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A. Supporting Statement For Paperwork Reduction Submission: *Evaluation of Youth Corps: 18-Month Follow-up*

A.1. Circumstances Requiring the Collection of Data

The Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) is requesting approval for follow-up data collection on the impacts of participation on individuals enrolled in youth corps programs. For this evaluation, we are implementing a random assignment evaluation of a nationally representative sample of youth corps programs.

We received OMB approval for baseline data collection for this evaluation on May 31, 2006 (OMB # 3045-0119). Baseline data collection was completed on June 4, 2007. This submission requests approval for the follow-up survey data collection for study participants approximately 18 months later.

Youth corps are state and local programs engaging primarily young adults (age 16–25) in a combination of national service, job training, and education. The majority of corpsmembers enroll in corps looking for a second chance to succeed in life. During their period of service, corpsmembers work in teams of 8–12, usually engaging in intensive service projects (mentoring young children, responding to natural disasters, and directly addressing unmet community and environmental needs) four days a week and participating in a comprehensive education, life skills, and civic engagement program on the fifth day. In return for their efforts, corpsmembers generally receive: 1) guidance by adult leaders who serve as mentors and role models; 2) a minimum-wage based stipend; 3) classroom training to improve basic competences and, if necessary, secure a GED or high school diploma; 4) on-the-job experiential and environmental education; 5) general and technical job skills training; 6) a wide range of support services; and 7) in some cases, a post-service AmeriCorps education award. Approximately 85 percent of the youth corps in operation nationwide receive AmeriCorps funding.¹ The study will provide an opportunity to use rigorous and scientifically based research methods to examine the power of youth corps to improve the lives of youth. In addition, the study design allows for an exploration of the differential effects associated with the three levels of participation: full-time, part-time, and limited part-time.

A previous study of youth corps, conducted over a decade ago by the Corporation, found participation in youth corps led to increases in employment and earnings as well as reduced levels of criminal arrests. It also identified numerous other outcomes for subgroups defined by gender and race/ethnicity, in particular for African-American men. However, numerous changes have occurred in the last decade, emphasizing the need for an updated evaluation of youth corps programs. First, attention to the field of service participation has grown dramatically. Since the commencement of the previous youth corps evaluation in 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the parent organization of the AmeriCorps program, has been expanded dramatically to address our

¹ Corpsmembers may be supported both by regular AmeriCorps funding and as Education Award only recipients.

country's domestic service needs. Likewise, President George Bush introduced the USA Freedom Corps in order to mobilize service participation nationwide.

Furthermore, community service research is a relatively young field, and the most sophisticated instruments and measures to examine service and civic engagement outcomes have been developed in the past decade.² In addition to academic discussions on emergent techniques in evaluating community programming,³ this recent body of research is the most informative in the field to date. The surveys used to collect data for this research have been constructed using the most up-to-date and sensitive instruments to offer data of a higher quality.

Finally, the current economic environment is substantially different from the economic environment of the early 1990s. Disadvantaged youth from the 1993/1994 cohort of the youth corps study may have faced several challenges with respect to obtaining education and employment opportunities prior to participation; the results of the original study found the program's strongest impacts to be on participants' employment and earnings.⁴ However, what were formerly traditional challenges in the job market present tremendous hurdles in today's economy. More than half of current corpsmembers nationwide dropped out of high school prior to entering the corps. For these youth, jobs are particularly hard to find. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the sharpest decline in labor force participation between the first quarter of 2001 and the second quarter of 2003 occurred among persons age 16–24.⁵ In addition, the number of teenage Americans will increase vastly between 2000 and 2010. These numbers, in the context of the current economy, imply increased difficulties and competition in the world of work and wages.⁶ In the wake of the current recession, programs connecting disadvantaged youth to education and employment opportunities will be even more essential for making a difference in their lives. The difficulties of the economic environment warrant a new examination of the impacts of youth corps programs on participants.

² See Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster; Abt Associates Inc., *Long-Term Impacts on Service Participants: Post-Program Supplemental Survey*, Cambridge, MA, June 2002; Saguaro Seminar, *Civic Engagement in America: Social Capital Community Benchmark (Survey) Final Version*, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, DL14407/14408, August 4, 2000; Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., Brady, H. E., & Nie, N., *American Citizen Participation Study, 1990* [Data file], Chicago: University of Chicago, National Opinion Research Center, 1990; Independent Sector, *Giving and Volunteering in the United States*, Washington, D.C., Independent Sector, 2001; Independent Sector, *Volunteering and Giving Among Teenagers*, Washington, D.C; 1996.

³ Fulbright-Anderson, K., A. C. Kubisch, and J. P. Connell, eds., *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives: Vol. 2, Theory, Measurement, and Analysis*. The Aspen Institute, Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families, 1998. For a discussion on evaluating youth development initiatives, see Public/Private Ventures, *Youth Development: Issues, Challenges and Directions*. Philadelphia, PA, Fall 2000.

⁴ Jastrzab, J., J. Blomquist, J. Masker, and L. Orr, *Youth Corps: Promising Strategies for Young People and Their Communities*. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates Inc., February 1997.

⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Participation During Recent Labor Market Downturns*. September 2003. Available at <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ils/pdf/opbils51.pdf>.

⁶ Public/Private Ventures, *Youth Development: Issues, Challenges and Directions*. Philadelphia, PA, Fall 2000.

The Corporation has an interest in the study of youth corps because the results of this study will enable the Corporation to fulfill its mandate to support programs that: 1) instill work ethic and sense of public service in participants; and 2) enhance skills development and educational level and opportunities for participants (as detailed in Section 199H 42 USC 12655). Also, this study complements the Corporation’s strategic plan, specifically addressing two of our ten key guiding principles: #4) to measure and continually improve our programs’ benefits to service recipients, participants, community organization, and our national culture of service and #9) to support continued civic engagement, leadership, and public service careers for our programs’ participants and community volunteers.

A.2. Purposes and Uses of the Data

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a government-owned agency established in 1993 by the National Community Service Act. The Corporation’s mission is to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in community-based national service that is intended to address the Nation’s education, public safety, human, and environmental needs in order to achieve direct and demonstrable results. The Corporation’s programs and public-private partnerships involve national and community-based service organizations, corporations, foundations, colleges, universities, K–12 schools, and state and municipal governments.

The purpose of the *Evaluation of Youth Corps: 18-Month Follow-up* is to measure changes on behavioral and attitudinal outcomes resulting from participation in youth corps. The study will treat participation in youth corps as the primary intervention, and will address the following key research question:

What are the impacts of youth corps participation on corpsmembers, with respect to both behavioral and attitudinal outcomes, including:

- *Civic Engagement and Citizenship*
- *Educational Attainment*
- *Employment Outcomes*
- *Workplace and Life Skills*
- *Avoidance of Risk Behavior*
- *Personal Development*

We expect that the findings from the study will contribute broadly to the fields of civic engagement and youth development research, and will provide valuable information about the effectiveness of these programs on the youth they serve. The study is grounded in the hypothesis that participation in youth corps can generate positive behavioral and attitudinal outcomes in the critical areas listed above. We hypothesize that successful achievement of these outcomes can alter the social and economic prospects of disadvantaged or at-risk youth.

The Corporation is heavily invested in learning more about “what works” for at-risk young adults. Service programs such as youth corps are founded on the assumption that participants will achieve higher levels of selected behavioral and attitudinal outcomes than non-participants. The proposed study will address the impacts of participation in youth corps, providing valuable information to the youth development field about the effectiveness of investments by public entities that directly affect

at-risk young adults. Moreover, we anticipate that the results from the study will be broadly disseminated to practitioners and other policymakers in the field, helping them to apply relevant findings and strengthen youth service programs.

In addition, since many youth corps are also AmeriCorps programs, the study will enable the Corporation for National and Community Service to make more informed decisions about effective investments in youth programming. The proposed design of the study is responsive to recent findings of the White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth (2003), which recommends that randomized experiments be “given the greatest weight in shaping what we know about what works.” It also reflects the Corporation’s commitment to supporting the most rigorous evaluation strategies.

In addition, the individual corps will benefit from participating in the study. This study employs the most rigorous research standards, enabling the local corps to inform program stakeholders, government officials, funders, and their communities about their program model and its impact on youth’s lives. Participation in the study will most likely result in benefits for the corps in terms of community support, fund-raising, and youth applicants.

The research will include two data collections: a baseline survey for youth corpsmembers and a comparison group (completed May 2007), and a follow-up survey for youth corpsmembers and for the comparison group at 18 months post-baseline. This submission requests approval for the follow-up survey data collection. The Corporation was granted approval for the baseline survey data collection on May 31, 2006 (OMB # 3045-0119).

A.3. Use of Information Technology to Reduce Burden

This study will rely on baseline data gathered from a self-administered survey of eligible applicants to youth corps, and a follow-up survey to be completed by youths who completed the baseline survey.

Baseline surveys were completed by youths during the application process between June 2006 and June 2007. When individual youth corps programs had the technological capacity to administer applications electronically, surveys were administered electronically to alleviate administrative burden on individual program sites and on the respondents. When this was not possible, responses were collected in a paper version of the instrument in conjunction with other paper forms generally used during the corps application process.

Follow-up surveys will be conducted with all youths who completed the baseline survey. They will be conducted by phone using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) technology in order to minimize burden on respondents. This method of data collection reduces error and minimizes the number of times survey respondents have to be re-contacted for additional or clarifying information.

The information needed for this evaluation cannot be obtained through any existing information technology. It is not routinely recorded by the Corporation in any electronic information medium that could be adapted to obtain the data required to address the research objectives.

A.4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

Efforts to avoid duplication include a review of the Corporation's administrative agency reporting requirements and of existing studies of Corporation programs. Based on this review, it was concluded that no other data are currently being collected to answer this study's research question about youth corps. Existing data can and will be used whenever possible.

A.5. Small Business

No small businesses are involved as respondents in the proposed follow-up data collection effort. Respondents are all individuals who are eligible applicants to youth corps programs.

A.6. Consequences of Not Collecting the Information

This submission is for a one-time 18-month follow-up data collection necessary to assess the characteristics and experiences of youths who participate in a youth corps program or are part of our control group. Without these data we will not be able to determine the effects of youth corps on the civic engagement, educational attainment, employment, and other outcomes for corpsmembers detailed above as compared to those youth that did not receive youth corps services.

A.7. Special Circumstances Justifying Inconsistencies With Guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6

There are no special circumstances required for the collection of information in this follow-up data collection.

A.8. Consultation Outside the Agency

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Corporation published a notice in the *Federal Register* announcing the agency's intention to request an OMB review of data collection activities. This notice was published on Thursday, May 17, 2007 in volume 72, number 95, on pages 27805-27806 and provided a 60-day period for public comments. A copy of the Federal Register notice for this information collection is included in Appendix B. There were no public comments submitted to the Corporation in response to the Federal Register notice.

The follow-up survey was developed by the Corporation's contractor, Abt Associates Inc. The initial design phase of the study and the development of the baseline survey instrument involved face-to-face and telecommunication meetings between Abt Associates Inc., The Corps Network and their affiliates, and an expert panel of individuals with substantive knowledge in fields related to the intended outcomes. The design of the follow-up survey was also discussed at these meetings and the expert panel provided some recommendations for the development of the follow-up survey at that time. In addition, a final draft of the follow-up survey was reviewed by members of the expert panel and their comments were incorporated into the final version of the instrument. The experts consulted are listed in Exhibit A-1.

Exhibit A-1**Expert Panel Members**

Constance A. Flanagan, the Pennsylvania State University

Harry Holzer, Ph.D. Georgetown Public Policy Institute

Linda Harris, Center for Law and Social Policy

David Reingold, Ph.D. Indiana University

A number of items from the baseline survey have been repeated in the follow-up survey instrument. Many of the additional follow-up items were chosen from existing surveys, such as the Current Population Survey and the post-program and supplemental surveys used in the AmeriCorps Longitudinal Study.

A.9. Payments or Gifts to Respondents

To offset the burden of completing the follow-up survey, respondents will receive \$20 upon completion of the follow-up survey. This amount is consistent with payments on similar studies, and was found sufficient based on our pre-test of the instrument with former corpsmembers.

A.10. Assurance of Confidentiality

The follow-up data collection plan has been reviewed and approved by the Abt Associates Inc. Institutional Review Board. Every effort will be made to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of respondents. The confidentiality procedures adopted for this study during follow-up data collection, data processing, and analysis will consist of the following:

- All study respondents will be assured that participation in the study is voluntary and the information they provide is confidential to the extent allowed by law and will be used only for the purpose of this research. To ensure data security, all individuals hired by the Corporation's contractor, Abt Associates Inc., are held to strict standards and are required to sign an oath of confidentiality as a condition of employment.
- All study participants signed a consent form before completing the baseline survey, acknowledging their understanding of the confidentiality procedures used in the study. Written consent was also obtained from a parent or guardian of all study respondents between the ages of 16 and 18 before completion of the baseline survey. These consent forms included confidentiality information about both the baseline and follow-up survey.
- Follow-up survey data will be recorded directly into a computer database, using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system, which eliminates the need for responses to be captured on paper. Respondent names will appear only once on computer monitors to telephone interviewers in order for them to reach the appropriate individual; only unique participant identification numbers, not respondent names, will be included in the database. All data files on Abt Associates Inc. multi-user systems will be under the control of a database manager, with access limited to project staff on a "need-to-know" basis only.

- Individuals' identifying information will be maintained separately from completed data collection forms and from computerized data files used for analysis. No respondent identifiers will be contained in public use files made available from the study, and no data will be released in a form that identifies individual corps staff, service providers, corpsmembers, or control group members.

A.11. Questions of a Sensitive Nature

Most of the questions asked in the baseline instrument do not involve questions of a sensitive nature. However, one of the goals of youth corps is to reduce negative behaviors in high-risk youth who are targeted for participation in the program. For this reason, we have included a small number of questions of a sensitive nature. Also, question 69 is a common question asked on many applications for federal programs (e.g., Corporation for National and Community Service Application Form, OMB# 3045-0054; Office of Personnel Management, Form OF-306). This information is not available from other sources.

To protect respondents from discomfort, respondents will be informed that they may skip any questions they wish not to answer, and they may cease participating in the study at any point. Specifically, respondents are told prior to answering this set of questions that, "In this section, we ask some questions that some people may feel are personal. Please remember, other than researchers, no one, not even youth corps staff, employers, family or friends, will see your answers."

The sensitive questions, items 66 through 72, are shown below:

<p>66. In the past 30 days, did you ever drink five or more drinks of wine, beer, or liquor at one time or in one sitting?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">YES NO (GO TO Q67)</p> <p>66a. On about how many different days did you have five or more drinks of wine, beer, or liquor during the past 30 days?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">_____ NUMBER OF DAYS</p> <p>67. In the past 30 days have you used any illegal drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, crack, methamphetamines, hallucinogens, or heroin?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">YES NO (GO TO 68)</p> <p>67a. On about how many different days did you use illegal drugs during the past 30 days?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">_____ NUMBER OF DAYS</p>

68. In the past 12 months, have you ever been arrested for any criminal offense by either a civilian or military court?

YES

NO (GO TO 70)

69. In the past 12 months, have you ever been convicted, or adjudicated as a juvenile offender, of any criminal offense by either a civilian or military court, other than minor traffic violations?

YES

NO (GO TO 70)

69a. In the past 12 months, how many days were you incarcerated?

_____ DAYS

70. In the last year, have you ever ...

	YES	NO
Intentionally damaged or destroyed property that did not belong to you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gotten into a fight at school or work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hurt someone badly enough to need bandages or a doctor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taken something from a store without paying for it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other than from a store, taken something not belonging to you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowingly sold or held stolen goods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Used force to get money or things from someone else	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hit or seriously threatened to hit someone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taken a vehicle without the owner's permission	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broken into a building or vehicle to steal something or to just look around?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helped in a gambling operation, like running numbers or books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting or killing them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

71. During the past 12 months did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?

YES

NO

72. During the past 12 months did you ever seriously consider suicide?

YES

NO

A.12. Estimate of Response Burden

The total burden for the individual is estimated at 60 minutes for treatment group members and 45 minutes for control group members. There is no financial burden, as the survey will be administered during a phone call initiated by Abt Associates' subcontractor, Guideline Inc. Time estimates are based on pre-tests of the survey with four former youth corps members. Exhibit A-2 presents estimates of the reporting burden both for individuals randomly assigned to serve in youth corps and those assigned to the control group.

A.12.1. Number of Respondents, Frequency of Response, and Annual Hour Burden

The follow-up survey will have approximately 2,267 respondents, 1,473 treatment and 794 control, and will take on average 45 to 60 minutes (1 hour for treatment and .75 hours for control) to complete. The follow-up survey will be administered one time. This estimated burden is based on a pre-test of the follow-up instrument with four former youth corps participants.

A.12.2. Hour Burden Estimates by Each Form and Aggregate Hour Burdens

There is a single version of the follow-up survey. The aggregate hour burden ranges from .75 to 1 hour (45-60 minutes). This estimated burden is based on a pre-test of the follow-up instrument with four former youth corps participants.

A.12.3. Estimates of Annualized Cost to Respondents for the Hour Burdens

Exhibit A-2 offers an estimate of reporting burden for a sample of 1,473 treatment and 794 control group respondents to a 45- and 60-minute survey (Appendix A). The Corporation estimates a corpsmembers' average hourly living allowance at \$5.38. Other than their time to complete the survey, there are no direct monetary costs to respondents.

Exhibit A-2

Estimate of Reporting Burden

Data Collection Sources	Number of Respondents	Minutes per Respondent	Response Burden in Hours	Cost/ Hour	Cost to Respondents
Eligible youth corps applicants in treatment group	1,473	60	1,473	\$5.38	\$7,924.74
Eligible youth corps applicants in control group	794	45	595.5	\$5.38	\$3,203.79
Total for all eligible youth corps applicants	2,267	—	2068.5	\$5.38	\$11,128.53

Written consent for participation in the study has already been obtained from the parents of respondents between the ages of 16 and 18. Therefore, the follow-up survey will not impose any burden on the parents of minor respondents.

A.13. Estimate of Total Capital and Startup Costs/Operation and Maintenance Costs to Respondents or Record-Keeper

There are no annualized capital/startup or ongoing operation and maintenance costs involved in collecting the information. Other than their time to complete the surveys, which is estimated in Exhibit A-2, there are no direct monetary costs to respondents.

A.14. Estimates of Costs to the Federal Government

The estimated cost to the Federal Government for the *Evaluation of Youth Corps: 18-Month Follow-up* data collection activities is \$318,651.

A.15. Changes in Burden

No change in burden is requested. This submission to OMB is for an initial request for approval.

A.16. Plans for Publication, Analysis, and Schedule

The Corporation's subcontractor, Abt Associates Inc., will use baseline and follow-up survey data to estimate the impacts of participation in a youth corps program. Random assignment produces treatment and control group members who are comparable in every way except for receipt of treatment. Abt Associates will use a standard *difference-in-means* approach to yield average impact estimates of participation in youth corps programs. This approach compares average outcomes of treatment and control group members; given random assignment, any differences can be attributable to the program. To the extent possible, program effects on various subgroups will also be examined. Subgroups of interest may include race/ethnicity, gender, age, education, and program.

A user-friendly final report will be produced that can be disseminated to a broad audience, including policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. The final report will present the key findings of the impact analysis based on a comparison of corpsmembers with their counterparts in the control group. It will describe any differences between the two groups in terms of educational and employment outcomes, and attitudinal differences. It will also include relevant descriptive characteristics and the results of any variation found between subgroups and by type of program experience. The delivery of the final report, which will be based on the previously completed baseline data collection and this follow-up data collection, is scheduled for 2009.

A.17. Approval to Not Display Expiration Date

No exemption is requested.

A.18. Exceptions to Item 19 of OMB Form 83-1

This submission describing data collection requests no exceptions to the Certificate for Paperwork Reduction Act (5 CFR 1320.9).