Narratives

Executive Summary

FoodCorps will have 126 full-time AmeriCorps members who will connect children in public schools to healthy food through nutrition education, school gardens, and improved school lunch offerings in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, and Washington, DC. At the end of the 1st program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for measurably improving children's attitudes toward trying new fruits and vegetables, thereby overcoming a key barrier in addressing the nation's costly epidemic of childhood obesity. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 3,780 total volunteers who will also be engaged in promoting healthy school food environments.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Healthy Futures. The CNCS investment of $1,310,400 will be matched with $2,560,000 in private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

PROBLEM/NEED: The rate of childhood obesity in the United States has tripled in the last 30 years. Today, 1 child in 3 is overweight or obese (CDC, 2011), facing a future of diminished educational attainment (Classen, 2009), lost economic productivity (RWJF, 2012) and shortened life expectancy (CDC, 2013) that threaten to reinforce the same disparities our nation is striving to overcome: a child born into poverty is twice as likely to be obese as her affluent peers (Singh et al, 2010), and nearly half of all children of color are now expected to develop diet-related diabetes during their lifetimes (CDC, 2011). The urgency of addressing childhood obesity is clear, but the solution must be targeted toward the populations at greatest risk.

There are geographic patterns to the severity of this epidemic that inform where a cost-effective program should focus. High rates of childhood obesity plague whole regions, particularly the South: a baby born in Mississippi (21.7%) is much more likely to be obese than one in Colorado (10.9%; RWFJ, 2011). In the West and Northeast, overall higher rates of health mask localized disparities. In Arizona, fully 76% of 6th-8th graders in the Tohono O'odham Nation are overweight or obese, far above the statewide average of 30% (TOCA, 2013). In Massachusetts, 39% of Boston schoolchildren are overweight or obese, while in suburban Needham only 14.8% are affected (Mass. Dept. of Health, 2011).

The effects of obesity on a child's health and human potential are alarming. The obese child will face an increased risk of diabetes (Narayan et al, 2003), have fewer friends (Cunningham et al, 2012), miss more days of school (Kesztyus et al, 2011), and score lower on tests (Datar et al, 2011). She will

likely be obese as an adult, too, suffering from long-term health consequences such as heart disease, cancer, and premature death (CDC, 2012). These direct symptoms of obesity already add up to $147 billion in health care costs in the United States, a figure projected to reach $550 billion when the current generation of obese children reaches adulthood in 2030 (Finkelstein et al, 2012). At both personal and societal levels, the toll taken by obesity is not one America can afford.

A driving force behind this epidemic among children is diet (Bishop et al, 2005), and of particular importance are the dietary habits they form at school. Less than 5% of kids eat their recommended servings of fruits and vegetables (Krebs-Smith et al, 2010), instead consuming empty calories--often at school (Poti et al, 2013). Children's diets have changed because the food environment (the physical and cultural surroundings that influence what they eat) promotes unhealthy choices----like having vending machines stationed outside school classrooms (USDA, 2010). Low-income kids in particular face barriers to making healthy choices at home, such as limited access to healthy food, fewer opportunities for physical activity, cycles of food deprivation and overeating, higher levels of stress, increased exposure to marketing of obesity-promoting products, and poor health care (Food Research Access Center, 2012). As a result, this vulnerable demographic, identifiable as the 20 million children that qualify for free school lunch, is especially vulnerable to the influence of school food on their weight, health, and lifelong diet: for many, what they eat at school comprises half of their daily calories (Institute of Medicine, 2012).

There is a pronounced need to address diet-related disease at its root: what we feed our children and what we teach them about food in school. FoodCorps, in alignment with the funding priorities of CNCS, recognizes this need and targets its intervention on schools where children face disproportionate risk of obesity. We stand ready to harness the talents of 150 AmeriCorps members to transform those school food environments in ways that increase students' knowledge of, engagement with, and access to healthy food----and we will have a powerful, positive impact on the dietary habits that shape long-term health and opportunity as a result. With this proposal, FoodCorps offers an approach that is directly aligned with CNCS' Healthy Futures priority: to meet pressing community needs for child health in more than 360 schools across 15 states through innovative, data-driven public service.

THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL: FoodCorps' multi-component intervention addresses the causes of childhood obesity, not just its symptoms, and is informed by successful regional AmeriCorps programs in Montana, Wisconsin, and Iowa. The FoodCorps program has been directly endorsed by the Surgeon General's National Prevention Council Action Plan (2012), is aligned with

multiple recommendations from the White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity (2010), and has been profiled in the journal Childhood Obesity. In addition to its direct impact on school food environments, the program has been designed to make a systemic difference through our members: FoodCorps members learn proven strategies to address problems of food and health during their terms of service----and are then launched into lifelong careers for the public good.

FoodCorps' long-term goals are fourfold: 1) to create individual change in children, as demonstrated through our measurement of attitude improvement towards healthy food; 2) to transform school food environments, as measured through our annual assessment of the schools we serve; 3) to position our AmeriCorps members as leaders who make a lasting contribution to food, education and health throughout their careers, as measured by the number of alumni employed in in related fields; and 4) to provide a body of research that helps school officials and other decision-makers understand key levers in improving the school food environment, as measured by publication of findings from our program. To achieve these long-term goals and address childhood obesity, FoodCorps has developed an AmeriCorps program that trains emerging leaders to improve healthy food education and access consistently measurably nationwide----while allowing our intervention to be adapted to the realities of the individual schools and communities we serve.

Central to the implementation of the FoodCorps program are partner organizations that maximize our AmeriCorps members' impact and cost-effectiveness by leveraging, rather than duplicating, pre-existing local efforts and relationships in each place we serve. In collaboration with state "Host Site" partners (e.g. University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension), we select community-based organizations as "Service Sites" (e.g. New Britain Community Health Center) that in turn support and oversee a specific FoodCorps AmeriCorps member or team. Each AmeriCorps member then dedicates his or her 1,700-hour, 11-month term to implementing a nationally aligned, locally adapted service plan that improves the food environments of high-need public schools (typically 2-4 schools per member).

Under the direction of our Service Sites, FoodCorps members provide an intervention designed to transform school food environments by implementing our three evidence-backed program pillars: "knowledge", "engagement" and "access":

KNOWLEDGE: FoodCorps AmeriCorps members teach kids about healthy food through hands-on lessons. Leading institutions such as the California Department of Education advise that in order to begin changing dietary behavior, children receive at least ten hours of nutrition education. Our members use respected third-party curricula to develop lessons that are delivered by teachers and

members during class, after school and over the summer. As part of a connected national network, AmeriCorps members share successful lesson plans and best practices on our online resource exchange, the FoodCorps "Toolshed". They also organize school-wide healthy food promotions and events, which have been shown to increase produce consumption and promote healthy diets (Van Cauwenberghe et al, 2010; Howerton et al, 2007; Dunton et al, 2010; Knai et al, 2006), and provide a connection between the classroom, the cafeteria and external health resources, filling a role for which school administrators do not have the time or expertise to complete. Based on past records, we expect each member to spend an average of 700 hours preparing for and teaching kids about healthy food in the classroom, reaching an average of 800 unduplicated students----children like the 3rd-grader in Michigan who told our service member he "learned not to judge a healthy food by its cover."

ENGAGEMENT: FoodCorps AmeriCorps members build and tend school gardens and engage students, teachers, and families in those gardens as learning tools. There is strong evidence that school gardens increase children's willingness to try and consume produce (Langellotto et al, 2012). Additionally, gardens are far more effective at increasing a child's consumption of fruits and vegetables than stand-alone nutrition lessons (Morgan et al, 2010). Our members also engage students in cooking lessons, providing gateway opportunities for children to turn their school garden produce into healthy meals they take pride in enjoying. As Eva (age 10) told one of our service members, "We get very excited to eat things we usually don't like, like broccoli, spinach, peas, and carrots...we grew it, so we like it a lot more." We expect an average member to spend 600 hours preparing for and teaching kids about healthy food in school gardens, to build and/or revitalizing five gardens and tend approximately 10,000 square feet of healthy greenspace.

ACCESS: FoodCorps AmeriCorps members ensure that their classroom and garden programming pays off with dietary change by bringing healthy local foods into the cafeteria and promoting them when served. Studies have shown that children who first learn about a healthy food, then try a sample of it through a taste test, and then have an opportunity to add a full serving of it to their tray, will be far more likely to choose it (Cooke, 2007). Our members also help Child Nutrition and Food Service Directors incorporate healthy items onto school meal menus at scale, facilitating connections with local farmers who can supply fresh ingredients in abundance. The combined impact of this approach is evidenced in this report from a service member at our Tohono O'odham tribal site in Arizona: "Our lettuce and radish promo at the elementary school was a total success! They ran out of radishes on the salad bar that day, and the K-4 kids loved trying them." We expect each member to spend an average of 300 hours facilitating or promoting healthy food access in the school cafeteria, introducing an

average of 2-3 healthy recipes into full-scale school lunch menus and conducting approximately 10 cafeteria taste tests.

When these activities are combined with school-wide events such as family nights, assemblies, or garden-builds, the likelihood of increased fruit and vegetable intake is even stronger (Perry et al, 2004). Our members combine targeted service to specific classrooms with events that reach the full school and community more broadly, and reinforce larger goals like parental civic engagement and volunteer generation that are essential to sustaining and expanding the changes our members introduce.

FoodCorps' "three pillar" strategy is based on evidence that programs with multiple, mutually reinforcing components have been shown to have a greater impact on children's health than single-component nutrition interventions (Seo et al, 2010). This is true for school food programs in particular: students participating in two or more interventions (in-class lessons, after-school gardening programs, exposure to local food in cafeterias, farmers' visits to schools, taste testing, and field trips to farms) scored significantly higher on fruit and vegetable knowledge and consumption, and lower on preference for unhealthy foods (Evans et al, 2012).

Finally, by ensuring that our members master our "Corps Competencies" (a comprehensive list of training topics geared toward producing school food leaders) and by providing ongoing alumni support and programming, FoodCorps positions its AmeriCorps members to successfully establish careers in food, nutrition, public health and education, often in positions that get created because of the impact achieved by our members: one recent alumna was hired at the end of her term by her Service Site----a tribal organization in Southern Arizona----to redesign the district's food service menus to offer more healthy and culturally appropriate choices. Another was hired for the new role of School Garden Coordinator for Fayetteville, Arkansas. On a direct level, FoodCorps also provides outstanding alumni an opportunity to further their careers by temporarily joining our own staff as a "FoodCorps Fellow," a yearlong post-AmeriCorps team leader role we fill in each state we serve.
EVIDENCE BASE: FoodCorps' evidence-based program model is based on the evaluation results of comparable programs, academic research supporting individual components of our program, and our own preliminary findings from nearly three years of impact- and inquiry-oriented program management.

Research from Comparable Interventions: A quasi-experimental pre/post evaluation conducted by the University of Wisconsin of a similar program operating at nine sites in that state provides strong underpinnings to FoodCorps' evidence base. The Wisconsin program found that AmeriCorps members

were successful in increasing student knowledge, attitudes, and consumption of healthy food (Rowe et al, 2012). It utilized AmeriCorps members to conduct nutrition and garden education and increase and promote healthy options in school lunch. Additionally, the evidence-based studies referenced in the previous section, "Theory of Change and Logic Model," all support the FoodCorps approach. While FoodCorps itself is relatively young, many studies (including randomized control trials) show the efficacy of the individual "knowledge" (nutrition education), "engagement" (gardening and cooking) and "access" (school lunch improvement) components that FoodCorps combines into its model, and on the added value of layering those components on top of each other.

FoodCorps Findings - Student Attitude Survey: FoodCorps conducts an annual pre/post survey to gauge shifts in student attitudes about healthy food choices over the course of 10 hours of garden-enhanced nutrition education. This attitude change is measured using the Fruit and Vegetable Neophobia Instrument, a validated survey that asks students about trying new fruits and vegetables across a variety of scenarios. Students rank their willingness to try items on a four-option scale across 16 questions, with data analyzed by the University of North Carolina. Changing student attitudes about healthy food has become a focus for the nutrition education field in light of recent instances of students rejecting healthier school lunches when introduced (New York Times, 2012). In our first program year, 46.6% of students surveyed demonstrated an improved willingness to try new fruits and vegetables, above our target of 40% (a benchmark of success based on similar programs). These shifts away from neophobia are important: neophobic children consume more saturated fat, less variety, and fewer fruits, vegetables, and protein (Cooke et al, 2006; Galloway et al, 2003), and these dietary patterns persist into adulthood (Pliner et all, 1991).

FoodCorps Findings - School Food Environments: Our AmeriCorps members complete the FoodCorps Landscape Assessment, a tool developed by FoodCorps which measures school food environment change across the three program pillars for each school that they serve. The Landscape Assessment is comprised of 30 indicators that are rated at the beginning and end of each school year in order to assess the change in the school food environment over the member's term. These 30 indicators, taken together, represent the most important components of healthy school food environments, which are critical to creating long-term healthy eating behaviors (Fox et al, 2009). In our analysis of last year's Landscape Assessment results from 222 schools, FoodCorps AmeriCorps members reported overall positive change in the presence of health-related practices in each of these three categories: 1) KNOWLEDGE: 72% of schools reported positive change. For example, 35 FoodCorps schools implemented "harvest of the month" programs, a best practice for connecting the

cafeteria and classroom to seasonal, local produce. 2) ENGAGEMENT: 66% of schools reported positive change. For example, 76 FoodCorps schools built school gardens or revitalized unused gardens for use by school groups. 3) ACCESS: 60% of schools reported positive change. For example, 67 FoodCorps schools established taste-testing programs to regularly expose students to new foods being introduced onto the school menus.

MEMBER TRAINING: In addition to preparing our AmeriCorps members to make and measure the difference they catalyze during their service, we are aiming to train a new generation of leaders in food, education, service and public health. Thus, FoodCorps trainings incorporate practical skill-building with professional development opportunities and guided reflection on public service. Every August, FoodCorps hosts a mandatory weeklong pre-service National Orientation for our AmeriCorps members. At this training, FoodCorps staff facilitate team-building, while external trainers lead workshops in topics such as community engagement, cultural awareness, and volunteer recruitment. Additionally, we recruit experts in nutrition education, school gardening and school food to conduct courses designed specifically for FoodCorps members. The policies and procedures of AmeriCorps and FoodCorps, including prohibited activities, are closely covered in attendance-monitored mandatory sessions. Further, throughout the training we engender a culture that celebrates public service, AmeriCorps identity, and civic action. After orientation, we provide members with a reference manual and ensure our members--and the volunteers they generate--understand AmeriCorps' code of conduct. In the rare instance when members are not onboarded by Orientation, late enrollees are trained by FoodCorps staff and supervisors on all essential elements (including prohibited activities) at the start of their service terms.

In addition to National Orientation, our state-level Host Sites organize weeklong trainings that explore concepts specific to their regions, such as state academic standards and school lunch regulations or successful school garden strategies for their climate. Once embedded with their community-level Service Site, members receive a third orientation from their Service Site Supervisors on topics ranging from school-specific relationships to goal-setting via the member's service plan to daily schedules. Midway through the service term, our AmeriCorps members reconvene in-person for the FoodCorps Mid-Year Gathering, where they forge deeper connections with their fellow members through community service activities like a public garden-building project, receive further training on topics pertinent to their service, and learn about AmeriCorps exit procedures.

Our AmeriCorps members are also provided with ongoing training opportunities throughout their terms. FoodCorps Fellows (our alumni team leaders) facilitate state-level trainings and workshops on

topics like project leadership, classroom management, working with teachers, and building alliances with community partners. Our national staff work with outside experts to offer monthly webinars covering communications, evaluation, and fundraising guidelines in the fall and then advanced concepts related to school food procurement practices, school gardening, nutrition education, and Life after AmeriCorps in the spring. Throughout each member's term of service, intentional reflection through Weekly Reporting and Reflection Logs as well as individual check-ins with supervisors and FoodCorps staff and participation in an all-service member listserv are key components of their ongoing development and support.

MEMBER SUPERVISION: Our AmeriCorps members are supported and guided by three reinforcing levels of supervision and support: FoodCorps national staff, our state Host Site partners, and our community Service Site partners. Individuals at each level of support work together to ensure FoodCorps and AmeriCorps compliance, while providing robust programmatic support for our members based on years of experience in the fields of food, education and service. At the first level, FoodCorps' nine national program staff complete back-end human resource administration (including processing background checks and stipend payments and providing AmeriCorps-branded apparel), orchestrate two in-person national trainings, and provide ongoing overall support.

Our Host Sites (e.g. Oregon Department of Agriculture) provide the second level of supervision. Each Host Site identifies a staff member responsible for managing FoodCorps implementation in their states, monitoring data collection, coordinating Service Sites, and ensuring maximum impact for FoodCorps AmeriCorps members statewide. Each state's FoodCorps Fellow, the AmeriCorps alumni that we embed with our Host Sites as team leaders, also provides support for members by making site visits, developing local training and reflection opportunities, compiling resources for school activities, and providing support for the daily challenges of service. Fellows are supported by a dedicated staff person at the national office who guides them through their responsibilities and ensures that any especially challenging or compliance-related issues they may face are redirected to an appropriate national staff member or site supervisor. Service Sites (e.g. Salem Kaiser Education Foundation), the local organizations that provide the day-to-day supervision of FoodCorps members, are the third level of support. These community organizations guide the specific goals and activities of members, provide weekly check-ins, and sign and certify electronic timesheets. Both Host and Service Sites have been selected by FoodCorps through competitive application processes that evaluate their experience implementing school food programming, their community knowledge, and their ability and desire to oversee service members. Schools are selected by Service Sites based on need and their readiness for

implementing our three-pillared program.

COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION: Pride in public service is at the heart of our program: prospective service members and the public learn about our AmeriCorps affiliation immediately upon visiting our website or meeting one of our corps members in the field. FoodCorps members connect with one another and with other AmeriCorps participants through listservs and by attending state commission-sponsored AmeriCorps gatherings and trainings. We provide our members with uniforms displaying the AmeriCorps logo, posters identifying sites as AmeriCorps locations ("AmeriCorps serves here"), business cards featuring members' AmeriCorps affiliation, and AmeriCorps logos for websites, newsletters, and press materials produced by our state and community partners. We coach members on how to introduce themselves, recognizing AmeriCorps and their Host and Service Sites, as well as how to coach the public and the members of the press who seek to showcase the accomplishments of FoodCorps. We also require all members to participate in National Days of Service and organize annual MLK, Jr. Day "Sunday Suppers" in partnership with Points of Light. As a highly visible, fast-growing national AmeriCorps program, we take our stewardship of the national service story seriously--and celebrate it joyfully.

Organizational Capability

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING: FoodCorps was founded with the express goal of creating a service-based solution to childhood obesity. Our journey began in 2009 with an AmeriCorps planning grant from CNCS and anchor private support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The ensuing 18-month planning process engaged more than 3,000 stakeholders who helped design today's FoodCorps. We now have 22 full-time national staff, 15 post-service fellows, 125 AmeriCorps members, and a network of 108 Host and Service Sites that implement our program across the 15 states where we operate today. FoodCorps is presently a National Direct grantee with 60 service members supported by that grant in eight states (Arkansas, Arizona, California, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Oregon). We also oversee an Education Award Program (EAP) grant from AmeriCorps, through which we have placed 15 service members in Michigan and New Jersey, utilizing dedicated support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and piloting the "agency corps" model that has proved successful for CNCS with other federal partners. We are currently also administering grants from service commissions in Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, Mississippi, and Montana. Please note that we have consulted the service commission in each state we serve as part of this National Direct proposal.

FoodCorps Co-Founder Cecily Upton leads the centerpiece of our work as the VP of Programs. She

manages FoodCorps' AmeriCorps program nationwide, and her responsibilities include ensuring compliance and accountability; supervising performance measurement; overseeing trainings of our organizational partners and service members; directing processes for all FoodCorps AmeriCorps members; contributing to and implementing the long-term strategy of program development; and managing Programs department staff. FoodCorps' eight other Programs staff dedicate their time to the FoodCorps service members and fellows in the fifteen states in which we operate, spearheading recruitment, training, support, human resources, and site management. VP of Finance and Operations Lauren Burnham, who earned her MPA in nonprofit accounting from New York University, prepares financial reports for FoodCorps, with additional review by the COO and CEO. All staff are given a thorough introduction to AmeriCorps rules and regulations, as well as guidance on where to find information regarding AmeriCorps program administration through the statute, FAQs, and grant contacts such as program officers. FoodCorps invests in staff participation in AmeriCorps trainings, such as the annual AmeriCorps Grantee Symposium, as well as other opportunities provided by our state commission partners. A ten-member Board of Directors oversees FoodCorps' long-term strategy and is comprised of national leaders dedicated to scalable, high-impact social change, including: Jenny Shilling Stein (founder of the Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation), Dr. Oran Hesterman (formerly with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and current President and CEO of the Fair Food Network), and Neil Hamilton, Esq. (Director of the Agricultural Law Center at Drake University).

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: FoodCorps' mutually reinforcing tiers of support at the local, state, and national levels help ensure compliance and accountability amongst our AmeriCorps members. They are introduced to FoodCorps and AmeriCorps requirements, such as prohibited activities, immediately in their service contracts, and again at our pre-service National Orientation, where they are required to attend workshops focused on AmeriCorps requirements and prohibited activities. These lessons are then reinforced at their state and local orientations, and we follow up with members via specific Reporting and Reflection Log questions to ensure they understand the rules. We also provide our members with reference manuals and conduct webinars focused on addressing questions associated with allowable fundraising and AmeriCorps-appropriate communications during the service term.

Through prevention, detection, and enforcement, FoodCorps ensures compliance amongst our partners as well: national staff work with Host Sites who work in turn with their state's Service Sites. Prior to the start of each term, responsibilities of these three tiers of oversight are outlined through

mutually signed MOUs between FoodCorps and Host Sites and between Host Sites and Service Sites. Annually, FoodCorps hosts an in-person Host Site Gathering, where new program administration topics are covered in depth. Host Sites then facilitate a mandatory orientation for all Service Site Supervisors at the start of each program year, with support from FoodCorps staff. The Service Site orientations include AmeriCorps prohibited activities, performance measurement, time tracking, service plans, performance reviews, reporting, rules of conduct, and communications guidelines. All Host Site and Service Site Supervisors are provided with a comprehensive supervision handbook that has been circulated as a model for other AmeriCorps programs by our AmeriCorps Program Officer.

National program staff conduct annual site monitoring visits guided by our AmeriCorps-approved monitoring tool and informed by annual progress reports required of all Host and Service Sites. The monitoring tool and progress report, combined with timesheet check-ups, desk audits, and conference calls all contribute to an annual risk assessment that FoodCorps completes for each Host Site. If specific areas of concern are identified, a plan for is determined, communicated, documented, and followed-up on. We have also developed management systems to address compliance issues should they arise with service members: we have established robust timesheet monitoring practices followed by both the Service Site Supervisor and fellow; we have implemented a "three strikes" policy of escalating corrective actions based on repeat infractions that culminates in dismissal (or that can be fast-forwarded through in the case of serious violations); we train on rules of conduct and prohibited activities at all of our three coordinated levels of oversight; and we have developed a Service Program Systems Manual to ensure that new staff are trained on the proper procedures for administering AmeriCorps programs with the high level of diligence we demand.

PAST PERFORMANCE: In FoodCorps' first two years of programming, our AmeriCorps members' extraordinary efforts led to some significant accomplishments. Serving in a brand new program, they demonstrated the FoodCorps model works--better than we expected for two key measures--and built the foundation for one of our most significant overall measures of success: healthy school food environments.

In 2011-12, our inaugural class of 50 FoodCorps members (all National Direct MSY) reached a total of 51,542 children with hands-on lessons on healthy eating, above our target of 50,000 children. At least 6,511 of these kids each received 10 hours or more hours of nutrition education, about half of our target of 12,000 children. (The variance was offset by an increase in number of total students reached). Of these 6,511 children, 3,034 demonstrated an increased willingness to try new fruits and vegetables, less than our target of 4,800 kids. In 2012-13, FoodCorps' 80 service members (60

Narratives

National Direct MSY and 20 state commission MSY) reached 67,584 children--above our target of 52,000 children--5,529 of which received 10 or more hours of nutrition education, below our target of 8,000. Of these 5,529 children, 3,317 demonstrated an improvement in their attitude toward trying new fruits and vegetables, above our target of 3,200. In both years, FoodCorps members reported reaching far more unduplicated children than expected, reflecting an unanticipated reality in the field that breadth, rather than depth, is an important first step in engaging new schools in the kind of programming FoodCorps offers. The reach of this start-up phase enabled us to build trust, foster teacher interest, and build rapport with school staff through school-wide activities that have paved the way for us to now "go deeper" with those same schools.

Though members reported fewer students than expected receiving 10 or more hours of nutrition education, we believe the actual number was higher than the impact logs reflect. The process for tracking ongoing classes is burdensome, and a number of members have reported that they do not track all their ongoing classes as a result. We have made plans to streamline our tracking process and train members on the importance of logging all ongoing classes they reach to address this issue.

Of those children receiving 10 hours of garden-enhanced nutrition education, far more than previous research led us to expect (40%) demonstrated an improved willingness to try new fruits and vegetables (46% and 60% in years one and two, respectively). When our AmeriCorps members spend at least 10 hours of nutrition education with a child, it has the intended effect. Accordingly, our goal is to offer 10 or more hours of FoodCorps education to an increasing number of children (both in total and for each service member) as our program becomes established. Though not included as a formal Performance Measure, FoodCorps has exceeded our targets for improving the food environments at the schools our members serve (255 schools in 2012-2013, above our target of 200).

In three years of programming we have not experienced any compliance issues. We have enjoyed 100% enrollment and 97.3% member retention to date (across National Direct, EAP, and state commission grants) and consistently field applications from approximately 1,000 candidates each year. Though already high, FoodCorps has taken additional steps to improve our retention rate, including: providing an anonymous Employee Assistance Program to all members; and hiring a Programs Human Resources Coordinator.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: FoodCorps prides itself on being a "learning organization". As such, we are always looking for ways to improve our program using data, structured analysis, and reflection. Our members fill out Weekly Reporting and Reflection Logs that are reviewed by national staff and compiled into monthly reports that we use to identify trends that help us better our program

model. At our Mid-Year Gathering, FoodCorps staff host "Build a Better FoodCorps" sessions with members, seeking input on how we can improve their member experience. FoodCorps national staff also facilitate feedback from our partners through annual progress reports and site visits, as well as monthly conference calls and annual in-person meetings.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

COST EFFECTIVENESS: FoodCorps expects to place our 150 AmeriCorps members in limited-resource schools in the following locations: Arizona (8), California (14), Connecticut (12), Georgia (12), Hawai'i (10), Iowa (8), Maine (10), Massachusetts (12), Mississippi (10), Montana (10), New Mexico (10), North Carolina (10), Oregon (10), and Washington, DC (12). (We are also seeking support for an EAP grant for 25 full-time positions in Arkansas, Michigan and New Jersey). With this National Direct proposal for 150 service members, we seek to moderately grow and consolidate the bulk of our service team through one national award, as opposed to accommodating the significant demand for our program by administering multiple awards through multiple state commissions (currently Connecticut, Hawai'i, Maine, Montana, and Mississippi). This consolidation will maximize efficiencies of administration and cost for both FoodCorps and CNCS, and holds the best opportunity to deliver consistent member experience and high-impact public service.

The CNCS cost per MSY is $10,400, or $1,560,000 for a full-time service team of 150. (For a full accounting of costs per MSY please see "Budget Adequacy.") As the CNCS share represents 34% of the budget needed to support these members, each FoodCorps AmeriCorps member is highly leveraged with private funding.

These expenditures represent an investment that is producing big returns. Last year, our 80 AmeriCorps members taught nearly 24,000 activities about healthy eating to over 67,500 kids, representing an overall cost of $59 per child reached. They engaged kids and families in growing food, and built or revitalized 411 gardens totaling almost 370,000 square feet of green space. They harvested nearly 30,000 pounds of produce from these gardens, much of which went into 882 cafeteria tasting events held by members to get kids more excited about healthy options offered in school lunch.

Additionally, an integral part of our members' service is to recruit and train droves of community volunteers, ensuring that projects built are sustained and that our investment is mirrored by the community's. Each member is expected to recruit and support a minimum of 30 volunteers. Last year, our 80 members recruited 3,289 total volunteers that dedicated 19,182 hours toward helping kids grow up healthy. Based on CNCS' and Independent Sector's established volunteer rate of $22.14/hour

(2012), our members recruited $424,689 worth of volunteer effort. And we know these immediate efforts will pay off: every $1 spent on nutrition education saves as much as $10 in long-term healthcare costs (Public Health Institute, 2013).

FoodCorps has a history of successfully raising funding to complement our CNCS funds. We are in the process of developing a sustainable revenue model similar to those used by other large organizations in the national service field. For example, we focus our efforts on partners willing to invest in FoodCorps over the long-term: returning funders and those with multi-year commitments finance a significant portion of FoodCorps' FY2014 budget--about 85%.

BUDGET ADEQUACY: FoodCorps' FY2015 budget for 150 AmeriCorps members is projected to be $4,561,800, including $1,560,000 from CNCS to be matched with $3,001,800 in private funding. This covers each member's living allowance ($17,500), health insurance and other benefits ($3,368), travel, lodging, and programming for two in-person national trainings ($5,406), and background check ($80). The remaining portion of the budget ($4,364 per MSY) covers FoodCorps' program staff salaries, office rental and equipment, travel (including site visits) and evaluation costs. It also includes support for the FoodCorps fellows program, which places a staff member in each state we serve. All budget allocations have proven sufficient for members and for national staff to operate an efficient, compliant, and analytical program, and we maintain a conservative supply of cash on hand to cope with unforeseen expenses. In addition to funding, we rely on in-kind support from our Host and Service Site partners: in overseeing our AmeriCorps members they dedicate significant amounts of time, energy, and office space and equipment.

Non-CNCS funding for the proposed 150 FoodCorps service members comes primarily from Service Site cost shares ($5,000 per member x 150 = $750,000), individuals, corporate partners and private foundations ($2,251,800). Of the total funding we need to raise in conjunction with this National Direct proposal, FoodCorps has committed or expected-to-renew funding totaling $2,800,000 out of the $3,001,800 in non-CNCS funding necessary to support our service team. We have already secured commitments for $1,500,000 ($750,000 in costs shares and $750,000 in foundation grants via an anonymous donor ($350,000), New Profit, Inc. ($250,000), the Rosenthal Family Foundation ($100,000), and the Claneil Foundation ($50,000). We are also currently in the process of renewing individual and private foundation grants totaling $1,300,000 ($1,000,000 from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, $150,000 from the Aetna Foundation, and $150,000 from Whole Kids Foundation). Additional funding will be secured utilizing a strategy that we have found successful: identifying private funders engaged in education, public health, the environment, and food, and

securing multi-year commitments from them. Consistent with years past, we expect to complete fundraising for FY2015 by August 1, 2014.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

FoodCorps -- Evaluation Plan

Description of Intervention

FoodCorps' multi-component intervention addresses the causes of childhood obesity, not just its symptoms. The FoodCorps program has been directly endorsed by the Surgeon General's National Prevention Council Action Plan and is aligned with multiple recommendations from the White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity. In addition, the program is designed so that AmeriCorps members learn proven strategies to address problems of food and health during their terms of service----and are then launched into lifelong careers for the public good. Through the public service experience AmeriCorps provides and through the deliberate skill and leadership development opportunities woven throughout the FoodCorps program, FoodCorps AmeriCorps members will be poised to inform decision makers around strong data and best practices that supports child health and healthy schools well beyond their service terms. The following section is a description of FoodCorps' theory of change, which is also reflected in the Logic Model Worksheet submitted with our application.

Goals and Outcomes

FoodCorps' long-term goals and desired outcomes, as reflected in our logic model and theory of change, are fourfold:

1) Fostering Healthy Children: Children adopt lifelong healthy eating behaviors and have improved health outcomes

2) Creating Healthy School Food Environments: Schools become healthier places to learn, play, work, and grow

3) Creating Systems Change through Leadership Development: The food systems field and related fields are seeded with leaders at every level who advocate for sustaining the change they created at FoodCorps

4) Creating Systems Change through School Food Policy: FoodCorps builds the evidence base that decision-makers and school officials use to develop systems that support child health nationwide

Narratives

Theory of Change

To achieve these long-term goals and address childhood obesity, FoodCorps has designed a program to bring about near-term outcomes in children's knowledge, attitudes and behaviors around healthy food, while increasing their access to it through the meals and snacks they consume at school. Central to the implementation of the FoodCorps program are partner organizations that maximize our AmeriCorps members' impact and cost-effectiveness by leveraging, rather than duplicating, pre-existing local efforts and relationships within the communities we serve. In collaboration with state-level Host Site partners (e.g. University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension), we select community-based organizations as Service Sites (e.g. New Britain Community Health Center) that in turn support and oversee a specific AmeriCorps member or AmeriCorps team. Each FoodCorps AmeriCorps member then dedicates his or her 1,700-hour, 11-month term to implementing a nationally aligned, locally adapted service plan that improves the food environments of high-need public schools (typically 2-4 schools per member).

Under the direction of our Service Sites, FoodCorps members provide an intervention designed to holistically transform the school food environment through our "three pillars" of knowledge, engagement and access:

KNOWLEDGE: FoodCorps AmeriCorps members teach kids about healthy food through hands-on lessons. Leading institutions such as the California Department of Education advise that, in order to change dietary behavior, children receive at least ten hours of nutrition education. Our members use respected third-party curricula to develop lessons that are delivered by teachers and members during class, after school and over the summer. They also organize school-wide promotions and events, which have been shown to increase produce consumption and promote healthy diets, and provide a connection between the classroom, the cafeteria and health-related organizations (Van Cauwenberghe et al, 2010; Howerton et al, 2007; Dunton et al, 2010; Knai et al, 2006). Based on past records, we expect each member to spend an average of 700 hours preparing for and teaching kids about healthy food in the classroom, reaching an average of 800 unduplicated students.

ENGAGEMENT: FoodCorps AmeriCorps members build and tend school gardens and engage students, teachers, and families in those gardens as learning tools.

Narratives

ACCESS: FoodCorps AmeriCorps members reinforce their classroom and garden programming by bringing healthy local food into the cafeteria and promoting it through events like taste tests.

2. Evaluation Design

Research Questions

The primary research questions cover two related facets of FoodCorps' theory of change:

I. Do students who participate in the FoodCorps program consume more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; fewer saturated fats; and a greater overall variety of foods at school than students from schools that do not participate in the FoodCorps program?

II. Does the extent of program implementation across the school environment play a role in student food consumption?

Research Design

The FoodCorps lunchroom consumption impact evaluation will be a quasi-experimental study with a nonequivalent control group design that looks at the impact of participation in the FoodCorps program (quasi-independent variable) on the consumption of healthy food during school lunch (dependent variable). The unit of study will be schools participating in the FoodCorps program, with schools that do not have the FoodCorps program as a control. Intervention schools will be selected for having a robust implementation of all three pillars of FoodCorps programming. To control for variability in cafeteria offerings, matched control schools will be selected from within same school districts as their FoodCorps counterpart schools. The criteria for and number of matched school pairs will be determined in partnership with the external evaluator that we will bring on board for the project. This design presents itself as the strongest, but most practical option; because FoodCorps Service Sites partner with schools as a whole for a variety of reasons, random assignment of students, classrooms, or schools to the programming makes for a less plausible program design. With the guidance of our external evaluation team, we will determine whether food consumption data should be gleaned from entire population of students eating lunch on study days, or whether it should be assessed based on a random sampling of students in the intervention and control school cafeterias, and will also work to control for the other limitations of this quasi-experimental design.

3. Data Collection

Narratives

Data collection will happen at each site using two methods, to be further refined or selected in partnership with the external evaluation team.

I. Food Consumption: Plate waste analysis using visual estimation techniques (specific visual estimation approach and technology to be determined, in part, by external evaluator expertise). Using digital photography of lunch trays, researchers are able to capture before and after photographs of student lunch trays, and use trained research assistants or photo analysis technology to assess the types of foods consumed. Visual estimation methods are a preferred plate waste study technique, as dietary recall surveys with children suffer from low accuracy, and weighted food methods (physical measurement of each individual item left on lunch trays) is resource-intensive and obtrusive, such that students may modify their behavior in the presence of this method (Buzby and Guthrie, ERS, 2002).

II. School Food Environment and Program Implementation: Environmental assessment using the FoodCorps Landscape Assessment, a rubric that rates a school environment across 30 features that contribute to creating a healthy environment, conducted by team of key stakeholders at each school in partnership with the evaluators. The assessment also tracks the key changes at each school over time made as a part of FoodCorps AmeriCorps members' service terms. This tool was developed internally at FoodCorps, and we will be working with partners in the field to validate the tool and process by which it is used over the next seven months.

4. External Evaluation

Identifying External Evaluators

To further develop the study design, FoodCorps will enlist an external evaluation team identified through a request for proposals (RFP) process announced in winter 2014. The RFP will be shared with the American Evaluation Association network, the USDA Farm to School Team evaluation contacts, and through the FoodCorps networks. An evaluator or evaluation team will be selected based on key criteria that include:

* Experience conducting multiple successful school-based food consumption studies (plate waste studies) utilizing control schools
* Expertise in food environment analysis
* Experience conducting multi-site evaluations
* Capacity to manage data collection across all sites, including ability to travel where necessary and to

inform and train Service Site supervisors, school staff, and FoodCorps AmeriCorps members who will be involved as a study sites

* Expertise in nutritional analysis and plate waste methods as well as environmental analysis

* Ability to obtain and manage Institutional Review Board approval for all study sites

Timeline and Budget

This study will unfold according to the following two-year timeline:

* February 2014: Release RFP for external evaluators

* April 2014: External evaluators identified

* May-August 2014: Planning and design with external evaluation team

* September 2014-June 2015: Data collection

* July 2015-February 2016: Data analysis and final report

* March 2016 onward: Evaluation findings reviewed and distributed

The budget estimate for this project is $90,000-$120,000, with funding coming from FoodCorps' existing budget as well as a proposal currently under consideration by a private foundation interested in the topic.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

2014-2015 PROGRAM YEAR CLARIFICATION:

Application Info: We have updated the Program Start to 8/1/2014 and Program End to 7/31/2015. We will start enrolling members on 9/1/2014 to serve an 11-month term.

Budget: We have updated the Budget Section 2 to reflect 126 MSY at a total of $1,310,400 ($10,400/MSY).

Operating Sites: We have updated the Operating Sites to reflect placements in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, and Washington, D.C.

Narratives

Program Need Justification:
(We have omitted justification of need for Hawai'i as we have removed that state from the list of Operating Sites).

There are geographic patterns--based on socioeconomic status and race--to the severity of childhood obesity that inform where FoodCorps focuses its efforts. States across the South suffer from childhood obesity at disproportionately high rates. In Georgia, an estimated 35% of kids in the state are overweight or obese; and the rate of overweight and obesity rises to 50.1% for kids living at or below the poverty level (Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health, 2012), the same kids that make up the majority of the 1.25 million Georgia children who receive free school lunch (USDA, 2013). Similarly, an estimated 43% and 46% of Hispanic and black children, respectively, are overweight or obese in Georgia, whereas only 23% of white children suffer from the disease (Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health, 2012).

Similarly, North Carolina has the 5th-highest rate of childhood obesity in the United States, with 34% of 10-17 year-olds considered obese or overweight. Of these youth, 30% of White children are overweight or obese, whereas 40% of African Americans and 48% of Other Minorities are overweight or obese (NC DPH, 2009).

In Washington, DC, neighborhood plays an important role when it comes to a child¿s health. Thirty-five percent of kids in the District are overweight or obese (CDC, 2012); yet in Ward 8, where FoodCorps expects to place the majority of our service members, and which is 94% African-American with about a third of the residents live in poverty (Neighborhood Info DC, 2013), 42% of children are overweight or obese, nearly four times the rate as the more affluent Ward 3 (Government of the District of Columbia, 2010).

In the West, where states typically enjoy lower overall rates of obesity, health disparities can be particularly acute. In Oakland, California, the childhood overweight and obesity rate is 34%, while just across the bay in Marin County only 24% of children are affected (UCLA, 2011). In New Mexico, American Indian kindergarteners suffer obesity at three times the rate of non-Hispanic Whites (NM DH, 2010). This void in health equity is reflected in a troubling statistic: the prevalence of type 2

diabetes increased by 46% for Native American children, adolescents and young adults, and by 14% for the U.S. population as a whole between 1990 and 1998 (Am. Journal of Public Health, 2002). In Oregon, children living in rural communities are twice as likely to be overweight as their counterparts in healthy Portland (OR DHS, 2007). FoodCorps concentrates our service member placements in these often overlooked communities.

Program Changes:
Based on the fact that FoodCorps is now under consideration for 126 full-time slots and a $10,400 cost per MSY, we would like to propose some changes to the allocation of our slots. These changes will allow us to maximize reach and impact, leverage significant private funding, and strengthen the relationships we have formed between CNCS, FoodCorps, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

We would like to maintain support we currently receive through State Service Commission Formula funding, and for which we have or will submit Continuation requests: in Hawai'i (8 MSY), Maine (10 MSY), and Montana (10 MSY). This is in addition to the Competitive Continuation funding we have been clarified on in Mississippi (10 MSY) and Connecticut (15 MSY). In lieu of using National Direct support for programming in these states, we would like to re-direct that support to Arkansas, Michigan and New Jersey--which are currently allocated under an EAP Continuation grant we are pursuing. If this is permissible at the funding levels described in the Continuation notice for our National Direct, we will withdraw our Continuation request for 25 EAP slots previously proposed for Arkansas, Michigan, and New Jersey.

Under this scenario, FoodCorps will be able to grow our service force significantly next year, collectively placing 179 MSY across 16 states and the District of Columbia beginning September 1, 2014. Each service member we place in the field will be there as a result of financial support from AmeriCorps, highly leveraged private investment, and community buy-in.

This reallocation would allow us to replace 25 EAP slots with support from this National Direct grant, a shift in support that will increase the number of service members we can place in the field to the highest level we are confident we can maintain effectively and sustainably at current financial capacity. Simply put, the leverage we are able to offer private donors in instances where AmeriCorps is making a substantial co-investment significantly increases our ability to secure private funding for

national service and for the work of FoodCorps in particular.

This shift in grant allocation also has an immediate impact on the financial viability of achieving this important growth for FoodCorps and our beneficiaries. It means that CNCS funding for 26 FoodCorps National Direct service members will receive a cross-agency co-investment via funds we have secured from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (at $12,500 per MSY). We are excited to have the opportunity to set a strong precedent for CNCS' "Agency Corps" model with USDA and to be able to leverage these federal commitments for impressive levels of private support and impact.

Performance Measures: Performance Measure targets have been updated and the total number of classes has been included. To supplement our explanation of our sampling process described in the Performance Measures section ("Due to the time- and cost-prohibitive nature of administering surveys to all students served, we will assess program outcomes using one sample class (3rd grade or above) per service member, selected through a stratified random sampling in order to avoid selection bias."): Collecting pre/post survey data for the entire population of 10,000 students anticipated to receive the intervention would be cost- and time-prohibitive for the following reasons: (1) FoodCorps must service members must seek permission to conduct the survey from school administrators at each school where the classes take place, (2) printing, tracking, collecting, cleaning, and analyzing survey data for 10,000 students requires significantly more staff time and contracted time through our university evaluation partnership than managing this data for a valid sample of the population.

Health Insurance Clarification Items:
(1) Please provide the name of the health insurance provider you use to insure your AmeriCorps members.

The Corps Network

(2) How did you select the provider? (for example, direct marketing, through the Health Insurance Marketplace or other means)

The Corps Network provides a cost-effective health insurance package that meets the requirements detailed in previous AmeriCorps grant provisions. We have used The Corps Network since plan year

2012.

(3) If you did not go through the Health Insurance Marketplace, what factors did you consider in making your decision?

As of January 1, 2014, our service members were already enrolled in The Corps Network. We have been using The Corps Network for three years, and are very happy with the quality of health coverage provided to our service members. The Corps Network currently offers AmeriCorps compliant coverage. If we were to direct each of our current 125 service members (funded through CNCS and State Commissions) to the Health Insurance Marketplace, we would potentially be processing 125 individual reimbursements on a monthly basis, which from an administrative perspective would be an incredible and unreasonable burden to our staff. The Corps Network is currently researching options to ensure that by September 2014, the coverage they offer will not only be AmeriCorps compliant, but will meet the Minimum Essential Coverage provisions of the ACA.

(4) What percentage of your full-time members have insurance through another means (for example, through a parent's or spouse's plan)?

51 of 125 service members have coverage through other means: 41%.

(5) 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?

The Corps Network has estimated that to be ACA compliant, there could be a potential increase of 20% to 25% in rates.

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

FoodCorps budgeted an 18% increase (we currently pay $152 per month per service member and I estimated $180) for the upcoming program year. To accommodate the 25% increase we'd need to increase the cost per service member per month by $10, to $190.

Narratives

2014-2015 PROGRAM YEAR CLARIFICATION, PART 2:

1) Please describe the identified need for the program in the added sites in Arkansas, Michigan and New Jersey.

FoodCorps focuses its efforts in limited-resource communities that are most at risk of suffering from high rates of childhood obesity.

In Arkansas, multiple generations suffer from overall high rates of obesity, perhaps because children with obese parents are at double the risk of becoming obese adults (NEJM, 1997). The state has the third highest rate of adult obesity in the nation (34.5%) and is the only one in America where rates of obesity are still climbing (RWJF, 2011). Meanwhile 21% of public school students suffer from obesity (Arkansas Center for Health Improvement, 2012), the sixth highest rate in the nation.

In Michigan, legacies of segregation and inequity still influence a child's health outcomes: a child growing up in predominantly African American Detroit (18.5%) is nearly twice as likely to be obese as a child in the more affluent, white suburbs (11.2%; MDCH, 2007).

In New Jersey, a state where farmers grow more than 100 different kinds of fruits and vegetables (NJDA, 2014), residents of Camden lack access to healthy food, without any full-service supermarkets in the city (Medical Daily, 2013). Growing up in a food desert, 24% of Camden youth are obese, well above the statewide average of 10% (Rutgers, 2010).

2) Please explain the proposed increase in member slots to the sites in California and Iowa from the originally requested and clarification levels.

In collaboration with our Host Site partners we have evaluated potential sites in California and Iowa for need, readiness, and opportunity for impact, and believe both states would benefit greatly from an additional service member. In California, where one in seven Americans live, FoodCorps and our Host Site partners Life Lab and the Community Alliance with Family Farmers have implemented a successful first year of programming. Significantly, we have formed a strong relationship with the

Narratives

Oakland Unified School District. With nearly 50,000 students enrolled (CDE, 2012), demand for FoodCorps' three-pillared program (Knowledge, Engagement, Access) has grown at a rate faster than we expected, and with strong champions within Oakland's schools and central commissary, increasing our service presence there is an opportunity we hope to seize.

Similarly, in Iowa, our service members and Host Site partner the National Center for Appropriate Technology have developed a strong bond with Des Moines Public Schools, Iowa's largest school district with over 32,000 students enrolled, 69% of whom qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (DMPS, 2014). New commitments from DMPS, combined with the district's diversified schooling approach (including career and technical schools and year-round schools), have assured us of the benefits that an additional service member would provide.

3) The continuation EAP program in Arkansas, Michigan and New Jersey has 25 slots at a cost per MSY of $750. Please justify a new request of 28 slots between these three states and a substantially higher cost per MSY of $10,400.

The request to allocate 28 slots in Arkansas, Michigan and New Jersey is crucial for two primary, linked reasons: the first is strategic, the second is financial. Before explaining these, we would like to note that FoodCorps was unaware that the request to reallocate some of the 126 MSY award to states previously included in our EAP program would be viewed as an increase in cost per MSY, due to the fact that the EAP and our National Direct are two separate grant awards on two separate time tables.

Strategically, the positions in our EAP program that we would like to reallocate to our National Direct are currently funded through a multi-year partnership with the USDA. We are set to receive $350,000 in support from the USDA in FY2015, building on the $150,000 we received in FY2014 and a longstanding evaluation and training partnership with the Food and Nutrition Services' Farm to School Team. FoodCorps built this relationship to mimic the "Agency Corps" approach important to the future of CNCS. Currently, the funding that USDA provides would allow us to support 25 AmeriCorps members in poverty persistent communities in Arkansas, Michigan, and New Jersey through our EAP. By reallocating these slots to our National Direct and enhancing the funding to support them, FoodCorps will be able to distribute our USDA funding across more AmeriCorps members in states beyond Arkansas, Michigan, and New Jersey, thereby strengthening the "Agency

Corps" approach and laying the foundation for the newly-authorized Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program in the most recent farm bill, championed by FoodCorps. Of particular interest to USDA are our positions in rural, poverty persistent USDA-identified "Strikeforce" counties in Georgia, Arizona, and New Mexico, in addition to our positions in Arkansas, Michigan, and New Jersey.

We serve in limited-resource communities, those most affected by childhood obesity. Communities in Arkansas, Michigan, and New Jersey, in particular, are afflicted by long-term negative socioeconomic trends such as rural outmigration, declining farm and manufacturing jobs, concentrated urban poverty, and segregation. We serve elementary and high school students in Marshall, Arkansas through our partnership with Searcy County, a rural area in northwest Arkansas designated as a Persistent Poverty County by USDA. And Flint and Detroit, Michigan--formerly prosperous cities hollowed out by the disappearance of the automotive industry, and where FoodCorps has placed four service members--suffer from the highest rates of violent crime in the country (FBI, 2013). Newark, New Jersey, where FoodCorps has partnered with Philips Academy Charter School to place one AmeriCorps member, has suffered a similar fate: White Flight and industrial decline has left nearly a third of the city living in poverty (Newark Patch, 2012). These troubling statistics highlight why we serve in these communities. However, they also signify something else that is critical to this request: why fundraising for the entire cost of an AmeriCorps slot is especially difficult in communities lacking basic resources. This difficulty required us to concentrate the valuable public funding from USDA in these areas. (In contrast, raising money for positions in California, for example, is less difficult because of nearby wealth centers in which FoodCorps has strong fundraising networks.) As of now, we have not been able to secure any private funding to support these positions in particular, necessitating the use of our limited general funds to ensure we serve the communities most affected by ill-health in these states.

Should we receive additional support from CNCS for positions in Arkansas, Michigan, and New Jersey, FoodCorps would be able to distribute our USDA funding across more positions, increasing the number of slots where USDA and CNCS both provide support for FoodCorps AmeriCorps members. This will also allow us to reach more children and schools in USDA priority areas: our 125 corps members currently serve 421 schools in 15 states (297 of which are designated Title I schools). Fifty of these schools--nearly 1 in 8--are located in USDA-designated Strikeforce Counties and 12 are in Persistent Poverty Counties (Navajo County, AZ; Searcy County, AR; Forrest, Leflore and Winston

Counties, MS; Dona Ana County, NM). As we grow to reach more of these priority areas, many of which are in Georgia where FoodCorps will begin serving next year, we will strengthen our partnership with USDA and position FoodCorps and CNCS to be long-term partners at a scale that can truly have an impact on childhood obesity in this country.

This reallocation would not cost CNCS any more (in fact less, as we currently receive $750/MSY through our EAP which we would no longer request), but the opportunity to market the enhanced partnership between AmeriCorps and the USDA via the FoodCorps program would increase dramatically.

Should CNCS still feel that the perceived increase in cost per MSY for these positions in not justified, we request the opportunity to revert to our original, pre-Clarification allocation of service members through this proposed National Direct grant (with the removal of Connecticut and Mississippi). In this scenario, fundraising for our EAP positions would remain difficult, the partnership with USDA might stagnate, and FoodCorps would need to consider the long-term viability of EAP-only support in our poverty persistent and rural locations. However, if absolutely necessary, the original allocation of slots is preferable to a middle ground that doesn't allow for strategic growth.

JUNE 20, 2014 CLARIFICATION

FoodCorps will be reallocating service members originally slated to serve Massachusetts (12 MSY) to serve in Maine. Maine has a child food insecurity rate of 24.6% (Feeding America, 2011), which is first in New England. Many of the counties where FoodCorps will serve rank even higher: Androscoggin County, 26.5%, Oxford County, 27.7%, and Washington County, 31.6%. In addition to the statistics above, staggering food insecurity in Maine can be measured through resources like the USDA's Food Atlas, which illustrates the prevalence of food deserts (defined as areas where low-income residents have to travel more than one mile [urban] or ten miles [rural] to access a grocery store). Food Atlas data depicts our service site communities as having limited farmer's markets or direct farm to consumer opportunities, as well as transportation challenges to grocery stores that may or may not have fresh or affordable local food. For example, in all of Somerset County (pop. 52,228), there are just 14 grocery stores (there are 37 fast food restaurants, by comparison).

Narratives

To add to this picture of poverty and food insecurity, the overweight and obesity rates in Maine reach as high as 38%. The 2007 Kids Count data identified 28% of Maine youth aged 10-17 as overweight or obese, with high school students averaging 25%. Quoted obesity rates are general, meaning health concerns are likely even more severe in the low-income schools where our partners work. In Maine, adult obesity levels reach 25.8 % ("F as in Fat," RWJF, 2010). The "Fat" 2010 report found distressing racial and ethnic disparities in the state, with the adult obesity rate climbing to 37.2% among Blacks compared to 25.9% among Whites, suggesting similar dynamics with obesity rates among children.

This reallocation will not affect performance measure targets or budget allocations.

Continuation Changes

Grant Characteristics