

Possible federal budget cuts concern local non-profits



by Mara Thompson | Monday, February 27th 2017

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. (WPBN/WGTU) -- A memo obtained by The New York Times is giving some insight to the 2018 federal budget, which hasn't been released yet.

According to The Times, it includes cuts to several programs, including AmeriCorps, and that's causing concern for organizations in northern Michigan.

SEEDS is a non-profit in Traverse City that works on projects with ecology and education, and while it would not shut its doors if it lost AmeriCorps members, it would be a negative for the community.

"AmeriCorps will be what I look back on for the rest of my life and say thank you," said Michelle Schuett.

Schuett has been serving at SEEDS in Traverse City for two years through the AmeriCorps Vista program.

"Everything that we need to get set up for the season set up for a project it's like a kit and I help get us ready for that," said Schuett.

In the summer SEEDS can have up to 70 corps members working on projects through the state.

One of those members, Leticia Rocha was just awarded Corps member of the year.

"Open my eyes to careers where before I didn't even think that I had a chance to have a career so it's really awesome to think that I can now," said Rocha.

"Fact is that AmeriCorps brings in resources the AmeriCorps members are doing work on our land and our community and they're a valuable," said SEEDS youth development director, Bill Watson.

AmeriCorps is funded both federally and by the organizations that use it.

But according to a memo obtained by The New York Times, federal funding could be cut next year.

"No we're not closing our doors if we don't have AmeriCorps but I think that it's important that the community and the country recognizes that these are young people that are foregoing getting a job a regular job and they're serving their community," said Watson.