

**CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNICATION:**

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

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

**99-225**

**SYNOPSIS -**

**AGENDA:**

MAY 17, 1999

To approve the AmeriCorps 28E Agreement by and between the City and the Des Moines Independent Community School District for ten AmeriCorp members to provide 17,000 hours of park service projects.

**SUBJECT:**

AMERICORPS 28E  
AGREEMENT WITH  
DES MOINES  
INDEPENDENT  
COMMUNITY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

**FISCAL IMPACT -**

The \$100,000 is allocated in the General Fund in Fiscal Year 1998/1999.

**TYPE:**

**RESOLUTION**  
ORDINANCE  
RECEIVE/FILE

**RECOMMENDATION -**

**Approval of AmeriCorps 28E Agreement by and between the City and the Des Moines Independent Community School District for ten AmeriCorps members to provide 17,000 hours of park service projects.**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

DONALD M. TRIPP  
PARK AND  
RECREATION  
DIRECTOR

**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 for the AmeriCorps program 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/can not 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 AmeriCorps program was a bipartisan federal program designed to become self-sustaining by its fourth year. The accepted grantees were provided 100 percent funding in year one and received 25 percent less each additional year. The transition allowed for local agencies to secure funding to make the AmeriCorps program self-sustaining by their fourth year. The funding needed on an annual basis is for a living stipend of approximately \$5.15 per hour. The State provides educational awards in the amount of \$3,300 for each member who completes their service hours at no additional expense to the agency administrator.

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. The Des Moines Independent Community School District Board approved the 28E Agreement at their regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, April 20, 1999.

Over the past three years, the Park and Recreation Department has received thousands of hours of service of members to support special improvements and park maintenance efforts such as the Flowers on Fleur project. Previously, AmeriCorps was not dedicated solely to City park projects. This agreement provides for ten members being assigned to City parks. Ten additional members will work through the Des Moines Independent School District through other funding sources. Each of the ten members provided to the City will work 1,700 hours.

The Park and Recreation Department will dedicate one AmeriCorps member toward the Community Gardening

program; four members to recruit and develop partnerships with local businesses, neighborhood associations and civic groups to establish a grassroots volunteer corps and create an "Adopt-a-Park" program; and the remaining five members will be coordinated as an environmental/beautification crew assisting Park and Recreation Department staff in improving City parks.

Accomplishments of the AmeriCorp program over the past three years include:

- Recruiting 1,500 volunteers.
- Generating 8,499 volunteer hours.
- Providing 75,556 service hours from members.
- Providing translation services and outreach in Vietnamese, Sudanese, and Hispanic-Latino communities.
- Planning and implementing Evelyn K. Davis summer program serving over 120 youth and creating connections between neighborhood associations, churches, Police Department, Park and Recreation Department, and businesses.
- 100 percent of members have either enrolled in school, are continuing to serve as AmeriCorp members, or have become gainfully employed.