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DATE: April 7, 2016

RE: Response to questions from City Council about PowerCorpsPHL, specifically:

1. What are the potential outcomes for PowerCorpsPHL participants?
2. How many are able to continue employment in the City?
3. Are there other programs like this that provide pipeline to City jobs?

1. What are the potential outcomes for PowerCorpsPHL participants?

Every six months, PowerCorpsPHL engages 68 young adults, ages 18 to 26, in transforming their lives through service. PowerCorpsPHL members are predominately male (82%) and people of color (96% are African American, 3% Latino and 1% White). Roughly 75% have been involved in the justice system and 20% in the foster care system. PowerCorpsPHL members are currently recommended from one of six recruitment partners: Department of Human Services, Mayor's Office of Reintegration Services, Youth Violence Reduction Partnership, Philadelphia Housing Authority, YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter High School and the Philadelphia Youth Network's E3 Centers. To date, the program has graduated five cohorts of opportunity youth, totaling 236 unique individuals (approximately 1/4 of whom enrolled in multiple cohorts).

PowerCorpsPHL members provide six months of full-time AmeriCorps service to City departments,¹ tackling pressing environmental challenges that include the need for improved stormwater management, increased tree coverage, and revitalized public land. Through their service, PowerCorpsPHL members develop technical skills that can be applied to jobs in a variety of industries. Additionally, PowerCorpsPHL members gain essential 21st century workforce skills, including teamwork, leadership, conflict resolution, accountability, time management, and network building. Upon completion of their service, each PowerCorpsPHL alumni receives customized support to pursue their education and career goals.

Despite significant personal and systemic barriers to their success, nearly 80% of PowerCorpsPHL members complete 900 hours of AmeriCorps service over six months, earning a \$2,775 Segal Education Award which can be applied towards

¹ PowerCorpsPHL members serve on crews at sites across Philadelphia, including parks, recreation centers, green stormwater infrastructures (GSIs), school yards, and business corridors. All service projects are planned and implemented in close partnership with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation and Philadelphia Water. From September 2013 to March 2015, PowerCorpsPHL members diverted 164 tons of debris from parks and green stormwater infrastructures and planted nearly 3,800 trees. Additionally, they revitalized over 2,900 acres of public land by building trails, restoring creek beds, constructing berms and rain gardens, elevating trees for safety, clearing inlets, refurbishing park benches and playground equipment, and removing invasive plants and debris to allow native plants to thrive.

tuition at any accredited post-secondary institution.² Of those, 90% transition successfully to career-track employment, post-secondary education or additional national service. Above all, PowerCorpsPHL members develop radically different community identities, the majority seeing themselves for the first time as leaders, role models, and agents of change.

2. How many are able to continue employment in the City?

PowerCorpsPHL works closely with program participants to identify and pursue their career goals. Next steps for each PowerCorpsPHL alum are different based on the education, training and work experience required to achieve their long term aspirations. At the end of each cohort, approximately 25% of PowerCorpsPHL graduates re-enroll in a second term of National Service, 50% transition directly to paid work and 20% pursue post-secondary. Many individuals are engaged in more than one of these three things.

To date, approximately 45% of PowerCorpsPHL alumni who've transitioned directly to employment have done so with the City or one of our sub-contractors. This includes 48 individuals across the following categories:

- 12 alumni were hired by Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, 11 in seasonal positions and one as an AmeriCorps Fellow
- 22 alumni have been engaged in Philadelphia Water's apprenticeship program. To date, 3 have been hired into permanent jobs, 14 are currently apprentices, and 3 are pre-apprentices. 2 were unsuccessful in securing full time employment but remain connected to the PowerCorpsPHL career services team.
- 14 alumni have been hired by employers receiving City contracts, including: AKRF (7), LuisCorps (1), Indego (4) and EducationWorks (3)

Over the past year, we have expanded our alumni offerings to include AmeriCorps Fellowships and paid internships for individuals looking for additional work experience to build their resume and/or prepare for a specific career field. In several cases, those experiences have led to permanent, unsubsidized employment. Example fellowship and internship sites include:

- AmeriCorps Fellowship sites: Clean Air Council, Episcopal Community Services, Philadelphia Urban Creators, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Smith Memorial Playground, SHARE Food Program, TTF Watershed Partnership and Vetri Foundation for Children
- Paid Internship sites: MANNA, PhillyCam, Solar States and Union Packaging

Overall, as PowerCorpsPHL alumni remain engaged with us over time, we are able to support their continued progression along the workforce pipeline. With the coaching and other supports we are able to provide, we see alumni move from initial, entry level positions to more advanced work, frequently coupled with enrollment in post-secondary education and training.

PowerCorpsPHL is still a new and evolving workforce development model for opportunity youth.³ We see multiple opportunities to build on promising practices and to create more and stronger pipelines to full time employment with the City, our sub-contractors, and our non-profit and private sector partners.

3. Are there other programs like this that provide pipeline to City jobs?

PowerCorpsPHL is currently the largest program of its kind operated by the City that is specifically focused on preparing

² A small number of individuals transitioned to employment before the end of six months, earning a pro-rated Segal Education Award based on the number of hours they served.

³ **Opportunity Youth** – also referred to as “disconnected youth” – are defined as young people between the ages of 16-24 who are neither in school nor working. Opportunity Youth face significant personal and systemic challenges, such as aging out of foster care, previous adjudication in the criminal or juvenile justice systems, and/or the impacts of poverty, including both housing and food insecurity. Most lack the education and relevant work experience required for meaningful employment. Philadelphia is home to a disproportionate number of these youth: a 2015 study by Drexel University's Center for Labor Markets and Policy found that one in four Philadelphians between the ages of 18-24 is “disconnected” from both school and work. See: *The Human Capital Deficit of Disconnected Youth in Philadelphia*, <http://drexel.edu/now/archive/2015/September/Disconnected-Youth/#sthash.o5D3U8vJ.dpuf>.

youth and young adults for employment in City government and across a range of employer partners. The City also supports the [Center for Employment Opportunities](#), via Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, to help youth and young adults returning from incarceration avoid recidivating by securing permanent work.

City government is well poised to build stronger and more intentional partners with the School District of Philadelphia, key post-secondary institutions, the Philadelphia Youth Network and a broad network of workforce development programs and organizations to ensure more and better pipelines to City jobs for opportunity youth.