

America's Promise—The Alliance for Youth
2007 Request for Proposals (RFP)
Cover Sheet

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Project Summary (200 words max.):

Los Alamos County requests funding to support the development of a service-learning program for youth in our area. We would like to hire a coordinator to collaborate with agencies that currently serve youth in our area, to research appropriate projects for our community, to solicit opinions from local youth about opportunities they would like to have, and to plan and implement new service-learning programs.

There are a multitude of benefits for youth who are involved in service projects that are led by youth and supported by adults. In fact, two of the Five Promises would be addressed by such a program—"Caring Adults" and "Opportunities to Help Others". This type of program would be mutually beneficial to our youth and our community. Goals of this program would be to provide more settings where adults mentor and support the youth, and help our youth to feel valued by giving them the chance to serve the community, work with other youth and adults, and reflect on their experiences. Ultimately, this program would increase the capacity of our community to engage our young people in active learning and service and allow for more youth in leadership roles for needed projects in Los Alamos.

Total amount of funding requested: \$18,360

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Narrative

- 1.) *What is the need related to the Five Promises that your community is currently experiencing. Please be as specific as possible and include and evaluative data showing a baseline for improvement.*

American's Promise has documented the importance of Opportunities to Serve Others and Caring Adults in the lives of our youth. Our community has identified multiple groups of young people that currently perform community service in Los Alamos County. Ideally, each of the young people that volunteers or is required to do community service work should be given an opportunity to help others, a chance to spend time with caring adults, and a means for reflecting on their experiences and identifying what they have learned. In practice, though, many of the community service experiences for these kids consist of completing menial labor, tasks such as scrubbing, sweeping, and cleaning, and often there is little contact with adults and no reflection or learning from the experiences. Community service is commonly viewed as a penalty rather than an opportunity.

While the completion of tasks such as cleaning are important to keep our community functioning properly, this is a lost opportunity to provide valuable Promises to our youth. In addition, we are overlooking a huge amount of potential benefit to our community. Our youth have fantastic ideas, loads of enthusiasm, and boundless energy. If we were able to channel these into service-learning projects, both the young people and the community could reap major benefits.

Of 120 youth surveyed recently by the Los Alamos Teen Court, over 90% felt that the community service was the part of their Teen Court experience that they enjoyed the least and learned the least from. We see this as an opportunity for improvement. Structuring a service-learning program and implementing new, youth-led, adult-supported projects would allow for community service to become a change agent for our youth—a means for engaging them in civic involvement and giving them responsibility for improving their own community. Statistics would be collected to show the numbers of youth, adults, and businesses or organizations involved in the programs and the types of projects they worked on. Post participation surveys would document the thoughts and attitudes of the youth involved in this new type of community service.

- 2.) *What is your project plan to address the need described above? How many children/young people will it serve, and what additional resources will they receive?*

Search Institute has recommended “Change Strategies”, an initiative to develop relationships between young people and adults and to build a web of support in the community. One of those strategies is to Mobilize Young People. The idea is to encourage and strengthen their ability to use their own power as asset builders by listening to their input and including them in decision-making. Another is to Activate Sectors of the community to create and asset-building culture that can contribute fully to the healthy development of young people. A third is to Invigorate Programs to become more asset-rich and to be available to and more easily accessed by children and adults.

These are initiatives we would like to implement in Los Alamos by developing new service-learning programs for our youth. These programs would be designed in a way that would facilitate youth leadership and follow-through, whereby youth could work with the adults to decide the rules, plan the activities, conduct the projects, and evaluate progress. The key would be establishing service projects that are done by the youth with adult interaction and support, and incorporating a reflection or learning component to the project.

Approximately 217 juveniles performed community service over the last twelve months as a requirement by either the Municipal Court, the Magistrate Court, or the Teen Court. In addition, community service is a component of many youth clubs and organizations at the high school level, including Key Club, Natural Helpers, National Honor Society, and Los Alamos Youth Leadership. All of these youth, and more, could contribute to and benefit from new, youth-led service projects. They would receive more (and more relevant) opportunities to help others and to work with caring adults. Youth could work on projects that they see directly benefiting sectors of our community, and they would be building assets in the process.

- 3.) *How will organizations from different sectors be involved in the implementation of this project? What role will they play?*

A Youth Programs Coordinator will collaborate with the sectors of our community including schools, congregations, businesses, and youth, human service, and healthcare organizations to develop new service programs for our young people. Some of these sectors have needs that may be addressed by new youth-led programs. And all of these sectors have valuable resources that can help to ensure the success of these new projects.

The Los Alamos Public Schools have multiple established clubs and groups, such as the Natural Helpers and Los Alamos Youth Leadership, which could serve as a starting place for gathering youth input. The Family Strengths Network is an organization that offers many strengths-based educational programs for kids, parents, and grandparents. They currently employ several facilitators who could work with youth as adult supporters for these programs. The YMCA and the Youth Activity Centers also employ experienced youth workers that could assist the young people involved in the service-learning projects. The Los Alamos Commerce and Development Corporation, our many faith-based organizations, and the YMCA's YES CORPS program are each familiar with different areas of need in our community. They could establish a list of business, environmental, and service needs in Los Alamos, and generate ideas for potential projects for the youth.

The Los Alamos Juvenile Justice Advisory Board could serve as the supervising agency for gathering data about the program and evaluating effectiveness in meeting our expressed need. The Los Alamos Family Council and the Community Health Council run a variety of assessment, counseling, and prevention programs for youth in Los Alamos, and they could help to develop the reflection and education component of the service projects to have the most beneficial impact on our youth. The collaboration of representatives and resources from each of these organizations would ensure that the new service-learning program would address widespread needs, serve as many youth as possible, and provide the most benefit to the young people involved.

4.) How will your community ensure the sustainability of this project past the end of this funding cycle?

Our County Council and School Board have committed to supporting new youth prevention and early intervention programs, and have allocated recurring funds in their budgets for these programs, implemented and managed through our Juvenile Justice Advisory Board. Funding from America's Promise will enable the Los Alamos JJAB (JJAB) to hire a coordinator, develop a pilot service-learning program, document the potential number of youth that could be served, and evaluate the benefits to Los Alamos youth, businesses, non-profit organizations, and our faith community. We anticipate this to be a well-received and very effective program, and thus expect the County Council and School Board to approve funding for the program on an on-going basis.

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Budget

Planning	Apr. – Jun. '07	
Coordinator	\$18/hour, avg. 25 hrs/wk	\$ 5,400
Implementation	Jul. – Dec. '07	
Coordinator	\$18/hour, avg. 25 hrs/wk	\$10,800
Final Report	Dec. – '07	
Coordinator	\$18/hour, approx. 20 hours	<u>\$ 360</u>
	Total Staffing Cost	\$16,560
Indirect Costs	Use of existing office space	
	@ \$200/mth for 6 mths.	\$ 1,200
	Materials: copies, office supplies	<u>\$ 600</u>
	Total Overhead Cost	\$ 1,800
Total Budget		<u>\$18,360</u>