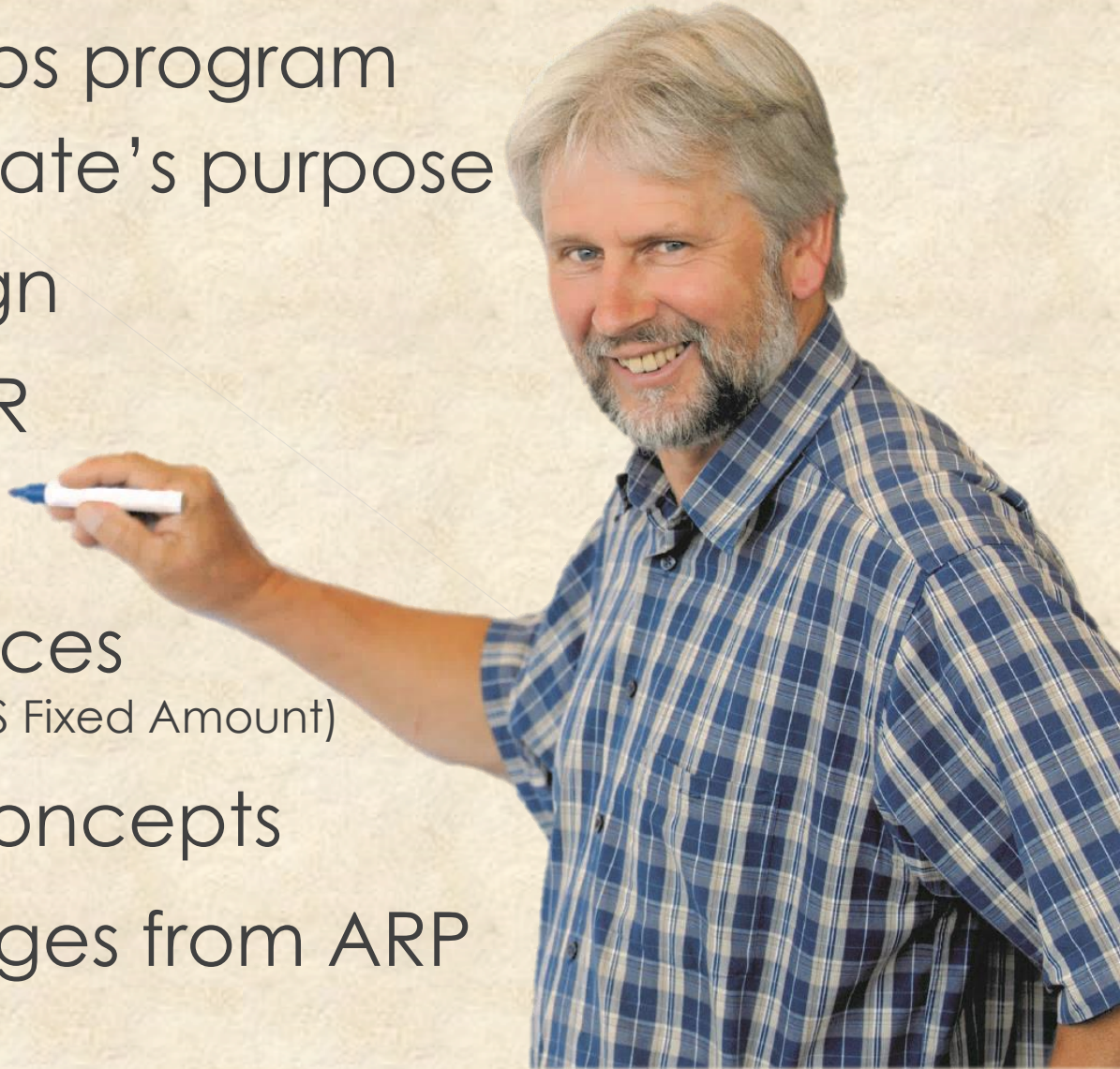# WELCOME TO
THE INTRODUCTION OF

Maine Standard Formula AmeriCorps Grants

RFP #202102030

What This Session Covers

- The AmeriCorps program
- AmeriCorps State's purpose
- Program design
- AmeriCorps HR
- Terminology
- Grant differences
  (Cost reimbursement VS Fixed Amount)
- Key budget concepts
- Coming changes from ARP

Questions

- Use chat box to submit questions as they occur to you.
- During presentation breaks, they will be answered.

AmeriCorps Basics

What is AmeriCorps?

◉ It is a National Service program

› Created by Congress in 1993
National and Community Service Trust Act

› Funded under the Corporation for National and Community Service (federal agency DBA AmeriCorps)

› Each year over 75,000 Americans serve

› Be the domestic Peace Corps
- Strengthen communities
- Meet critical needs
- Permanently change conditions

What is AmeriCorps?

- 3 related branches

- Each has a distinct mission

  › AmeriCorps NCCC – disaster response, relief and under "blue skies" community projects

  › AmeriCorps VISTA – alleviate poverty by developing organizations (indirect service)

  › AmeriCorps State/National – direct service & capacity building by engaging community volunteers, improving volunteer management

State

NCCC

VISTA
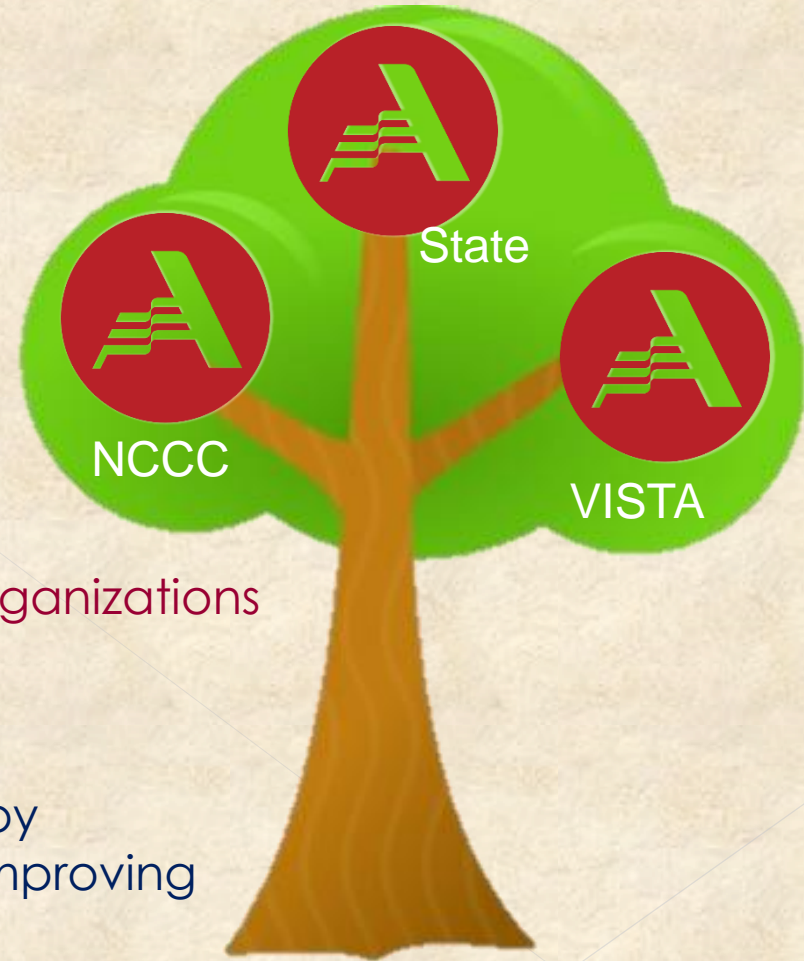
AmeriCorps State

- Member service benefits people, communities – external facing

Examples
- Teach classes
- Organize community gardens
- Train home child care staff
- Winterize or repair homes, community buildings
- Conduct financial literacy programs
- Do health assessments

AmeriCorps State

- **AND** builds capacity. Examples
  - › Implement volunteer management
  - › Conduct volunteer training
  - › Recruit local residents to volunteer
  - › Serve alongside volunteers, teaching them the AmeriCorps members' job
  - › Connect with partners who share the vision/mission of grantee agency

AmeriCorps State

- AmeriCorps Members
  - Serve in teams
    - You can't have "just one"
    - Normally must have **at least 8** members
    - The Rural State AmeriCorps option allows for min 2, max 5 (different RFP)
  - They have a common work plan
    - Activities are from a model solution proven to change situation
    - Every Member works on the same goal
    - Service activities the same regardless of the setting

AmeriCorps State

◉ Take the Poll on your screen!

› What is your organization's AmeriCorps experience?

AmeriCorps State

⊙ Take the Poll on your screen!

Polling 1: ⌄

Polling 〰

1. What is your organization's experience with AmeriCorps? Check all that apply. (Multiple choice)

Received an AmeriCorps State/National grant

Hosted an AmeriCorps State/National member

Managed a VISTA project

Hosted a VISTA member placed by a VISTA project

Hosted a NCCC team in the community

AmeriCorps Alums are on staff

No experience

AmeriCorps State

> Requires implementation of _all_ volunteer management practices

- Members have
  - role descriptions,
  - applications,
  - background checks,
  - orientation,
  - terms of service
  - training,
  - supervision,
  - time and effort reporting, etc.

AmeriCorps State

> Requires implementation of *all* volunteer management practices

- Service is documented –
    - how much accomplished,
    - for who,
    - when
- Service results are reported –
    - how much
    - impact or results
    - $$ value, both cost and ROI

    - to organization's leadership, staff & board
    - to internal audiences including volunteers
    - to funders and public constituents

AmeriCorps State

> Requires implementation of *all* volunteer management practices

- Resources used recorded –
  - cash
  - in-kind
  - supplies
  - people (employees, consultants, trainers)
  - occupancy or tools
- Agency has or develops policies on volunteer engagement

> Commission technical assistance and training helps grantees develop volunteer management capacity

AmeriCorps State

> Activity
  - Download the file, *VolunteerManagementPractices.docx* and take a minute to complete it with your team.
    (The link is in the chat box.)

> Use the new poll to respond.
  - What is the current status of volunteer management in your agency?

> In the chat box, enter response to
  - What are the implications for an AmeriCorps program?

AmeriCorps State

> poll

Polling 2: Slide 14 ⌄ Edit

1. What is the current status of volunteer management in your agency?

○ Bare bones - only a few business practices in place

○ Basic - application, selection, role description, supervision, and recognition are in place

○ Intermediate - about half the practices are implemented

○ Advanced - all but a few essential practices are in place

○ No volunteer management practices

AmeriCorps State

> Services focus in specific areas
  - What federal law allows:
    - Economic Opportunity
    - Healthy futures
    - Education
    - Public Safety (including Disaster Services)
    - Environmental Stewardship (includes housing)
    - Veterans Services

> Each grant competition highlights a subset

AmeriCorps State

> Economic Opportunity means
> - Grants support and/or facilitate
>   - access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people;
>   - help economically disadvantaged people to have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy;
>   - transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing; and/or
>   - have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed.

AmeriCorps State

> Disaster Services means
> - Grants support/facilitate service that
>   - increases preparedness of individuals for disasters,
>   - improves individual readiness to respond to disasters,
>   - helps individuals recover from disasters, and/or
>   - helps individuals mitigate disasters.

AmeriCorps State

> Environmental stewardship means
> - Grants supports service that
>   - support responsible stewardship of the environment while preparing communities to respond & recover from challenging events;
>   - conserve natural habitats, protect clean air and water, maintain public lands, support wildland fire mitigation; and cultivate individual and community self-sufficiency; and/or
>   - support activities such as conservation and fire corps which can help veterans and others learn new job skills.

AmeriCorps State

> ## Healthy Futures means
> > - Grants supports service that
> >   - improves access to primary and preventive health care for communities;
> >   - increases seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible; and/or
> >   - increases physical activity and improve nutrition in youth with the purpose of reducing childhood obesity.

AmeriCorps State

› Education means
  • Grants support service that contributes to
    • improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children;
    • improved school readiness for economically disadvantaged young children;
    • improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving high schools; and/or
    • preparing economically disadvantaged students for success in post-secondary education

AmeriCorps State

> Veterans and military families means
  - Grants support service that
    - positively impacts the quality of life of veterans and improves military family strength;
    - increases the number of veterans, military service members, and their families served; and/or
    - increases the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through CNCS-supported programs.

AmeriCorps State

- Activity: Take the Poll on your screen!
  - What focus area matches your potential program?

AmeriCorps State

- Activity: Take the Poll on your screen!
  - > What focus area matches your potential program?

AmeriCorps State

> Volunteer Maine will accept proposals for any allowable service project but is most interested in proposals tied to its priorities.

> Commission priorities

- Public health:
  - Includes but not limited to substance use and mental health.
- Workforce development
  - Includes but not limited to programs related to green jobs and climate crisis/action;
- Housing
  - Includes making housing safe and affordable;
- Environmental/community sustainability
  - Includes emergency preparedness and aspects of transportation.

Your idea for AmeriCorps

> Think about the community need you want to tackle

- What is the solution your program will implement?

- How do you know the solution will work? Who recommends it for the situation? Who has evaluated its effectiveness?

- What will AmeriCorps members do?

- What roles will community volunteers fill?

- When AmeriCorps leaves in 3 years, what permanent change will be their legacy?

- Is the community ready to change?

AmeriCorps State

› Activity

  • Download the file using link in chat, **_PD1.docx_**
    http://volunteermaine.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/PD1.docx
    and take 10 minutes to complete it with your team.

  • When you have completed the activity, please use the "Raise Hand" function to show you are ready to move on.

› Use the chat box to submit questions. These will be answered when we come back in 10 minutes.

Break for Q&A

Answer questions in chat box

A Closer Look:

Program Elements

⦿ Operate through grants made to local organizations

› Eligible entities must have EIN
   • Public agencies – municipal, county
   • Private nonprofit agencies
   • School districts and higher ed institutions
   • Faith-based organizations

› May only operate a program in Maine

› Maine Formula AmeriCorps
   • An agency may apply to lead a coalition of agencies, so members serve at multiple sites
   • Must have at least 1 employee who will devoted primarily to AmeriCorps program
   • Grant award is for 3 years; start August

- Service targets need or problem in a community
  - Goal → measurably improve situation
  - Impact on a specific geographic area, target population

- Service activity is "evidence based"
  - Proven to work by research or evaluation
  - Model promoted by expert on the topic
  - Implement in your locale "with fidelity" meaning "without tinkering with model"

- Community consultation
  - Those who will benefit help design it
  - Community advises during implementation
    - Provides feedback on what's working
    - Reviews assessments, results
    - Helps build connections, resources

- Grantee organization is ready
  - Leadership supports goals, methods, and engaging AmeriCorps members
  - Other employees support and will welcome AmeriCorps members and volunteers
  - Local resources are real not "hoped for"

- Able to track effectiveness with data + performance measures
  - Pick from national menu of paired outputs and outcomes
  - Follow instructions provided for measuring
  - Assess 3 aspects of impact:
    - service activities – how things improve
    - community capacity – local volunteer growth
    - member development – what members learn

- Can articulate a theory of change
  - Has a strong understanding of community status in terms of addressing the need
    - At the 50 yard line? In opponent's end zone?
    - Everyone in agreement or still debating?
  - Describes why this service activity is the right one for the current status
  - Describes what will change and by how much as a result of AmeriCorps effort
    - How far down the field can you move the ball towards your goal of solving the problem

- Plan is so well thought out, it fits into a logic model
  - End goal is clear
  - Activity types & amounts required to accomplish outcomes are known
  - Relationships and credibility with beneficiaries exist
  - Short-term + intermediate outcomes known
  - Resources needed for activities are at hand

AmeriCorps State

> Activity

- Download the file, **_PD2.docx_**
  http://volunteermaine.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/PD2.docx
  and take 15 minutes to complete it with your team.

- When you have completed the activity, please use the "Raise Hand" function to show you are ready to move on.

> Use the chat box to submit questions. These will be answered when we come back in 15 minutes.

AmeriCorps State

> Activity + Performance Measures = Logic Model

Problem/ Need	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Mid-term Outcomes	End Outcomes
The community problem the program activities (interventions) are designed to address.	Resources necessary to deliver the program Activities, including the # of locations/ sites and number/type of AmeriCorps Member terms.	The core activities that define the Intervention/ program model that members will implement or deliver; include duration, dosage and target population.	Direct products from program activities.	Changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes and opinions. These outcomes will be measurable during the program year.	Changes in behavior or action. These outcomes Are measurable during the grant period.	Positive changes in condition or status of problem or need. Stated but not measured.
Brief! Use phrases not paragraphs.	List and, where logical, amount.	Brief phrases	Quantity for each activity	Cite performance measure and enter target	Cite performance measure and enter target	End goal – horizon towards which everything is striving

AmeriCorps State

- Activity + Performance Measures = Logic Model
  - Best practice: use one row per element
  - Logic Model has 3 page limit
  - Should be "summary" of program

Problem/ Need	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Mid-term Outcomes	End Outcomes
Need service tackles						
Capacity building						
Member development						

Break for Q&A

Answer questions in chat box

What AmeriCorps Grants Really Provide

+

Grant Options

- What an AmeriCorps grant provides
  - Personnel
    - Authorized AmeriCorps member slots (positions)
      - Multiple terms of service options to help you reach your goals:
        1700 hours (Full time)
        1200 hours (Three Quarter Time)
        900 hours (Half-time)
        675 hours (Reduced Half-time)
        450 hours (Quarter-time)
        300 hours (Minimum-time)
      - Terms below 1700 hours can be part-time or 'full-time' service meaning 40 hrs/wk
      - 1700 hours = 1.0 MSY (like an FTE) Programs must have at least 8 MSY

- What an AmeriCorps grant provides
  - Funds to support the Members
    - Federal agency annually sets a maximum per-member amount
    - Cost-per-Member based on 1700 hours
    - Now the CPM is $16,300

- What local sources provide
  - Funds for program operations (travel, training, supervision, evaluation, supplies…)
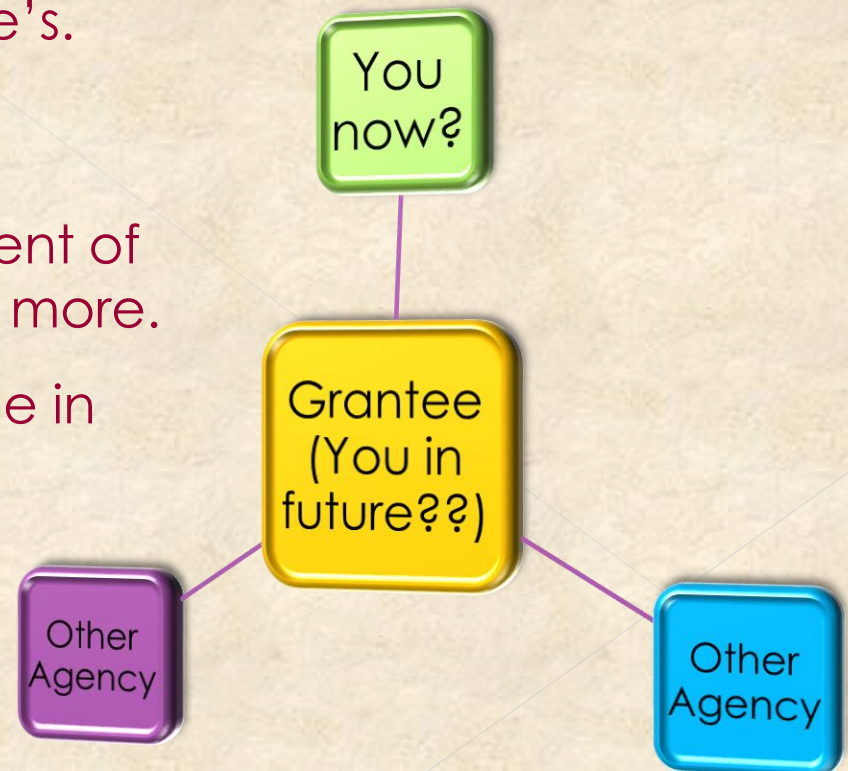
- Budget flexibility
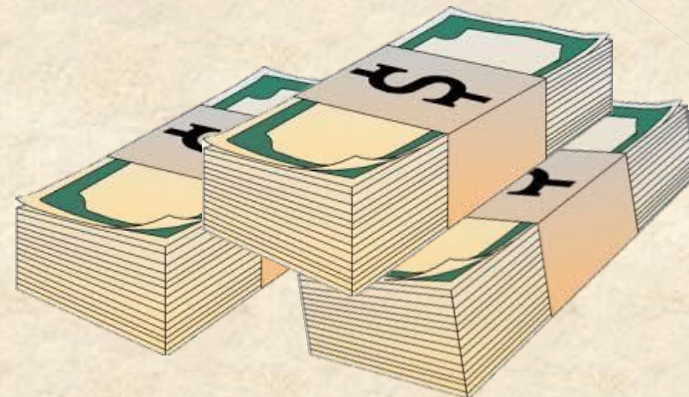 - If local donors prefer to support the members, AmeriCorps funds can cover supervision, training, etc.

- AmeriCorps host site vs grantee
  - No cost share paid to another agency.
  - You budget to fit your circumstances.
  - The resources you put toward the program (space, materials, on-site training, supervision) count as local share for your grant not someone else's.
  - You have full control over the activity implemented, member workplan, assessment of member performance, and more.
  - You get full credit for change in local need.

FIXED AMOUNT GRANTS

> Funding is a fixed formula:
> # of MSYs X $16,300

> Applicant does *not* submit a full project budget
> - Emphasis is on full enrollment and full retention
> - Spotlight on operation and meeting performance targets
> - Program staff not subject to National Service Criminal History Background Checks

FIXED AMOUNT GRANTS

> Source of Funds section of budget must show
  - sufficient resources to operate the program described
  - donor or source of each cash or in-kind resource
  - amount
  - if funds are secured or proposed

> Grantees
  - reimbursed based on recruitment and retention rates
  - do not file any financial expenditure reports
  - are not required to manage funds in compliance with Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200 et seq).

COST REIMBURSEMENT GRANTS

> Funding is a fixed formula:
> # of MSYs   X $16,300

> Applicant submits a full project budget
> - Standard for enrollment is 100% and for retention, 85%
> - Same expectations for operation and meeting performance targets
> - % of grantee share required is determined by length of time as AmeriCorps grantee

COST REIMBURSEMENT GRANTS

› Source of Funds section of budget must show
  - donor or source of each cash or in-kind resource
  - amount
  - if funds are secured or proposed

› Grantees
  - reimbursement based on expenditures and match rates
  - file financial expenditure reports
  - required to manage funds in compliance with Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200 et seq).

AmeriCorps State

> Activity

- Stand and march 10 paces, stretch
- Using the chat box,
  list 3 risks a grantee could face under a
  -- Fixed Amount grant
  -- Cost Reimbursement grant.

> Use the chat box to submit questions. These will be answered when we come back in 10 minutes.

AmeriCorps State

> Activity

- Use poll on your screen to indicate whether your will submit under Fixed Amount or Cost Reimbursement.

Polling 3:   ∨   Edit

1. Will your application type be

○ Cost reimbursement

○ Fixed Amount

○ Do not know

Cost Reimbursement Budget Overview

Budget flexibility Example 1

› Local resources do not cover Members but will support other expenses

	AmeriCorps	Local Share	Total
Member support	$$$$	$	
Project director/ Member supervisor		$$$$	
Member travel		$$$$	
… other (phone, internet, training, supplies, etc.)		$$$$	

Budget flexibility example 2

- Local resources prefer to cover Members but are not able to cover other expenses

	AmeriCorps	Local Share	Total
Member support		$$$$	
Project director/ Member supervisor	$$$$		
Member travel	$$$$		
… other (phone, internet, training, supplies, etc.)	$$$$	$$$$	

- Possible sources of local share
  - Local share makes up at least 30% of total project budget.
  - Local share is a mix of cash and in-kind.
    - Cash = any expense paid with organizational cash; if not match on another grant can be
      -- an allocation of someone's time
      -- a portion of indirect
      -- supplies, copying, technology, space
      -- other items used to deliver service

    - Will need ~ $ 7,000 per member to cover support costs not covered by AmeriCorps funds

    - In-kind = expenses covered by third party such as waived training fees, supplies donated for service effort, etc.

- The Maximum size of your grant can be deduced from the number of MSY's you propose

  - 8 MSY x $16,300 = $130,400

  - 30% minimum local share = $ 56000 (cash and in-kind)

  - Grant total = $186,400

Some local share options in proposal for 8 AmeriCorps members

> *These are just ideas to start your thinking.*

Item	Calculation	Total
Member support	About $7,000/pp cash needed for expenses not covered by AC funds	$ 56,000
Supervision – allocate part of existing staff	100% of staff person whose wage is $36,000 and benefits/taxes are 20% ($7,200).	$43,200
Space (if not part of indirect)	$9/sq foot including utilities X 100 sq ft x 8 members	$ 7200
Indirect	Only 5% of AmeriCorps funds can go to indirect.* Under federal rules, the difference can be allocated as match. So your agency indirect is 15%, the 10% not claimed on AmeriCorps goes under match.	$21,101
	Total of your cash contribution	$127,501

> *Remember,* cash is anything your agency pays for and in-kind will be a project contribution from an outside partner.

Unique in AmeriCorps budgets

> ## Local Share

- To determine the percentage of sharing, use the total project amount.

- For example, using the partial figures from the last slide and putting all CNCS funds on Member Support, the share is …

Item	CNCS Share	Grantee Share	Total
Member support	$ 123,884	$ 56,000	179, 884
Supervision – allocate all/part of existing staff		$ 43,200	43,200
Space (if not part of indirect)		$ 7,200	7,200
Indirect	6,516	$ 28,027	34, 543
Total	130,400	134,427	**264,827**
	49%	51%	100%

Cost per member: CNCS share/8MSY= $16,300

- ⊙ Unique in AmeriCorps budgets
  - › Calculating Indirect
    - Congress set a limit of 5% on the amount of AmeriCorps funds claimed as indirect.
      BUT
      Allowed organizations with Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements (NICRAs) to claim the difference between their indirect rate and the 5% as grantee share.
    - For example, using the figures from the last slide where the indirect rate was 15%, it works like this …

Item	CNCS Share	Grantee Share	Total
Expenses before indirect	$ 123,884	$ 106,400	230,284
	123,884 X .0526	(230,284 X 0.15)-6516	CNCS + Grantee shares
Indirect	6,516	$28,027	34,543
Total	130,400	134,427	264,827
	49%	51%	100%

This is Option B in the budget instructions.

- Unique in AmeriCorps budgets
  - Option A is for organizations without NICRAs
    - It is not the *de minimus* rate permitted under Uniform Guidance.
      - You claim 5% on the CNCS share
      - You claim as Grantee Share, 10% of total project
    - For example, using the figures from the last slide, it works like this …

Item	CNCS Share	Grantee Share	Total
Expenses before indirect	$ 123,884	$ 106,400	230,284
	123,884 X .0526	230,284 X 0.10	CNCS + Grantee shares
Indirect	6,516	23,284	29,800
Total	130,400	129,684	260,084
	50%	50%	100%

◉ Unique in AmeriCorps budgets
> Uniform Guidance (2CFR 200+)
the CNCS exception
- When calculating the indirect on CNCS share, member stipends and benefits are included.

- When calculating indirect on Grantee Share,
  - For NICRAs, follow your agreement instructions on whether to include or exclude Member Support;

  - For Fixed 10%, include Member Support

  - For De Minimis, exclude Member Support

> *Complete instructions are in the RFP.*

AmeriCorps State

> Activity – 15 minutes

- Review Cost Reimbursement Budget instructions in RFP pages 42-47.

- When you have completed the activity, please use the "Raise Hand" function to show you are ready to move on.

> Use the chat box to submit questions. These will be answered when we come back in 15 minutes.

Break for Q&A

Answer questions in chat box

- A "regular" AmeriCorps program
  - Member service terms have 5 options: 1700 hours completed in 1 year;
  - 1200 hours –typically a school year
    900 hours
    675 hours
    450 hours
    300 hours
    - Any terms could be 40 hrs/wk but most shorter ones require only a few hours/week.

  - Living allowance only provided if serving 40 hrs/wk.

- What positions can you actually recruit for and fill?

- Maine AmeriCorps
  - Minimum size is 8 MSY; no maximum size
    - Though funding is limited to approx. 15 MSY
    - You can increase MSY with lower cost per MSY and/or increased local share

- "Member development"
  - Equivalent to professional development of staff.
    - Orientation and training -- onboarding
    - Training on skills, knowledge for task (20 % of time)
    - Education or training that will improve Member understanding of issue, agency, community context
    - Helping member document performance

- AmeriCorps Members
  - Commit to term of service

  - Member service agreement
    - Rolls into one document
      -- requirements of service and
      -- details like code of conduct, benefits, etc.

  - Member position description is like volunteer role description
    - Term of service
    - Function of role at place of service
    - Qualifications, Skills, Knowledge, Abilities (essential and preferred)
    - Duties or responsibilities; daily hours and location;
    - Reporting relationship, etc.

- AmeriCorps Members

  - Benefits
    - for those serving full-time:
      -- living allowance,
      -- health coverage,
      -- child care

    - forbearance on payment of student loans;

    - trust pays interest accrued during service term;

    - on successful completion, ~$6,345 Education Award

- AmeriCorps Members
  - Are recruited, selected, supervised, and evaluated by the grantee agency

  - Receive training to perform all the service activities at the start as well as during their terms

  - As a result of reflection activities organized by program, develop an ethic of service and civic responsibility

  - If age 55 or over, have the option to transfer the Ed Award to their child or grandchild

Break for Q&A

Answer questions in chat box

Accountability:

Maine AmeriCorps

- Performance Measures and Data

  › Three components for Grantees

    • Demographics (page 40-41)
      • Number of community volunteers

    • Continuous Improvement (page 28)
      • Think of this as customer and operations feedback loop

- Performance Measures and Data

  - Performance measures (page 28-29)
    - Applicants select from menu of national performance measures to find one measure that fits their program.

    - Enter Capacity Building and Member Development measures as "applicant defined" in the online application system.

American Rescue Plan changes

- State commissions have been advised to watch for changes
- RFP will be updated to reflect whatever would impact proposals
  - Week of April 5-9
- Major change expected
  - Increase in cost per MSY
- RFP deadline cannot change
  - Date for states to submit list of grants and funds needed has not changed.

Break for Q&A

Answer questions in chat box

To ask questions after today …

Since the formal Request for Proposal is published Commission staff *are not allowed* to provide individual advice.

Email questions to
   Service.Commission@maine.gov

Subject: RFP 202102030 Question

All questions must be received by March 29.

Looking forward to seeing your ideas!

Volunteer Maine, the state service commission

207-624-7792

Service.Commission@maine.gov

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VolunteerMaine.gov
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