CivicSpark

Leveraging Service for Climate Action

Jan. 30, 2015
Service as a Smart Growth Strategy

- Designed to support local government program and policy activities
- Links emerging talent pool to programmatic needs
- AmeriCorps’ provides national recognition and robust benefits for participants
- Creates overarching structure for recruitment, training, supervision
Making a Local Impact

- **Member Commitment**
  - 11-month service year

- **LGC** works with Local Governments to define projects
  - Meet communities where they are ready to take action
  - “Climate readiness Teams provide high-quality technical capacity-building support services to local governments through research, planning and project implementation activities.

- **Impact is measured through**
  - Staff Development
  - Capacity Building Projects
  - Transition of Knowledge
CivicSpark Four-Step Intervention Model

Step 1: Gap Assessments

Step 2: Service Projects

Step 3: Volunteer Engagement

Step 4: Transitioning Expertise
Partnerships increase effectiveness and support

Local Government Capacity Building

Regional Partners
- Align local needs and opportunities
- Provide context for members to understand regional needs

Regional Partners
- Technical support
- Alignment with State goals and resources

California Office of Planning and Research

Encore Fellows
- Project management experience
- Mentorship
- Staff presence in each region

Encore Fellows
- Provide context for members to understand regional needs

AmeriCorps members
- Commitment to climate change work
- Passion & Energy

AmeriCorps members
- Project Support
- Organizational infrastructure
- Administration

Local Government Commission

CivicSpark A program of the Local Government Commission
Project Examples

- iCommute San Diego
  - Promote SANDAG iCommute program, which is a regional, County-wide program promoting ridesharing, public transit, and bicycling resources.

- Ventura Climate Friendly Buildings
  - Support the Ventura Better Business Challenge of reducing energy usage by 20% by the year 2020

- San Gabriel Valley Point-of-Permit Energy Audit and Education
  - Engage homeowners undertaking certain types of home renovation projects that require permits and to incorporate energy efficiency (EE) measures into their projects.

- SLO Climate Action Support
  - Work with SLO County and SLOAPCD on the implementation of Climate Action Plans for 7 local jurisdictions.

- Urban Forestry in the Central Valley
  - Increase urban forestry and forestry management capacity through technical support and training.
Structure supports Success

Key elements
- College graduates with local government and climate change experience
- Specific training/prep on the tools they will most use
- Ongoing technical training throughout the year
- Continued capacity support through use of volunteers
- Supervisory support through Encore Professionals

Early success signs
- 250 applicants for 48 openings
- 88 Local Governments being served through 30+ projects
- Half of local governments are “High Need”
- Over $1,000,000 in local matching funds lined up
- Over 10,000 hours of service already provided
Next Steps and Lessons Learned

Next Steps
- Look to refine and evolve the current program
- Replicate and expand where possible

Lessons Learned
- Avoid “one size fits all” approaches
- Strong programs need strong partnerships
- Local government is a great “site” for service
- AmeriCorps is a strong base model, but has challenges.
Questions?

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