

Grant Proposal Report to Commission from Task Force

RFP Due Date:	02/24/2026	Project Name:	AmeriCorps Resilience Corps II
Application Number :	26ES280648	Project Contact:	Julia Breul
Legal Applicant:	Greater Portland Council of Governments	MSYs and Slots requested:	13.30 / 20
Grant Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recompete <input type="checkbox"/> Cost Reimbursement <input type="checkbox"/> Fixed Amount	Budget Proposed	CNCS funds <u>\$ 475,000</u> Local Match _____
Reviewers:	Levak, Doremus, Bare-Rogers	Cost per Member:	\$25,000

Program Description (executive summary):

The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) will have 20 AmeriCorps members in Cumberland, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Waldo, and York Counties in Maine. AmeriCorps members will conduct research and data analysis, support development and modernization of operational systems and regulatory tools, assist with comprehensive and economic development planning processes, strengthen cross-sector partnerships and coordination across jurisdictions, assist with volunteer recruitment, facilitate community engagement and education activities, and provide implementation support for initiatives that advance economic resilience. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps Members will be responsible for providing capacity building support to 10 organizations, and delivering training on economic resilience strategies to 200 individuals. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage 75 volunteers who will be engaged in serving on committees, providing event support, helping with data collection and monitoring, and assisting with community coaching and education efforts. In addition to the AmeriCorps investment, \$122,250 in public funding and \$169,223 in private funding will support the project.

2. Other than the legal applicant, please list the agencies or organizations that appear to be the major collaborators or partners in this grant.

3. Will the applicant place AmeriCorps members with other agencies? Yes No

4. Applicant proposes to deliver services:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Within a single municipality | <input type="checkbox"/> Within a single County but not covering the entire County |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County-wide in a single County | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multiple Counties but not Statewide <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide |

4. Which federal focus area does this applicant identify as related to its proposal? Do the performance measures chosen match the focus area?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans and Military Families |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capacity Building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Futures | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

5. Based on your read of the Application Instructions and Proposal, please answer the following questions:

A. Does the proposal fall in a Commission funding priority? Yes No NA

If yes, which one?

- Public Health – including domestic violence, abuse or neglect, substance use, emergency preparedness/response, adverse childhood experiences, and mental health

- Workforce development – combining service with skill development or certifications that lead to post-service employment
- Housing – affordable and safe housing; home energy conservation, weatherization, or repair including programs that perform the modifications, teach homeowners DIY skills, or help residents connect with programs that offer financial assistance to accomplish the projects
- Climate action compatible with *Maine Won't Wait* (the state climate action plan) and Maine Climate Corps
- Environmental/community resilience, adaptation, and sustainability including emergency preparedness.

Scoring Detail:

Peer Reviewer Consensus Score. *Assessment of narrative using point distribution from federal agency. Major categories (Program Design, Organizational Capability, Budget and Cost) are dictated by CFR rubric for scoring.*

CATEGORY	Rating
Rationale & Approach/Program Design Section (50%)	
Community & Logic Model	Strong
Evidence Tier	Strong
Overall Evidence Quality	Adequate
Notice Priority	Strong
Member Experience	Strong
Organizational Capability Overall Rating 25%	
Organizational Background and Staffing	Adequate
Member Supervision	Strong
Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy 25%	
Member Recruitment	Strong
Member Retention	Strong
Data Collection	Adequate

Task Force Consensus Score. *The Task Force reviewers assess the additional technical criteria that states are directed to consider by the CFR.*

	Quality Rating
Program Model	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of community need targeted and funding priorities 	Strong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which proposal will serve specified communities and add to diversity of Commission's portfolio 	Adequate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal is innovative use of AmeriCorps and might be replicated 	Adequate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence the program can be sustained beyond initial start up 	Strong
Past Performance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can comply with requirements, info consistent with other grant administrator's info, consistent with externally verified past performance 	Strong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RECOMPETE ONLY: applicant used member positions 	Strong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RECOMPETE ONLY: used financial resources allocated 	Strong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RECOMPETE ONLY: implemented program effectively 	Strong
Financial Plan - Plan anticipates operational costs and provides sufficient resources to implement program	Strong
Fiscal Systems	

• Capacity of Financial mgt system to comply with fed requirements	Strong
• Strength of orgz financial mgt practices as evidenced by audits, etc.	Strong
• Strength of sponsor orgs financial status/stability per audit, 990, etc.	Strong

Final Assessment of Application:

Forward or fund with no corrections/modifications

Forward or fund with corrections/modifications

Do Not Forward or fund

Peer Reviewer Notes and Appraisal Summary:

Section: Program Design (50 %)

Community and Logic Model, 20 points

Reviewers felt the project clearly identified a community need and a well-developed approach to meeting that need. They commented that the logic model was strong.

Evidence Base, 20 points

Overall reviewers felt there was opportunity for improvement in this section. Reviewers felt the selected evaluation that formed the evidence base for the intervention was dated, as it was from 2019 and wondered if the grantee could find more recent data to accompany it. Reviewers also commented that it would be useful for the applicant to speak to lessons learned from previous years of implementation.

Notice Priority, 4 points

Reviewers felt this was strong noting the proposal’s stated funding priorities are clear and relevant.

Member Experience, 6 points

Reviewers rated this as strong, noting the variety of ways the program is intentionally working towards a meaningful member experience including thoughtfully design training and networking opportunities. As one reviewer noted, GPCOG has “a practical plan intended to provide relevant skills and experience for AmeriCorps members.”

Section: Organizational Experience (25%)

Organizational Background and Staffing, 15 points

Reviewers commented there was room for improvement in this section in better explaining the organization’s overall mission and how the program fits into the overall picture of the work of the organization.

Member Supervision, 10 points

Reviewers rated this as strong, noting the full time staff member, layers of oversight, and experience of the organization with federal grant management.

Section: Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25%)

Member Recruitment, 8 points

Reviewers assessed the application to have clear evidence of how they are supporting these costs.

Member Retention, 9 points

Reviewers assessed the application to have clear evidence of how they are supporting these costs.

Data Collection, 8 points

Reviewers felt that there was a missed opportunity for providing a slightly more detailed explanation of these costs.

Grants Task Force Review Notes and Appraisal Summary:

Program Model

1. Alignment of Community Need Targeted and Funding Priorities

The discussion noted that while the proposal may serve some disadvantaged or distressed communities, it does not explicitly target them. Reviewers observed that the program's design allows placements in municipalities that may not meet the intended federal definition of distressed communities, and the geographic focus appears concentrated in southern Maine, particularly around the Greater Portland area. As a result, the proposal was viewed as only moderately aligned with the Commission's funding priorities related to serving disadvantaged communities.

2. Extent to Which Proposal Will Serve Specified Communities and Add to Diversity of the Commission's Portfolio

Reviewers expressed concern that the proposal may not significantly expand the Commission's portfolio in terms of geography or populations served. There was a perception that the activities tend to concentrate in the Portland region and municipal networks associated with that area. This raised questions about whether the proposal would substantially broaden service to rural or underserved regions or diversify the existing portfolio given the Commission's interest in serving communities in areas of Maine other than Southern Maine.

3. Proposal is Innovative Use of AmeriCorps and Might Be Replicated

The panel acknowledged that the proposal includes promising partnerships and a potentially innovative approach to working with municipalities and partner organizations. However, reviewers noted that the application lacked clear detail on how specific activities would be implemented and how the partnerships would function in practice. Because the operational approach was somewhat diffuse, it was difficult to determine the degree of innovation or whether the model could be easily replicated elsewhere.

4. Evidence the Program Can Be Sustained Beyond Initial Startup

Reviewers expressed confidence in the program's sustainability based largely on familiarity with the organization and its previous work. While the proposal itself did not strongly demonstrate long-term sustainability mechanisms, panel members relied on the organization's track record and ongoing partnerships as indicators that the program would likely continue.

Past Performance

5. Ability to Comply with Requirements and Consistency With External Information

The panel agreed that the applicant has demonstrated the ability to comply with grant requirements and maintain consistency with information reported to other grant administrators. Reviewers noted that the organization's past performance appears consistent with externally verified information, and there were no concerns raised about compliance or reporting practices.

6. Applicant Used Member Positions

Initially, reviewers expressed uncertainty due to missing data in the materials about member position utilization. After staff clarified that the program had fully enrolled its member positions in the previous year, reviewers adjusted their assessment to reflect confidence that the applicant has successfully filled and utilized AmeriCorps member slots.

7. Used Financial Resources Allocated

After clarification regarding the program's operational history, reviewers agreed that the applicant has appropriately utilized allocated financial resources. The organization's past record of managing grant funds and meeting program obligations supported the conclusion that funds were used effectively.

8. Implemented Program Effectively

Based on staff input and prior experience with the program, reviewers concluded that the organization has implemented its program effectively. The panel referenced the program's consistent performance and successful execution of grant-funded activities as evidence of effective program management.

Fiscal Systems

9. Capacity of Financial Management System to Comply with Federal Requirements

The panel agreed that the organization has adequate systems in place to meet federal financial management requirements. No concerns were raised about the applicant's ability to track and manage federal funds according to applicable regulations.

10. Strength of Organizational Financial Management Practices

Reviewers found the organization's financial management practices to be strong, as evidenced by audit results and overall financial oversight procedures. The panel did not identify any issues related to internal controls or fiscal governance.

11. Strength of Sponsor Organization's Financial Status and Stability

The sponsor organization was viewed as financially stable, with strong indicators from audits and financial documentation. The panel expressed confidence that the organization's financial condition would support continued program implementation.

Do you think that this applicant would be effective in this category of grant? YES (X)