



STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS RFA SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY

RFA NUMBER AND TITLE:	202403063: Maine Rural State AmeriCorps Grants
RFA ISSUED BY:	Maine Commission for Community Service
SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:	3/28/2024
QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:	3/29/2024
PROPOSAL DUE DATE:	4/11/2024
PROPOSALS DUE TO:	Proposals@maine.gov

Provided below are submitted written questions received and the Department's answer.

	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
	N/A	How does the stipend work for the volunteers? What exactly is the sponsor responsible for paying?
1		Answer See RFA pages 22 and 23. "Grantee" means the sponsor in the discussion of the member living allowance that is there. The sponsor manages living allowance disbursement for their members, covers FICA, provides accidental injury/death insurance or worker's comp, and health insurance. They do NOT pay unemployment insurance because AmeriCorps members are not employees under state and federal law. Sponsors are required to offer health insurance, however they are not required to offer their agency health plan to all members; a possible option is the Corps Network insurance which is more affordable than many other plans.

	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
	N/A	Regarding essential volunteer management business practices, are those tasks the AmeriCorps member learns to manage volunteers or is that the sponsor's role to implement?
2		Answer Both. AmeriCorps programs must implement all the essential volunteer business practices in the course of operating the program. AND, AmeriCorps members will learn and implement these skills in order to effectively involve community members as volunteers.

	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
	N/A	What does it mean that all members must have a common workplan; we need members to do a variety of tasks, like recruiting volunteers or answering a hotline, would we be eligible?
3		Answer Members' service all contributes to a common workplan and common performance measures, but

	they may do different activities to meet the goals of that workplan. For example, a program that has a goal to increase physical activity in a community may have one member leading hikes, another member delivering programs in the school, and another distributing rental gear.
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	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
	N/A	Does their have to be an on-site supervisor for the member and what does that look like in fully remote organizations?
Answer		
First and foremost, the member's service does have to be externally facing and most will need to be in the field or community on a routine basis (to deliver training, recruit volunteers, etc). Some activities may be appropriate for teleservice. AmeriCorps has a policy on teleservice. Key is a system in place to verify hours served and to supervise/validate activities performed. Remote service is NOT permitted; i.e., when a member is not located within the commuting area of the geographic community where the service is to occur. Additionally, virtual service sites are NOT permitted. This refers to organizations that do not have a physical location. An organization with no physical space may develop a partnership with an allied organization to serve as the home base for the AmeriCorps members. Please review the federal policy on this issue. It is online at https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/ASN_Teleservice_Policy_2023.01.pdf		

	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
		Are members paid during vacation times or when the host site is closed?
Answer		
Please review the regulations listed on pages 27 and 28 of the RFA. In particular, 43CFR § 2522.245. How are living allowances disbursed?) Members are paid a living allowance for their entire term. That total amount is divided by the pay periods during the term and the monthly/bi-weekly/weekly amount paid stays the same every pay period, whether or not the member serves less or more than full-time. Vacation or leave time does not count towards their total hour requirement to complete their term of service. The program should take into account any host site closures (such as school vacations) week and an allowance for some leave time when designing their term of service. The member must have plenty of time to complete their service.		

	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
	N/A	How do you define rural?
Answer		
See RFA page 9, "Rural Communities" definition. This competition awards priority points for rural communities, as defined by the USDA Rural-Urban Continuum Codes, these include: Oxford, Franklin, Somerset, Piscataquis, Aroostook, Washington, Hancock, Lincoln, Waldo, and Knox counties. Programs in other counties ARE eligible for this competition, they just won't earn preference points. (See RFA page 13 discussion of preference points.)		

	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
		We're a small organization with just one employee and I've never managed a government grant. Is this a good fit for us?
Answer		
7	There are small non-profits with few staff where the Executive Director takes a major lead in managing the AmeriCorps program. Other programs choose to hire a program manager to handle grant administration, partnerships, and member supervision. The start-up time is often the most intensive when you are building out systems that you then implement. There is extensive technical assistance and training available; there is an expectation that grantees will attend the new grantee training sessions during summer months. This is why we suggest that an organization have all of the Essential Volunteer Business Practices in place before starting an AmeriCorps program. Additionally, strong programs often already are implementing the project and they have resources in place and they are adding AmeriCorps members to expand the effort.	

	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
	N/A	Is there a cost-share required?
Answer		
8	Please see RFA page 17, "Grantee Share of Project." For this competition, there is no specific match requirement with documentation of expenditures and fully detailed budgets. However, more than the grant funds are needed to effectively run the program. The grantee needs to show in the application that the monies are identified and, during the grant, will report on the amount of local money going to support the program. The reports are quarterly Program Income Reports.	

	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
9	N/A	I heard that Climate Corps is not being funded. Does that put this program at risk?
Answer		
	No, this program is funded by the Federal AmeriCorps appropriation, not by Maine state government.	

	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
10		Is there somewhere that we have to outline our specific State priority/funding category? Or, is it generally implied by the nature of our needs and interventions?
Answer		
	Yes. Refer to the "Instructions for Narratives" Program Design section #4 on page 43. This is the Funding Priority and Preferences section with prompts for response.	

	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
11		If we elect to onboard 1200 hour members, rather than full time 1700 hours, and we run programming for 30 weeks, is it ok for them to work 40 hours a week, despite being 3/4 time members?
		Answer

Yes. The federal agency designates the positions as three-quarter time because of the number of hours served, not the intensity of service. As the chart on page 18 of the RFA indicates, it takes 30 weeks at 40 hrs/wk to complete this term.

	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
12		If a 1200 hour volunteer finishes up their hours and instead of returning the next year as an AmeriCorps member, would rather be employed by White Pine, for the summer season, let's say, are we permitted to officially hire them?
		Answer

When an AmeriCorps member completes service, they are free to accept any employment they would like and the same is true for a grant recipient. The agency may offer employment to any individual eligible to accept employment.

	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
13		Can the difference between the min and max stipend as listed in the chart, be used for program costs such as payroll, taxes, healthcare, and management of the staff?
		Answer

A living allowance (RFA page 22) is the amount paid to an AmeriCorps member. The chart shows the lowest (minimum) amount that may be offered and the federally established maximum. The living allowance amount should not be confused with the Cost Per Member (RFA page 27) which is a flat amount per Member Service Year (MSY). A MSY is 1700 hours so the total number of hours to be served by members in the Corps divided by 1700 yields the number of MSYs.

	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
14		Is there a word count or page number for each section? How can we best format our draft to mimic the online application system?
		Answer

Please see RFA pages 40 and 41 for instructions and, in particular, the section "Application Page Limitations."

	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
15		Does the application allow bullet points, or does it have to be in full sentence format for the narrative sections?

	Answer
	Please see RFA pages 40 and 41 for instructions and, in particular, the section "General Advice on Narrative Form."

16	RFA Section & Page Number	Question
		How should we go about citing outside sources? As in - do we add in footnotes, use in-text citations keyed to a bibliography etc.?
Answer		
Please see RFA pages 40 and 41 for instructions. As noted, eGrants does not recognize any text formatting including footnotes. Citations will have to be in the narrative.		