

**Organizational Capacity Assessment.** The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health (CGCDPH) is ready to fulfill all obligations within this project including the cash match of \$8,700, Iowa Public Health Association (IPHA) agency member designation, and duties outlined in the Site Supervisor Responsibilities document. The CGCDPH and designated host site supervisor, Kelli Huinker have the capacity and are ready to recruit, interview and recommend a member for selection to the IPHA Program Director. Ms. Huinker is prepared to partake of trainings to organize for the AmeriCorps HealthCorps member, provide guidance, daily supervision, accountability, meaningful work opportunity, and evaluation for the member. The CGCDPH has orientation procedures and time-tracking software in place to ensure a smooth transition and ease of time tracking. Currently, the CGCDPH has multiple contracts with local, state, regional, and federal agencies to conduct specific programs; therefore, staff members are fluent in accountability, reporting requirements, time tracking, reporting in-kind and ensuring contractual obligations are met succinctly. Ms. Huinker also has an outstanding relationship with the Iowans Fit for Life Team to provide ongoing support for wellness services. Resources available for the HealthCorps member include an experienced manager dedicated 100% to wellness initiatives, support staff, a county-owned, on-site fitness facility for the member's use and for program enrollees use, personal office space and required equipment like computer and phone, and a web-conferencing system all in a safe, welcoming community. Moreover, the CGCDPH received the 2011 *Excellence in Physical Activity* award at the Public Health conference for Ms. Huinker's diligent work to increase the level of physical activity of County employees and residents. That award shows the capacity of the CGCDPH to implement wellness initiatives tied to gainful outcomes. Existing departmental structure and experience allows for an immediate, professional opportunity for the HealthCorps member.

**Cerro Gordo County's Health Issues.** The AmeriCorps project goal to reduce the risk of preventable chronic disease and obesity and improve the health and quality of life for Iowans aligns with CGCDPH goals. The CGCDPH Community Health Needs Assessment and Health Improvement Plan notes the following chronic disease related issues. The 2008 Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System report shows 21% of Cerro Gordo County (CGC) children ages 24 to 59 months are overweight and 16% are obese. Iowa's data for the same age group reflects that statewide, 17.5% of children are overweight and 15.1% are obese. Accordingly, CGC has high rates for chronic conditions. This county ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in Iowa for adults diagnosed with diabetes (7.5%) and the county's heart disease mortality rate is startling. For 2008, CGC's heart disease mortality rate is 354 per 100,000, which is much higher than the state's rate at 244.1. In 2010, CGC was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> for per capita gallonage of alcohol purchased (Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division). Moreover, CGC ranks 69<sup>th</sup> out of 99 counties for health outcomes according to the 2011 County Health Rankings (University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute). That translates into CGC being one of the least healthy counties in the state with the highest chronic conditions. The county's health issues are well documented and place CGC as one of the counties that most needs wellness-centered, behavior modifying, evidence based initiatives. The Community Health Needs Assessment, County Health Rankings and the localized health improvement plan show that the CGCDPH is aware of the wellness related health issues that plague the county and have a plan to address those issues. With a HealthCorps member, plan implementation can begin.

**Work Plan.** The HealthCorps member will be instrumental in supporting the CGCDPH's Health Improvement Plan and addressing the overweight/obesity health needs, particularly in children, while accomplishing any additional strategies brought forth by the IPHA and the Corporation for National and Community Services. The member will provide direct service, organizing, building capacity, and will

coordinate wellness activities with existing programs or may aid in new program development. The CGCDPH has priorities that include working with population-centered programs in obesity prevention and wellness. Priorities include: 1.) supporting childhood obesity prevention programming in area preschools and partnering with elementary schools for exercise and nutrition initiatives (establishing Walking School Bus programs in area elementary schools to reach approximately 100 students and aiding schools with nutritional choices), 2.) continuing efforts with worksite wellness initiatives for about 245 county employees, and 3.) establishing senior exercise and balance programs at area Senior Centers and assisted living facilities to reach 125 seniors. Another priority the HealthCorps member will touch is improving access to local nutritious foods. This will be accomplished by promoting and updating the online Community Health Calendar that highlights local farmer's markets and other health and nutrition related events and activities. In addition, the HealthCorps member will have the opportunity to be involved in other related wellness initiatives such as tobacco prevention strategies in area high schools (JEL chapters) and cardiovascular programming for low-income women, if chosen. As shown in the priorities, the CGCDPH can reach the minimum of 300 people with the capability to expand. Each of the prioritized projects has a work plan in place with associated outcomes. CGC, the 12<sup>th</sup> most populous county in Iowa, is part of the Mason City micropolitan area, which allows the CGCDPH to serve both rural and urban populations in daily operations. Most, if not all programming currently serves a mix of rural and urban populations; therefore, any project the HealthCorps member works on will be similar.

**Data Collection and Documentation.** The CGCDPH will document the health impact of the HealthCorps member's projects for a minimum of 300 participants. To measure the impact of the HealthCorps member, the community, and the Department's efforts towards addressing childhood overweight and obesity, attendance of students participating in the Walking School Bus (WSB) program will be tracked and stored in a project specific database. Pre and post surveys will be distributed to WSB participants to calculate physical activity levels and increases in wellness education and awareness (60% of participants will increase activity levels). Adult impact will be identified by tracking and storing participation rates of senior adult fitness classes, in addition to fitness assessments including changes in Body Mass Index, Balance and Stability, and Quality of Life pre and post program efforts (60% of participants will increase activity levels or education of activity levels). The CGCDPH's worksite wellness program continually measures the impact of all their intra-department wellness programs through attendance tracking, fitness changes (aerobic capacity, strength, flexibility, weight) biometric changes (cholesterol, blood pressure, glucose), and educational awareness surveys (there is currently a 50% participation rate in Employee Wellness Programs and 60% of participants will increase knowledge). Tracking the usage of the Community Health Calendar will also be an indicator of the number of residents who utilize the information to improve their awareness of local options for purchasing nutritious foods. The Department has the equipment and knowledgeable staff to ensure data is collected, stored, and disseminated appropriately to the community, Iowa Public Health Association, and the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service.

**Community Infrastructure.** As a governmental agency, the CGCDPH relies heavily on collaborating with others to provide better, more efficient services for its constituents. The CGCDPH is a piece of the community infrastructure that uses other pillars of infrastructure such as local business or the schools to reach intended populations. The Wellness Service Section specifically coordinates a Wellness Coalition for programming and service efforts. The Coalition includes members representing the following agencies: Mercy Medical Center-North Iowa, the local school system, the YMCA, the North Iowa Corridor Economic Development, the United Way, the area community college, and the Chamber of

Commerce along with others. The Coalition's role is as the driver of wellness on a community level. The represented agencies have wellness programs, are invested in health for their clients and/or staff, and work toward improving community health outcomes. Working closely with the Coalition will be imperative for the HealthCorps member to achieve behavior modification on a community level. Current initiatives to show the existence and use of the community infrastructure include a Wellmark funded wellness program and a Walking School Bus, both of which partnered the schools with public health and the help of volunteers to implement sustainable physical activity programs.

**Experience with Diverse Populations and Faith Based Communities.** As a local health department, the CGCDPH has a long history of working with diverse populations through service provision and collaboration. CGCDPH programs like childhood immunizations, lead poisoning prevention, senior health and cardiovascular screening are targeted-population programs to serve populations such as low-income people, families with children younger than five, senior adults or the Latino community. Local public health at its core is about serving diverse populations where/how they are comfortable to meet their needs to improve the community health status as a whole. Collaborating with multiple diverse populations and faith based communities is a part of daily operations. Working with the local medical system, a faith based organization, local churches and youth service clubs, the CGCDPH has formed a network of collaborators to provide a united front on multiple health initiatives.

**Supervisor Designation.** Kelli Huinker, Wellness Service Manager at the Department will be the HealthCorps member's supervisor. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Kinesiology and Health, holds multiple certifications (ACE-CPT, NSCA-CSCS, ACSM-HFS), and is fully committed to provide needed services for the AmeriCorps member. Since 2009, Ms. Huinker created a community Wellness Center (fitness facility), convened and maintained a Coalition, and wrote a Community Wellness Plan. She accomplished this while coordinating two large projects, one of which was a hugely successful, sustained, childhood obesity prevention program in area preschools. Versed in CDC fellow recruitment procedures, Ms. Huinker will employ her knowledge to recruit, interview and select the best candidate. Her experience with supervision of employees and accountability will mesh well with this project as she regularly hires student interns from the local college to implement programs. There is a high degree of training, mentoring, supervision, accountability, and evaluation along with compliance with contract and grant obligations that exists and is successfully completed by Ms. Huinker. She understands the National Service and AmeriCorps mission, is willing to devote time to management and evaluation of the HealthCorps member, and is willing to articulate the member's roles and responsibilities to other staff.

**Experience with National Public Service Programs.** The CGCDPH has past experience with **Senior Corps** for assisting in a community-wide Cardiovascular Disease survey project and for a wellness program, Making Tracks, aimed at improving the health of community residents via school, worksite, and community based physical activity and nutrition programming. The CGCDPH has benefitted from **Experience Works**, a national, charitable, community-based organization that helps older adults get the training they need to find good jobs in their communities, also. Two workers, one of whom gained experience in financial administration and one who currently is employed by the Department for Information Technology support are a part of Experience Works. In conclusion, the CGCDPH has the organizational capacity, the experience, priorities and goals that align with the IPHA AmeriCorps project's, and the enthusiasm to ensure success if Cerro Gordo County is selected.