

PART I - FACE SHEET

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

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

1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION:

Application Non-Construction

2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):	3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE: 04-DEC-11	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER: 742833329
2b. APPLICATION ID: 12AC134348	4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: 12ACHNM0010002

5. APPLICATION INFORMATION

LEGAL NAME: Rio Grande Community Farm DUNS NUMBER: 018145453 ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 6804 4th St, NW #114 Albuquerque NM 87107 - 6117 County: Bernalillo	NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Minor Morgan TELEPHONE NUMBER: (505) 345-4580 FAX NUMBER: INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: minormorgan@northvalleyorganics.com
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6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 742833329	7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit 7b. Community-Based Organization
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8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> A. AUGMENTATION B. BUDGET REVISION C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER (specify below):	9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: <p style="text-align: center;">Corporation for National and Community Service</p>
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10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: 94.006 10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps State 12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Albuquerque, New Mexico Village of Los Ranchos, New Mexico	11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Farm Labor For Community/Non Profit Farms in Albuquerque, NM 11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):
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13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 09/01/12 END DATE: 08/30/13	14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="NM001"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="NM001"/>
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15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: <input type="text" value="1"/> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 5px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">a. FEDERAL</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: right;">\$</td> <td style="width: 60%;">165,552.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. APPLICANT</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$</td> <td>54,917.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. STATE</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$</td> <td>0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d. LOCAL</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$</td> <td>0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e. OTHER</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$</td> <td>0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f. PROGRAM INCOME</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$</td> <td>0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g. TOTAL</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$</td> <td>220,469.00</td> </tr> </table>	a. FEDERAL		\$	165,552.00	b. APPLICANT		\$	54,917.00	c. STATE		\$	0.00	d. LOCAL		\$	0.00	e. OTHER		\$	0.00	f. PROGRAM INCOME		\$	0.00	g. TOTAL		\$	220,469.00	16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS? <input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON: DATE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372
a. FEDERAL		\$	165,552.00																										
b. APPLICANT		\$	54,917.00																										
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e. OTHER		\$	0.00																										
f. PROGRAM INCOME		\$	0.00																										
g. TOTAL		\$	220,469.00																										
17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO																													

18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.

a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Minor Morgan	b. TITLE: Executive Director	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (505) 345-4580
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:		e. DATE SIGNED: 04/24/12

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Executive Summary

Rio Grande Community Farm is in the 2nd year of AmeriCorps providing infrastructure and labor to non-profit/educational farms in Albuquerque, NM. With our partners American Friends Service Committee and Bernalillo County Extension, we have deployed 12 members to several sites. We are focusing on the CNCS Priority Area of Environmental Stewardship by providing locally produced organic food, practicing soil, water and land conservation, and training the next generation of farmers.

Rationale and Approach

PROGRAM DESIGN- NEED IN THE COMMUNITY

Rio Grande Community Farm (RGCF) in Albuquerque, NM is requesting funding for three years as an AmeriCorps Agency. We are currently in our 2nd year implementing AmeriCorps and are developing a deeper understanding of how the qualities of AmeriCorps can directly impact our identified issues. The community problems our program addresses are contained in our AmeriCorps Vision Statement:

"RGCF, in collaboration with AmeriCorps, strives to grow certified organic food for our

community, on public land, using methods that sustain and enhance our soil and water, while

training the next generation of farmers."

We choose to grow healthy food and distribute it locally for 2 reasons: 1) There is a great need in our community (see below) and 2) Our unique history- we were founded 15 years ago as a nonprofit to serve our community. Our Charter contains the goals of healthy food, land conservation and farmer training. We have a long term contract with the City of Albuquerque to farm 50 acres located in the center of the City. From the beginning we have engaged in: "Public farming, on public land, in the public interest." We have a contract with Albuquerque Public Schools to distribute fresh, organic food to the school system. The addition of the AmeriCorps program is an extension of our public mission.

IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS

The Needs in our community that our program addresses are:

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1. Growing healthy organic food that directly improves the health of school children and community.
2. Using growing practices that conserve and enhance the soil, water and lands we grow on.
3. Training the next generation of farmers: AmeriCorps members and volunteers that come to the farm.

1. THE NEED TO GROW HEALTHY FOOD IN BERNALILLO COUNTY.

In a review of 97 studies from 1980-2008, researchers at Washington State University concluded that organically grown vegetables are more nutritious than conventionally grown foods: "Across all 11 nutrients, the nutritional premium of the organic food averaged 25%. This justifies a new answer to the question: Are organic foods more nutritious? The answer is Yes." (Benbrook, Zhao, Yanez, and Davies, Organic Center Press, March, 2008, "Nutritional Superiority of Organic Foods", pg. page 4).

The USDA in 2011 listed Bernalillo County, New Mexico as a "Food Desert" with 47.9% of the Bernalillo county population having "low access" to healthy food. (USDA Food Desert Locator, www.ers.usda.gov/data/fooddesert, November, 2011). In 2008, the Annie E. Casey Foundation ranked New Mexico 47th out of 50 for states with children below the federal poverty line. Almost one quarter-24%- of NM children are in poverty. (www.aecf.org). The Centers For Disease Control (CDC) lists data for obesity and diabetes that paints an alarming picture for New Mexico. Comparing data from 1994 and 2010, NM experienced a 7% rise in obesity and a 5% rise in diabetes, with the trend continuing upwards. (www.cdc.gov/diabetes/statistics). Finally, in a major study presented to the NM Legislature in 2008, one of the major causes of food insecurity in NM was listed as lack of local distribution: "Because New Mexico's mid-sized and large farmers sell primarily to the national market, it is difficult to find locally produced fresh fruits and vegetables" (NM Food Gap Task Force, Final Report, November 30, 2008, page 7). Clearly there is a pressing need for locally produced, organic food that is distributed to our citizens, particularly our children.

2. THE NEED FOR FARMING PRACTICES THAT CONSERVE WATER AND IMPROVE SOIL.

RGCF is proud to be one of 4 farms in New Mexico that have been officially designated by the USDA as a "Demonstration Site" for soil and water conservation practices. RGCF is in the 2nd year of a 5 year study whereby all our tillage and farming practices are evaluated and data recorded for all operations. We are practicing "no till/minimal till" tillage which means we disturb the soil as little as possible. Instead of traditional techniques such as plowing, disking and deep tillage, we now practice no-till drilling, flail chopping and extensive cover cropping. These techniques are now recognized by

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the USDA as the preferred practices for soil conservation. "Farming without tillage provides an undisturbed soil that is ideal habitat for the soil food web" (Jon Stika, "Making the Transition to No-Tillage", USDA NRCS NM, Integrated Cropping Systems and Water Management Handbook, Introduction 1G, November, 2011).

We are also developing state-of-the-art water conservation practices using a recently installed sub-surface drip irrigation system. Of 22 forms of irrigation categorized by the USDA, sub-surface drip is considered the most water efficient. The need to develop water conservation in the arid Southwest is beyond dispute. In a recent major study F. Ackerman and E. Stanton of the Stockholm Environment Institute state: "With climate change, the Southwest water crises will grow far worse. Conservation and efficiency measures, however, have the potential to greatly lower water use throughout the region. As climate change exacerbates water woes, adaptation will be essential to stave off unplanned water shortages and restrictions." The study goes on to document many of the causes of the water crises including inefficient agricultural practices. (F. Ackerman, E. Stanton, "The Last Drop: Climate Change and the Southwest Water Crises", Stockholm Environment Institute, www.sei-us.org, February, 2011). In a county by county study of the potential economic impacts of water shortage on crops, Bernalillo county is estimated to have \$3,491,000 potential loses per year due to water shortages. (Evaluating Sustainability of Projected Water Demands Under Future Climate Change Scenarios", Tetra Tech, Inc., 2010, www.tetrattech.com).

Finally, in a major study reported in Nature Magazine looking at the effect of greenhouse gasses on climate, University of New Mexico professor Peter Fawcett states: "We are certainly increasing the possibility of crossing a critical threshold to severe and lasting drought conditions." (P. Fawcett, et al, Nature Magazine, #470, 2011). The soil and water conservation practices being piloted at RGCF, with the assistance of AmeriCorps members, are gathering data and establishing protocols that will not only benefit our local farms, but be a model for farms throughout the Southwest.

3. THE NEED TO TRAIN FUTURE FARMERS IN SUSTAINABLE AND ORGANIC PRACTICES.

RGCF undertook a survey of local sustainable/organic farms in 2008 to determine what farmers believed to be the biggest barrier in expansion of sustainable/organic farming. The 2 major needs were:

A. Farms needed labor assistance during the peak months of March-August. Those operations with a developed greenhouse program needed labor assistance all year round.

B. Besides direct field work with crops, farmers need infrastructure such as fencing, painting the barn, repairing irrigation canals, install 10,000 feet of drip irrigation, plant a windbreak hedgerow,

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etc.

In addition to our own survey of farm needs, there is ample documentation of the problem of declining farm numbers and the aging of the farmer population. In a recent major conference here in Albuquerque, some of the largest non-profit foundations in America (Kellogg, Ford, Casey) specifically discussed the need to support more "Beginning Farmer" initiatives (Plenary Session- "Agricultural Sustainability, Honoring Tradition and Seeding the Future", NFG 2011 annual conference, Oct. 25, 2011). In one of the few quantitative studies at the county level, the USDA used information from the annual Census of Agriculture database to show that Bernalillo county has lost between 10-100 farms from the period 1992-1997 ("Rural Conditions and Trends", vol. 10, #2, 1998, page 35). More recent data from the NM Chile Growers Association documents a catastrophic drop in NM chile production from 35,000 acres in 1992 to 8,800 acres in 2010 (www.nmchileassociation.com, "NM Chile Production from 1979-2009", annual report).

TARGET COMMUNITY

While we are focusing on 3 Identified Problems facing our community, the solutions to these problems indirectly address several other timely and critical questions facing our nation: How do we respond to global climate change? How do we use public lands for the most benefit to our citizens? How can we preserve wildlife habitat in urban areas? How do we preserve the best practices of traditional farming techniques? How do we inspire young people to enter agriculture as a profession? How do we support local economies and the creation of local jobs? How do we educate our children to better understand our environment and where their food comes from? At our farm and training sites, we are answering these questions every day, contributing our part to a national dialogue that will determine the role our country plays in the international community of the 21st century. It is very important work.

We believe that we will have a direct impact on several constituencies in our community including:

AmeriCorps members: 12 of our own, 200 others in NM

Other RGCF staff and Board members: 20

Community volunteers: 500

Students/citizens coming to the farm: 1000

Students/participants in community garden: 200

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Albuquerque Public School students receiving meal servings: 2500

Other citizens through and our food donation program: 300

Corporate partners, other farmers, other non-profits: 200

Citizens experiencing the annual Maize Maze educational event: 20,000

By enhancing the ability of local sustainable and non-profit farms to grow healthy food for our citizens, we are directly improving the overall quality of life for all citizens residing in Bernalillo county.

AMERICORPS MODEL-PLAN TO MEET THE NEEDS

We propose a model that directly addresses the three identified needs in our community. Over the past 15 years we have developed relationships with many partners and organizations addressing food and agriculture issues.

Background:

Rio Grande Community Farm (RGCF) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization located in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The 138-acre farm is owned by the City of Albuquerque. The City acquired the land in 1995 after a campaign to preserve this last remaining parcel of farmland in the North Valley. Recognizing the value to the community of maintaining this agricultural space, the City passed a sales tax to fund its acquisition. RGCF was founded in 1997 and began management of the farm.

The Farm holds a special place in the history of Albuquerque. It occupies the original site of Los Poblanos, one of the earliest Spanish settlements in the Rio Grande Valley. It is a living link in an agricultural heritage that extends over 1700 years, making it among the oldest parcels of continually farmed land in the United States. Years of hard work have transformed the neglected land into community gardens, wildlife habitat, and certified organic croplands. These provide educational experiences, community service, recreation and entertainment to a broad segment of our population while honoring our history and protecting the environment. As our population grows and as water becomes scarcer, it becomes increasingly important to preserve agricultural lands in order to safeguard our quality of life. The farm operates a 2 acre community garden that is open to all.

RGCF is an agricultural jewel in the center of our city. The Farm provides city dwellers with rural experiences: growing food for their families or for needy members of the community, learning about agriculture, observing wildlife, walking the historic acequias, and participating in annual events such as the Maize Maze and Harvest Festivals. The organic farm is a model for teaching methods of

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sustainable, organic agriculture. Our Vision/Strategic Direction:

1. Demonstrating sustainable urban agriculture

RGCF operates a certified organic farm on public land using sustainable agriculture methods with the goal of growing food, as well as demonstrating these methods for the farming community. RGCF will blend the best of traditional agriculture with more progressive strategies to improve yield and conserve water and soil. RGCF will collaborate with other farms/agencies and disseminate information.

2. Growing food for and with our community

RGCF will grow and distribute fresh, organic produce to diverse populations in Albuquerque including schools, food banks, non-profit organizations, grocery stores, and restaurants. RGCF will operate a community garden that welcomes volunteers and encourages food donations. RGCF will supervise a cooperative pool of labor to assist other farms throughout the winter season.

3. Providing education and training opportunities in agriculture

RGCF will provide education programs and host special events, such as the Maize Maze, that teach the community about sustainable agriculture, organic gardening, nutrition and wildlife. RGCF will train young farmers and engage them in the process of farming public land for the public good.

4. Enhancing urban wildlife habitat

RGCF will plant wildlife crops with the goal of maintaining and enhancing wildlife habitats. The community will be encouraged to visit the farm for recreation and appreciation of the natural world.

5. Growing and celebrating the farming community

RGCF will learn and teach both traditional and progressive farming practices, to people of all ages, through a variety of programs and activities on the farm. RGCF will host events that celebrate our own work and will participate in community events sponsored by organizations that celebrate farming and farm education in our community.

AMERICORPS PROGRAM MODEL:

Based on these findings we developed the following model for effectively utilizing AmeriCorps members. This is the model we are currently following, having begun implementation on 9/1/2010.

1. We wanted to partner with other established agriculture based organizations to enhance the reach and impact of the program beyond our RGCF farm site. We chose the Bernalillo County Extension office (BCE) and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) as our Lead Partners. BCE is the largest Extension office in the State and is part of our Land Grant University, New Mexico

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State University (NMSU). We're able to access the tremendous resources and opportunities for training offered by NMSU. The AFSC recently received a major Federal Food Security grant designed to support organic/sustainable non-profit farms in the South Valley of Albuquerque, an area of the city that has a long agricultural tradition but also high poverty and crime rates. By working with these 2 agencies our "three-legged stool" will have far greater impact and reach.

2. We currently have 12 AmeriCorps members deployed across all three sites. For 2012/2013 we are requesting 12 members.

3. All members are deployed full time on working farms, meeting the unmet needs for labor on these farms. Eligible farms are non-profit or educational institutions. This keeps the program in compliance with 45 CFR 2520.65.

4. AmeriCorps members are deployed directly on one of the 3 farm sites for the period September-November and February-August. For the 2 month period Nov. 15- January 15, all members reconvene as a group and become the AmeriCorps Winter Work Crew. This idea emerged from our research on farm needs. Members complete construction and infrastructure projects, providing labor, tools and expertise. The receiving farm provides materials and project oversight. Projects tend to be large scale construction that individual farms don't have the time or labor to complete. In the winter of 2010 we completed over 26 projects for a variety of groups. We are currently in the middle of our 2nd "Winter Work Crew" and this is proving to be one of the most popular and beneficial aspects of our program. Any non-profit, educational or public sector farm qualifies for the "Winter Work Crew". To date we have completed farm construction projects for 4 nonprofit farms, 2 City agencies, our City Botanical Gardens, our partner agencies (AFSC and BCE) and 3 other non-profit agencies.

In addition to providing a valuable service in enhancing local farm infrastructure, the Winter Work Crew is an excellent training opportunity for our AmeriCorps members. They visit other farms, learn from other farmers, and experience different approaches to sustainable farming beyond what they receive at their placement site.

WHY AMERICORPS IS THE IDEAL SOLUTION

AmeriCorps is the ideal model for addressing the problems identified in our Mission. Many youth are coming out of high school and college with a greater appreciation and interest in environmental issues. Their enthusiasm, energy and commitment can be channeled into productive activities addressing our community needs. Their ability to bond with each other and work in teams has been key to empowering them to work the long hours and difficult conditions that farming demands. The need to train folks quickly and facilitate good communication has required our agency to develop a

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very strong training, mentoring and supervision plan. We have put in place many good management practices that will benefit our organization for years to come.

MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

What will our members do on a day-to-day basis? Our basic Member Position Description is as follows:

General Description- The AmeriCorps Farming Intern serves under direct supervision of the Chief Farmer of Rio Grande Community Farm, and will be placed at one of three farm sites: Los Poblanos Fields, Bernalillo County Extension or American Friends Service Committee. The farming intern primarily will complete field and greenhouse tasks necessary for the production of agricultural crops. This position will perform field and labor tasks associated with preparing field areas for crops, starting plants in the greenhouse, planting out starts, tending crops, harvesting and arranging for delivery of crops. The position may involve tractor work and does involve use of hand tools and walk behind tractor equipment. Specific duties include:

Greenhouse related: planting starts in the spring for plant-out in the fields; maintaining, pruning, fertilizing starts to maximize growth and health; planting starts in the fields; watering all starts; detailed record keeping of all activity for organic certification purposes.

Field related: preparation of field areas using hand tools and walk behind tractor equipment; tractor/hand cultivation; pruning, staking, fertilizing starts planted out; season extension activity such as hoop houses and row covers; disease and pest prevention techniques; harvesting of crops; storage and packaging of crops for delivery; following all NOP and NMOCC organic standards; irrigating using flood, well, gravity and drip systems.

Infrastructure development: digging trenches for buried pipelines using hand tools and walk behind equipment; operating irrigation equipment; maintaining flood irrigation ditches
Member also agrees to participate in the "Winter Work Crew" work crew during the winter months as well as assist in our major fall education event, the Maize Maze.

By deploying 12 members at 3 separate sites we are directly addressing all 3 Identified Problems:

A. With a consistent and motivated work force, farms will be able to produce more food crops for sale to Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) and other local outlets, thus decreasing food insecurity and addressing the public health issues impacted by lack of fresh locally grown vegetables in the food supply. Both RGCF and AFSC have contracts to sell to APS.

B. No-till farming practices are more labor intensive than conventional tillage. While our sub-

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surface drip system is water efficient, it is labor intensive to maintain and operate. With support through AmeriCorps we will be able to refine and master these water and soil efficient farming techniques.

C. Our AmeriCorps members are learning critical practical skills in sustainable agriculture. Fully half of our current members plan on pursuing careers in agriculture or environmental issues. What they are learning at the farm will be invaluable. In addition to concrete skills, AmeriCorps members are learning teamwork, good communication, social skills and the importance of civic engagement.

MEASUREABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT

In addressing the 3 major Identified Problems we expect to see the following community outcomes:

1. Create a more secure food network. With the additional labor that the AmeriCorps program will provide, our non-profit farms will be able to grow a larger quantity of food distributed locally.

2. Increase the amount of food sold to our school system, thereby improving public health. We are targeting food to Albuquerque Public Schools and several nonprofit, charter and faith based schools.

3. Through our educational programs we are developing training curriculum for healthy food choices for children. In July, 2012 we will inaugurate our first "Farm Youth Camp" that will create structured experiences for young people to better understand the source of their food and how our natural environment works. This 2 week camp will be the first of its kind in Albuquerque and AmeriCorps members will play a key role in its success.

4. Training the next generation of farmers. By exposing AmeriCorps members to different farm settings, members will have the opportunity to explore their individual interest areas.

5. Establish a model for cross agency collaboration. One of the exciting aspects of this program is the opportunity to demonstrate that several agencies can work collaboratively in meeting the needs of the community. With NMSU's focus on agricultural education and AFSC's focus on community development and empowerment, we believe this coalition can "holistically" meet the needs of non-profit farms. In implementing the grant we will forge the long term lines of communication, specialization of responsibilities and organizational framework that will exist long past the grant period.

6. Demonstrate the effectiveness of partnering with government agencies- City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County. Rio Grande Community Farm and the Bernalillo county plots are both located on land owned by the public. RGCF is the non-profit farming entity that administers the farm, but the City of Albuquerque is a major partner. The RGCF farm is part of the larger Mission of the Open

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Space Division to preserve and enhance public lands for agriculture.

7. Begin to establish the framework for a Cooperative organization where farmers share resources. We have already seen fruit from this effort- the Bernalillo County Extension Service purchased a \$50,000 tractor implement this year called a no-till drill. This implement will be housed at RGCF and be available to many public farming groups. This is a result of involvement with AmeriCorps.

MEMBER EXPERIENCE

Last year was our first year as an AmeriCorps Program Services Agency- we learned many valuable lessons and have put into place systems that will assure members a broad experience including:

A. Extensive and detailed orientation and training period. Besides the 2 day orientation, for the first month members are being evaluated by staff as well as self-evaluation, for assignment to one of 4 "Teams" that make up the core of the work at the farm. Each Team has a Lead member with set duties and responsibilities. These teams meet weekly with our Chief Farmer and coordinate the week's activities. This provides an opportunity for leadership, innovation and creativity in directing the activities of the farm, all under the watchful eye of farm staff. It is exciting to see individual members grow into the role and assume leadership of projects.

B. Extensive skill set training. Farm staff offer "mini-courses" on practical farm skills such as: tractor operation, trellis construction, greenhouse activities, harvesting, transplanting, woodworking on the farm (a very popular course), welding, and other skills. These are formal courses ranging from 1-8 hours and involve varying levels of certification.

C. Conferences and workshops. All members attend the annual Southwest Regional Organic Conference, a 3 day extravaganza of workshops, course and peer-to-peer time. Through the Extension office and the USDA, we also offer classes in specific topics. 3-4 of these workshops occur throughout the year. We have also facilitated some specialty training for interested members using on-line, book purchase and mentoring opportunities. For example, we have one member with a Master's degree in agronomy who is learning all about the Standards for Good Agricultural Practices.

D. Winter Work Crew. This 2 month period in the winter provides a broad opportunity to see other farms and farming operations, while performing a valuable service.

E. Off-site sponsored field trips. We are working with the NM Commission on Community Volunteerism (NMCCV) to develop 2-3 day trips that combine a visit to other AmeriCorps programs in NM with visits to other nationally recognized sustainable farming operations such as the Taos Pueblo Red River Center and the Seeds of Change production fields, both in Northern NM.

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F. Service Learning events sponsored by the farm where members are able to work with the public and other volunteers around national holidays and civic events. This year our members participated in the NMCCV Veterans Thanksgiving Appreciation Day. Our members will be taking the lead in our annual Martin Luther King, Jr and Cesar Chavez Day appreciation events. These opportunities place the farm experience in the wider context of civic engagement and community volunteerism.

Each of our members comes to us with an understanding of the community goals of AmeriCorps. We talk about a "marriage" for one or more years between the member and the farm and community. This was one of the major lessons learned from year one. Members who came to the farm seeking a job and subsequently applied through the AmeriCorps portal were far less committed than members who came to us already familiar and engaged in AmeriCorps. We have allocated extra funds to purchase clothing gear with the AmeriCorps logo. Particularly in a farming setting, one t-shirt is not enough. We provide one heavy duty jacket and 3 shirts for all members. They are proud to wear the gear- this helps create an AmeriCorps identity. Likewise in our training and daily operations we strive to create a "culture of safety" and "culture of civic engagement" that helps bond the group together as AmeriCorps members. We participate in all events sponsored by the NMCCV including the annual "Launch". This, and other arranged field trips, allow members to share their experiences with other NM members. We have recently added a staff member- our Educational Director- who is savvy in the use of social media. As a result our Facebook page is now a lively and exciting venue for all RGCF staff, including AmeriCorps members. On our Facebook you will see some stunningly beautiful photographs of the farm posted by one of our AmeriCorps members. This is helping to create a strong sense of identity in members.

From year one we also learned the importance of facilitating the reflection process for members. We give each member a waterproof and durable journal for use throughout their year. Every 2 weeks, on payday, we also have our "Jam Session". This is an opportunity for members from all 3 sites to share ideas, thoughts, reflections and, in general, to process their ongoing experience.

MEMBER SELECTION

RGCF has a strong member recruitment and selection process. The single most important aspect is screening potential members for their understanding and commitment to the overall philosophy of public service. Those coming into the program anticipating a year of hard work and demonstrated

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commitment to the community- these members readily adapt. Those who think of it primarily as a job can become disillusioned with the various demands placed on them. How do we accomplish this? We begin the recruitment process early, in mid-March for start date 9/1. The first step in the process is to query our existing AmeriCorps members. This coincides with their mid-term Performance Evaluation and is a logical time to begin planning for the future. If a current member is in good standing and wants to remain a 2nd year, we encourage this. Once we have a rough idea of the number of new members we will need we begin a rigorous vetting process made up of 5 phases:

1. All potential applicants must apply through the AmeriCorps portal, even if they are local and known to us. This serves as a pre-screen.
2. We review the Resume, Letter of Interest and all information in e-grants. We screen out inappropriate applicants and those whose interest area does not match the needs of our program.
3. We arrange an in-person or Skype interview. We use questions designed to elicit the applicant's commitment to the principles of AmeriCorps and interest in farming/environmental stewardship.
4. Applicants that are deemed eligible after the first interview are mailed a detailed description of farming activities and a list of the various challenges members face in working on a farm (long hours, hot working conditions, early start, etc.). We ask each applicant respond to a list of 10 questions designed to facilitate reflection on whether the member truly wants to work on a farm. Based on many years working with volunteers, interns and students, we know that many folks lose interest when the realities of farming kick in. Our application process requires potential members to address these issues up front. We lose about 40% of our applicants at this point.
5. Applicants that do respond are automatically moved to the next and final level, which is a tour of the farm, meeting current AmeriCorps members and completing an in-person panel interview. From this final group we select primary candidates and backup candidates. We inform each candidate of their status and require a written confirmation of acceptance. Finally we build our list based on meeting the various needs of all 3 placement sites. We also inform 2-3 candidates of their "standby" status. These are folks prepared to accept the position after the program begins, within 30 days of the start of the program. In both year 1 and year 2 we lost one candidate within the first 30 days of the program, for a variety of reasons. We have now learned the importance of having alternate candidates.

How do we generate candidates? We have extensive ties in the community and use the following methods to identify potential candidates:

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- A. References from existing farming policy organizations, farms and other non-profits;
- B. Mid Region Council of Governments "LandLink" program. This is an on-line listing of farming related resources for New Mexico.
- C. New Mexico State University. Through Extension , we can access students in agriculture studies.
- D. University of New Mexico (UNM).
- E. Egrants postings
- F. Our own website, Facebook and twitter accounts
- G. Word of mouth from existing members and RGCF staff.
- H. Our Named Partners resources- AFSC and Extension (postings, websites, announcements, etc.)

In year one we successfully recruited 9 members- 100% of our slots. All successfully exited from the program with full or partial education awards. We had 2 members in 2010 who left the program early due to allowable medical issues. They both received partial education awards and were successfully exited from the program. For year 2 we have successfully recruited 12 members- 100% of our slots. All are on track to successfully complete the program.

ORIENTATION OF MEMBERS

Members receive a full Orientation handbook, a 52 page document containing all necessary policies, forms, helpful information, etc. Below are the Orientation Topics of the class of 2011/2012:

Thursday, September 1, 2011, 8:00 a.m.- 5:00

8:00-8:30 Coffee and muffins

8:30 a.m. Welcome by Minor Morgan, Executive Director and Stephanie Dobbie, Board President

9:00-9:30 Introduction of staff Board, community members and City staff.

9:30- 12:00 Vision for AmeriCorps: What is AmeriCorps and how can it change your life: US

Representative Martin Heinrich, Romain Serna, NM Commission Director

10:30-11:30 "Why what we do matters- Building our Soil" demonstration by USDA staff

11:30-12:30 Overview of RGCF: "Public Farming on Public Land in the Public Interest"

12:30-1:30 pm: Potluck lunch provided by the Board! (at the Barn)

1:00-4:30 pm: Walking Tour of the farm

Friday, September 2, 2010, 8:00 a.m.- 5:00

8:00-8:30 More goodies and coffee (farmers love coffee!)

8:30-12:00 "The Nuts and Bolts!": a variety of administrative and practical topics

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Lunch: 12:00-1:30 pm: Local, Ayurvedic cooking in the North Valley: Anna Purna Restaurant
1:30- 5:30(?) Group tour of Extension program, Hubble House, AFSC plots in south valley

MEMBER TRAINING:

We have several elements to assure on-going training of all members: "Jam Sessions" every 2 weeks, scheduled off-site field trips, farm skills training, annual organic farming conference, "Winter Work Crew", site trips to other AmeriCorps programs, scheduled Service Days, web-based tutorials, mentorship with RGCF staff, NMCCV sponsored training and events and self-directed research using our library of materials. We also devote one "Jam Session" to AmeriCorps "Prohibited Activities". Proof of training and Acknowledgement of Understanding is maintained in each members' file.

MEMBER SUPERVISION

Members are supervised on a daily basis by our Chief Farmer, AmeriCorps Director and Education Director at the main RGCF site. Site Supervision is provided by Don Bustos/Sayrah Namaste at AFSC and Joran Viers at Bernalillo County Extension. In addition to direct supervision, we have a strong "team farming" model composed of 4 Teams with an AmeriCorps Lead, weekly farm task meetings, a "communication center" bulletin board and a Senior AmeriCorps Lead (a 2nd year AmeriCorps member). Note: the Senior AmeriCorps Lead member does NOT provide supervision of other members. They serve as a mentor and Task Leader as they are familiar with all phases of the farm operation.

OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

We measure our overall performance by reviewing 3 types of information:

- A. Our AmeriCorps Performance Measures
- B. Qualitative feedback from surveys of our members, partners, farm sites and others.
- C. Review of a specific set of quantitative metrics that correspond to each of three I identified Problems the program is addressing.

Collectively this data is outlined in our Annual Overall Program Evaluation (See Section 4). A brief discussion of each area follows:

Performance Measures

We have selected the Focus Area of Environmental Stewardship, which is a tier 2 Priority. Within this Focus Area we have selected National Performance Measure EN4: Parks Improved. This is an aligned

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Performance Measure within the Environmental Stewardship Focus Area. Further we have selected the Service Category "At-risk Ecosystems Improvement":

Qualitative Surveys

We complete annual surveys with our 2 named partners AFSC and Bernalillo County Extension, focusing on process issues. We survey our AmeriCorps members twice yearly. We survey the participating farms that receive services from the Winter Work Crew. We survey our Board of Directors as to their understanding and commitment to AmeriCorps. Our Education Director also completes surveys on the groups and students that visit the farm.

Metrics

Our metrics are very specific quantitative data sets that target the three Identified Problems our program is addressing. The data sets are:

Problem #1: Increase amount of healthy food grown for our community. Metrics are: lbs. of food delivered to our school system and other non-profits; lbs. of food donated to shelters/others; types of food crops grown

Problem #2: Improve the soil quality, conserve water and maintain wildlife habitat. Metrics are: Total water usage of our sub-surface drip irrigation system; Crop specific water use data on drip system; Percentage of soil organic matter; Percentage of soil as active carbon fraction; Soil micronutrients.

Problem #3: Need to train the next generation of farmers. Metrics are: # of AmeriCorps members successfully completing the program; # of community garden members; # of volunteers coming to the farm; # of education groups that attend the farm; # of youth enrolled in the Summer Farm Camp.

VOLUNTEERS AT RGCF

RGCF has an extensive volunteer program. We have our "docent" program whereby interested individuals make a one year commitment for periodic volunteering, typically twice monthly for 4 hours. We also have dozens of groups volunteer for single day (or half day) farming experiences. Many of the volunteers at RGCF have come to us through participation in school groups. Typically, a school group will send 30-60 students for a half day farm experience and several parents will

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accompany them to assist. RGCF also works closely with the Mayor's Office of Volunteerism. (MOVE). Through the MOVE website, we receive many calls and volunteers. With the addition of the AmeriCorps program we are seeing our volunteer program grow, both in quantity and quality.

AmeriCorps members interact with most volunteer groups coming to the farm, particularly the community garden. Community members volunteer 2 days per week and work alongside AmeriCorps members in completing community garden tasks. Our community garden coordinator is an AmeriCorps member and has made special efforts to enlist community participation. Outreach to schools, working with the Master Gardeners and postings on Facebook are some of the activities our AmeriCorps members do to enhance and bring to the farm community volunteers. The community garden has approximately 150 active users who grow their own food, donate food to other community organizations and preserve the land and soil. One of the most positive benefits is the impact our AmeriCorps members have on the community volunteers. We work closely with another non-profit that works with the developmentally disabled (Adelante of Albuquerque). The interactions between our AmeriCorps members and the Adelante clients enriches both. These efforts contribute dramatically to achieving our overall mission at the farm.

Organizational Capability

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING

RGCF is in a unique position to be an AmeriCorps Program Services Agency. We have been in existence for 15 years and have an excellent relationship with City, State and local non-profit agencies.

We have implemented a number of complex and rigorous grants including:

- A \$250,000 Food Security grant from the USDA CSREES program.
- A \$100,000 drip irrigation water conservation grant from the USDA NRCS program.
- Several grants from the New Mexico Department of Agriculture.
- A \$50,000 organic research grant from the USDA

In January of 2008 we became a placement site for AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers, and in 2010 we began as an AmeriCorps Program Service Agency. We are now in our full 2nd year of AmeriCorps. In our first fiscal audit, in 2011, the State Auditor stated: "This is one of the strongest first year programs I have audited. You will only be cited in 3 areas- normally a start-up program is cited in 6-10 areas." This auditor sent written correspondence acknowledging the high quality of our accounting.

RGCF currently has 6 paid staff: Executive Director, Chief Farmer, Education Director, Bookkeeper, Database Specialist/Office Manager and Events Coordinator. The Executive Director and Chief

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Farmer are the lead personnel for the AmeriCorps grant although all staff are involved. Our Chief Farmer has many years in organic farming and staff supervision. The RGCF Board of Directors fully support the AmeriCorps program and have created a Board run "AmeriCorps Support Committee". Activities of this committee include: arranging social events for members, providing food at our bi-monthly Jam Sessions, addressing housing and other material needs of new members, and general support. The AmeriCorps budget accounts for approximately 40% of the RGCF annual budget.

We have a very strong fundraising program. Since 2008 we have written and been funded for 41 separate grants ranging from large federal grants to local Foundations. We have identified 4 local Foundations that we will apply to for match support. Each of these foundations has funded us in the past. Between grant writing and sales of our products we are confident we will be able to meet all match requirements of the AmeriCorps grant.

Over the past year we have worked closely with our State Commission, NMCCV and complied with all requests and requirements. We are current in EGrants and OnCorp with all reports.

SUSTAINABILITY

AmeriCorps involvement in our 3 farm sites is building the infrastructure so that sustainable farming as a whole in Bernalillo county will be much stronger. There is a constant balance between using soil for "cash crops" and supporting soil enrichment. With AmeriCorps support, our farms have less pressure to turn every field into a "cash crop". At RGCF we are also seeing a major growth in our educational programs. This "deepening" of our programs will serve us well in the future as we become less reliant on AmeriCorps. We also see an expansion of our involvement with many of our traditional partners: Bernalillo County Extension office, New Mexico State University, the NM Department of Agriculture, the NM field office of the USDA. Our increased involvement has opened up new opportunities that would not have been possible without AmeriCorps. For example, last year the USDA designated RGCF as a "demonstration" site for NM. This is in large part due to having the extra resources AmeriCorps provides to comply with the various requirements of being a demonstration site.

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Adherence to AmeriCorps and NMCCV Standards is very important to RGCF. We achieve this through activities including: Board review of member's surveys, audit reports and member exit data;

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monthly staff meetings that review AmeriCorps progress; close communication with our State Commission, NMCCV; an external review of our financial records by a third party CPA and other activities. We also have regular communications and meetings with our site supervisors. Every year we review our Member Position Descriptions to assure our members do not engage in Prohibited Activities.

ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

We have a 100% compliance with enrollment and retention. For year one we filled all 9 slots- they all exited with a full or partial education award. We have filled all 12 slots for 2011.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

COST EFFECTIVENESS

We are requesting funding for a three year period, with 88% of the CNCS requested funds covering the cost of 12 full time member slots. We do not anticipate the need to increase the number of member positions over the 3 years, nor do we anticipate the need for a budgetary increase from year to year. After 2012/2013 our match requirements increase above the 24%. We do anticipate increasing costs in the area of insurance and health care, but plan on meeting this increased cost through our agency funds. We expect increasing costs to correspond to our increasing match requirement. Our MSY has not increased from 2011/2012- we are requesting the same MSY.

We have refined our budget process and have a very good understanding of how to allocate and manage the funds. For example we have learned which types of line items lend themselves to Foundation Funding (Farmer salary support) and which don't (workers comp insurance). We allocate CNCS funds for those items most difficult to obtain outside funding for. Our budget request for 2012/2013 is identical to 2011/2012. Our MSY for 2012/2013 is identical to 2011/2012, even though we have seen a significant rise in some areas (health care costs and workers comp insurance).

CASH MATCH FUNDS

For our current year (2011) we have generated cash match funds from 2 sources. Approximately half of our current needed funds (\$15,000) are coming from a grant by the McCune Foundation. The remaining portion of match funds are provided through sales of products to various outlets. For 2012 we have identified 4 foundations and a new funding stream to meet our cash match. The 4 local NM foundations we will be targeting are: Alfred Pierce Foundation, McCune Foundation, Albuquerque Community Foundation and the Junior League of Albuquerque. We have received funds in the past

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from each of these organizations. We have confidence some of these foundations will fund our match.

We also have great confidence in our newest funding stream: a summer Youth Farm Camp. Our Education Director has done extensive research and determined that we will be able to generate the complete cash match requirement from this program alone, if necessary. The AmeriCorps members will play an important role in the Youth Camp.

Finally, review of our IRS form 990 reveals that we have ended every fiscal year since our founding 15 years ago in the black. 2011 will be no different. We have a deep well of support from individuals, organizations and public entities. We have every confidence we will be able to meet our match requirements for 2012/2013 and beyond.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

Annual Overall Program Evaluation- AmeriCorps Program Services
Rio Grande Community Farm- 2012/2013

Once yearly Rio Grande Community Farm (RGCF) in collaboration with its 2 Named Partners- New Mexico State University and American Friends Service Committee- will perform a thorough evaluation of all aspects of the AmeriCorps program to include:

1. Progress on established AmeriCorps Performance Measures.
2. Survey results from participating non-profit farms.
3. Summary of AmeriCorps member's periodic feedback.
4. Review of organizational quality measures for Rio Grande Community Farms.
5. Review of each partner organization satisfaction assessment with AmeriCorps.
6. Analysis of our compliance with our stated program model: number of members hired, trained and placed, length of placement, etc.
7. Review of farm production data to determine overall improvement in farm operations.
8. Summary of RGCF Board of Directors feedback about the AmeriCorps program.
9. Summary of Feedback from the City of Albuquerque regarding overall satisfaction with the AmeriCorps program.
10. Summary of feedback from a variety of community organizations impacted by the AmeriCorps program.
11. Summary of Metrics that address each of the three I identified Problems.

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Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

The following are responses based on questions made to the program on 4/20/2012.

NMSU office space is provided to the member(s) assigned to work with the Bernalillo County Extension Office and consists of shared office space with access to a computer, office furniture and related services for the purpose of planning and researching projects.

Health Care: It has been our experience that many members come to the program with health insurance through their parents. All members needing insurance will be provided insurance. If there is a greater need than what is funded through the CNS portion, than RGCF will provide the premium and pay for it with one of our major funding streams. This will increase the RGCF cash match portion, but will not affect the CNS portion. All members will receive health insurance.

Member Supervision: Members receive strong supervision for all 3 placement sites. Our primary site at Los Poblanos fields has a full time and on site supervisor thru our Chief Farmer Dan Schuster. In addition, the Program Director Minor Morgan is present at the site a minimum of 3 days per week, along with Dan Schuster. Also our Education Director is present at the site for periods throughout the week. Supervision of members has proved to be good. Supervision at the Extension placement site is accomplished thru Extension staff and NMSU staff located at the 2 primary sites where members conduct work: the Extension main office and the historic Hubbell House in the South Valley. Supervision of members placed with the American Friends Service is achieved thru the AFSC supervisor Sayrah Namaste.

Training: All training is provided by RGCF staff and paid for thru one of our funding streams of grants, fee based programming and sales of agricultural products..

Impact and success of AmeriCorps program. Success is measured on many levels. We have seen an increase in the food crops we are able to grow and distribute to our school system and our local food cooperative. We have seen improvement in the land itself through utilizing "minimal till" farming

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methods. We have seen our community garden program double in number of individuals served, due to AmeriCorps.

Community education. AmeriCorps members are not directly involved in educational tours or the summer camp. However they are indirectly involved in assuring these programs succeed through their farming work. For the Summer Camp, AmeriCorps members are preparing a specific area of the farm- growing crops, weeding, watering, starting plants in the greenhouse. This area will be utilized by the kids in the summer camp. The same is true for educational tours. AmeriCorps members are not leading the tours, but are preparing the vegetable plots that are featured on the tours. The greatest degree of direct involvement in education is through our community garden. This consists of 2 acres with 110 rows, shared by 80 different individuals, groups, churches, etc. One AmeriCorps member manages this program full time and is assisted by a number of other AmeriCorps members. The community garden provides ample education to all community garden members- this would not be possible without AmeriCorps.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Already on File at CNCS

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable