

Narratives

Executive Summary

The University of Northern Iowa proposes to have 35 AmeriCorps members who will provide residential energy efficiency services, environmental education and community outreach in Black Hawk, Dubuque, Jefferson, Jones, Linn, Polk and Winneshiek counties. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for providing 907 energy audits, weatherization of 615 homes and 300 energy education programs completed for 4,200 participants. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 1,000 volunteers who will be engaged in community projects to support environmental stewardship and energy efficiency services. This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Environmental Stewardship. The CNCS investment of \$393,631 will be matched with \$440,508 in local funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

1. PROBLEM/NEED

Residential energy costs in Iowa's severe winters are significant, especially for people with low income. Energy costs are a major hardship for low-income families. According to the 2013 Home Energy Affordability Gap Study, Iowa households with incomes below 50% of the Federal Poverty Level pay 30% of their annual income towards home energy bills; a total of 64,292 homes in 2013. The gap in dollars between what individuals can afford on energy bills and what they are actually paying has increased 173% over the last 10 years. (Source: The Home Energy Affordability Gap study, conducted in 2003 by Fisher, Sheehan & Colton, introduced a model that calculated the dollar amount by which "actual" home energy bills exceeded "affordable" home energy bills on a county-by-county basis for the entire country. This is the "home energy affordability gap" or "Gap Study.")

Existing sources of energy assistance do not adequately address the energy affordability gap in Iowa. Actual energy bills for low-income Iowans exceeded affordable energy bills in Iowa by \$2.98 million during 2012-2013 winter heating fuel prices. In contrast, Iowa's federal energy assistance funds have dropped from \$54.8 million for Fiscal Year 2012, to \$49.7 million, increasing the shortfall by nearly 6% (Gap Study, 2013).

In response to these needs, Green Iowa AmeriCorps has chosen to serve primarily households of low-income, elderly, and persons with disabilities, because they are the most affected by rising energy costs and will benefit directly. Low-income individuals do not have the financial capacity to make efficiency

Narratives

upgrades, while elderly and disabled persons are physically unable to weatherize their home themselves.

Rural communities and small towns are common in Iowa's predominately agricultural state, with 61% of Iowa's population considered rural according to the 2012 U.S. Census Bureau. These populations are served by small rural utility companies or rural electric cooperatives, many of which do not have the capacity to support energy conservation services. According to Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities 75% of Iowa's municipal electric utilities serve fewer than 1,500 customers. With a customer base of this size, it is not financially possible for utilities to employ auditors. Where services are available, low-income families experience long waits, and initial audits are not followed up with energy improvements.

In 2015-2016, Green Iowa AmeriCorps will offer energy programs and services in seven Iowa counties and surrounding rural areas: Black Hawk, Dubuque, Jefferson, Jones, Linn, Polk, and Winneshiek County. These counties were chosen based on need, rural-urban mix, and the local lead organization's eagerness and capacity to be a host site for an AmeriCorps program.

Note: All demographic data are from the U.S. Census Bureau for 2012

Site 1---Black Hawk County (Cedar Falls/Waterloo area): The poorest of all metro areas in Iowa is home to a large number of low-income households, older structures, and households living in poorly kept rental properties. Fully 16.5 % of Black Hawk County residents live below poverty lines, 14.6% of the population is elderly, and over 28.5% of households have a resident living with a disability. The 2013 Gap Study found that Black Hawk County has 4,071 households living at less than 50% of the federal poverty level, and these households pay an average of \$172 per month.

Site 2---Dubuque County (Dubuque area): Elderly comprise 14.6% of the population, 25.3% of households have individuals living with disabilities, and over 10% of local residents live below poverty line. A total of 1,387 households live below 50% poverty level in Dubuque, each paying \$187 per month more than they can afford (Gap Study, 2013).

Site 3---Jefferson County (Fairfield area): Over 18% of the population in Jefferson County is elderly, significantly above the 15% average for the state. Nearly 15% of the population is low-income, and over 31% have a disability. Of the 514 homes living 50% below the poverty line, each pays \$181 per month more than what they can afford on utility costs (Gap Study, 2013).

Narratives

Site 4---Jones County (Anamosa area): Of the population in Jones County, 18.2% is elderly, 8.3% is low-income, and over 28% of households have a person living with a disability. Of the 287 households living below 50% poverty level, each pays \$227 per month more than they can afford on energy bills (Gap Study, 2013).

Site 5---Linn County (Cedar Rapids area): Over 14% of Linn County are elderly, low-income comprise 10%, and over 25% are people with disabilities. Of the 3,786 households living below the 50% poverty level, each have a monthly bill \$167 more than what they can afford on energy costs (Gap Study, 2013).

Site 6---Polk County (Des Moines area): Polk County has a large metro area with elderly and low-income households comprising over 11% of the total population. Nearly 24% are households with persons with disabilities. Of the 8,509 residence living below 50% poverty level, each household is paying a \$167 a month beyond what they can afford (Gap Study, 2013).

Site 7---Winneshiek County (Decorah area): Nearly 9% of Winneshiek County is below the poverty level, 18% are elderly, and 26% are people with disabilities. Winneshiek County has 188 households below the 50% poverty level, paying an astounding \$226 per month more than they can currently afford (Gap Study, 2012).

2. THEORY OF CHANGE/LOGIC MODEL INFORMATION

Green Iowa AmeriCorps has a strong theory of change that clearly links well-trained AmeriCorps members to successfully address identified community needs, resulting in compelling measurable outcomes.

As shown on the Logic Model worksheet, Green Iowa AmeriCorps members will engage in three core activities:

- 1) Energy Audits: Highly trained members will perform residential energy audits, infiltration testing, and gas and carbon monoxide testing.
- 2) Weatherizations: Members will address air infiltration issues with improvement to the building envelope, install energy efficiency measures, and provide residents with recommendations to increase the comfort and efficiency of their homes.
- 3) Education: Members will learn and teach the multiple benefits of energy efficiency, environmental stewardship, and conservation to rural and urban communities with age-appropriate educational programs, residential weatherization workshops, and one-on-one consultations with residents.

Narratives

Energy Audits---Members will spend 2-3 days per week performing energy audits throughout their service terms. Audits typically take 2 hours per home. Home energy audits include a blower door test to determine the extent of air infiltration. A blower door test will use a variable-speed fan to depressurize the home. This is conducted in conjunction with a pressure measurement tool to identify air leakage pathways and measure air leakage and energy loss. The blower door test will be administered by a member trained and certified as a Building Performance Institute (BPI) energy auditor.

Members will perform a walk through assessment to identify potential efficiency measures and make recommendations to improve efficiency. Members will share the results of the energy audit, potential savings, and information on local energy efficiency rebate and incentive programs with the resident. This core activity will lead directly to the achievement of the outcome of 907 home energy audit services to target populations and rural communities, as shown on the Logic Model worksheet

Weatherization--- When homes test above air infiltration minimum standards, members will schedule weatherization appointments to perform air infiltration and efficiency improvements. Members will spend 2-3 days per week throughout the year performing weatherization services. Depending on the amount of work to be done in a home, weatherization can take anywhere from two to eight hours of work for a team of five members. Weatherization services are prioritized based on several criteria: low income individuals, elderly, persons with disabilities, and high air infiltration. Support from local partners ensures that all the services and materials are free to the targeted recipients.

Members will resolve air infiltration issues in the building envelope around windows, doors, attic accesses and rim joists. Members will fill bypasses with spray foam, rigid foam board, and caulk to eliminate infiltration. Members will install door sweeps, outlet insulators, weather-stripping, and other material to air infiltration.

Member will improve the energy efficiency of the home through the installation of compact florescent light bulbs and low-flow water fixtures. Members will inspect the furnace/water heater for inefficiencies, insulate pipes, and tape ductwork when needed.

Implementing weatherization services creates an immediate impact for the populations in need, resulting in energy and money savings. This core activity will lead directly to the achievement of the outcome of 615 home weatherization services to target populations and rural communities as shown on the Logic Model worksheet.

Narratives

Energy Education---Members will facilitate energy education activities in local communities at least one day per week throughout the year. Examples include: presenting green building strategies to a group of contractors; hosting a Girl Scout workshop for an energy badge; planning an informational session for all ages at the library; and giving a weatherization presentation to the local neighborhood association. Members will archive each presentation for future use at other Green Iowa AmeriCorps sites. .

Members will provide individualized education to residents during audits and weatherizations.

Members will discuss rebate opportunities and behavior changes that could significantly improve the efficiency of the home and reduce energy costs.

Members will train volunteers to assist with weatherization, educational programming, and energy-focused projects that are beneficial to the community. Examples include: community garden work, the weatherization of a local homeless shelter, and assistance with an electronics waste drive. Each Green Iowa AmeriCorps member will also plan and execute a volunteer generating project of their choosing that will address an energy related community need. The projects will be executed through the planning of the members and support of leveraged volunteers.

Educating communities about energy efficiency gives them the tools to make mindful decisions about their energy consumption. Creating investment and interest in energy efficiency efforts through volunteerism generates an impact much larger than AmeriCorps members could have independently. This core activity will lead directly to the achievement of the outcome of 4,200 individuals reached through 300 energy education workshops and residential one-on-one consultation as shown on the Logic Model worksheet.

3. EVIDENCE-BASED--MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT

The services Green Iowa AmeriCorps and leveraged volunteers will provide are strongly supported by evidence and measurable community impact.

Nationally, the U.S. Department of Energy's Weatherization program weatherized over 600,000 low-income homes. On average, the program reduces energy consumption for low-income families by up to 35 percent, saving them more than \$400 on their heating and cooling bills in the first year alone with improvements made through air sealing, insulation and implementing more energy efficient heating and cooling systems. As a comparison, one leaky house weatherized by AmeriCorps members, with a significantly lower investment of time and financial cost, can result in \$150 savings

Narratives

per year or \$2,250 over the 15 year life of the improvements.

Nationwide, the weatherization of 600,000 homes is estimated to save more than \$320 million in energy costs in just the first year (U.S. Department of Energy, December 2011). This proves that weatherization for low-income populations are not only a priority at the national level but that it is providing measurable community impact nationwide.

Locally, the results from a friendly community energy competition, organized by University of Northern Iowa/Iowa Policy Project among several rural towns in Northeast Iowa, indicate that through a combination of incentives, energy education, and AmeriCorps energy audit and weatherization services, participating communities reduced their overall electricity consumption by 2 to 20% annually, and summer time electricity use reduction by 6 to 26% (Get Energized Iowa, 2013). Green Iowa AmeriCorps is not only concerned with the energy and money saved through services but residents' view of the work done. Green Iowa AmeriCorps sought the feedback of recipients of weatherization services and from satisfaction surveys collected, 100% of individuals indicated that they were "satisfied" to "very satisfied" with Green Iowa AmeriCorps services, and 100% would recommend the program to a friend (Green Iowa AmeriCorps Satisfaction Survey, 2012). A quality service can change a person's attitude about energy efficiency and build strong community ties to the program.

4. NOTICE PRIORITY

Though Green Iowa AmeriCorps does not currently fit the priority area criteria, the program is highly successful as an energy efficiency program supporting environmental stewardship.

5. MEMBER TRAINING

Green Iowa AmeriCorps members will receive a high quality training to ensure they are effective in implementing the proposed program interventions.

Orientation will bring together all 35 members and includes history of AmeriCorps, OSHA safety training, and five days of comprehensive, hands-on weatherization training. Other training will include conflict resolution, confidentiality protocol for residents, and customer service procedures. Members will review and sign service agreements to outline requirements and expectations during their term. Members will discuss prohibited activities, civic engagement and networking with other AmeriCorps programs. Other activities will include energy education, coordinator responsibilities, and program goals. Members will receive sensitivity and diversity training .

Narratives

Orientation will continue at each local site. Members will become acquainted with local office operations, discuss community partnerships, and participate in communication, public speaking, leadership, marketing and team building activities. Former Green Iowa members, site supervisors and qualified trainers will facilitate much of the on-site training to acclimate new members to Green Iowa AmeriCorps. Member will also complete all required AmeriCorps trainings in volunteer management, disaster response, communication, citizenship and Life After AmeriCorps.

It is a priority of Green Iowa to provide opportunities for ongoing training throughout members' term of service. This consists of energy and weatherization training, Building Performance Institute (BPI) Certification to teach members about construction sciences and certify them as building analysts/energy auditors. Weatherization and Building Performance Institute trainings areas conducted early the service term to ensure comfort and knowledge with all aspects of the program before conducting weatherization.

Program staff and site supervisors will ensure that member are aware of all prohibited activities and ensure they adhere to all guidelines. Prohibited activities will be explained in detail at orientation with a review of all activities in their service agreement, a role play activity dealing with activities that are considered prohibited and ongoing reminders to all members and supervisors during program wide communication emails, site visits, and during heightened time of presence of prohibited activities in the media.

6. MEMBER SUPERVISION

Green Iowa AmeriCorps members will receive high quality guidance and support from site supervisors.

Green Iowa AmeriCorps has designed its program for members to conduct day-to-day service with oversight from site supervisors. Each community will have a site supervisor from the host organization to ensure members are meeting the expectations outlined in service agreements and refraining from any prohibited activities.

Each site supervisor will conduct weekly member meetings to discuss upcoming activities and events, share ideas, and address concerns. Minutes from each meeting will be shared with the program director.

Site supervisors will be responsible for approving members' monthly time sheets and ensuring that hours logged are related to our program mission, AmeriCorps service or training. Site supervisors will ensure that members do not participate in prohibited activities.

Narratives

Site supervisors will ensure quality control of the weatherization through on-site visits and performing random follow-up calls to receive feedback, communicating with the program director on a weekly basis locations, and discussing disciplinary action if warranted. Quarterly site visits are conducted by the program director.

Site supervisors will attend training prior to the arrival of members to cover basics of AmeriCorps, supervisor responsibilities, prohibited activities, guidelines for background checks and accompaniment, rules and regulations.

7. MEMBER EXPERIENCE

Green Iowa AmeriCorps will provide an incredible service experience for members filled with valuable skill building and professional development sought by future employers. Green Iowa AmeriCorps has a positive and significant impact on members' future employment. A 2013 survey of Green Iowa AmeriCorps graduates revealed 1) 81% of former members are currently working or pursuing a formal degree in an energy related, environmental or nonprofit field 2) 100% indicated that they were hired into their current positions because of the extensive trainings and job skills they gained through Green Iowa AmeriCorps experience and 3) 85% ranked their experience with the program as highly satisfying. This demonstrates the impact the extensive training and positive experience of service has had on alumni of Green Iowa AmeriCorps.

Members will participate in reflection activities as part of their monthly reports that are reviewed by the Program Director and Site Supervisor. Members will also participate in monthly civic engagement trainings at each of their host sites to learn and stress the importance of civic engagement becoming a life-long commitment. Developing the spirit and practice of civic participation among members is a key goal of the program. Ali Mikkelsen, a former member had this to say on her monthly report about the impact serving with Green Iowa AmeriCorps:

"As my service is coming to an end, I can't help but think back on all the great experiences that I have had and what AmeriCorps has done for me. The most important thing that I have gotten out of my service is my desire to become involved in the community that I am in. Before I started my term, I didn't know how or have the confidence to go about being an active member in my community but now I have this strong desire to do so."

Members will be connected to other AmeriCorps members in their service areas for national days of service, ongoing projects and collaboration on projects when applicable. Members will also regularly work with other branches of AmeriCorps, conducting volunteer projects with the NCCC-Vinton

Narratives

members, executing capacity building performed by local VISTA members and working with Senior Corps and RSVP members to partner with individuals 65 and older.

Members will engage in community projects to instill and develop a sense of active and productive citizenship. Each member will be given the opportunity to create a volunteer generating project in their service location to gain valuable skills in community engagement and learn what processes can be applied in any community to create impact beyond their AmeriCorps term.

Members of Green Iowa AmeriCorps will be recruited locally through host sites, local colleges, job fairs and local employment and service websites. Around 50% of members for the current 2014-2015 term are from the areas they are serving, providing community members the opportunity to serve their community through national service.

8. COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION

Members and all host site staff will receive training at orientation and throughout their service about what it means to be an AmeriCorps member. Program staff will stress the importance of identifying members as AmeriCorps members, how they will be part of national service as a whole, and the important differentiation from AmeriCorps members and other program staff and volunteers. Host Sites will be required to confirm that they understand and recognize that all members will be recognized as AmeriCorps members at the host organization as part of the official host site agreement.

Communities will be informed of members AmeriCorps status through meetings with key community contacts as part of on-site orientation as well as presentations throughout the year. All marketing materials and events will refer to members as AmeriCorps members and all host sites will have clear 'AmeriCorps Serves Here' signage posted.

Members are required to wear these uniforms on a daily basis as part of their member service agreement. Members will be provided with uniforms including t-shirts, sweat shirts, long sleeve shirts and collared shirts, each including their AmeriCorps logo, making them easily identified as AmeriCorps members. Members will also be given the opportunity to help design uniforms to create a greater sense of ownership and commitment to wearing the uniforms on a daily basis.

Organizational Capability

1. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND & STAFFING

Green Iowa AmeriCorps and the University of Northern Iowa has the experience, staffing and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program effectively.

Narratives

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) is a public university serving nearly 14,000 students. Center for Energy and Environmental Education (CEEE) is an outreach arm of the University and is uniquely positioned to be the lead organization to host AmeriCorps. From know-how to do-now, CEEE's mission is to empower Iowans with the knowledge, skills, and the inspiration needed to create a sustainable and desirable future for Iowa communities. The Center has a staff of 8 people, 5 of them full-time. This marks the 6th year of the AmeriCorps program at UNI-CEEE.

Green Iowa AmeriCorps and the University of Northern has the necessary staff in place to effectively manage the program. Kamyar Enshayan, Director of the Center for Energy & Environmental Education at the University of Northern Iowa, works with practitioners in communities to create social change in the areas of energy efficiency, renewable energy, local food infrastructure, waste reduction, green schools and energy education.

The University of Northern Iowa has key staff in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs to assist with each phase in the grant management process, including pre-award, post-award and financial management. Green Iowa AmeriCorps has access to the payroll and benefits systems that manages thousands of employees at the University annually.

Green Iowa AmeriCorps staff includes a program director, Ashley Craft, seven site supervisors, and an administrative assistant provided by University of Northern Iowa.

The Center has had 20 years of experience administering grants. CEEE's external funds come from competitive grants and long term relationships with foundations, businesses and government agencies that see the results and accomplishments.

The University of Northern Iowa along with each of the six host sites have experience hosting Green Iowa AmeriCorps programs and are familiar with federal funding as state governments, academic institutions and 501(C)(3) organizations.

2. COMPLIANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

Green Iowa AmeriCorps will ensure compliance and accountability in both implementation and management of its AmeriCorps program at all levels of the grantee and service site locations.

Prohibited activities will be explained in detail at orientation with a review of all activities in the service agreement, a role play activity dealing with activities that are considered prohibited and ongoing reminders to all members and supervisors during program wide communication emails, site visits, and during heightened time of presence of prohibited activities in the media.

If an instance of risk or noncompliance arises at any level program staff will act immediately to make

Narratives

sure the activity is terminated. A corrective action plan will be put in place, program staff will administer repercussions in accordance with the member service agreement, which contains all prohibited activities and is reviewed and signed by the member. Program staff would also seek counsel from the state program officer if further action or guidance was needed.

Green Iowa AmeriCorps will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities at the grantee, sub-grantee, and service site locations through ongoing training and close oversight of program operation.

3. PAST PERFORMANCE FOR CURRENT/FORMER GRANTEEES ONLY

Green Iowa AmeriCorps met all performance targets set for the 2013-2014 year and greatly exceeded numbers in many categories.

In the 2013-2014 service term, Green Iowa AmeriCorps recruited and enrolled 100% of the awarded member slots. Program staff is dedicated to enrolling 100% of members for the 2015-2016 service term year by recruiting and placing highly committed members completely aware of all the requirements and responsibilities of their service term.

Throughout the 2013-2014 year, the program retained 96% of members. Of the 25 total members who participated in the program, only one member was exited for cause, leaving the program without an education award. This member did complete his term of service but did not complete all of the exit requirements of his term of service, though they were clearly outlined. Of the 25 full-time members that started the 2013 service term year no slot conversion or slot refills were necessary.

In the upcoming year, 2015-2016, the program commits to abide by the 100% enrollment rate and outperform the minimum retention rate. This will be achieved by emphasizing the importance of completing the full term of service during the interview, at orientation, and throughout the service term.

The program did not encounter any compliance issues or areas of significant weakness in the last program year. However, in a goal for continued improvement, Green Iowa will collect feedback from recipients of service through customer satisfaction surveys and an annual feedback survey regarding weatherization and educational services received. Data from annual informal surveys of members and community partners will assist in identifying any new or future needs of the program.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

1. COST EFFECTIVENESS

The budget is sufficient to carry out all necessary activities to ensure effective program operation. The

Narratives

budget costs support the activities and expenses identified in the narrative; members, trainings, materials, travel, and staff support, etc.

Service provided by Green Iowa AmeriCorps is the most cost effective solution to solving the identified needs. Labor costs to provide the same comprehensive services by a private contractor would be very expensive to the resident and thus, rarely available. According to Weatherization Assistance Program data, major weatherization programs through local community action agencies spend an average of \$8,000 per household over a timeframe of 8-11 weeks, with many individuals never receiving service because of long waitlists and priority guidelines.

Green Iowa AmeriCorps keeps program costs low and effective through partnerships that provide free or low-cost training for members that is valued in the tens of thousands of dollars and fund-raising for materials for weatherization. One home weatherized by AmeriCorps members can result in \$150 savings per year or \$2,250 over the 15 year life of the improvements and only costs an average of \$35-50 per home in materials and 10 hours of total labor towards the home.

2. BUDGET ADEQUACY

Green Iowa AmeriCorps plans to have financial support at the local, state and federal support. The University of Northern Iowa is contributing \$115,497 in in-kind match. This includes a portion of the CEEE Director's time (5%), office space, administrative support, utilities, and other indirect costs.

Green Iowa has solidified funding from the states three major utility providers; MidAmerican Energy Company, Alliant Energy and Black Hills Energy. Green Iowa AmeriCorps has been included as a partner in each of these utilities 5 year energy efficiency plan, demonstrating sustainable, long term financial support to match Corporation funding. Green Iowa AmeriCorps anticipates \$148,605 in the 2015-2016 year to support a portion of member living allowance, worker's compensation, FICA and health care. Funds will also cover the costs of all required criminal history checks, member training, weatherization materials, travel for required Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service training events, travel for site visits, and a portion of the salary and fringe benefits for the Program Director.

Green Iowa AmeriCorps anticipates \$105,763 from the United States Department of Agriculture and Community Development Block Grant funding along with state funds from the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service will support member living allowance costs, a portion of program director salary to organize the project, weatherization materials, supplies, and travel.

Each site will be asked to generate local cash/in-kind support of \$10,000. This will support member travel, trainings costs, member uniforms, state timekeeping system costs, marketing materials,

Narratives

member AmeriCorps uniforms, member handbook, safety and audit equipment and materials, evaluation costs, marketing and educational materials and a portion of member healthcare costs. Each site will also be responsible for providing an in-kind site supervisor, office space, computers and a portion of the salary and fringe benefits for the Program Director.

The proposed budget includes fringe benefit rates of 30.2% (for academic administrative positions) and 37.3% (professional and scientific staff positions) of requested salaries. The University of Northern Iowa uses a fringe benefit pool rate system to charge and allocate fringe benefits for all employees. Benefit component costs (TIAA-CREF-retirement, IPERS-retirement, Health/Dental, Worker's Compensation, Unemployment, Life Insurance, Disability Insurance, and FICA) are initially charged to a central fringe benefit pool account. Fringe rates are determined for each employee classification according to fringe eligibility. A monthly process is run to apply these rates to the monthly payroll and charge the same accounts used to distribute actual payroll expense. Rates are calculated for eighteen (18) employee classifications. The rates are further broken down as appropriate according to fringe eligibility for full benefits, partial benefits, IPERS only, and minimum coverage. Periodic reports generated by the University provide an accurate representation of fringe costs per employee classification.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

2015-2016 CLARIFICATIONS

A. Programmatic Clarifications

1. Please clarify how volunteers will be recruited and trained, including how volunteers will be made aware of, and will adhere to, regulations regarding prohibited activities.

Volunteers will be recruited through partnerships with local community college, volunteer centers, civic organizations and other community entities. Volunteers will be leveraged to support energy efficiency projects and various environmental stewardship projects as part of community outreach

Narratives

project or specific member volunteer generating projects. All volunteers will sign a waiver, including a review of all prohibited activities and regulations, prior to any participation in an outreach activity. Members and program staff will ensure proper volunteer training is conducted prior to the start of the event and as needed throughout the volunteer experience. Depending on the outreach activity itself, training topic will vary from one event to the next. All members receive volunteer management training as part of orientation week and are well versed in how to properly recruit, manage and recognize volunteers during their service.

2. Please clarify how members will be placed at each of the host sites.

Each applicant goes through a recruitment intake process to identify if any preference in service location or host site as part of their service with Green Iowa AmeriCorps. Applicants may have a preference if they are choosing to service in their local community or are interested in specific characteristics of the community or host site attributes. If applicants have no preference the program places members based on what they believe would be a strong team of five based on communication style, service motivation, skill set and experience. The goal of member placement at each host site is to build the strongest possible team for that service location while simultaneously taking into account the geographical flexibility of applicants.

3. Please clarify how the program will determine targeted households of low income, older (elderly) Americans and/or have disabled residents.

The program will identify targeted households of low income, older Americans and disabled residents through specific partnerships with organizations that provide service to these demographics along with target marketing strategies to increase awareness and access to services. Examples include partnering with local community action agencies to identify LI HEAP/low income households who would be desirable candidates for services. The program also partners with local RSVP programs, senior centers, the department of human services and groups working with individuals with disabilities to create channels of access to audit and weatherization services.

B. Budget Clarifications:

We have made all budget clarifications directly within the budget.

1. Please consider decreasing the application's proposed cost per MSY, or provide a compelling explanation for why the cost/MSY cannot be decreased.

Narratives

Green Iowa AmeriCorps has been a formula funded program for the past 6 years, with a current cost per MSY of \$13,783. To take significant steps to make our application more competitive we have reduced the cost per MSY to \$11,594. Because a significant reduction has already been made to our cost per MSY for our submission we are unable to reduce the amount any further at this time.

2. Please confirm the EIN number entered on the 424 screen.

Yes, the EIN number entered on the 424 screen is correct; 426004333.

3. If the program has had an A-133 completed, please forward a copy to the CNCS grants officer.

The University of Northern Iowa has a A-133 completed and it has been provided to the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service for forwarding to CNCS.

4. Please clarify Section C Staff Travel the purpose and calculation for the \$400 budgeted in the CNCS sponsored travel line item.

The \$400 is for conference fees, plus the 8 trips X 200 miles X \$0.56/mile, 2 nights lodging X \$102/night=1,500. Change made directly in budget.

5. Please clarify Section C Member Travel please provide a calculation for daily travel for members.

Daily travel for members: Mileage and vehicle rental fees= average \$89/week * 45 weeks= \$4,000 for travel to weatherizations, education and outreach activities. Change made directly in budget.

6. Please clarify Section III - Please note the base for which the indirect cost rate is applied to clarify the calculation for this line item.

The University of Northern Iowa has a federally approved indirect cost rate of 33.8% of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC). The indirect cost rate applies to all items listed under sections I and II.

7. Under "Source of Funds" provide type and amount of match for each line item listed

All sources of funds have been listed directly in budget.

C. Performance Measure Clarification

1. Please clarify how the following data will be captured via the Performance Measures as stated in the

Narratives

Application Narrative: AmeriCorps members will be responsible for providing 907 energy audits, weatherization of 615 homes and 300 energy education programs for 4,200 participants.

907 energy audits will be generated and performed through teams of AmeriCorps members at 7 host locations through an average of 12 audits per month over an 11 month term. Each audit will be tracked in a weatherization log excel document that includes resident contact information, structure data, demographic information, and blower door data collection information.

The program estimates that of the 907 audits conducted, 615 will result in follow-up weatherization services performed by members. Weatherization services performed will be tracked in the same weatherization log, adding the weatherization services performed and post-test blower door data along to the initial audit information.

A total of 300 energy education programs will be completed by teams of AmeriCorps members at 7 host locations through an average of 4 programs a month over an 11 month term. Participants will be tracked through head counts and sign-in sheets and tracked in an education log maintained by each site.

2. Please consider revising the performance measurements to include the following: EN1, EN 1.1, EN2, EN2.1.

The program has revised the application to include EN1, EN1.1 as well as EN3 and EN3.1 as the measures that best capture the program design, data and service impact. Members do receive significant training as part of service that leads to heightened employment opportunities but job placement is not a primary target metric of our program. These changes have been made in the performance measures section.

3. Please clarify Output EN3 when and how all the data captured from the host sites will be combined to complete baseline data. Also explain how the program will ensure that individuals attending more than one program or training are only counted once.

All host sites will be using the same education log template to track specific information in the education log regarding all conducted education programs. Members will be trained on how to complete and track information during program orientation. Participants will be tracked through sign-in sheets, participant lists and head counts. Names will be collected to ensure that participants

Narratives

will not be counted more than once as part of the identifier in the education log. Members will conduct pre and post surveys to identify participants who indicate an increase in knowledge and awareness through program participation.

4. Please describe the pre/post test instrument including what environmental stewardship concepts are measured, how the content of the test is connected to the learning objectives of the training, when the post tests will be distributed to the participants, and how much improvement from pre-test to post-test is necessary to be counted as improved. Confirm that the instrument measures actual knowledge gains and not perceived gains.

Members will distribute a survey prior to the start of the program to gather a base line of knowledge for each participant. The post test will be the same questions will be distributed at the conclusion of the educational event and will identify if there was an increase in knowledge based on the individuals' participation in the program. The type of pre and post-test including the questions asked will be dictated by the age group of participants and subject matter of the class.

The contents of the test will be determined by the content of the educational program and its learning objectives. Some examples would include energy conservation, energy efficiency, weatherization skills, renewable energy, and sustainable and environmentally focused behavior changes.

If participants show any improvements in correct responses it will be considered an improvement.

The instrument used will require participants to demonstrate their increased knowledge instead of simply asking their opinion on their own increased knowledge.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics