**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFP AMENDMENT # 1**

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| **RFP NUMBER AND TITLE:** | RFA # 202407139 Maine AmeriCorps Planning Grants Application Instructions and Guidelines |
| **RFP ISSUED BY:** | Maine Commission for Community Service/Department of Education  |
| **AMENDMENT DATE:** | 08/08/2024 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | 08/28/2024 |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | Proposals@maine.gov |
| **DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES IN RFP (if any):*** Application instructions revised/added
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| **REVISED LANGUAGE IN RFP (if any):****A. Executive Summary (Required - 0 percent)** Please fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary. Do not deviate from the template below. [*Name of the organization*] proposes to develop an AmeriCorps program to serve [*list the location(s) the program will serve*]. It will address [*community need*] that impacts the lives of [*describe anticipated beneficiaries of service*] in the AmeriCorps focus area(s) of [*list]*. The AmeriCorps federal ARP investment $[*amount of request*] will support planning activities carried out in collaboration with [*list significant program partners*]. No AmeriCorps members will be needed to execute this plan. **B. Program Design (50 percent)** Reviewers will consider the quality of the application’s response to the criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value. ***1. Need and Target Community(ies) (15 points):*** In the narrative* Identify the geographic community or communities where the program is likely to operate.
* Describe the need the AmeriCorps program will address including the role current or historical inequities faced by underserved communities may play in contributing to the problem
* Demonstrate that it is prevalent and severe in the communities that would benefit. Use relevant local data in the description. *Note: “community” can be a geographic region, a specific population among residents, or a combination of the two.*
* Describe how people impacted by the need were engaged in identifying it as the priority to address.
* Describe the services, organizations, or planning efforts already working to address this need.
* Describe the service beneficiaries (target population) for AmeriCorps program services including demographic information.

***2. Response to Need (15 points)***In the narrative* Provide a rationale for adding AmeriCorps members to community resources targeting the need.
* Describe the gap in current efforts the AmeriCorps program would try to fill, what solution or response the AmeriCorps program is likely to implement, and where service activities are apt to occur.
* Explain the relationship the applicant has now to potential service beneficiaries.
* Describe partners who want to be involved in the program. Are any of them already engaged in meeting the need?
* Have any local resources been identified as available to invest in the AmeriCorps program? These would include expertise, personnel, funding, etc.

***3. Readiness for Planning (15 points)***In the narrative* What is the connection between the potential AmeriCorps program and your organization’s mission, goals, and strategic plan or current priorities.
* Describe your organization’s current engagement of volunteers in its services. What do they do? How is volunteer recruitment, selection, supervision, and training handled? What is the system for documenting their time/effort contribution to the agency and impact of their work? If volunteers are not part of the agency’s workforce, what similar experience (interns, loaned executives, etc.) does the agency have?
* Identify the lead staff person for planning and key people (internal and external) who will need to join the planning team. If the lead planner will be a new hire, describe what qualifications the organization will require and how long it will take to recruit and onboard the person.
* Explain how the requirement for an AmeriCorps Advisory group will be met including what constituents or stakeholders will be represented, the roles they will have in program development, and skills or resources they will add to the planning process.

***4. Expertise and Training (5 points)***Considering the timeline and tasks outlined on page 14 et seq., describe the level of expertise the planning team can apply to the tasks listed below. Identify tasks that will require training to complete. (Note, this section is partially used to plan technical assistance to award recipients.) * 1. Developing the Theory of Change
	2. Developing the Logic Model to show outcomes, outputs, frequency and duration of activities, AmeriCorps member roles, community volunteer roles, resources needed, number of beneficiaries
	3. Identifying the research evidence that the intervention (program approach) is effective for the need
	4. Developing organizational policies, procedures, and documentation systems for involving AmeriCorps members and volunteers in the agency’s activities
	5. Designing AmeriCorps member training and supervision plans
	6. Establishing or negotiating agreements with partners on roles, responsibilities, and commitment of resources.
	7. Develop a plan to keep the community and stakeholders aware of AmeriCorps activities and accomplishments
	8. Design a system for internal monitoring of program compliance and accountability
	9. Establish a protocol for securing the grantee share (match support) for the program

**C. Organizational Capability (25 percent)** Reviewers will consider the quality of the application’s response to the following criteria below. ***1. Organizational Background and Staffing*** * The applicant describes how it has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan the proposed program.
* The applicant describes its prior experience in the proposed area of programming (if any).
* The applicant clearly describes its current organizational capacity (strengths, opportunities, challenges) and the status of its planning or development activities.
* The applicant's board, management, and staff collect and use information to learn and make decisions.
* The applicant's management and staff submit frequent reports to its governing board, funders, the public, and/or stakeholders on how well the organization is implementing its programs and strategies.

**D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)** Reviewers will assess the quality of the application’s budget using the criteria below. **No narrative should be entered in the narrative box except for “See budget”.** ***1. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy*** * Budget is submitted without mathematical errors and proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award.
* Budget is submitted with adequate equations and description to assess how each line item is calculated.
* Budget complies with the budget instructions.
* Grantee share is submitted with adequate information to support the amount written in the budget.\*
* The budgeted match is equal to or more than the required match for the given program year.

\*Although the American Rescue Plan “match replacement” option for AmeriCorps will be used for the local share, applicants should enter the funds under “Grantee Share” and on the budget lines to which they would be applied.Applicants must complete the budget and ensure the following information is in the budget screens: * Current indirect rate cost rate information.
* Under “Source of Funds”, identify any non-AmeriCorps funding and resources the applicant will use to support planning. If none, leave blank.

**E. Evaluation Plan (0 percent)** Planning applicants should enter “N/A” in this section.**F. Amendment Justification** Enter N/A. This field is used if you are awarded a grant and need to amend it. **G. Clarification Information** Enter N/A. This field is used to enter information that requires clarification in the post-review period. Please clearly label new information added during clarification with the date. **H. Continuation Changes** Enter N/A. This field is used to enter changes in application narratives in continuation requests.**VI. Logic Model****Planning Grant proposals do not require a logic model but this portion of the system cannot be disabled. To ensure your application will submit without a completed logic model, use the eGrants link in the left side navigation menu. This takes you to a part of the proposal that is outside the narratives so you are advised to enter it after completing all narrative fields and saving those sections.****In the first blank row of the logic model, click “edit.” This will open a pop-up screen with fields for each column of the logic model. Enter “not required” in the visible fields. When finished, click “save and close.”****VII. Performance Measures****All applicants must submit performance measures with their application. Follow these directions to enter the universal Planning Grant Performance Measure in the eGrants performance measures module.****Home Page** **• To start the module, click the “Begin” button on the Home Page. As you proceed through the module, the Home Page will summarize your work and provide links to edit the parts of the module you have completed. You may also navigate sections of the module using the tab feature at the top of each page.** **• Once you have started the module, clicking “Continue Working” will return you to the tab you were on when you last closed the module.** **• To edit the interventions, objectives, MSYs, and slot allocations for your application, click the “Edit Objectives/MSYs/Slots” button.** **• After you have created your performance measure, the Home Page will display a chart summarizing your measure. To edit a performance measure, click the “Edit” button. To delete a measure, click “Delete.” To create a new performance measure, click the “Add New Performance Measure” button.** **Objectives Tab** **• An expandable list of AmeriCorps focus areas appears on this tab. When you click on a focus area, a list of objectives from the AmeriCorps strategic plan appears. A list of common interventions appears under each objective.** **• First click on the “Other Community Priorities” focus area. Then click on the “Other” objective and select the “Other” intervention.** **• Choose “Other Community Priorities” as your program’s primary focus area in the drop-down list at the bottom of the page. Next, select “other” as your primary intervention.** **• Click the next button to continue.** **MSYs/Slots Tab** **• On this tab, you must enter a numerical value of “1” in all MSY and slot fields in order to submit your application. The module does not permit blank fields. Then click the next button to continue.** **Performance Measure Tab** **• To create your performance measure, begin by selecting “other” from the objective drop-down.** **• Enter the following title: Planning Grant.** **• Enter NA in the problem statement text box.** **• Check the box next to the intervention text box. Enter this text in the intervention text field: “Plan an AmeriCorps program.”** **• Click the button next to the output text box. Enter this text in the output text field: “Work with grantor staff to design and conduct planning process as outlined in the application.”** **• Check the box next to the outcome text box. Enter “NA” in the outcome text field.** **• Enter a numerical value of “1” in the MSYs and slots fields at the bottom left of the page.** **• Click “next” to proceed to the data collection tab.** **Data Collection Tab** **• On this tab, enter NA in the intervention text box. Then expand each output and outcome. Enter ”1” for all numerical values required and enter NA in all text boxes. Select “other” as your data collection method for both the output and the outcome.** **• After entering data collection information for the output and outcome, click “Mark Complete.” You will return to the Performance Measure tab. To continue to the next step of the module, click “Next.”** **Summary Tab** **• The summary tab shows all of the information you have entered in the module.** **• To print a summary of all performance measures, click “Print PDF for all Performance Measures.”** **• To print one performance measure, expand the measure and click “Print This Measure.”** **• Click “Edit Performance Measure” to return to the Performance Measure tab.** **• Click “Edit Data Collection” to return to the Data Collection tab.** **• Click “Validate Performance Measures” to validate this module prior to submitting your application****VIII. Program Information****In the Program Information Section, applicants should only check the boxes for those characteristics that represent a significant part of the program.** **General Information: select either Yes or No from the drop-down menu****AmeriCorps Funding Priorities. Select “No NOFO priority area” to indicate you are not responding to the federal agency’s Notice. This is a state competition.****Populations Served. Check “None of the Above.” Planning grants do not support service activities.****Grant Characteristics. Check any grant characteristics that are a significant part of the proposed program.****AmeriCorps Identity/Co-branding Questions. Select Yes or No.** **Grant Characteristics- AmeriCorps Member Population. Check “None of the above categories”****IX. Documents** **If the documents you are required to provide in hard copy are part of the pre-filled list, change their status in eGrants from the default “Not Sent” to “Sent” or to “Not Applicable.”** **For documents that are not part of the standard list, select “Enter New,” name the new document (e.g., “Financial Management Survey”) and enter status “Sent.”****These documents must be submitted by email according to the submission instructions on page 19.****a. Attach a copy of the program’s SF424 face sheet to the document package. It can be obtained from eGrants which generates a PDF version of the page.****b. A contents list enumerating the documents you have included. It should match the documents list in eGrants.****c. Organizational chart for legal applicant showing where the proposed AmeriCorps program would reside.****d. AmeriCorps Readiness Survey****e. Audit (with management letters and all findings) of legal applicant for the last completed fiscal year.****f. The organization’s most recently filed 990. (Not applicable to units of government.)****g. A copy of the organization’s negotiated indirect cost rate. If the applicant does not have one, please include a statement to this effect and indicate if the applicant organization has a cost allocation plan.****h. Volunteer Maine Financial Management Systems Survey (Attachment E, page 45)****i. Explanation if delinquent on Federal Debt (if applicable). Any applicant that checks Yes to the question on federal debt delinquency must submit a complete explanation which will be forwarded to AmeriCorps Office of Grants Management.****X. Funding and Demographics****In the Funding/Demographics Section enter:****• Other Revenue funds. Enter zero (0).****• Number of Episodic Volunteers Generated by AmeriCorps members. Please enter zero.****• Number of Ongoing Volunteers Generated by AmeriCorps members. Please enter zero.****XI. Operating Sites****This eGrants field is not applicable. It is used by applicants operating in more than one state. Do not complete this section.****E. BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS****Funding for these planning grants is from the AmeriCorps portion of the American Rescue Plan which waives the requirement there be local funds. Instead, it uses some ARP funds for “match replacement” to fulfill the 70% AmeriCorps and 30% grantee share requirement.****How to show ARP match funds in Budget. Expenses described under CNCS Share column should account for 70% of the Grant Total Cost and AmeriCorps ARP funds should equal 30% of the Grant Total Cost. In no scenario should the Total Cost be more than $60,000.****Example using maximum grant: CNCS Share Total $42,000** **Grantee Share Total + $18,000** **Grant Total Cost = $60,000****Preparing Your Budget.****Your proposed budget should be sufficient to allow you to perform the tasks described in your narrative. Reviewers will consider the information you provide in this section in their assessment of the Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy selection criterion.****Follow the detailed budget instructions below to prepare your budget. It is recommended you prepare your budget in the same order as indicated in the Budget Worksheets in Attachment B, page 36, because the format parallels the budget narrative section of eGrants. The eGrants system will create the budget summary automatically from the detailed budget narrative information you enter.** **After the budget details are entered, eGrants will perform a limited compliance check to validate the budget. If it finds any compliance issues you will receive a warning and/or error messages. Warnings are different from errors. All errors must be resolved before the budget can submitted. Warnings point out information which may need correction and edits may or may not be needed.****As you prepare your budget:****• All the amounts you request must be defined for a particular purpose. Do not include miscellaneous, contingency, or other undefined budget amounts.****• Itemize each cost and present the basis for all calculations in the form of an equation.****• Do not include unallowable expenses, e.g., entertainment costs (which include food and beverage costs) unless they are justified as an essential component of an allowable activity.****• Do not include fractional amounts (cents).****Programs must comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and the requirements of the Omni Circular. Please refer to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200) for allowable, allocable, and reasonable cost information, as well as, audit requirements, including the need to provide audits to the Clearinghouse if expending over $750,000 in federal funds as required in the Omni Circular. The OMB Omni circular can be found on-line at www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200** **Section I. Program Operating Costs****Complete Section I, Program Operating Costs, by entering the “Total Amount,” “CNCS Share,” and “Grantee Share” for items A-I. When a line item is added to the budget, a second pop-up screen appears with each of these fields labeled. The budget work sheets or a spreadsheet can be used to develop the descriptions and formulas that eventually go into eGrants.** **A. Personnel Expenses:****Under “Position/Title Description,” list each staff position separately and provide salary and percentage of effort as percentage of FTE devoted to this award. Each staff person’s role listed in the budget must be described in the application narrative. Note: all personnel on the grant are subject to the National Criminal History Background Check requirements.****B. Personnel Fringe Benefits:****Under “Purpose/Description,” identify the types of fringe benefits to be covered and the costs of benefit(s) for each staff position. Allowable fringe benefits typically include FICA, Worker’s Compensation, Retirement, SUTA, Health and Life Insurance, IRA, and 401K. You may provide a calculation for total benefits as a percentage of the salaries to which they apply or list each benefit as a separate item. If fringe benefits are over 30%, you must itemize them and justify the high cost.****Holidays, leave, and other similar vacation benefits are not included in the fringe benefit rates but are absorbed into the personnel expenses (salary) budget line item. Do not enter them.****C. 1. Staff Travel:****Describe the purpose for which program staff will travel. Provide a calculation that includes itemized costs for airfare, transportation, lodging, per diem, and other travel-related expenses multiplied by the number of trips/staff. Where applicable, identify the current standard reimbursement rate(s) of the organization for mileage, daily per diem, and similar supporting information. The standard mileage reimbursement should not exceed the federal mileage rate unless a result of applicant policy and justified in the budget narrative. Only domestic travel is allowable.****We expect all applicants to include funds in this line item for travel for staff and site staff to attend Commission and AmeriCorps -sponsored technical assistance meetings. These include the Annual Grantee Training (central Maine), the Maine Volunteer Leadership Conference (October), and monthly grantee meetings. Attendance at the regional conference of AmeriCorps grantees (May, mid-Atlantic or south) is required for program staff and fiscal staff of the legal applicant who are responsible for grant finances.** **Sample Travel calculation: 2 staff to the Corps Network Conference in Buffalo, NY: 2 staff X $300 airfare + (3 day) X $400/day shared lodging+ $50 shared ground transportation + $35 per diem per person =$1,760.00 for regional conference.****C. 2. Member Travel:****N/A. Enter zeros.****D. Equipment:****Equipment is defined as tangible, non-expendable personal property having a useful life of more than one year AND an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit (including accessories, attachments, and modifications). Any items that do not meet this definition should be entered in “E. Supplies” below. Purchases of equipment are limited to 10% of the total Corporation funds requested. If applicable, show the unit cost and number of units you are requesting. Provide a brief justification for the purchase of the equipment under Item/Purpose.****E. Supplies:****Include the amount of funds to purchase consumable supplies, materials, or equipment that does not fit the definition above. You must individually list any single item costing $1,000 or more.** **F. Contractual and Consultant Services:****Include costs for consultants related to the project’s planning. There is no maximum daily rate. It is not necessary to include a figure in that data field.****G. 1. Staff Training:****Include the costs associated with training staff on project requirements and training to enhance the skills staff need for effective project implementation (project or financial management, volunteer supervision, etc.) If using a consultant(s) for training, indicate the estimated daily rate.****Staff training should include registration fees for AmeriCorps regional meetings ($150 pp), Maine Volunteer Leadership Conference ($50 pp), and the fee for either a training/education event related to the competencies for National Service Program Staff or Certified Volunteer Administrator ($300) qualification.** **G. 2. Member Training:****N/A. Enter zeros.****H. Evaluation:****N/A. Enter zeros. Planning grant recipients are not required to evaluate the effort.****I. Other Program Operating Costs:****Allowable costs in this budget category should include when applicable:****• Criminal history background checks are required for all employees or other individuals who receive a salary or stipend or similar payment from the grant under Personnel Expenses. Include the cost for these checks for staff (at least $54 per individual) or explain how your program will be covering the cost in the budget narrative. Program consultants and contractors are not required to have criminal history background checks.****• Office space rental for projects operating without an approved indirect cost rate agreement that covers office space. If space is budgeted and it is shared with other projects or activities, the costs must be equitably pro-rated and allocated between the activities or projects.****• Utilities, telephone, Internet and similar expenses that are specifically used for planning the AmeriCorps program and are not part of the organization’s indirect cost/admin cost allocation pool. If such expenses are budgeted and shared with other projects or activities, the costs must be equitably pro-rated and allocated between the activities or projects.****Section II. Member Costs****This section should not be visible in eGrants but, in case it is, please enter N/A or zeros as appropriate.** **Section III. Administrative/Indirect Costs****Definitions****Administrative costs are general or centralized expenses of the overall administration of an organization that receives CNCS funds and do not include particular project costs. These costs may include administrative staff positions. For organizations that have an established indirect cost rate for federal awards, administrative costs mean those costs that are included in the organization’s indirect cost rate agreement. Such costs are generally identified with the organization’s overall operation and are further described in Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance.****Calculating Administrative/Indirect Costs** **In operating grants, there are several options for claiming indirect and using negotiated indirect cost agreements. However, in this planning grant application, all funds will be AmeriCorps ARP monies and subject to a statutory restriction. Under section 121(d) of the NCSA and CNCS’s regulations at 45 C.F.R. 2517.710, no more than 5% of the total CNCS funds expended may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps grants. That means, the 5% must be used for both the CNCS Share column and Grantee share column since the latter are actually federal AmeriCorps funds. The Commission 1% retained covers central accounting processing of payments and the grant report system.** **Five Percent Fixed Administrative Costs Option****1. To determine the CNCS grant share for Section III and at the same time determine the allocation between the grantee and Commission use these formulas:** **([Total CNCS share of Section I] + [Total CNCS share of Section II] x 0.0526) x (0.20) = Commission Fixed Amount****([Total CNCS share of Section I] + [Total CNCS share of Section II] x 0.0526) x (0.80) = CNCS Fixed Amount** **(grantee share)****The factor 0.0526 is used to calculate the maximum amount of federal funds that may be budgeted for administrative (indirect) costs, rather than 0.0500, as a way to mathematically compensate for determining Section III costs when the total budget (Sections I + II + III) is not yet established. Enter this amount as the Corporation share for Section III A.****2. To determine the Grantee share for Section III: Repeat the steps in #1 and enter this amount as the grantee share for Section III A.****3. Enter the sum of the CNCS and grantee shares under Total Amount.****Section IV. Source of Funds** **Planning Grant awards are not likely to cover all the costs incurred in the planning process. To demonstrate that the process will not be hindered, enter a brief description of any source of support and the total value in the “Source of Funds” fields that appear at the end of Budget Section III. It is not necessary to indicate what expense the funds cover. Identify whether it is secured or proposed. Include dollar amount, the classification (cash or in-kind), and the source type (Private, State/Local, or Federal). Include indirect costs. Define all acronyms the first time they are used.** **F. REVIEW, AUTHORIZE, AND SUBMIT****The review, authorize and submit procedures are the same for all grant applications.****eGrants requires that you review and verify your entire application before submitting, by completing the following sections in eGrants:****• Review****• Authorize****• Assurances - use this link to read:** [**https://egrants.cns.gov/cnsmisc/EASSUR.HTM**](https://egrants.cns.gov/cnsmisc/EASSUR.HTM)**• Certifications - use this link to read:** [**https://egrants.cns.gov/cnsmisc/ECERTS.HTM**](https://egrants.cns.gov/cnsmisc/ECERTS.HTM)**• Verify Budget, Performance Measures, and Narrative contents****• Submit****Read the Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications carefully. Complete each section of the Assurances and Certifications. Each assurance or certification must be opened and read before eGrants will record it as read and authorized. Each section must also be checked and submitted individually. eGrants does not recognize multiple selections for assurances and certifications.** **The person who authorizes the application must be the applicant’s authorized representative. A copy of the governing body’s authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant’s office.****The applicant’s authorized representative must log into his/her eGrants account and proceed with Authorize and Submit. After signing off on the Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications, his/her name will override any previous signatory that may appear and show on the application as the Authorized Representative.** **Be sure to check your entire application to make sure that there are no errors before submitting it. eGrants will also validate the proposal and generate a list of errors if there are sections that need to be corrected prior to submission. A reminder, warnings are informational and acting on them is optional.** |
| **All other provisions and clauses of the RFP remain unchanged.** |