECFC uses cooking classes for adults and children, healthy meals, and taste-testing in school and community gardens to increase nutrition knowledge and healthy eating habits. One of our host sites, Cooking with Kids has conducted preliminary field testing and process evaluation with fourth-grade students in the program. The study, featured in the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior revealed favorable outcomes including increased interest in new food items and cooking, increased self-efficacy for food preparation, and increased intake of fresh fruit and vegetables. (Lohse: 2011). Similar programs such as Healthy Eating in Portland, OR, confirm these results where after participating in healthy meal planning and cooking classes, 69% reported that they had increased daily consumption of fruits and vegetables.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION & ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION: The ECFC works to educate youth and community members about the importance of and strategies for resource conservation, recycling, and re-use as well as engage youth and community members directly in the diversion conservation and waste-reduction activities. Pre-post tests taken by participants in our environmental stewardship and conservation workshops indicate increased knowledge and skills in gardening, botany, water & energy cycles, composting, and energy conservation. 87 % of participants indicated an interest in protecting natural resources and conserving energy and water at home.

MEMBER TRAINING

Member training is designed to ensure adequate preparation and retention and includes: 1) Pre-Service Orientation, 2) State-wide AmeriCorps Launch, 3) Weekly Cadre Gatherings for Professional Development Training or Group Service-Projects, 4) Site-Specific Training, 5) Disaster Preparedness, and 6) Prohibited Activities. Pre-Service Orientation: A 4-day Orientation for FT/PT Members and a 2-day overnight camp for QT/MT Members introduce the following topics which are revisited in more depth during weekly Cadre gatherings at EC: 1) food security through service projects at the local food bank, soup kitchen and the Community Farm; 2) cultural competency training that enables Members to explore their own cultural identities, learn to work effectively across cultures, and provide context of Northern NM that sets the framework for our food security work from program partners and

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community experts; and 3) speaker panels to demonstrate SF's current efforts and existing obstacles to food security and connect Members to leaders in the local food security movement. State-wide Launch: Members attend the 3-day State-wide AmeriCorps launch in the fall which is hosted by one of the NM AmeriCorps programs around the state each year. Weekly Cadre Gatherings: FT Members gather every Friday afternoon from 1-4:30PM throughout their service year for professional development and group service projects coordinated by EC. Friday training topics include: community development, education, nutrition, sustainable agriculture, youth development and mentorship, volunteer recruitment and management, outreach and marketing, meeting facilitation, disaster preparedness, and project development. QT/MT Members' weekly trainings on Saturdays from 2-5PM deepen their understanding of food and sustainability issues and provide personalized mentorship and coaching as high school and college Members design projects and peer education campaigns. Group Service Projects: Members take part in at least 15 group service projects throughout the year that are held at least once a month during the Friday afternoon Cadre meeting time as well as during Orientation and National Service days. Group service-projects are hosted by partner service-sites as well as community organizations and local farms and are intended to leverage the resources of the ECFC to address community needs while providing hands-on training for Members beyond their personal Service-Sites. Site-specific Training: Site Supervisors provide site-specific training for Members their first week of service. The site training includes a history of the agency, training on the organizational structure and culture, an opportunity to meet staff, and position specific training. Disaster Preparedness: EC provides training in Disaster Preparedness for all Members. Training resources include the Office of Emergency Management, the Food Depot, the Red Cross, the National Guard, and the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster Northern NM Chapter. Prohibited Activities: EC provides training to all Members during Orientation on Prohibited Activities. The training includes a verbal review of all activities prohibited by AmeriCorps when serving as a Member as well as scenario role-plays. Upon completion of the training, Members sign a form indicating their understanding. A poster of Prohibited Activities is also displayed in the office. Throughout the year, our Program Director reviews timesheets, checks in with Members about their daily activities and addresses with the group any questionable activities that arise.

MEMBER SUPERVISION:

Program Supervision: EC staff collects regular feedback about the program through facilitated group check-ins on Friday afternoons for FT/PT Members and on Saturday afternoons for QT/MT. We use pre and post-Member tests that gauge their knowledge of food security issues and their commitment

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to and skills in community engagement, volunteerism and community service; conduct individual and group exit interviews facilitated by EC staff to collect Members' feedback and qualitative evidence of the program's impact on Members. Adjustments are made to the program as necessary. Site Supervision: Each Member works with EC and their site supervisor to create a work plan based on their position description. Members participate in a coaching meeting with their site supervisor on a biweekly basis where they check-in on the progress of their work, and inform their supervisors of any challenges they are having or additional support they need. Performance evaluations are conducted in January and July. SITE SELECTION, TRAINING, OVERSIGHT: Sites are recruited and selected by EC staff using the following criteria: alignment with mission of ECC program, ability to provide Member supervision, training, coaching and appropriate workspace, ability to engage Member positions with appropriate duties and direct-service activities to our target populations, ability to provide in-kind and cash resources to support the program, and other grant requirements.

COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION

All Earth Care Food Cadre Members take part in a Pre-Service Orientation that frames their placement and their service objectives within AmeriCorps Service movement and the specific mission of the Earth Care Food Cadre Program. Members Orientation includes a history of national service as well as a workshop on speaking about their work and the development of elevator speeches that they can use when introducing themselves to community members and partners. To foster a sense of connection and identity with the AmeriCorps brand, Members identify themselves as ECFC AmeriCorps Members through their email signature and are provided service gear (t--shirts, sweatshirts, buttons) that they wear regularly to their service-sites and are required to wear at all community events. Members are recognized as ECFC AmeriCorps Members in their staff bios and in all reporting on the work they perform for their sites -- whether in newsletters, press releases, or annual reports. Materials they prepare for their sites for publication include the AmeriCorps logo. In addition, the AmeriCorps logo is prominently displayed in our front entrance and at service site offices in addition to our websites, bringing attention to how AmeriCorps is supporting the local community. Through regular group AmeriCorps service projects our Members develop a strong sense of their membership in the AmeriCorps national service movement.

Organizational Capability

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING: EC was founded in 2001 to educate and empower youth to create a thriving, just and sustainable world. Our organization has directly reached over 12,000 youth and community volunteers through our youth leadership development programs,

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civic engagement opportunities, urban agriculture, and youth-led community projects. Since 2005, EC has been supporting youth-led projects that address food & nutrition and sustainable food systems. EC has an excellent track record in managing both federal and non-federal grants and multiple funding streams. We have successfully administered three State grants in addition to our State-funded AmeriCorps grants including NMPED and NMCCV's Next Generation Council Fund. We have been regularly supported by over 20 private foundations, and continue to secure funding from new foundations each year. In addition to grant funding, EC has increased funds through corporate sponsorships, fundraisers, and private donors. We are currently in the 4th month of our fourth year of AmeriCorps funding for FY 2013. Our last monitor visit in 2013 from the State AmeriCorps office resulted in no major findings. STAFFING: EC has an experienced and diverse project team that is committed to managing the ECFC. Our Board of Trustees meets monthly to review overall program implementation and development, agency performance, and finances, including the Financial Statements, Budgets, Cash flows, and other key legal documents. The following EC staff have key roles in the ECFC. Bianca Sopoci-Belknap, EC Director -- budgeted for 600 hours toward the project. Bianca is the cofounder of the ECFC Program and served as the Program Director for the last 4 years. She has developed and managed model programs in youth development and sustainability for Global Exchange, the Border Network for Human Rights, Del Pueblo, Inc. and Local Energy. From 2005-2007 she coordinated a Cooperative Education Program for Antioch College that placed undergraduate students at 30 service-sites throughout Northern NM. She served as an AmeriCorps Member from 2002-2005 while in college. Bianca is Chair of the mayor appointed Sustainable SF Commission and received the 2010 NM Youth Leaders Advocate Award. Bianca provides oversight for the program, and training and support to program staff as well as AmeriCorps Members. Pamela Dupzyk, full-time AmeriCorps Program Director. Pamela manages the grant, evaluation & reporting, member and site supervision and training. Pamela has over 25 years' experience working in nonprofits and in coordinating programs that benefit the community and the environment. She has successfully managed grants from the small \$5,000 (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation) to the large \$500,000 (Howard Hughes Medical Foundation) and from a variety of agencies including federal, state, and local government, and private foundations. She has supervised and trained hundreds of volunteers of all ages and backgrounds throughout her career. Avree Koffman is EC's part-time Program Coordinator. She is a local young person from Santa Fe, NM who has successfully graduated from EC's Youth Allies leadership program and is currently a part-time ECFC Member. As a youth participant, Avree founded Youth Allies' partnership with Los Amigos Del Parke -- engaging her peers

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in the preparation of weekly healthy meals for community members in need. As an AmeriCorps Member, she continues to lead that project as well as mentor and train high school youth participants in the Youth Allies program in food, health, and environmental stewardship. In 2014-2015 she will assume a part-time permanent position with Earth Care providing program coordination support for AmeriCorps program with a focus on the Youth Crew Quarter and Minimum-time positions.

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

EC has implemented financial, project management, administrative, and quality control policies and procedures that adhere to standard best practices and guarantee the success of our programs. These procedures assure fiscal management, program supervision, and timely reporting. We have written personnel, fiscal and reporting policies and procedures in place, which provide for auditing and accountability. Our financial statements reflect sound financial standing. EC completed our first full audit in October 2012. The report indicated four findings that are currently being addressed by our Executive staff and Board of Directors. In order to ensure service-site compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations, EC implements various strategies. First, we hold pre-service, mid-term and end-of-service site visits with supervisors and AmeriCorps Members present and three supervisor group meetings per year to cover the rules and regulations of AmeriCorps. Member Position Descriptions and Contracts are developed with service site supervisors and include regulations. Members and site supervisors sign a form acknowledging their understanding of Prohibited Activities. We review Members' timesheets and monthly reports with an eye for Prohibited Activities. Finally, we post the list of Prohibited Activities in our office for all to see. We also develop a MOU with each service site outlining responsibilities and requirements of each entity. When sites are out of compliance, it is our policy to hold a meeting with the supervisor and Member to attempt to correct the issue. If corrections are not made within 30 days, we remove the Member and place them with another site. In instances of risk or noncompliance concerning our own organization, it is our policy to take immediate corrective action and conduct an assessment in order to determine how and why the issue of risk/noncompliance emerged. We have never experienced serious issues and have always been able to take corrective action and prevent further noncompliance through staff education and the modification of policies and procedures.

PAST PERFORMANCE

Earth Care has successfully administered our AmeriCorps program for the past three years. Each year we have succeeded in meeting 100% of our stated performance objectives. A brief overview of our program's cumulative impact includes: 1) Supported over 30 local farms through the Santa Fe

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Farmers Market Institute FT Member and 20 farm service projects. 2) Supported the development or expansion of 11 school and community gardens, 10 home gardens for low-income residents. 3) Provided healthy foods education through garden workshops, nutrition education, and cooking classes for over 6,000 children and youth. 4) Distributed emergency food to over 1,500 low-income individuals through weekly meals and the coordination of two food pantries (this number does not include figures from our current 2013-2014 program year in which we've placed a FT Member at the Food Depot to increase our hunger relief efforts 300%). 5) Provided environmental stewardship training for over 7,000 youth and community members and mobilized more than 5,000 youth for environmental conservation and stewardship service-learning projects. 6) Diverted over 100,000 lbs. of food waste from the waste stream. 7) Mobilized more than 1,000 additional community volunteers.

COMPLIANCE ISSUES: Due to the reorganization of staff duties and staff turnover, we experienced difficulty in the past year enrolling Service Members within the 30-day window. Our new Business Manager who was hired and whose responsibilities included Member enrollment did not fully understand the difference/relationship between On Corps enrollment and Egrants enrollment and as a result did not successfully complete Egrant enrollment for Members in our Youth Crew (QT and MT placements) who began after the initial launch in the fall. We discovered this issue and provided corrective training for our Business Manager. As a further precaution, we shifted enrollment responsibilities to the Program Director whose day-to-day management of the program ensures their full knowledge of enrollment and Member file management needs.

ENROLLMENT: Over the last three years of managing our AmeriCorps program we have averaged a 98.5% enrollment rate. A few Minimum-time and quarter-time slots have been unfilled over our three years due to changes in recruitment time from the beginning of the semester to later in the semester when students already have committed to work and extracurricular schedules and could not participate in the program. Last year this was due to delays with our state contract. We will continue to do our best to recruit Members during optimal recruitment times.

RETENTION: Over the last three years our retention rate has been 91-97%. There have been occasions when Members exited with cause do to health issues, family emergencies, and other compelling circumstances. In these cases we have been able to find replacement Members. We place a strong emphasis on placement evaluation within the first month of service in order to allow for Members to be replaced if needed.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

EC engages in ongoing reflection, program evaluation, and program development in order to

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continuously improve our programs' performances. We have worked in partnership with the Santa Fe Food Policy Council to carry out extensive research through a SF Community Food Assessment and Food Plan which informs the food security interventions our AmeriCorps members focus on. In fact, our AmeriCorps Member placed at the Food Policy Council in 2012 conducted over 50 interviews with community stakeholders to determine unmet food needs and shared the results with program staff in order to inform our future program design. We host 3 annual meetings with our partners, representing diverse constituencies throughout the food system, to seek feedback about program implementation and design. We also receive feedback about the program from Members who regularly conduct outreach with community members and integrate community feedback into monthly reports and weekly service reflection discussions during Cadre Gatherings.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY

EC is requesting a cost/MSY that is lower than previous years at \$12,943 per MSY. We were able to achieve a lower cost per Member even though we increased full-time living allowances from \$12,100 per year to \$13,000 per year and part-time living allowances from \$6,050 to \$6,500 in order to help Members better meet the high cost of living in SF. We were able to do so by keeping administrative costs to a minimum. We continue to invest heavily in Member training and support because of its importance. CNCS's investment in the ECFC receives a very high return. Due to our partnership with 10 local organizations, 4 local school gardens, and area farms, we are able to manage a multifaceted program with high impacts with limited overhead and staff costs. This is possible because of the investment in the program by our community -- for example, partner organizations donate hundreds of hours of support in-kind through their roles as Service-Sites. EC is also able to leverage partner agency cash match contributions in support of the program costs. Our partner Service-Sites have pledged \$75,000 for the 2014-2015 program. The remainder of our Match responsibility (a total of \$103,681) for 2014-2015 has already been identified through private renewal grants from long-term funders that are deeply invested in our ECFC AmeriCorps Program.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

EVALUATION SUMMARY OR PLAN - As a previously formula-funded NM state grantee, we are considered a NEW applicant. Earth Care developed our evaluation plan and tools with Davis Innovations, Inc. Our evaluation plan for FY2014 has been refined through 3.5 years of experience in evaluation and data collection for this program. We have developed evaluation tools and procedures

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for administration of these tools specific to each of our performance measure objectives. Local food production evaluation includes 1) tracking of # of farms, community and school gardens started or supported using garden/farm activity logs and 2) tracking of fresh fruits and vegetables harvested for use by food banks, school cafeterias, and low-income members. Food assistance evaluation includes 1) number of individuals receiving emergency food from food banks/other organizations through tracking forms and client databases and 2) # of individuals that reported increased food security through participant surveys at food assistance sites. Disaster preparedness evaluation includes # of individuals that receive CNCS-supported services in disaster preparedness through attendance tracking sheets and outreach logs. Healthy Futures Nutrition Education evaluation includes 1) # of youth engaged in activities to reduce childhood obesity through activity logs and 2) # of participants introduced to nutritious meals and healthy foods through attendance sheets at healthy meal/cooking sessions. Healthy Futures Food Education and Support includes evaluation includes 1) # of individuals getting support, education, and/or referrals for hunger through a client tracking database and activity log documenting case management/support services rendered and 2) # of individuals that report increased food security through client surveys. Capacity Building evaluation includes 1) # of community volunteers recruited by organization or participants through volunteer activity log and 2) # of organizations implementing effective volunteer management practices through pre-post organizational assessment tool. Environmental Stewardship and Resource Conservation and Reuse evaluation includes 1) tons of materials collected and recycled/re-used through material tracking form and 2) # of individuals trained in environmental stewardship strategies through activity logs. Our data collection systems include OnCorps Reports, Google Surveys, and Excel spreadsheets. Data is analyzed by our evaluation consultant and mid-year and year-end narrative performance measure reports are developed by EC staff with support from our evaluation consultant. Information collected is shared with program partners and incorporated into program development for continuous improvement.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

Earth Care International ; Application ID #14AC156968

Your application is under consideration for a grant in the amount of \$191,034, 14.76 Member Service Years (MSYs), 27 slots, and \$12,942.68/Cost per MSY.

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1. Section III. Administrative/Indirect Costs - This section was omitted. Please provide calculations for: A. Corporation Fixed Percentage or B. Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate. If you choose to use the Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate please provide a copy to your Grants Officer at kmitchell@cns.gov.

Our budget (CNCS request & Match) does not include any indirect costs -only direct programming costs. Administrative costs of our organization are not included or billed to program budgets. This is how we've done it in the past.

We did try calculating .05 of CNCS request & .05 of Match and putting it in as follows (.05 of CNCS request - \$191,034 and .05 of Match 103,681 = Total = 15136 , CNCS = 9952, Match = 5184) in case it was a requirement but that put us over for cost per Member so we removed it. So you will see reflected in this section that the numbers entered remain 0.

2. Please explain to CNCS how the program will meet its cash needs as it relates to the estimated unrestricted revenue expenses in 2 or more of the last 3 years.

We do not fully understand this question. Earth Care's Food Cadre Program has, since its inception 4 years ago met its cash needs through Partner Matches from the organizations who serve as host sites to our Members as well as private foundation grants and funders. Partner matches are unrestricted funds however foundation grants are restricted for the use of the program.

3. Please explain to CNCS how the program will track the cash and investment months that were less than 1 year to the commission.

We do not fully understand this question. We track our cash flow on a monthly basis & both internally to our Board of Directors as well as through the invoicing process with Workforce Solutions.

b. Programmatic clarification items: Please respond in the eGrants narrative field labeled Clarification Summary:

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4. Members providing services to farmers and nurseries could be considered a benefit to for-profit businesses. Please explain why this is not a prohibited activity or how the plan will be revised to remove these activities.

Prohibited Activities state that Members are not permitted to provide a direct benefit to a business organized for profit. Our Members provide regular service at the Community Farm and the Four Bridges Farm, both are local NONPROFIT farms with registered 501(c)3 status. These farms donate their produce to the local food bank, the Food Depot (another partner organization of ours) or to schools. We also conduct regular service projects at school gardens. Our Members do not conduct service at nurseries or business farms. However, we do occasionally host trainings at farms or nurseries as part of our Member Training Program.

7. What percentage of your slots will be targeted to recruiting members with disabilities?

0%. Our program is not designed specifically to support the needs of members with disabilities therefore we do not target this group specifically during the recruitment process. While we have had members with disabilities in the past, they were selected because they were the top candidate for the position and we were confident that their needs for support did not exceed the realistic capacities of the program or their site. We provided these members with individualized support as needed. We have not recruited for members with disabilities because we do not feel it would be responsible to recruit such members without having the appropriate systems in place to support their participation and success in our program.

What is your program's plan, if any, for outreach and recruitment of members of the disability community? N/A

8. In order to increase the number of individuals with disabilities serving as AmeriCorps members, CNCS is offering applicants the opportunity to request additional MSYs to be filled by AmeriCorps members with disabilities. The additional MSYs would be funded at the clarification cost per MSY level. Applicants must describe their intent to recruit, engage and retain additional members with disabilities and provide a detailed outreach plan for how these members will be recruited and supported (e.g. established recruitment partners or strategies.) In addition, programs receiving these

Narratives

additional member positions will be required to report specific details on the success of the recruitment, supervision and retention of AmeriCorps members with disabilities in semi-annual progress reports. If you would like to request additional MSYs to be filled by AmeriCorps members with disabilities, please describe your intent as requested above. Also indicate how many MSYs your program would like to request, the number of slots by slot type, and where the additional members will serve. Add these additional MSYs to your budget.

We are not requesting additional MSYs to be filled by AmeriCorps members with disabilities at this time.

e. MSY With No Program Funds Attached Clarification. Please respond in the eGrants narrative field labeled ¿Clarification Summary¿.

9. Applicants may request No-Cost MSYs. These additional no-cost MSYs are national service positions in which no grant funds will be awarded. In other words, grantees could receive additional AmeriCorps positions but no additional grant funds. Programs will be responsible for using their own or other resources to pay program costs, member support costs and other operating expenses. Keep in mind that full-time AmeriCorps program costs include expenditures for the AmeriCorps living allowance, health care and criminal history checks. Programs are not required to pay living allowances or cover health care for less- than-full-time members.

We are not requesting additional No-Cost MSYs at this time.

f. Healthcare Clarification Items For All Applicants (unless the grant type is professional corps, EAP, or grants without full-time members):

10. Please provide the name of the health insurance provider you are proposing to use to insure your AmeriCorps members: Corps Network Insurance, Summit America Insurance Services

11. How did you select the provider? (for example, direct marketing ,through the Health Insurance Marketplace or other means) We have been using this provider 3 years for our AmeriCorps Members.

Narratives

We learned of them from other New Mexico grantees. We have been very satisfied with their coverage/service and were happy that they are engaged in the necessary process to upgrade their services and acquire verification to meet Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC) coverage, as defined by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) this year.

12. Does your proposed budget for member healthcare provide for Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC) coverage, as defined by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), for your full-time members?

They have begun the verification process and guaranteed that the process will be complete and they will be an approved provider by September 1, 2014 as required.

13. If not, what adjustment to your budget is necessary in order for you to provide Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC)?

Our healthcare budget per Member in 2014-2015 will increase to \$220 a member which is reflected in our proposed budget.

14. If you do not have enough information to answer question (4), please explain why not and/or what prevented you from being able to obtain the necessary information.

N/A

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics