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## B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

### B.1. Respondent Universe

The Corporation's contractor, Abt Associates Inc., will collect information for the *Evaluation of Youth Corps: 18-Month Follow-up* on behalf of the Corporation. The contractor is responsible for the design and administration of the surveys that will be used to collect information about youth corpsmembers.

In 2006, a stratified random sample of 22 youth corps programs across the country were selected and agreed to participate in the youth corps study. The 22 youth corps were randomly selected from a universe of 100 programs and a sampling frame of 60 programs that were eligible for the youth corps study.<sup>1</sup> Corps enrolled and served over 21,034 corpsmembers in 2006. Study participants were selected from applicants to the programs selected for participation in the study. A representative sample of 2,267 eligible corpsmembers was randomly assigned to either participate in a youth corps program (treatment) or to be part of the control group. The statistical methods for this collection were approved by OMB under #3045-0119. This information collection request is for the 18-month follow-up for participants in the study.

Exhibit B-1 shows the number of youth corps programs in the universe, the number of youth corpsmembers enrolled in the 2006 program year, the number of youth corps that were sampled and participated in the study, and the number of members in both the treatment and control groups.

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#### Exhibit B-1

##### Population and Sample Size

Population		Sample	
Number of Programs	Number of Members	Number of Programs	Number of Members
100	21,034	22	2,267

A random sample of eligible program applicants was selected from each selected program to yield a total sample of 2,267 youth corps eligible applicants at baseline.

### B.2. Procedures for the Collection of Information/Limitations of the Study

Abt Associates project staff will coordinate with their subcontractor, Guideline Inc., to conduct the follow-up survey. All study participants who completed baseline surveys in 2006 and 2007 will be contacted by telephone to participate in the follow-up survey, which will be conducted using a

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<sup>1</sup> Eligible corps had to be active members of The Corps Network and to have served a minimum of 50 corpsmembers in 2005.

computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system. CATI allows telephone interviewers to read the survey questions on their computer screens and record the survey responses using their keyboards. This technology speeds the conduct of the interviewing by managing question skips and other technical issues associated with the survey questionnaire. It also assures higher quality data by eliminating a separate step for data entry. Conducting the survey by telephone will also be least burdensome to respondents, since they are not required to complete any paperwork and they can complete the survey in their own home.

### **B.2.1. Statistical Methodology for Stratification and Sample Selection**

The approach for the study includes a sample of approximately 2,267 applicants from a randomly selected stratified sample of 22 youth corps programs. Program applicants in the 2006–2007 program year were randomly assigned either to participate in a youth corps program (treatment group) or to a control group. The 22 corps were randomly chosen from all eligible, Corps Network-affiliated youth corps programs. The program group includes full-time, part-time, and limited-part-time corpsmembers in their initial year of service. The methodology for stratification and sample selection was approved by OMB under #3045-0119. This collection is for the 18-month follow-up for participants in the study.

### **B.2.2. Estimation Procedure**

For producing population-based estimates of totals, percentages and means, each respondent member will have a sampling weight. This weight combines the base weight that is the inverse of the probability of selection of a member and an adjustment for non-response. This adjustment is to account for members who are in the sample but do not respond to the follow-up survey. Every effort will be made to minimize the non-sampling errors in the estimates by maximizing the response rates and taking steps to reduce response errors.

In addition to the program sample of youth corpsmembers, the study also drew a sample of control group members in order to assess the impact of the program. An impact study is generally so defined because it attempts to identify program effects that cause the changes in outcomes. Thus, a study of impacts requires the identification of an appropriate control group. Control group members are similar to the treatment group, and were eligible for the youth corps program, but through random assignment are excluded from participation in the youth corps for the study period.

Because this study relies on random assignment, estimation of program impacts is relatively simple and straightforward. Random assignment produces treatment and control group members who are comparable in every way except for receipt of treatment. Therefore, we can interpret any statistically significant differences in outcomes as effects of participation in youth corps. Abt Associates Inc. will use a standard difference-in-means approach to yield average impact estimates of participation. 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, we will also examine program effects on various subgroups by splitting the sample and estimating the effects on each subgroup using data only for that subgroup. Subgroups of interest may include race/ethnicity, gender, age, and education. Finally, we will explore the differential effects of selected program experiences, including program intensity (part-time vs. full-time duration) and AmeriCorps funding status (AmeriCorps funded vs. non-AmeriCorps funded participants); this analysis will be conducted

on the treatment group alone, since we will not have comparable data from the control group.<sup>2</sup> We plan to consult with the members of the expert panel (Exhibit A-1, page A-6 in Part A) to provide input on any key analytic decisions.

**B.2.3. Degree of Accuracy Needed for the Purpose Described in the Justification**

A sample size of 2,267 was randomly assigned during the baseline data collection period. Therefore, we will attempt to collect follow-up data on this sample. We estimate in Exhibit B-2 the sample sizes necessary to conduct subgroup analysis. As indicated in the exhibit, there are reasonable gains in precision as measured by minimum detectable effect sizes (MDEs), as the sample size increases from 500 to 2,000 per group. Therefore, our ability to conduct subgroup analysis by the levels of participation (full-time, part-time and limited part-time) and AmeriCorps funding status (AmeriCorps funded vs. non-AmeriCorps funded participants) will need to be determined based on the response rates for these subgroups after follow-up.

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**Exhibit B-2**

**Minimum Detectable Effect Sizes**

Sample Size, Treatment Group	Sample Size, Control/Comparison Group	Minimum Detectable Effect Size (MDEs) <sup>a</sup>
500	500	.078
750	750	.064
1000	1000	.055
1500	1500	.045
2000	2000	.039

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<sup>a</sup> Based on 80 percent power at the .05 significance level (two-tail test), 80 percent survey response rate.

**B.2.4. Unusual Problems Requiring Specialized Sampling Procedures**

There are no unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures.

**B.2.5. Use of Periodic (Less Frequent Than Annual) Data Collection Cycles**

The follow-up survey is a one-time data collection necessary to determine the differences between youth corpsmembers and their counterparts in the control group 18 months after they were randomly assigned to one of these two groups.

**B.3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal With Issues of Nonresponse**

All eligible youths who completed the baseline survey during the youth corps application process will be asked to complete the follow-up survey. We expect the fact that respondents have already completed one similar survey and are familiar with the study to encourage most respondents to participate. The instrument was developed in coordination with The Corps Network and the

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<sup>2</sup> The feasibility of various subgroup analyses will be determined by the size of the sample, and the size of the subgroups being explored.

Corporation, with consideration to length and reading level so it is simple for youth to complete. In addition, the instrument was pre-tested with a diverse group of four current corpmembers to ensure usability.

Guideline Inc. will contact all individuals 10 months after completion of the baseline survey to verify their current contact information. This will increase the likelihood of locating these individuals to conduct the follow-up survey 18 months after completion of the baseline survey. When conducting the follow-up survey, a minimum of seven telephone calls will be made to individuals who may be difficult to reach. Phone numbers will be called at different times of the day and on different days to increase the likelihood of completing the telephone interview. In addition, a 1-800 telephone number will be left with hard-to-reach individuals for callbacks at their convenience. This methodology and level of calling persistence improves the response rate and minimizes non-response bias.

We expect to achieve at least an 80 percent response rate on completion of the follow-up survey.

#### **B.4. Tests of Procedures or Methods**

The survey instrument has been drafted and has undergone two reviews: (1) an internal review conducted by Abt Associates Inc.'s Internal Review Board and (2) a pre-test with four former youth corpmembers. In order to accurately determine the burden placed on respondents as well as further test the clarity of the survey questions, a pre-test was conducted in which a total of four former youth corpmembers from diverse backgrounds responded to the survey to assess the reliability of the instrument. Revisions were made to the follow-up instrument in response to comments received from both of these reviews.

Modifications to the length, content, and structure of the survey have been made based on the results of the survey pre-test interviews. Respondents provided generally positive feedback indicating that they could readily answer the questions and that the time to complete the survey was not onerous (about 60 minutes).

#### **B.5. Names and Telephone Numbers of Individuals Consulted**

The information for this study is being collected by Abt Associates Inc., a research and consulting firm, on behalf of the Corporation for National and Community Service. With Corporation oversight, Abt Associates Inc. is responsible of the study design, instrument development, data collection, analysis, and report preparation.

The instrument for this study and the plans for statistical analyses were developed by Abt Associates Inc. The staff team is composed of JoAnn Jastrzab, project director; Dr. Carrie Markovitz, task leader; and a team of senior-level staff. In addition, members of the expert panel consulted on the study design and instrument development (see Exhibit A-1, page A-6 in Part A). Contact information for these individuals is provided below.

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