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Seven Western Massachusetts Nonprofits Selected as Partner Service Sites with TerraCorps TerraCorps Receives Funds to Make National Service Opportunities More Accessible

June 16, 2023: TerraCorps, an environmental nonprofit that runs an AmeriCorps national service program, has received multi-year grant funding from a private foundation to increase the stipend its service members receive by 44% beginning in August 2023. By supporting TerraCorps, the anonymous foundation hopes that the conservation career pathway established by the organization will become more accessible to a diversity of people who are underrepresented in the environmental workforce.

“The TerraCorps service model has proven to be an effective pathway for the next generation of leaders to launch environmental careers,” says TerraCorps President and CEO David Graham Wolf. “Over 80 organizations in our sector have hired TerraCorps alumni and 75% of alums are currently working in a career directly related to their TerraCorps service. This funding will make TerraCorps opportunities more accessible to some people who otherwise might not be able to make the economics of national service work.”

TerraCorps partners with a network of 40+ nonprofits throughout Massachusetts and Rhode Island focused on community needs related to local land conservation and sustainable agriculture including land trusts, watershed councils, and community farms and gardens. These partners act as service sites for a new cohort of up to 60 AmeriCorps service members annually.

Seven Western Massachusetts nonprofits have been selected as TerraCorps service sites for the 2023-24 service year, which runs from August 28, 2023, through July 26, 2024. These include CISA, Food Bank of Western MA, Grow Food Northampton, Hilltown Land Trust, Kestrel Land Trust, MassAudubon Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, and Nuestras Raices.

Service members are paired with a site supervisor who provides guidance and mentorship while they learn to manage community programs and projects over an 11-month, 1700-hour service term. CISA, Hilltown Land Trust, and Grow Food Northampton will host Community Engagement Coordinator members, while Kestrel Land Trust, Hilltown Land Trust and Mass Audubon will host members in the Land Stewardship Coordinator role. **Food Bank of Western Massachusetts and Nuestras Raices will host Sustainable Agriculture Coordinator roles**, and Kestrel Land Trust will host a Youth Education Coordinator.

These TerraCorps positions will help increase the capacity of these local land conservation and food security organizations to connect wide ranges of people to the land in various ways around the region. **The TerraCorps member will serve as a Sustainable Agriculture Coordinator on the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts’ no-till community engagement farm, Cultivating for Community.**

TerraCorps members receive a \$26,667 stipend (pre-tax), healthcare coverage, and may qualify for childcare assistance, federal student loan forbearance, and a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award for satisfactory completion.

TerraCorps is currently accepting service member applications. If you are interested in learning more about how serving with TerraCorps will offer you professional experience and opportunity in the environmental sector, please visit terracorps.org/available-member-positions. For additional information about the opportunity to serve with the local organizations, contact:

- CISA: Kelly Coleman at kelly@buylocalfood.org
- Food Bank of Western Massachusetts: Amanda Reynolds at amandar@foodbankwma.org
- Grow Food Northampton: Niki Lankowski at niki@growfoodnorthampton.org
- Hilltown Land Trust: Katie Carr at katie@hilltownlandtrust.org
- Kestrel Land Trust: Kari Blood at kari@kestreltrust.org
- MassAudubon Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary: Christian Marks at cmarks@massaudubon.org
- Nuestras Raices: Hilda Roque at hroque@nuestras-raices.org

About TerraCorps: TerraCorps cultivates an ecosystem of people and organizations that center community land ownership, access, and stewardship to support a diversity of interests that benefit human health and environmental sustainability. We value the power of local nonprofits to best understand and serve their communities. Our goal is to help them succeed by providing them access to the AmeriCorps national service model to build organizational capacity. The program is funded in part by a grant provided by AmeriCorps, a federal agency, and administered in Massachusetts by the Massachusetts Service Alliance and in Rhode Island by ServeRI.

About AmeriCorps: AmeriCorps, a federal agency, brings people together to tackle the country's most pressing challenges through national service and volunteering. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities. AmeriCorps helps make service to others a cornerstone of our national culture.

About the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts: Since 1982, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts has been a community partner to end hunger. We provide healthy and culturally responsive food directly through our own programs (Mobile Food Banks and Brown Bag: Food for Elders), and through the food assistance network in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties. These independent pantries, meal sites and shelters are on the front lines providing food and resources to individuals, families, seniors, children, and people with disabilities, including veterans, so they may lead healthy and meaningful lives. The Food Bank partners on public education and advocacy to address systemic issues that lead to hunger, operating with the belief that everyone has a right to healthy food. **Cultivating for Community (CFC)** is the Food Bank's regenerative farming and education initiative where volunteers and school groups work together to grow and harvest crops while learning about sustainable agriculture, environmental stewardship, food security and food sovereignty. CFC was conceived to begin a journey of learning and practice in no-till farming and food justice.

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