REPORT TO COUNCIL
City of Sacramento

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CONSENT
February 20, 2007

Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

Title: AmeriCorps Grant Approval

Location/Council District: Citywide

Recommendation: Adopt a **Resolution** 1) authorizing the City Manager to execute an agreement and any extensions, amendments, or other documents related thereto with the State of California as necessary for the City to accept a three-year AmeriCorps grant from the State of California in a total amount not to exceed $1,217,703; 2) establish an operating grant for the first year in the START Fund 245 and appropriate up to a maximum first-year grant award of $405,901; 3) authorize the Department of Parks and Recreation to continue operating an AmeriCorps program throughout the three years of the approved grant provided State funding is available.

Contact: David Mitchell, Division Manager, 808-6076

Presenters: N/A

Department: Parks and Recreation

Division: Children and Family Recreation Services

Organization No: 4726

Description/Analysis

Issue: The City has again been awarded a grant to operate an AmeriCorps program. Authorization is required to continue the program, for the City Manager to sign the agreement and any amendments or extensions, and to amend the budget and appropriate funds.

Policy Considerations: Continued participation in this program is consistent with the City's strategic plan to enhance livability.

Environmental Considerations: None

Commission/Committee Action: None

Rationale for Recommendation: Approval will allow AmeriCorps members to continue providing nutrition and fitness programs and resources to help START students and their families live healthier lives.

Financial Considerations: The program is funded for the first year of a three-year grant by the State of California in the maximum amount of $405,901. The State expects to renew the grant for the second and third years for a maximum of $405,901 each year. In order to earn this amount, the program must be operated in accordance with the approved grant application, and local matching funds must be spent, either by direct cash expenditures or in-kind contributions. The Sacramento START program has the capability to absorb the grant match within its existing operating budget, and no additional General Fund appropriation is required.

Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD): Purchase of supplies and equipment will be made in accordance with the City's Emerging and Small Business Development program requirements.

Approved by: Janet R. Bu
Cassandra H. B. Jennings, Assistant City Manager

Recommendation Approved:

Cassandra H. B. Jennings
for Ray Kerridge, City Manager

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Attachment 1

Background

Sacramento START (Students Today Achieving Results for Tomorrow) is a public/private collaborative providing after-school literacy and enrichment programs to more than 8,000 enrolled elementary school children in the most disadvantaged areas of the City and County. Part of the mission of START is to build the capacity of elementary school children to succeed academically and socially, while reconnecting families and neighborhoods with their schools.

Known as the domestic Peace Corps, AmeriCorps provides Americans with full- and part-time opportunities to perform intensive community service. AmeriCorps participants, known as members, work in locally-designed programs using a combination of local and federal funds. A concept has been developed to incorporate AmeriCorps members into the Recreation Division's programs, with the goal of enhancing the after-school enrichment programs and of recruiting and training volunteers to work in those programs.

The AmeriCorps program is funded by the Federal government, which passes through its funding to the State of California.

Original Grant 2004
With Council authorization, Sacramento START applied for a large AmeriCorps grant in 2002. Shortly after that, federal funding was reduced, and a grant award smaller than applied for was approved, in the amount of $169,992 per year for three years. In June 2004, 53 part-time members were enrolled, each of whom was required to provide 675 hours of service.

Initially there were 44 AmeriCorps members working at 42 sites in the Sacramento START after-school program. They were trained as enrichment and/or recreation specialists, allowing START's employees to focus on academics with the elementary school students. The AmeriCorps members delivered dance, drama, journalism, art, music, science, youth leadership and fitness programs. Approximately 6,000 children reaped the benefit of additional daily positive role models and enhanced opportunities for skill-building and access to a broad array of new activities. Five AmeriCorps members acted as volunteer recruiters, and they recruited 200 community members and established partnerships with faith-based, youth, senior and corporate organizations.

In addition to working at START sites, the AmeriCorps members provided more than 1,500 hours of community service at such activities as National Night Out, Lights On Afterschool, Natomas Community Festival, National Make a Difference Day, and George Sim Community Center Halloween Festival.

Amended Grant 2005

An expanded AmeriCorps program began in January 2005. The intent was to add 107 part-time AmeriCorps members in the second and third years of the three-year grant, some of whom would have served their first 675 hours during the first year. As implemented, funds were released to START to support 60 additional members, 58 of whom completed their required term of service.

These members continued to support the 42 START sites with enrichment and recreation programming. They took the lead in character education of the 6,000 START children, service learning projects, youth leadership, community service projects, planning for family nights, community outreach and partnerships, as well as chess, karate, dance, drama, art, music, nutrition, journalism and recreation programs. In addition, they participated in community service projects.

The AmeriCorps members were assigned to one site for their entire length of service. This allowed them to work more closely with the City employees at the site and to build a stronger relationship with the children. At START sites they were counted as one of the adults needed to meet the required ratio of one adult for every twenty children.

New Grant 2006

In May 2006, START applied for a three-year AmeriCorps grant which was approved for a maximum of $405,901 for each of three years for a maximum total of $1,217,703. START is required to provide matching funds, which will be met through the payment of payroll expenses of the 82 half-time AmeriCorps members who will work in the Sacramento START program. The match will come primarily from the other funding sources that support the START program – previously budgeted General Fund dollars and several million dollars in grants from the California Department of Education. The AmeriCorps members are used in lieu of the typical first-line staff, enabling START to use the funds that would normally be spent on the first-line staff to supplement the AmeriCorps grant to cover the program costs.

The mission of the 82 half-time AmeriCorps members is to provide nutrition and fitness programs and resources that will help START students and their families live healthier lives. Each member will serve a 900-hour term of service that will focus on providing START students with nutrition and community service curricula, lead fitness activities, plan family nights, recruit community volunteers, oversee the implementation of school site gardens, participate in three National Days of Service, and participate in one large-scale community service project.

The State expects to renew this grant for two additional years at a maximum of $405,901 per year. Renewal is subject to the future availability of Federal and State funds and successful operation of the program.

Although the State just recently forwarded the contract documents to the City, State approval to begin operations and to incur reimbursable costs was received several months ago, and the program began shortly thereafter.

RESOLUTION NO.
Adopted by the Sacramento City Council

AMERICORPS GRANT APPROVAL

BACKGROUND

A. The Department of Parks and Recreation has operated an AmeriCorps program for two years within the Sacramento START program under a prior agreement. The pending agreement with the State of California would authorize the continuation of the program for the first year of a three-year grant, with the expectation that agreements for the second and third years will follow.

B. Continued operation of the AmeriCorps program will enable the City to continue providing valuable services to the thousands of children enrolled in the Sacramento START after-school program, as well as provide community service and training to 82 AmeriCorps members.

C. The program is partially funded by the State and requires a local contribution of cash and in-kind support. The Sacramento START program is able to absorb the grant match within its existing operating budget, and no additional General Fund appropriation is required.

BASED ON THE FACTS SET FORTH IN THE BACKGROUND, THE CITY COUNCIL RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City Manager is authorized to execute an agreement and any extensions, amendments, re-applications or other documents related thereto with the State of California as necessary for the City to accept a three-year AmeriCorps grant from the State of California in a total amount not to exceed $1,217,703.

Section 2. An operating grant for the first year is established in the Sacramento START Fund (245) as follows:

Revenue:	245-OGR-G633-3513	Federal Grants	up to $405,901
Expense:	245-OGR-G633-4258	Professional Services	up to $405,901

Section 3. The Department of Parks and Recreation is authorized to continue operating an AmeriCorps program throughout the three years of the approved grant provided State funding is available.