



**2009 ECO Standards
and
Process Guide**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Introduction to ECO	3
ECO Is/ECO Is Not	4
ECO as Professional Development	5
ECO as Technical Assistance Only	5

ECO STANDARDS

Purpose and Activities	5
Organization and Management	5
Program Design	7
Corpsmember Development	7
Work Experience and Service Projects	8
Evidence of Success	8

ECO PROCESS

2009 ECO Process Timeline	9
2009 ECO Process Steps	10
ECO Standards Exemptions	14
Sample Agenda	15
The Corps Network 2009 Guidelines for Travel Expenses	16

2009 ECO COMMITTEE

Ira Okun, Consultant
 Mike Bassett, Conservation Corps of Long Beach
 Harry Bruell, Southwest Conservation Corps
 Sean Damitz, Utah Conservation Corps
 Allen Dietz, Consultant
 Jen Freeman, Colorado Youth Corps Association
 Lee Gault, Montana Conservation Corps
 Parc Smith, American YouthWorks
 Wendy Wigert, Montana Conservation Corps

The Corps Network Staff Contact

Sarah Kirschenbaum, Programs and Projects Associate
Phone: 202-737-6272
Fax: 202-737-6277
Email: skirschenbaum@corpsnetwork.org

Introduction to ECO

Excellence in Corps Operation (ECO) is a self-assessment and peer review process which recognizes Corps making a commitment to *high-quality* standards and continuous improvement. Its purpose is to promote and recognize excellence in the Corps movement and provide evidence of a Corps' continued self and outside evaluation. Corps across the country use the process as a tool to identify strengths and challenges and bolster program quality. Each year, ECO status is awarded to Corps who complete the ECO process and submit Annual Report Forms for a period of five years. Corps can renew their ECO status by completing the ECO Renewal process.

BENEFITS TO CORPS PARTICIPATING IN THE ECO PROCESS:

The Value of Self-Assessment. Corps consistently report that the greatest value of ECO is the process of completing the self-assessment. The ECO standards offer a comprehensive framework with which to guide discussion about a Corps' current state and future. The knowledge and experience of Corps staff are tapped during participation in the ECO process.

Experienced Peer Reviewers. Three ECO reviewers are chosen from The Corps Network community. These reviewers are selected for the fit of their experience and expertise to the Corps' self-identified needs. Reviewers will ask questions a Corps had not thought to ask itself and offer recommendations of effective practices tested at their own Corps.

Cost-Effective Assessment. *The ECO process is an acceptable evaluation for Corporation of National and Community Service grantees receiving less than \$500,000 a year.* It is also one of the most valuable – and least expensive - assessments around. Reflecting its commitment to sustaining and growing the Corps movement, The Corps Network shares the cost of the process with participating Corps.

A Forum to Gather Partners. The ECO process is an ideal opportunity to engage partners—funding, community, project—in the discussion. ECO Corps often involve partners in the process to provide ECO visitors with their vital perspective and, in turn, further invest them in the Corps. A partners' participation in the ECO process demonstrates the value the Corps places on that relationship.

Access to the Knowledge of the Corps Community. Corps that have participated in ECO have continuing access to effective practices through The Corps Network and its online resource center. ECO also facilitates Corps to Corps communication and contact with reviewers based on the common ground of the ECO Standards. Connecting through ECO and its Standards allows Corps references and resources to facilitate continuous improvement.

HOW CAN I USE MY ECO AWARD EFFECTIVELY?

The benefits of ECO do not end after completing the process. First, Corps that are awarded ECO status receive an electronic ECO logo and recognition at The Corps Network Annual Forum. ECO Corps then utilize the process and award in a number of ways:

Fundraising. In seeking funding, Corps may highlight their ECO status into the narrative of proposals in order to demonstrate their commitment to quality programming and governance. Corps also use the

ECO process during implementation and reporting of funded programming as proof of outside evaluation.

Marketing. A description of the comprehensive ECO process and the ECO logo are well-used in websites and marketing materials to demonstrate credibility and a commitment to continuous improvement. The ECO Award is also an important way to communicate the quality of your Corps to Corpsmembers, parents, project sponsors, donors, and other stakeholders.

Stepping Stone to Additional Assessments and Certifications. Knowing that a Corps may have to undertake numerous assessments from year to year, the transferability of the ECO Award to other certifications is a valuable benefit.

<i>The ECO Process IS:</i>	<i>The ECO Process IS NOT:</i>
<p>✓ Driven By Technical Assistance. At its core, The Corps Network ECO Standards are a technical assistance process whereby Corps compare their own operations to high-quality standards and develop a continuous improvement processes to maximize their effectiveness. The Corps Network ECO is the driving force for The Corps Network’s technical assistance program.</p>	<p>∅ A Definition of Corps. The Corps Network ECO Standards do <u>not</u> present a precise definition of a Corps, nor do they differentiate between service and conservation and other types of Corps.</p>
<p>✓ Based on Peer-Determined Standards. The Corps Network ECO Standards are agreed upon by a committee of the nation’s Corps directors and other senior-level staff.</p>	<p>∅ A Membership Requirement. The Corps Network ECO Standards are not a requirement for The Corps Network membership, nor is their use restricted to members of The Corps Network. However, those who are not members of The Corps Network must pay a fee to participate in the process.</p>
<p>✓ A Form of Assessment. The most substantial portion of the ECO process involves both an organizational self-assessment and peer assessment.</p>	<p>∅ A Formal Accreditation. The Corps Network ECO Standards focus on high-quality Corps operations and recognize Corps that make significant commitments to excellence. They are not a formal accreditation process that gives Corps a ‘rating’ or ‘score.’</p>
<p>✓ A Strategy for New Corps Development. Groups planning new Corps programs can use The Corps Network ECO Standards and effective practices in their program development.</p>	

ECO as a Professional Development Opportunity

In order to expand the professional development opportunity inherent in ECO, the Committee encourages additional peer reviewers to participate in the ECO site visit at their own expense. The participation of additional Corps staff will add to the ECO experience for everyone involved. In the past, The Corps Network has not been able to accommodate all interested and qualified site visitors. Opening this opportunity is an effort to give interested site visitors the option of joining a peer review team. The Corps Network will coordinate Corps staff and leaders who wish to join an existing ECO site visit team. Please contact Sarah Kirschenbaum at skirschenbaum@corpsnetwork.org for more information.

ECO as Technical Assistance Only

A Corps completing the ECO process receives a technical assistance benefit in the form of advice from experienced practitioners in the Corps field. The Corps Network also makes this benefit available to all Corps, including those not yet ready to participate in the full ECO process. Corps may request an experienced team of ECO visitors to provide technical assistance only. A Corps requesting this service will be assisted by ECO visitors whose experiences match its areas of need. The visitors will draw on their own experiences and the resources and structure of ECO in providing technical assistance. Please contact Sarah Kirschenbaum at skirschenbaum@corpsnetwork.org if you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity.

2009 ECO STANDARDS

Purpose and Activities

PA1 Mission: Corps presents a clear mission and its program and activities are consistent with the mission.

PA2 Target Community: There is a relationship between the Corps' mission, activities and the Corpsmembers and communities it serves.

PA3 Activities: Corps' mission shapes its structure and offerings.

Organization and Management

OM1 Governance and Accountability: Corps is a non-profit agency, part of another non-profit agency or a function of local, state, federal or tribal government and is subject to active oversight from its governing body.

OM2 Leadership: Corps maintains a strong, engaged, continuous and competent leadership.

OM3 Staffing: Corps staffing structure is responsive to program function and mission.

OM4 Staff Development: Corps incorporates staff development as a management strategy.

OM5 Organizational Development Planning: Corps and their governing boards engage in active organizational planning, which could include annual operational planning, strategic planning, and long term sustainability planning, and is committed to a continuous improvement strategy.

OM6 Collaboration: Corps leverages resources through collaboration.

OM7 Collegiality: Corps contributes to the quality of the Corps and youth development movements.

OM8 Visibility: Corps has a marketing strategy and is visible in the community.

OM9 Funding: Corps attracts and effectively manages stable and diverse funding.

OM10 Financial Management: Corps has appropriately competent staff and implements generally accepted accounting principles and sound financial controls appropriate to its organizational size and structure (e.g., internal accounting controls and policies, regular financial statements produced for a governing body or institution, an independent audit, cash flow forecasts, etc.)

OM11 Organizational Risk Management: Corps follows generally accepted human resource practices, retains appropriate files and records, possesses a technological capability (including a back-up system and virus protection) necessary to meet its needs, and maintains a full range of written policies, procedures and insurance coverages as required by federal, state and local statute.

OM12 Infrastructure: Corps has adequate facilities and equipment to meet the mission and size of the program.

OM13 Government Relations: Corps educates and develops relationships with local, state, and federal officials appropriate to the needs of its mission and in accordance with IRS guidelines for lobbying.

OM14 Emerging Trends: Corps management and governance shall maintain a forward looking outlook and shall continually assess current and emerging local, regional and national trends and their impact on the youth, environmental, and social needs of their community. Such assessments may be reflected in their strategic planning, sustainability planning and entrepreneurial initiatives.

Program Design

PD1 Consistency & Integration: Corps exhibits consistency across programming, including full integration of work experience, service projects and educational/development activities, through learning through service, experiential education, and/or other means.

PD2 Age/Stage Appropriate Outlook: Corpsmember development activities, work experience, and service projects are age and/or stage appropriate for the Corpsmembers.

PD3 Corpsmember Voice: Corps actively incorporates Corpsmember input in program development and operations.

PD4 Term of Service: Corps' length of term of service is adequate and appropriate to fulfill its mission and meet the development and education needs of its Corpsmembers.

PD5 Internal Community: Corps builds 'esprit de Corps' and internal community.

PD6 Diversity: Leadership, staff and Corpsmembers reflect, understand, incorporate and celebrate the diversity of the community the Corps serves.

PD7 Career Focus: Corps prepares Corpsmembers for post-Corps careers through education, training and/or work experience and service projects.

PD8 Corpsmember Eligibility: Corps conducts a methodical and strategic approach to attract Corpsmembers identified in its mission, maintains eligibility requirements consistent with community needs, and is not mandated to accept any specific individual participants.

PD9 Corpsmember Pay: Corps pays Corpsmembers for their work.

Corpsmember Development

CD1 Corpsmember Responsibility & Leadership: Corps engages Corpsmembers in their personal development and sets high expectations for them. Corps provides opportunities for Corpsmember leadership development.

CD2 Orientation & Training: Corps provides comprehensive Corpsmember orientation and adequate on-going training and supervision to both complete work experience service projects and promote Corpsmember learning and development.

CD3 Education: Corps assesses individual Corpsmember needs, provides opportunities for Corpsmembers to continue their education, earn certificates and regularly measures progress.

CD4 Life skills: Corps assesses individual Corpsmember needs and provides opportunities for Corpsmembers to learn needed life skills.

CD5 Supportive Services & Opportunities: Corps provides Corpsmembers with appropriate supportive services and opportunities to meet their needs and build on their interests and strengths.

CD6 Reflection: Corps provides opportunities for Corpsmember reflection.

CD7 Post-Corps Services & Support: Corps provides or secures services as necessary to facilitate Corpsmember transition to school and/or employment and encourages continued affiliation.

Work Experience & Service Projects

WS1 Community Need: Corps' service projects meet demonstrable community needs, are for the public benefit, and promote civic engagement.

WS2 Safety: Corps incorporates risk management principles, follows appropriate safety practices, and provides adequate safety gear and tools.

WS3 Supervision: Corps ensures supervision for each project, promotes Corpsmember development principles and high quality community service.

WS4 Quality: Projects are visible, tangible, useful, needed, and provide long-term community benefit and strive to be environmentally sound.

WS5 Sustainability: Projects or benefits continue after the Corps involvement concludes.

Evidence of Success

ES1 Descriptive Data: Corps collects information on its current operations, services and participants.

ES2 Outcome Data: Corps establishes measurable objectives that reflect its goals and mission and collects solid information about the results of its activities. Corps may demonstrate how they meet this measurement using AmeriCorps Performance Measures and Progress Reports.

ES3 Comparative Measures: Corps seeks sources of comparative information and data from other Corps and external sources in developing organizational and programmatic goals.

The ECO Process

The Corps Network ECO process occurs in a series of 12 steps. Below is a timeline which lists those steps and, following that, the details of each step are explained.

ECO Process Timeline

Process Step	Action	Date
1	Application Due	April 3, 2009
2	Selection of 2009 ECO Corps	Shortly after ECO Committee receives the applications
3	ECO Orientation Conference Call with Corps and The Corps Network	Shortly after Corps are Selected
3	Hosting Corps' Understanding of Responsibilities Form	No later than two weeks after Orientation Call
4	Self-Assessment & Hotel Reservations/Accommodations	At least one month before the site visit
5	Electronic versions of Supporting Documents mailed to Site Visitors as a CD	At least two weeks before the site visit
6	Agenda	At least two weeks before the site visit
7	The Site Visit	Summer and Fall, 2009
8	ECO Reports	No later than one month after the site visit
9	The Corps' Response to Recommendations	Within one month after the finalized report is sent
10	Award of ECO Status	Upon receipt of the Corps' response to the Recommendations
11	2009 ECO Corps publicly recognized	The Corps Network Annual Forum, February 2010
12	ECO Renewal Process	Start to complete Annual Report Forms due in February 2011. Please contact The Corps Network for further information about the ECO Renewal Process in 2014.

ECO Process Steps

Step 1: Orientation Conference Call and Understanding of Responsibilities Agreement

Orientation Conference Call. The Corps Network and the Lead Reviewer assigned to the Corps' review process will hold a conference call with selected Corps staff to orient them to the process and timeline. Dates for the ECO site visit will be discussed and confirmed during the call. The call will provide time to address any initial questions a Corps may have.

Corps Understanding of Responsibilities Agreement. Hosting Corps must sign and fax an Understanding of Responsibilities Agreement to The Corps Network no later than two weeks after their ECO Orientation call. **Please note that Corps have a six-week-prior deadline in which they are allowed to back out of the ECO process.** Should the Corps decide not to undergo the ECO process after the six-week-prior deadline, The Corps Network will seek reimbursement for all expenses incurred, including but not limited to purchased airplane tickets and staff time.

Step 2: Self-Assessment

Corps are required to assess how they meet each of The Corps Network ECO Standards. The Corps should involve all key staff members in the assessment. ***The self-assessment is due to The Corps Network and the site visitors at least one month prior to the ECO site visit. Please note, hotel reservations must also be confirmed at least one month prior to the visit.***

The completed self-assessment sent to The Corps Network will be organized according to the six ECO Standard Areas. At the beginning of each section the Corps must write a short summary (about one page) assessing the Corps' strengths, areas to be improved, and key effective practices in relation to that Standard Area. Every Standard within each section will then be addressed and information supporting the Corps' relevant performance will be listed. Acceptable types of supporting information include written documents, discussion, or physical evidence to be shown at the Corps premises or project sites. In the self-assessment document, each piece of information will be detailed and identified by type. The self-assessment will be a resource for site visitors and the Corps in facilitating the site visit.

The Lead Reviewer will be the primary person available to the Corps for assistance in developing its self-assessment. The Corps Network staff and ECO Committee members are also available to assist Corps with the self-assessment.

Corps that have completed other processes (specifically Corps that are Certified California Local Corps through the California Association of Local Conservation Corps, Corps that have been accredited by the Colorado Youth Corps Association, and Corps that have undergone the New Jersey Youth Corps annual monitoring process do not have to complete parts of The Corps Network ECO self-assessment due to duplication (see page 14, "ECO Standards Exemptions").

Step 3: Supporting Documents

All documents supporting the self-assessment should be collected and mailed to The Corps Network and site visitors as a complement to the self-assessment. These documents should be in electronic format and mailed as CDs so that effective practice documents can be posted to the online ECO Resource Center. Documents should also be collected into a notebook to be available to Site Reviewers during the ECO Site Visit. For example, under *PA3: Staffing*, the Corps may want to provide job descriptions for key staff members and a flow chart of the organization. Supporting documents should be organized according to each Standard. *The Corps must provide a complete copy of the supporting documents to The Corps Network and all site visitors at least two weeks prior to the ECO site visit for review.*

The self-assessment and supporting documentation should be transmitted to The Corps Network and site visitors electronically via CD or as an attachment. The preferred formats for electronic documents are Microsoft Word, PDF or Microsoft Excel. In order to facilitate discussion, a paper copy of supporting documentation should also be available during the site visit.

A Corps Lead Reviewer or The Corps Network will gladly assist any Corps undergoing the ECO process in identifying documents that are suitable to include.

Step 4: Agenda

An agenda for the site visit is due to The Corps Network and all site visitors at least two weeks before the ECO site visit (see page 43, "Sample Agenda"). The agenda should include 1) time spent with the self-assessment and reviewing supporting documents with key staff people (about 40 percent), 2) and time spent in secondary discussions with the Executive Director, staff, Board Members, Corpsmembers in leadership positions, and community partners (about 50 percent), 3) time spent at work/project sites with time to discuss the projects with Corpsmembers, crew leaders, and project sponsors (no more than 10 percent),.

The agenda should ensure that site visitors will be exposed to staff and Corpsmember perspectives of the Corps. One way this can be accomplished is through meeting Corpsmembers and front-line staff without the presence of senior Corps leadership.

Step 5: The Site Visit

At least two representatives from the Corps community (at least one of whom represents a Corps – often an ECO Corps – that is similar to the Corps being visited in its structure, mission, size, geographic scope, demographics, etc.) and one staff member of The Corps Network will perform a site visit. The site visit is two and one-half days and three nights. For each visit, The Corps Network designates one of the site visitors as the "Lead Reviewer," who has overall responsibility for facilitating the visit. Site visitors will meet via conference call before the visit to discuss and assign roles.

Guided by the agenda and informed by the self-assessment and supporting documents, site visitors will hold discussions with key staff members and observe site operations. However, the site visitors and Corps should remain open to amending the agenda as warranted.

The site visitors will meet with the Corps director and selected staff on the final morning of the site visit for an exit review. The exit review will provide time to discuss the site visitors' collection of Effective Practices, Recommendations, and Suggestions. The site visitors will provide time for the Corps to clarify any information or respond to questions.

Step 6: ECO Reports

An ECO Report containing Effective Practices, Recommendations and Suggestions will be submitted to the Corps ***no later than one month after the site visit***. The report will consist of two sections:

- 1) Effective Practices. This document will be public information for the Corps community.
- 2) Recommendations and Suggestions. Recommendations are broad advice for ways to improve the Corps. Suggestions are more specific ideas on ways that a Corps may go about applying the Recommendations. The Recommendations and Suggestions will only be shared with the hosting Corps.

*Corps directors should respond to the ECO Report **within one week** of receipt with any clarifications or corrections for any of the proposed Suggestions and Recommendations.* The site visitors, who are not obligated to drop proposed Recommendations and Suggestions at the Corps director's request, will then make any changes and submit the finalized report to the Corps. During this process the site visitors will call upon the ECO Committee for guidance if they have specific questions or issues about how to proceed with any part of a particular report.

Parts or all of the Effective Practices may be posted in the online ECO Resource Center, accessible from The Corps Network website. Supporting documents that demonstrate Effective Practices will be catalogued at The Corps Network as a technical assistance library and may also be posted in the online ECO Resource Center. ECO Corps may be required to resubmit supporting documents electronically at the request of The Corps Network staff. Information-sensitive documents can be edited at the ECO Corps' request and any documents the Corps labels as confidential will not be posted on the website.

Step 7: The Corps' Response to Recommendations

*The ECO Corps must respond in writing (via electronic submission to The Corps Network) to the Recommendations section of the report within **one month after receipt**.* The Corps response must address Recommendations by explaining how and when the program will implement the Recommendations or why certain Recommendations will not be implemented. A Corps may request technical assistance in developing a response to the Recommendations. The Corps may respond to the Suggestions section of the report but is not required to do so.

Step 8: Award of ECO Status

The ECO Committee confers ECO Awards upon receipt of the Corps' response to the Recommendations. Each ECO Corps is recognized as such if the Corps completes an Annual Report Form, provided by The Corps Network, and undergoes an ECO Renewal Process in 2013.

Step 9: Public Recognition of ECO Corps

The 2009 ECO Corps will be recognized at The Corps Network Annual Forum in February 2010. The Corps Network ECO Corps will be awarded a certificate, documents to provide to funders and other public interests, and the ECO logo to use on letterhead and in promotional materials. ECO Corps will also be asked to participate in ECO-specific Forum programming.

Step 10: ECO Renewal Process

Five years after an ECO Corps has gone through the ECO process, it has the option of taking part in the ECO Renewal Process. The ECO Renewal process must be undertaken if a Corps wishes to maintain its ECO status. Guidelines for ECO Renewal are now available.

ECO Standards Exemptions

Certified California Local Corps having successfully completed the California Association of Local Conservation Corps (CALCC), Corps that have been accredited by the Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA), and Corps that have undergone the New Jersey Youth Corps annual monitoring process are exempt from parts of The Corps Network ECO self-assessment due to duplication.

CALC Exemptions

- PD7 Career Focus
- PD8 Corpsmember Recruitment & Eligibility
- PD9 Corpsmember Pay
- CD2 Orientation & Training
- CD3 Education
- CD7 Post-Corps Services & Support
- WS3 Supervision
- WS4 Quality

NJYC Exemptions

Corps that have gone through the NJYC annual monitoring may omit:

- OM7 Collegiality
- OM8 Visibility
- OM10 Financial Management
- CD2 Orientation & Training
- CD3 Education
- CD5 Supportive Services & Opportunities
- CD7 Post-Corps Services & Support
- ES1 Descriptive Data
- ES3 Comparative Measures

CYCA Exemptions

- PA1 Mission
- PA2 Target Community
- PA3 Activities
- OM1 Governance
- OM2 Leadership
- OM3 Staffing
- OM4 Staff Development [Professional Development]
- OM5 Organizational Development Planning
- OM7 Collegiality
- OM8 Visibility [Marketing]
- OM9 Funding
- OM10 Financial Management [Fiscal Accountability]
- OM11 Organizational Risk Management
- PD4 Term of Service
- PD9 Corpsmember Pay [Paid Work]
- CD1 Corpsmember Responsibility & Leadership
- CD3 Education
- CD4 Life Skills
- CD5 Supportive Services & Opportunities
- CD6 Reflection
- CD7 Post-Corps Services & Support
- WS2 Safety
- WS4 Quality [Project Quality]

Sample ECO Site Visit Agenda

Monday, August 3, 2009

- 9:00 a.m.** Pick up site visitors from hotel
- 9:30 p.m.** Breakfast and discussion with key staff: Overview of ECO Standards Self-assessment
- 1:00 p.m.** Lunch with Board Members and key staff at the Corps
- 2:00 p.m.** Break
- 2:15 p.m.** Staff Interview: Team Supervisor
- 2:45 p.m.** Staff Interview: Internship Coordinator
- 3:30 p.m.** Staff Interview: Recruiter
- 4:00 p.m.** Staff Interview: Fiscal Officer
- 4:30 p.m.** Review ECO Standards Self-assessment documents
- 5:30 p.m.** Drive site visitors to hotel
- 7:00 p.m.** Pick up site visitors at hotel to go out to dinner with key staff

Tuesday, August 4, 2009

- 8:00 a.m.** Pick up site visitors from hotel
- 8:15 a.m.** Arrive at the Corps to see PT, the start of the day at the Corps
- 8:45 a.m.** Leave for Corps project site visit
- 9:00 a.m.** Arrive at Corps project site
- 9:10 a.m.** Discuss Corps project with Corpsmembers, crew leaders, and project sponsors
- 9:450 a.m.** Leave Corps project site
- 10:15** Arrive back at offices, continue to review ECO Standards and self-assessment documents
- 11:30 a.m.** Interview Corpsmembers and Leaders
- 12:00 p.m.** Go to lunch with community partner panel
- 1:30 p.m.** Arrive back to Corps to continue meetings with key staff
- 3:45 p.m.** Break
- 4:00 p.m.** Visit Corps classroom, discuss education at Corps with teachers and Corpsmembers
- 5:00 p.m.** Drive site visitors back to hotel
- 7:00 p.m.** Site Visitors group dinner to discuss recommendations, suggestions and effective practices and formulate report on their own

Wednesday, August 5, 2009

- 8:00 a.m.** Pick up site visitors from hotel
- 8:15 a.m.** Scheduled time for follow-up interviews with staff, further review of ECO Self-assessment, visitors provide limited technical assistance, and/or question and answer session on ECO Self-assessment
- 9:30 a.m.** Final exit interview with key staff and overview of recommendations, suggestions, and effective practices
- 11:30 a.m.** Drive site visitors to airport

The Corps Network 2009 ECO Travel Guidelines

These policies and procedures apply to site visitors traveling at the expense of The Corps Network and the hosting ECO Corps, except where other instructions are given.

GENERAL

- Insurance coverage for health, travel (except for rental cars), and related liabilities to, from and during the event is the traveler's responsibility;
- The Corps Network will not make travel arrangements or cover expenses for spouses/partners who are not traveling at the expense or authority of The Corps Network;
- The Corps Network will pay for roundtrip airfare to the hosting ECO Corps or similar transportation (i.e. train fare) for the 2009 ECO site visitors. The hosting ECO Corps will pay all other business-related expenses of the site visitors (i.e. transportation from the airport, all meals and lodging, transportation from the hotel to the Corps each day, etc.); and
- Site visitors must submit for reimbursement all receipts to The Corps Network. The Corps Network will reimburse the site visitors and will then invoice the Hosting Corps for these expenses. This invoice is to be paid within one month of receipt.

TRANSPORTATION

Airfare/Non-Auto

The Corps Network will pay the airfare from the site visitor's program site (the place where he/she is normally based unless otherwise pre-approved by The Corps Network) to the ECO site. If the site visitor chooses to fly somewhere other than directly to and from their program site to the ECO site, and that cost is higher, The Corps Network will reimburse the site visitor only for an amount equal to the round-trip fare to and from the visitor's program site. Any difference in cost will be borne by the site visitor. If the site visitor chooses a different mode of transportation, and the total cost exceeds that of airfare, the site visitor will be reimbursed up to an amount equal to the cost of airfare. The additional cost will be borne by the site visitor.

If the site visitor can obtain a significantly cheaper flight to an ECO site with a Saturday night stay over, The Corps Network will cover necessary hotel fees up to the cost of the more costly airfare.

Auto

The Corps Network reimbursement rate for personal automobile transportation is \$0.505 (prevailing IRS rate) per mile.

The hosting ECO Corps will cover the costs of renting a vehicle for "in-town" purposes if the hosting Corps determines that it is the best mode of transportation for the site visitors. In these cases, the hosting Corps will also cover the cost of rental car insurance if the site visitor feels that utilizing the rental car company's insurance is necessary.

LODGING

The hosting Corps will pay for the site visitor's hotel, hotel parking (if applicable) and associated tax. If the site visitor shares a room with another site visitor, the site visitors cannot collect the difference saved. The hosting Corps should not request that site visitors share the same hotel room. Hosting Corps should offer two or three suggested hotels for the site visitors to stay in, with all of the site visitors choosing the same hotel. Hotels should be of comparable quality and value to the major national hotel chains (e.g. Marriott, Radisson, Hyatt, Holiday Inn, etc). The Corps can offer, as an option, an alternative arrangement such as a state park lodge, residential Corps facility, etc., but must also offer the hotel option listed above if available. If the site visitor brings a companion, the site visitor is responsible for his/her expenses.

The hosting Corps will not pay for incidental hotel charges such as movies. If the room is not direct billed to the Hosting Corps, the site visitor is responsible for payment at the time of checkout. The Corps Network will invoice the Hosting Corps at a later date per the site visitor's reimbursement claim to The Corps Network. The site visitor will pay for any long-distance calls.

MEALS

The hosting Corps is responsible for all of the site visitor's meals starting with arrival to the Corps site. The hosting Corps may want to provide catered meals or take the site visitors to restaurants that the hosting Corps feels are reasonably priced. Any meal that the site visitor pays for must be submitted to The Corps Network with an original itemized receipt; the hosting ECO Corps will be billed (credit card transaction receipts are not valid without the itemized backup). Meals should not exceed \$35 for dinner, \$25 for lunch and \$15 for breakfast.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES

ECO site visitors are required to purchase their own transportation tickets to the hosting ECO Corps and will be reimbursed by The Corps Network. ECO site visitors may be required to pay for their lodging and meals if these are not direct billed to the hosting Corps. Site visitors must mail all original receipts to be reimbursed accompanied by a completed Travel Reimbursement Form from The Corps Network. The Corps Network will reimburse the site visitors for their out of pocket expenses and will invoice the hosting Corps when all ECO site visitor expenses have been tabulated. PLEASE NOTE THAT **ONLY ORIGINAL RECEIPTS CAN BE ACCEPTED FOR REIMBURSEMENT. THE ONE EXCEPTION IS FOR AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL AT THE RATE OF \$0.505 (prevailing IRS rate) PER MILE.**

If you have any questions regarding these travel guidelines, please feel free to contact Sarah Kirschenbaum at (202) 737-6272.