



## Rural Alliance for Dignity AmeriCorps Member Position Description

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**Name of Member:** *(Include member's full name listed on formal documentation)*

**AmeriCorps Member Position Title:** Garden Education and Food Security Program Assistant

**Program:** Rural Alliance for Dignity at La Puente Outreach

**Service Site:** Manna -The Durango Soup Kitchen, 1100 Avenida Del Sol, Durango, CO 81301

**Position Supervisor:** Kyler Grandkoski, Garden Education and Food Security Programs Manager

**Email:** garden@mannasoupkitchen.com

**Phone:** 970.385.5095 Ext: 108

### I. Purpose:

2019 US Census data shows the percentage of La Plata County's population living below the poverty level as 10%; approximately 5,564 people. La Plata County has very limited affordable housing and above average cost of living. Many residents spend far greater than the recommended 35 percent of their paycheck on housing. These factors contribute to financial, food and housing insecurity in our community. Additional geographic barriers limit an individual's access to adequate proportions and nutritious food. Hunger Free Colorado reported in April 2021 that 1 in 3 (33%) of Coloradans are food insecure, meaning they lack reliable access to nutritious food; with people of color and households with children facing even higher levels of hunger. Food security is one of the top common social determinants of health; simply, poor nutrition has negative effects on a person's physical health, mental health and quality of life.

Manna works to reduce and remove prominent barriers to access food, housing, employment, and transportation, while minimizing stigma associated with low-income. We provide daily prepared meals, choice-based Food Market, and a milieu of supportive services and referral network at no cost to support food insecure families in La Plata County in moving towards self-sufficiency. Furthermore, we are dedicated to growing and providing healthy food options that are culturally and nutritionally important to our community.

In doing so, Manna manages an on-site ½ acre production and education garden with orchard, as well as an off-site 2-acre farmland parcel, that supply our Community Kitchen (Take-out Window and Food Market), Culinary Program and community partners with no-cost, nutrient-dense, organically grown produce. We also partner closely with other local organizations and groups including the Durango Farmers Market, City Market, Natural Groceries, The Good Food Collective and others to improve collection and redistribution of local food, reducing food waste in the community. These efforts combined with state food provider assistance funds have allowed us to establish a new choice-based Food Market stocked with both shelf-stable groceries and fresh produce.

We also operate the Community Produce Share Program that further eliminates prominent barriers to fresh local foods, such as; cost, transportation, time to shop, and quality. Community members can enroll and receive a weekly box of fresh local produce at a reduced cost (or pay with SNAP/Double Up Food Bucks) and pick up at the most convenient of multiple locations across the county. This program supports participants with weekly newsletters, recipes, nutritional information, farmer spotlights, food resources and opportunities for engagement.



Manna also provides Healthy Living education and support programs for local children, families and individuals facing food insecurity: *Monthly Food Skills Series*, *Weekly Healthy Eating from the Food Market*, *Family Mornings in the Garden* during the Summer and *Afterschool Thriving Youth Program* in the Winter. We weave nutrition, cooking, gardening, and emotional intelligence skills into fun and engaging programs throughout the year.

## **II. Description of Duties:**

The AmeriCorps Garden Education and Food Security Program Assistant will serve to create opportunities that support and reinforce the importance of local food and healthy lifestyles for La Plata County communities. The Program Assistant plays an important role in the flourishing and maintenance of our education and production gardens: Manna Garden, Carver's Farmland and partner site education gardens. They also support the Community Produce Share Program by maintaining weekly communication, distribution and record keeping. The Program Assistant helps develop curriculum and deliver lessons to local youth, families and individuals, while engaging volunteers in the maintenance of the local educational and production gardens under Manna's care. This position develops, maintains and strengthens relationships with local farmers, non-profit organizations, food hubs, food insecure community members and volunteers.

## **III. Responsibilities:**

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Serve economically disadvantaged populations by reaching food-insecure individuals and families and students on free and reduced lunch via services through a holistic, dignity-based approach.
- Provide empowerment and social justice through community powered food production and food-security programs.
- Oversee a confidential, dignity-based implementation of low-cost Community Produce Shares to those who identify as food insecure.
- Maintain Community Produce Share program rosters, weekly communications, and newsletter creation. Receive, reconcile and track payments on mobile POS system. Manage and order supplies.
- Receive weekly produce and invoices, provide quality control on all incoming products.
- Oversee aggregation, storage, stocking and distribution of products for the Community Produce Shares Program and Food Market.
- Create and distribute weekly newsletter and flyers with local food resources, quick easy healthy recipes and nutritional information for the Community Produce Share Program and the Food Market.
- Teach garden and nutrition lessons that incorporate healthy eating choices, nutrition values, social-emotional wellbeing and gardening principles at Manna and partner organization sites.
- Adapt education curriculum, activities and engagement to meet the needs of distinct audiences and develop and grow as an educator.
- Participate in the production of high volume, organically grown quality produce at Manna's Garden sites: landscape maintenance, irrigation setup/management/maintenance, harvest, wash, pack-out, transportation, storage, inventory and distribution.
- Help organize and lead garden education, volunteer opportunities, local events and tours.
- Program administration: planning, prep time, sourcing supplies, email correspondence, phone communication, participant tracking and program development.



- Develop evaluation tools to measure engagement and outcomes related to individuals and families who identify as food insecure.
- Provide back-up support to Community Kitchen, Food Market, Resource Center, Culinary Program and Backpack Program as needed.
- Assist in the creation and management of social media groups, posts, blogs, and website.
- Treat everyone who comes to Manna with respect and understanding.

#### IV. Qualifications:

##### Required Qualifications:

- Excellent communication and organizational skills.
- Comfortable and excited to serve with diverse populations, people experiencing homelessness and food insecurity.
- Ability to work outside for extended periods of time and engage in physical activity in variant weather.
- Ambition to learn about experiential education, sustainable agriculture, program coordination as well as local food security, poverty and food equity.
- Ability to collaborate and adapt to different challenges.
- Ability to multi-task and work with urgency when necessary.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality.
- Ability to work independently, as a team and delegate as needed.
- Desire to network and bring together partners around a shared goal.
- Ability to show compassion, wisdom, boundaries and impartial judgement when dealing with staff, program participants and community members.
- Understanding and or willingness to learn about diversity, equity and inclusion.

##### Preferred Qualifications:

- Bilingual in Spanish and English.
- Leadership experience, especially with leading groups of youth or volunteers.
- Gardening experience.

#### VI. Term of Service:

The member's term of service begins on **August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022** and ends on **August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023**. This term is classified as full-time, in which the member must satisfactorily complete at least **1800** hours of service, average a minimum of 37 service hours per week, and serve the complete term to be eligible for the education award.

#### VII. Time Requirements:

This position is a normal service week of 40 hours, in which the member will serve full 8-hour days, Tuesday – Saturday. Members may be required to serve on weekends and holidays as needed. Along with the Service Site time commitment, members will also be required to attend three Service Days events.

#### VIII. Orientating and Training:

##### AmeriCorps /La Puente

- New member orientation – Members are required to attend an orientation that includes AmeriCorps training (OnCorps, prohibited and unallowable activities, MSA, gear, etc.) and La Puente organization's policies, procedures, and culture.



- Required Training - Three program retreats, AmeriCorps Swearing In Ceremony & Retreat and Service Days.

## Service Site – Manna – The Durango Soup Kitchen

- New member onboarding - this includes reviewing the Manna Human Resource Handbook, taking a tour of the facilities, meeting the staff, brief history of the organization and introduction to our programming.
- Participate in weekly staff meetings.
- Participate in training and enrichment activities including: site-specific training, trainings relevant to rural hunger, poverty, homelessness, racial equity, and educational barriers; reading assignments, community nights, retreats, and other activities, trainings, or events that are applicable to the service year.
- Required Training:
  - SERV Safe Food Handlers course.
- Optional Training:
  - Colorado State University's Master Gardener Program.

## **Benefits:**

- A living allowance in the amount of up to **\$16,000**.
- The member is eligible for health benefits compliance with AmeriCorps policy.
- The member is eligible for childcare benefits in compliance with AmeriCorps policy.
- The program will provide FICA (Social Security and Medicare), and worker's compensation.
- Upon Successful completion of the member's term of service, the member will receive an education award from the National Service Trust in the amount of **\$6,345**.
- The member is eligible for the forbearance of most federally-guaranteed student loans and some private loans.
- The member's service term can be counted towards The Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF). This is a program for federal student loan borrowers who work in "public service" jobs, including jobs in government or 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations. After 10 years of eligible employment and qualifying loan payments the remaining debt on federal student loans will be forgiven.
- Members are allowed 10 vacation days and 6 sick days per 1 year term.
- The opportunity to gain applicable experience, training and certifications that are resume quality.
- The opportunity to strengthen or learn new life skills (relationship building, conflict management, budgeting).

## **IX. Evaluation and Reporting:**

Evaluating: Members' performance will be evaluated by their supervisors quarterly (every 3 months). They will also meet with the AmeriCorps Director for a Check-In at the 3- and 9-month mark.

Reporting: Members will be required to submit weekly timesheets.

## **X. Service Location & Contact Information:**

# Rural Alliance for Dignity

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## Service Site Information

**Organization:** Manna – The Durango Soup Kitchen  
**Service Site Office:** 1100 Avenida Del Sol, Durango, CO 81301  
**Service Site Director:** Ann Morse  
**Email:** director@mannasoupkitchen.com  
**Phone:** 970.385.5095 Ext:107

## AmeriCorps Program Information

**Organization:** La Puente Home Organization  
**AmeriCorps Office:** 317 State Street, Alamosa, CO 81101  
**AmeriCorps Director:** TJ Mendez  
**Email:** director.volunteers@lapuente.net  
**Phone:** 719.992.2050

## **XI. Authorization:**

The member and program hereby acknowledge by their signatures that they have read, understand, and agree to all terms and conditions of this agreement.

AmeriCorps Member

AmeriCorps Program Director

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*Signature*

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*Signature*

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*Printed Name*

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*Printed Name*