

**CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNICATION:**

**ITEM \_\_\_\_\_**

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

**99-114**

**SYNOPSIS -**

**AGENDA:**

MARCH 22, 1999

To approve submittal of AmeriCorps grant application to the Iowa Volunteer Council for the management and coordination of 20 members at 1,700 hour per member.

**SUBJECT:**

AMERICORPS  
GRANT  
APPLICATION

**FISCAL IMPACT -**

Upon receipt of the grant, \$267,000 will be needed to cover the living stipend and supervision of 20 AmeriCorps members. These funds will be provided by both public and private sources. Approximately \$67,000 will be funded through anticipated savings in the Park and Recreation Department Operating Budget and \$200,000 will be derived from private sources. Submittal of this grant application does not obligate the City to any expenditures.

**TYPE:**

**RESOLUTION**  
ORDINANCE  
RECEIVE/FILE

**RECOMMENDATION -**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

DONALD M. TRIPP  
PARK AND  
RECREATION  
DIRECTOR

**Approval to submit AmeriCorps grant application to the Iowa Volunteer Council.**

**BACKGROUND -**

The AmeriCorps program is comparable to an urban Peace Corps. Members are recruited to provide service projects worth 1,700 hours over a 12-month period. In exchange, members receive development training and can earn an educational award, provided by the State to be placed toward future education expenses or payment toward student loan debts.

The primary objectives of the AmeriCorps grant are:

- To recruit and coordinate volunteer efforts in bringing members of the community into the City park and open

space system to enhance the quality of life and leisure experiences of the residents of Des Moines.

- To develop members in identification of environmental and beautification strategies within the City park and open space system to address and correct problems inherent within the system that have not/cannot be addressed by City employees.
- To expand partnerships with local neighborhoods in cooperation with the Des Moines Independent School District for educating and assisting with neighborhood community gardens.
- To conserve, restore, and sustain parks, recreation facilities and services provided to the community.

The local AmeriCorps project was established four years ago in the Enterprise Community and managed by the Des Moines Independent School District. Members are considered volunteers; however, they do receive a living stipend of approximately \$5.15 per hour, paid by the contract manager.

Over the past several years, the Park and Recreation Department has received the services of members to support special clean-up efforts, such as the Flowers on Fleur beautification effort. Within the next month, the Park and Recreation Department will bring a 28E Agreement between the City and the Des Moines Independent School District before the City Council to retain ten members. This effort will dedicate one member toward the Community Gardening program; four members will be trained to recruit and develop partnerships with local business, neighborhood associations, and civic groups to establish a grass-root volunteer corps and "Adopt-A-Park" program; and the remaining five members will be coordinated and supervised as an environmental/beautification crew to assist Park and Recreation Department staff in making Des Moines a more beautiful place to work and live.

The grant application for the AmeriCorps program in the Year 2000 is due April 1, 1999. The concept is to have the City take over the management and operations of the program with the citizens of Des Moines receiving the direct benefit of the members' efforts. It is anticipated that the City would recruit 20 members annually to complete service projects throughout the City. This would include continuation of the grass-roots volunteer recruitment and Adopt-A-Park programs.

If the grant application is accepted, an agreement between the City and the Iowa Volunteer Council will be drafted and presented to the City Council at a future meeting.

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