

State of Maine

Volunteer Maine,
The Commission For Community Service

RFA # 202207123

MAINE RURAL STATE AMERICORPS GRANTS

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

for New Fixed Amount Grant Proposals

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| **RFA Coordinator** | *All communication regarding this RFA must be made through the Coordinator identified below*.**Name:** Maryalice Crofton **Title:** Proposal Coordinator**Contact Information:** service.commission@maine.gov19 Elkins Lane, 105 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0105207-624-7792 |
| **Information Sessions**  | **Dates:** Part A: Successful Program Design - 8/17/2022 *and* Part B: Member Experience - 8/24/2022**Time:** 8:30 am – 12 pm, local time each date**Location:** Virtual. Session registration required. Use this link: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9xazpj> *Sessions will be recorded and posted with this grant announcement on the Division of Procurement Services grant page.* |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be received by the RFA Coordinator identified above by:***Date:** August 31, 2022, no later than 4:00 p.m., local time |
| **Proposal Submission** | *Proposals must be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:***Submission Deadline:** September 15, 2022, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time.*Proposals must be submitted electronically in the federal eGrants system and additional documents emailed to the following address:***Electronic (email) Submission Address:** Proposals@maine.gov |

From the time this RFA is issued until proposal selection is made, all contact with the State regarding this RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator. No other person/State employee is empowered to make binding statements regarding this RFA. Violation of this provision may lead to disqualification from the bidding process, at the State’s discretion.

**Highlights for Potential Applicants**

1. This competition has one eligibility criteria that does not apply in other competitions. Only organizations that have never had an AmeriCorps grant may apply. Local agencies that have hosted AmeriCorps members and paid cost share to AmeriCorps grantees or VISTA programs are eligible.
2. Proposals submitted in this competition may only propose full-time terms of service for members (1700 hours over 44 weeks, 1200 hours over 32 weeks or 900 hours over 25 weeks).
3. The smallest project must account for no less than 3400 hours of service (2 MSY) in a year; 8,500 hours (5 MSY) for largest project. Members must serve within the applicant agency.
4. A complete proposal consists of the application sections in eGrants ***plus*** the required additional documents submitted to the Division of Procurement Services at the email address specified on the cover and page 13.
5. This document has three types of information:
	1. An introduction to AmeriCorps and its service culture;
	2. Guidance on designing an AmeriCorps program; and,
	3. Directions for writing a grant proposal.
6. Applicants must measure performance using one set of national standardized measures in each of these categories:
	1. Direct service activities,
	2. Capacity building activities, and
	3. AmeriCorps member development.
7. AmeriCorps has made it clear it now funds proposals that implement evidence-based program models that have been proven by independent evaluation to make a strong impact on community needs and conditions. Strong impact means “an impact with a substantial likelihood of yielding a major change in life outcomes for individuals or improvements in community standards of living.”

Successful applicants cite evaluations of their proposed program model that were done by issue experts (e.g., national literacy leaders, US Centers for Disease Control, National Institute of Building Sciences). The evaluations cited need to show the program proposed and service to be provided are proven to be effective and endorsed as a solution for the targeted need.

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# Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

The following terms and acronyms in this RFA shall have the meaning indicated below:

**AmeriCorps:** An umbrella term that refers the federal agency and its three programs that strengthen communities by mobilizing community resources. The three AmeriCorps programs are AmeriCorps State/National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps).

**AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps):** a full-time residential program for men and women, ages 18-24, that strengthens communities while developing leaders through direct, team-based national and community service. Members are assigned to one of the campuses located in Denver, Colorado; Sacramento, California; Vicksburg, Mississippi; and Vinton, Iowa.

**AmeriCorps State and National:** Used only when referring to grants or funding. AmeriCorps State grants are awarded by the state service commissions to organizations operating programs solely within the particular state. AmeriCorps National grants are awarded directly by the federal agency to multi-state or national organizations operating a program in multiple states.

**AmeriCorps State:** AmeriCorps State grants to public and nonprofit organizations engage AmeriCorps members in direct service and capacity-building to address unmet community needs. Applicants propose service activities designed for a team of members serving full- or part-time for one year or during the summer.

**AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America):** AmeriCorps VISTA provides full-time members to community organizations and public agencies to create and expand programs that build capacity and ultimately bring low-income individuals and communities out of poverty. AmeriCorps VISTA is administered out of the federal agency's Regional Field Offices.

**Capacity Building:** A set of activities that expand the scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of programs and organizations. These activities achieve lasting positive outcomes for the communities served by AmeriCorps-supported programs. As a general rule, the federal agency considers capacity building activities to be *indirect services* that enable organizations to provide more, better, and sustained *direct services*. Capacity building activities cannot only support the administration or operations of the organization. Capacity building activities must:

1. enhance the program delivery model.
2. increase or expanding services that address the pressing needs identified in the community, and
3. enable the agency to sustain the level of direct service after the capacity building effort is completed.

**Cost Reimbursement Grants**: These grants fund a portion of program operating costs and member living allowances with flexibility to use all of the funds for allowable costs regardless of whether or not the program recruits and retains all AmeriCorps members. Cost reimbursement grants include a formal matching requirement and require the submission of a budget and financial reports.

**Education Award (proper name:** Segal AmeriCorps Education Award) - After successfully completing a term of service, AmeriCorps members who are enrolled in the National Service Trust are eligible to receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award. It can be used to pay education costs at any place qualified to accept federal financial aid (higher education institutions, technical training programs) or to repay qualified student loans. The annual value is tied to the maximum amount of the U.S. Department of Education’s Pell Grant. The value is updated each winter for the following year.

**Enrollment Rate:** Enrollment rate is calculated as slots filled, plus refill slots filled, divided by slots awarded.

**Evidence based program**: a program that has been rigorously evaluated and has demonstrated positive results.

**Fixed amount Grants:** These grants provide a fixed amount of funding per Member Service Year (MSY). The amount does not cover the full cost of program operation so a grantee must obtain funds and in-kind resources to support the full range of expenses. The award amount is subject to adjustment based on the level of member enrollment and the number who complete the full term of service. Invoices for reimbursement are submitted on a schedule during the budget year and show the members serving along with the hours they completed during the invoiced period.

Under fixed‐amount grants, grantees have minimal financial reporting.  Fixed‐amount grants are exempt from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Cost Principles, which means that the amount of the AmeriCorps award is not based on a line-item budget and programs are not required to maintain documentation to support the allowability of expenditures charged to Federal or matching grant funds.

**Grantee Share:** the resources a grantee contributes to operating an AmeriCorps program. Although the grantee share is sometimes informally called “match”, it is the portion of funds, supplies, and human resources not covered by the amount of funding provided through AmeriCorps awards.

**Leveraged Resources:** “Leveraged resources” are all the non-AmeriCorps resources that a grantee uses to support the program.

**Members**: Participants in AmeriCorps are referred to as members - not volunteers.

**Member Service Location:** A member service location is the site at which an AmeriCorps member is placed to provide his/her service to the community.

**Member Service Year (MSY):** One Member Service Year (MSY) is equivalent to 1700-hours of AmeriCorps service. A MSY can be divided into parts that match standard shorter terms.

**Other Revenue:** Funds necessary to operate an AmeriCorps program that are not AmeriCorps funds or grantee share (match) identified in the budget. Programs should not enter the total operating budget for their organization unless the entire operating budget only supports the AmeriCorps program. Fixed amount grantees should enter all non- AmeriCorps funds that support the program in The “Source of Funds” budget section. All fixed grants will have other revenue.

**Retention Rate:** Retention rate is calculated as the number of members exited with award (full or partial award) divided by the number of members enrolled.

**Reducing and/or Preventing Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse:** AmeriCorps is interested in any program models that seek to address the prescription drug and opioid abuse crisis in America.

**Rural Communities:** AmeriCorps uses rural-urban continuum (RUCA) codes to classify program addresses as either rural or urban. RUCA codes classify U.S. census tracts using measures of population density, urbanization, and daily commuting. Applicants may designate themselves as serving rural communities if some or all service locations are in rural areas as defined by RUCA codes or if the program can provide other compelling evidence that the program is rural in the narrative portion of the application.  This self-designation will be considered in grant-making decisions. For more information about RUCA codes, please visit the USDA website found here: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-continuum-codes/>).

**Same Project:** Two projects will be considered the same if they: Address the same issue areas, address the same priorities, address the same objectives, serve the same target communities and population, utilize the same sites.

# A. Federal & State Partners in AmeriCorps State Grant-making

## I. Volunteer Maine (The Maine Commission for Community Service)

Volunteer Maine builds capacity and sustainability in Maine’s volunteer and service communities by funding programs, developing volunteer managers, fostering adoption of high-quality volunteer management practices, raising awareness of sector issues, and promoting service as a strategy.

Established in 1994, the agency was known as the Maine Commission for Community Service, the statutory name. In 2002, the Commission launched Volunteer Maine as its outreach to volunteer programs that were not part of National Service. In 2019, the two identities were merged, and Volunteer Maine became the Commission’s primary identity. The mission has not changed. Volunteer Maine fosters and inspires community service and volunteerism to address critical needs in the State of Maine.

As the State of Maine partner for the federal agency, AmeriCorps , Volunteer Maine has several very specific legal responsibilities related to AmeriCorps and National Service. These include:

* providing training and technical assistance to local nonprofit organizations and other entities that want to plan and apply for funding to implement national service programs;
* selecting programs to be funded under the National and Community Service Act;
* pre-selecting programs to compete for funding under AmeriCorps State Competitive;
* providing training and technical assistance to National Service programs in Maine;
* evaluating, monitoring, and administering grant programs.

All Commission activities -- those related to the wider volunteer sector as well as National Service -- and its funding priorities flow from its Strategic Plan. To learn more about the Commission, visit [VolunteerMaine.gov](https://volunteermaine.gov/)

## II. AmeriCorps, the federal agency

In 2020, the federal agency rebranded itself from the Corporation for National and Community Service to AmeriCorps. The federal agency was established in 1994 and among the grant programs it manages are

* Foster Grandparents, RSVP, and Senior Companion Program; and
* AmeriCorps VISTA, the National Civilian Community Corps programs, and AmeriCorps State/National (the crew program).

The federal agency mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities and fortify the civic health of the United States.

To accomplish these goals, AmeriCorps provides grants as well as training and technical assistance to volunteer organizations. It explores, develops, and models effective approaches for using volunteers to meet the nation's human needs and conducts and disseminates research that helps develop and cultivate knowledge that will enhance the overall effectiveness of national and community service programs.

For more information on AmeriCorps, visit [AmeriCorps.gov](https://americorps.gov/).

# B. Maine Rural State AmeriCorps Programs

AmeriCorps is referred to as the “Domestic Peace Corps.” Grants are awarded to eligible organizations to implement evidence-based direct service programs in which AmeriCorps members provide the human resource needed to carry out the program. The activities target high priority, critical needs in specific communities with the goal of measurably improving/changing the situation. The AmeriCorps participants/members develop technical, life, and civic skills through program training and supervision. AmeriCorps also builds the capacity of the community to meet its own needs by engaging citizens as volunteers who serve alongside the AmeriCorps members.

Although agencies serving any rural community may propose AmeriCorps programs under this RFA, preference points will be given to applicants with a physical presence in counties classified as 6, 7, or 8 on the USDA rural—urban continuum (<https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-continuum-codes/>).

Organizations that operate local Rural AmeriCorps programs design service activities requiring between 3,400 and 8,500 hours of service by a team of members serving full-time (40 hours/week) for up to one year. Terms of full-time service for each member may be 1700, 1200, 900, 675, 450, or 300 hours. The length of a term will depend on the program design. Seasonal winter or summer programs generally use terms that are 900 hours or less. School year programs typically rely on 1200-hour terms.

AmeriCorps members serve with a single organization and help in one of three ways:

1. Increase the amount of service provided through an evidence-based program in order to overcome unusual demand or delay in accessing the service.
2. Provide new services to an organization’s clients/customers through an evidence-based program in order to address an unmet need.
3. Extend to a new population or region a proven program model that addresses a local need.

An AmeriCorps member is an individual who is enrolled in an approved national service position and engages in community service. Members serving full-time receive a living allowance and other benefits. The organizations that receive grants are responsible for recruiting, selecting, and supervising AmeriCorps members to serve in their programs. They must provide the members with full role descriptions and work plans in addition to documenting the eligibility of AmeriCorps members to serve and receive the education award. They help members acquire skills, training, education, and experience which they can carry into the workforce and future service to their communities.

Note that AmeriCorps State is *not the same as* AmeriCorps VISTA. AmeriCorps State members *may not* do research, strategic planning, grant-writing, or other indirect service activities. At least 80% of a member’s time in AmeriCorps State must be spent on direct service to the public.

One way to discern indirect from direct service is to ask who is the primary beneficiary? If it is the organization in which the AmeriCorps member serves, then it is *indirect*. As an example, the organization has a better ability to meet its mission because AmeriCorps developed new resources or researched community needs or supported agency planning activities.

If the primary beneficiary is a customer/client/community, then the service is *direct.* For example, the community or people who come to the organization for assistance receive the help they seek because AmeriCorps is adding human resources to the organization and increasing its ability to provide services.

AmeriCorps direct service may occur at the grantee organization’s site or it may occur out in the community. For instance, a program for diabetics that combines meal planning, nutrition education, and exercise may occur at sites where participants can conveniently gather. Still, the members are directed in their work by the grantee and the program is tightly identified as “belonging” to the grantee. In another example, a school district may decide to formalize and strengthen how it brings volunteers in to assist. The AmeriCorps members might work with staff in several locations to identify volunteer roles, describe positions, recruit new people, and set up other systems. Even though the AmeriCorps members help staff in several school buildings, they are still serving in one district, under one supervisor, with one work plan.

As AmeriCorps members carry out the direct service, they also build the capacity of the grant recipient to sustain the work after the start-up and implementation “boost” from AmeriCorps. During their service, AmeriCorps members recruit community volunteers to serve alongside them and implement volunteer management systems that help the agency document volunteer contributions to service accomplishments.

Maine Rural State AmeriCorps grantees receive training and technical assistance from the Volunteer Maine staff in order to build their internal capacity. During the first year, the emphasis is on implementing systems related to volunteer management and the specifics of AmeriCorps reporting, fiscal tracking, and other documentation. In the second year, grantees are required to participate in Service Enterprise, a researched based approach to engaging skilled volunteers and increasing organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

Thus, Maine Rural AmeriCorps represents a “quadruple bottom line” because those who benefit from the services are changed; the community is changed; AmeriCorps members who serve change; and the grantee organization is changed.

## I. What do AmeriCorps State Grants Cover?

AmeriCorps grants award two types of resources to address the local need: member positions (also called slots) and funds to support AmeriCorps members during their service terms. Grantees use the funding to support AmeriCorps members performing service. In other words, AmeriCorps grants partially cover the expense of operating an AmeriCorps program and do not cover general organizational expenses. Local cash and in-kind resources are required to cover the full implementation of the program.

## II. Number of Awards, Size, and Grant Types

**A. NUMBER OF AWARDS, SIZE, AND MATCH.** Volunteer Maine intends to fund 1 to 3 proposals through this competition but retains the right to fund none if the quality of proposals does not merit support.

Grants will range from $52,000 for a team of two AmeriCorps members up to $ 130,000 for a team of five. The amount is determined using the maximum cost per member set by the federal agency ($26,000) multiplied by the number of AmeriCorps members requested. The Commission will issue either full or partial awards at its discretion.

**B. GRANT TYPE, ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PERIOD, AND DURATION:** Awards in this competition are Fixed Amount Grants. The AmeriCorps proposal can incorporate any term of service needed by the program design. The proposal may request up to $26,000 per Member Service Year.

The advantages of this type of grant are 1) the applicant does not submit a full project budget as part of the proposal; 2) the award recipient is not bound to federal financial tracking requirements and is not required to report operating expenses. Grant recipients receive reimbursement based on AmeriCorps member recruitment and retention rates. If grantees do not achieve full enrollment, the reimbursed funds decrease proportionally.

In this type of grant, the focus of monitoring and quality assessment is the program’s ability to meet performance targets, achieve the desired community change, engage the community as volunteers, and fully enroll as well as retain AmeriCorps members. In other words, the program’s evidence of performance is more critical since it becomes evidence that additional local resources are used to carry out the program.

A grant period is three (3) years with 12-month annual budget periods serving as the basis for adding funds. If a proposal is selected, only the initial period of funding will be awarded. Funding and positions for years 2 and 3 will be awarded under a continuation application process. Each time, the Commission reviews program operations and performance to determine whether another year of resources is merited.

A typical program year is September 1 through August 31 although school-based programs frequently start around August 15. After a proposal is selected and a multi-year grant authorized, only the initial year of funding will be provided. AmeriCorps members may not start service or be enrolled prior to the grant award start date. Likewise, program funds budgeted under grantee share may not be expended prior to the grant start date. This includes expenses for recruitment of members, a task which should start as soon as the applicant learns their proposal has been selected. With prior permission, a grantee may incur expenses to be reimbursed after the award start date.

The amount and duration of any grant as well as the final decision to issue a grant award is subject to the availability of funds as determined by Congressional appropriations, grantee compliance with program regulations, fund management, and grantee performance. Generally, the federal agency negotiates funding with state service commissions in mid-summer. Decisions on all grant awards are not final until the federal agency formally awards AmeriCorps funds to Volunteer Maine. Programs are expected to begin implementation soon after.

## III. Service Activity Priorities for This Competition

As mentioned earlier, the capacity building emphasis in Maine Rural State AmeriCorps programs is one of three required elements of these programs. The second is meeting a need through service. Volunteer Maine has identified the following priorities for AmeriCorps action and will award preference points to applications seeking to develop programs in these areas:

* Public Health – including domestic violence, substance use, emergency preparedness/response, and mental health;
* Workforce development – combining service with skill development that leads to post-service employment
* Housing – affordable and safe housing; home energy conservation, weatherization, repair
* Climate action compatible with *Maine Won’t Wait* (the state climate action plan) and Maine Climate Corps; and,
* Environmental/community sustainability which would encompass emergency preparedness and aspects of transportation.

Volunteer Maine preferences will be considered in selection of proposals. AmeriCorps service activities must to fit into the federally allowed categories (called focus areas) described below.

**B. FOCUS AREAS**. Under the Serve America Act of 2009, Congress directed CNCS to focus AmeriCorps efforts on six categories of issues. Proposals submitted in this competition must align with one of these categories:

a. **Economic Opportunity Focus Area.** Interventions 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 access to services that enhance financial literacy, transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing, and/or improve employability with increased success in securing jobs. This focus area includes engaging disadvantaged people in service as a means of increasing their employability by developing skills, knowledge, abilities, and evidence of these.

b. **Education Focus Area.** Interventions support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute 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 elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or support economically disadvantaged students prepare for success in post-secondary educational institutions.

c. **Environmental Stewardship Focus Area.** Interventions support responsible stewardship of the environment, while preparing communities for challenging circumstances and helping Americans respond to and recover from disruptive life events: programs that conserve natural habitats; protect clean air and water; maintain public lands; support wildland fire mitigation; cultivate individual and community self-sufficiency; provide reforestation services after floods or fires; and more. AmeriCorps programs support activities, such as conservation and fire corps, which may also help veterans and others learn new job skills through conservation service.

d. **Disaster Services Focus Area.** Interventions increase the preparedness of individuals for disasters, improve individuals’ readiness to respond to disasters, help individuals recover from disasters, and/or help mitigate disasters. Grantees also have the ability to respond to national disasters under AmeriCorps cooperative agreements and FEMA mission assignments.

e. **Healthy Futures Focus Area.** Interventions support for activities that improve access to primary and preventive health care; increase seniors’ ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible; increase physical activity and improve nutrition with the purpose of reducing obesity and related diseases; establishing or expanding substance use disorder response or prevention programming.

f. **Veterans and Military Families Focus Area.** Interventions positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength; increase the number of veterans, military service members, and their families served by AmeriCorps; and/or increase the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through AmeriCorps.

## IV. Submission Deadline and Compliance Requirements

All proposals must be submitted in eGrants <http://www.nationalservice.gov/egrants/> **no later than 11:59 p.m. local time on September 15, 2022.**  Receipt time will be established by the date/time stamp electronically recorded at the time of submission.

1. **Proposals Due:** Complete proposals must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. local time, on the date listed on the cover page of this RFA. Proposals received **after** the 11:59 p.m. deadline will be **rejected** without exception.
2. **Complete means** the proposal is submitted in eGrants (<http://www.nationalservice.gov/egrants/> ) **and** all required additional documents listed below are submitted by **email** to the email address provided on the RFA Cover Page. Applicants are encouraged to request read receipts on emails.
3. Only proposals received through eGrants and email will be considered. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete e-mail transmission and receipt.
4. Applicants are to insert the following into the subject line of their email submission:

“**RFA# 202207123 Proposal Submission**”

1. Applicant submissions are to be compiled into two files, with each file named as it is titled in bold below, and include:

- **File #1- Application ID# (from eGrants)** *PDF format preferred*

 Completed - Proposal Cover Page (SF424) printed out from eGrants proposal

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 Organizational Chart showing the relationship of the program staff and AmeriCorps members to the rest of the organization

 AmeriCorps Program Start-up Plan -- (Attachment D, page 68)

 Labor Union Concurrence (if applicable; if not applicable, please include an explanation statement in order to avoid the appearance of omitting this consideration)

Labor Union Concurrence applies:

1) If a program applicant:

a) Proposes to serve as the placement site for AmeriCorps members; and

b) Has employees engaged in the same or substantially similar work as that proposed to be carried out by AmeriCorps members; and

c) Those employees are represented by a local labor organization, then the application must include the written concurrence of the local labor organization representing those employees. Written concurrence can be in the form of a letter or e-mail from the local union leadership.

2) If a program applicant:

a) Proposes to place AmeriCorps members at sites where they will be engaged in the same or substantially similar work as employees represented by a local labor organization, then the applicant must submit a written description of how it will ensure that:

i) AmeriCorps members won’t be placed in positions recently occupied by paid staff

ii) No AmeriCorps member will be placed into a position for which a recently resigned or discharged employee has recall rights as a result of a collective bargaining agreement, from which a recently resigned or discharged employee was removed as a result of a reduction in force, or from which a recently resigned/discharged employee is on leave or strike.

- **File #2 Application ID# (from eGrants)** *PDF format preferred*

 Audit ***PLUS*** Management Letters and all findings

 Organization’s most recently filed Form 990

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (if applicable)

 Federal Financial Management Systems Survey (Attachment C, page 65)

 Explanation if delinquent on Federal Dept (if applicable)

## V. Questions Regarding This RFA

Questions about this RFA must be submitted by email to Service.Commission@maine.gov ***with the subject line***: “Maine Rural State AmeriCorps RFA #202207123”. The deadline for written questions is August 31, 2022 and responses to all substantive and relevant questions will be posted on the same page as the RFA <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants> and at <https://volunteermaine.gov/grants/funding-proposals-request>

## VI. Applicant Resource Page

Attachment G contains a compilation of links to documents referenced in the RFA.

## VII. Information Session

A 2-part information session will take place virtually. Each session will focus on a different aspect of the AmeriCorps requirements. Part A: Successful Program Design will be on August 17, 2022 from 8:30 am – 12 pm and Part B: Member Experience will occur on August 24, 2022 from 8:30 am – 12 pm. Both sessions will be recorded and posted with this grant announcement on the Division of Procurement Services grant page.To register for the sessions, go to <https://tinyurl.com/2p9xazpj>

# C. Eligible Applicants and Selection Processes

## I. Who Is Eligible to Apply?

Organization Qualifications: Maine public or private non-profits, State/county/local units of government, higher ed institutions, faith-based organizations, labor organizations, federally recognized Tribes, and regional organizations that will operate an AmeriCorps program entirely within Maine may apply.

All applicants must have an existing physical presence in the community where AmeriCorps members will serve. Organizations must have an official IRS employer identification number. Applicants will need to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier with the federal System for Award Management and have an active registration. Both can be done online and are discussed later in this document.

Only organizations that have *never* been awarded an AmeriCorps grant may apply. Agencies that have hosted AmeriCorps members but not had fiscal responsibility for the program are eligible.

Preference: As stated earlier, applicants serving any rural region may submit proposals, but preference points will be given to applicants in counties classified as 6, 7, or 8 on the USDA rural-urban continuum. Those counties are Franklin, Hancock, Oxford, Somerset, Waldo, Aroostook, Knox, Washington, Lincoln, and Piscataquis.

Not Eligible: Organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime are disqualified from receiving assistance under an AmeriCorps grant. Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Sections 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 USC 501(c)(4), which engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply.

Note that under section 745 of Title VII, Division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2016, a similar restriction may be enacted with the appropriation for any corporation has any unpaid Federal tax liability which—

* has been assessed
* for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and
* is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, that corporation is not eligible for an award under this RFA/Notice.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Special Note About Proposals Submitted to Both AmeriCorps National and AmeriCorps State Competitions.** Volunteer Maine will not consider proposals for the same project if an applicant is awarded a grant under the AmeriCorps State or National Competitive grants to be announced in May 2021. Federal regulation specifically states a project may not be funded from both sources for concurrent operation.

Applicants with prior AmeriCorps program experience must get approval from federal program officers to be considered a new project. Requests for approval to be considered a new project should describe how the new project differs from the previous project in the characteristics noted below.

The federal agency will consider a project to be new if there is a meaningful difference between it and previous projects with regard to the objectives and priorities of the projects; the nature of the services provided; the program staff, participants, and volunteers involved; the geographic locations in which the services are provided; the populations served; and the proposed community partnerships. (§2522.340).

## II. Review Process for AmeriCorps Proposals

### State Review by Volunteer Maine, the state service commission

The Commission uses selection criteria and a process that incorporates the mandatory AmeriCorps weighting and scoring of various criteria published in the Code of Federal Regulations, as well as Commission policies on funding and performance, and the requirements of state contract selection rules.

All AmeriCorps State proposals are assessed by the Commission’s Grant Selection and Performance Task Force using a two-phase process.

Phase One. External Peer Review of application narrative, budget, and performance measure components using federally required scoring system. Reviewers are community service practitioners, educators, administrators, and specialists in the areas of environment, public safety, education, and other human needs who evaluate the quality of the proposals.

Volunteer Maine uses the mandated AmeriCorps weighting and selection criteria during this phase: 50% for Program Design, 25% for Organizational Capability, and 25% for Budget Adequacy and Cost Effectiveness for a possible total score of 100 Peer Reviewer points.

Peer Reviewers express their consensus recommendations to the Commissions’ Grant Selection and Performance Task Force by assigning each proposal to one of the following categories:

* Strongly Recommend for Further Review (A comprehensive and thorough proposal of exceptional merit with numerous strengths; total score between 90 and 100)
* Recommend for Further Review (A proposal that demonstrates overall competence and is worthy of support; it has some weaknesses. Total score between 80 and 89)
* Recommend for Further Review with Hesitation (A proposal with approximately equal strengths and weaknesses. Total score between 60 and 79.)
* Do Not Recommend for Further Review (A proposal with serious shortcomings. There are numerous weaknesses and few strengths. Total score 59 or below)

Applications not recommended for further review will not be submitted to the Task Force for consideration.

Phase Two: Applications recommended for some level of review will undergo further assessment by the Grants Selection and Performance Task Force. The Task Force will include in its review documents submitted as part of this competition plus data from publicly available information systems including SAM (the federal System for Award Management). It also will consider information gathered in a structured interview of representatives of the grant applicant. The representatives must include the proposed project director plus personnel responsible for finances and human resources.

The Task Force will use the following weighting and selection criteria during this phase: 25 points Funding Priority Alignment, 10 points Program Model, 15 points Commission Preferences (rural, partnerships, marginalized communities), 10 points Financial Plan, 15 points Fiscal Systems, 10 points Past Performance, and 15 points for Grant Readiness for a possible total of 100 points.

Upon completion of the Task Force review, the scores from Phase One and Phase Two will be combined to produce a single review score.

The Grant Selection and Performance Task Force will then make its final recommendations for funding to the full Commission. Proposals that address Commission priorities and preferences will be considered first for awards. If there are sufficient funds remaining, proposals in other categories will be considered.

The Grant Selection and Performance Task Force will then make its final recommendations for funding to the full Maine Commission which retains the right to issue either full or partial awards at its discretion. The Task Force is not obligated to recommend submission of any proposals.

**Commission Vote On Applications.** The Commission will vote on funding recommendations at the regular October 2022 business meeting.

### Proposal Contents Available to the Public. Once the selection process at the Commission level is complete, all submissions in response to this RFA will be considered public records available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) (1 M.R.S. §§ 401 et seq.). At the federal level, all submissions will become public record and available for public inspection pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act once the award decisions are accepted by AmeriCorps. Portions of submissions will be published on the federal website in compliance with its policy on government transparency.

## III. Unauthorized Applicant Contact with Peer Reviewers or Grants Selection Task Force Members

During the review period, applicants/bidders may not directly contact either Peer Reviewers or Grants Selection and Performance Task Force Reviewers, regarding this AmeriCorps Grant competition. The review period begins at the submission deadline and ends when the Task Force presents its decision to the Commission.

Applicants/bidders may only contact the designated proposal coordinator at Volunteer Maine with questions or comments regarding this competition. If an applicant/bidder initiates or attempts direct contact with reviewers, this will result in disqualification of their proposal.

## IV. Appeal of Grant Decisions

Any person aggrieved by the Commission’s decisions under this RFA may appeal the decision to the Director of the Bureau of General Services in the manner prescribed in 5 MRSA § 1825-E and 18-554 Code of Maine Rules, Chapter 120 (found here: <http://www.maine.gov/dafs/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-120> ).  The appeal must be in writing and filed with the Director of the Bureau of General Services, 9 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333-0009 within 15 calendar days of receipt of notification of contract award.

# D. Understanding AmeriCorps State Programs

AmeriCorps is a national service program with three distinct branches: AmeriCorps State and National (team-based programs), AmeriCorps VISTA, and National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC). These instructions focus on the **AmeriCorps State** program that is administered through Volunteer Maine.

The following chart shows a comparison of major program traits.

| **Comparison of AmeriCorps program types and grants (examples; not complete)** | AmeriCorps State/Nat’l | AmeriCorps VISTA | AmeriCorps NCCC |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grant $$ are awarded to local or national agencies | X |  |  |
| Grants consist of 1) authorization of AmeriCorps positions at levels needed to achieve targets set in performance measures and 2) federal funds to support members in the positions  | X |  |  |
| Grants include only authorization (allocation) of AmeriCorps positions. Grantees may be required to reimburse the federal agency for living allowance expense of several AmeriCorps positions. |  | X |  |
| Payment of AmeriCorps member stipends and benefits is handled directly by the federal agency  |  | X | X |
| Grant requires that local cash and in-kind resources used to carry out program services be reported as match in order to qualify for and receive the funds. | X |  |  |
| Categories of community needs addressed include Healthy Futures, Education, Veterans and Military Families, Economic Opportunity, Disaster Services, Environmental Stewardship, Capacity Building | X | X |  |
| Primary mission is poverty alleviation |  | X |  |
| Primary mission is disaster response and recovery |  |  | X |
| Grantees are required to mobilize local volunteers who become the future providers of the service | X |  |  |
| Program is required to use one set (output, outcome) of the standardized national performance measures for intervention and capacity building. | X |  |  |
| Members serve in teams | X |  | X |
| Members can serve terms of less than 1700 hours over a 12-month period except in the Rural State AmeriCorps model. | X |  |  |
| Members who successfully complete service always qualify for an education award | X | may choose end of term cash stipend | X |
| Members may have other employment or be in college if it does not interfere with their service term | X | X |  |
| Members must be between 18 and 24 years of age |  |  | X |
| Members must be at least 17 years of age and out of school. [[2]](#footnote-2) There is no upper age limit. | X |  |  |
| Members generally need some college or a degree  |  | X |  |
| Members who are 55 years of age or older at the start of service and successfully complete a term of service may transfer the use of the Education Award to a child, grandchild, or foster child. | X |  |  |

## I. Online AmeriCorps Regulations, Guidance, and Performance Measures

There are three online resources applicants need to consult when designing a program.

1. **Official Guidance.** All AmeriCorps active Guidance is available on the agency’s Guidance webpage: <https://www.americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/official-guidance>. The contents of these documents do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way unless incorporated into a contract or grant agreement. These documents are intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.
2. **The Code of Federal Regulations** sections on AmeriCorps (<https://ecfr.federalregister.gov/>). The table below highlights sections that are useful in designing a program; however, applicants are urged to review the full text of 45 CFR §2520, §2521, §2522 to acquire a full understanding of AmeriCorps regulations.
3. **The National Performance Measures**A text document version of the information can be downloaded using this link:
 <https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/ASN_FY2022_PerformanceMeasuresInstructions_FINAL.508.pdf>

**Key to Selected Program Elements in the AmeriCorps Regulations[[3]](#footnote-3)**

| *Requirements and Selection*  | *Citation in the AmeriCorps Regulations* |
| --- | --- |
| Member Service Activities | §2520.20 - §2520.55 |
| Prohibited Activities | §2520.65 |
| Minimum Requirements for Every AmeriCorps Program Type | §2522.100 |
| Types of AmeriCorps Programs | §2522.110 |
| Tutoring Programs | §2522.900-2522.950 |
| Matching Funds | §2521.35-2521.90 |
| Member Benefits | §2522.240-2522.250 |
| Calculating Cost Per Member Service Year (MSY) | §2522.485 |
| Performance Measures | §2522.500-2522.650 |
| Evaluation | §2522.500-2522.540 and §2522.700-2522.740  |
| Selection Criteria and Selection Process | §2522.400-2522.475 |
| Standards for Financial Management Systems. | §2541.200    |

## II. AmeriCorps Program Description

AmeriCorps strengthens communities by mobilizing local resources to address one or more critical issues in one of the identified focus areas. One of the most important roles AmeriCorps plays is expanding the number of volunteers. On average, each AmeriCorps member recruits and manages 12 community volunteers who devote 4-10 hours a month to the same community need. In other words, AmeriCorps is a “force multiplier.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

Members help nonprofit, public, charitable, faith-based, and community organizations by serving in ways that improve and expand critical services in one of three ways:

1. Increasing the amount of service provided in order to overcome unusual demand or delay in accessing the service.
2. Providing new services to an organization’s clients/customers in order to address a new need or issue.
3. Extending a proven program model addressing a critical need to a new population or region.

**Grantee Share of Project.** AmeriCorps grants *partially* cover the expense of operating an AmeriCorps program and *do not* cover general organizational expenses. Additional cash and in-kind resources are required. In AmeriCorps, the term “in-kind” is restricted to non-cash resources provided to the program by third parties. Resources paid by the applicant organization from unrestricted funds (space, office supplies, etc.) are considered cash support because these can be identified in the agency accounting system. Both in-kind and cash typically make up the local grantee share.

The program must raise some non-federal cash as part of the local share. State or municipal public funds as well as private donations from corporate, philanthropic, nonprofit, or individuals can be used as match.

Some federal agencies have agreed that their funds may be used as part of the AmeriCorps grantee share. Because the allowable funds vary by program within each agency (HUD, OJJDP, Interior, Education, FEMA, etc.) please discuss the use of other federal funds with the awarding federal agency *prior to submitting* your AmeriCorps application. Have the agency document permission or concurrence in writing. Be sure that federal funds passed through by state agencies get the same pre-application permission if they are part of the grantee share.

Grantees that use other federal funds as local share should be aware they will have to track and report the amount and source of other federal funds on quarterly source of funds reports.

*NOTE: Because Fixed amount grants are not required to match AmeriCorps funds and, therefore, there is no restriction on the mix or type of federal, state, public, private, cash or in-kind support used to operate the program.*

**Member Service Terms.** There are seven options for AmeriCorps members’ terms of service, all of which must be completed within 12 months. The duration of full-time effort (40 hours per week) is determined by the amount and type of activity that needs to be done. Some projects have a few people who serve 10-12 months and add many part-time AmeriCorps members for a “high activity” period. Examples would be weather-dependent service such as housing rehab or summer youth programs.

A single Member Service Year (MSY) is at least 1700 hours which a person serving full-time completes within 12 months (52 weeks). An MSY can be split into multiple positions. See the following chart for service term options and MSY equivalents.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SERVICE TERM OPTIONS FOR MEMBERS** | **Service term minimum hours**  | **MSYValue** | **1 MSY converts to no more than...** | **MSY equivalent** | **# of weeks needed to complete term if serving 40 hrs/wk** | **# hours/week required if term of service is 1 yr (52 wks)** |
| Full-time | 1,700 | 1.00 | -------------- | --------------- | 42.5  | 33  |
| Three Quarter time | 1,200 | 0.70 | No conversion | 0.7  | 30.0  | 23.1  |
| Half-Time |  900 | 0.50 | 2 slots | 0.5  | 22.5  | 17.5  |
| Reduced Half-Time |  675 | 0.381 | 2 slots | 0.381  | 17  | 13  |
| Quarter-Time |  450 | 0.265 | 3 slots | 0.265  | 11.25  | 9  |
| Minimum-Time |  300 | 0.212 | 4 slots | 0.212  | 7.25  | 6  |

**All proposals submitted for this competition must accommodate at least 3,400 hours of volunteer time within a twelve-month period**.

**Service benefits those who serve**. Member development is the essential “third impact” of AmeriCorps. Grantees must design training, coaching, and educational opportunities that help AmeriCorps members develop an ethic of service, civic leadership skills, and technical skills that will be valuable for future employment.

The degree to which AmeriCorps members are successful is directly related to the program plans for recruiting, selecting, training (initial and on-going), supervising, and giving feedback to the members. Something to keep in mind is that a strong AmeriCorps program design relies on implementation of all the essential practices in volunteer management from “day one” of operations. For a list of these, see Attachment E (page 51).

Examples of the essential volunteer program practices that are fundamental to AmeriCorps include

* a selection process that is consistent with the published role description and includes a background check;
* pre-service orientation to the program purpose and goals;
* a service agreement specifying the responsibilities, expectations, length of service, causes for dismissal and so forth;
* skill training before and during the term that assures quality service;
* documentation of hours served and the work accomplished;
* assignment to a supervisor; and
* orientation of the supervisor to the program goals and expectations.

## III. Other Program Requirements

* An applicant for an operating grant has done sufficient planning such that all is ready to implement the required program elements for AmeriCorps.

45 CFR § 2522.100 (“What are the minimum requirements that every AmeriCorps program, regardless of type, must meet?”) has the complete text describing these requirements.

* **The program name must include “AmeriCorps”** and must be spelled out fully so it is evident to the public, members, partners, and beneficiaries of program services.
* Applicants must propose program designs that are evidence-based meaning proven by a rigorous evaluation to be effective for the community need targeted by program service activities.
* Up to 20% of a program’s aggregate member service hours may be spent in training or professional development or education related to their service assignment.
* Members may spend up to 10% of their direct service time raising funds in support of the AmeriCorps program activities so long as the funds do not support:
* any portion of the match for AmeriCorps member living allowances or benefits;
* the sponsor’s general operating expenses or an endowment;
* any facet of preparing grant application for funding by AmeriCorps or any other federal agency.

For example, an AmeriCorps member could canvass gardening centers and local farm supply stores for donations to build raised gardens, seedlings, and soil in connection with a community garden project.

* Members are prohibited by law from doing any of the following:

(a) while charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or the federal agency, staff and members may not engage in the following activities:

(1) attempting to influence legislation;

(2) organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;

(3) assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;

(4) impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;

(5) engaging in partisan political activities or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;

(6) participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that is likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;

(7) engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;

(8) providing a direct benefit to--

(i) a business organized for profit;

(ii) a labor union;

(iii) a partisan political organization;

(iv) a nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and

(v) an organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (g) of this section, unless AmeriCorps assistance is not used to support those religious activities; and

(9) conducting a voter registration drive or using AmeriCorps funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
(10) providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and

(11) such other activities as the federal agency may prohibit.

(b) AmeriCorps members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above.

Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-AmeriCorps funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.

* Programs are required to recruit and engage community volunteers in program service. Note there is a clear prohibition against AmeriCorps members displacing any unpaid volunteers.[[5]](#footnote-5) Programs may recruit current volunteers to serve in AmeriCorps but may not eliminate the time or effort of volunteers by having AmeriCorps members perform their duties.
* All grantees must conduct National Service Criminal History Record Checks (NSCHCs) on any person receiving a living allowance, stipend, or national service education award, and on anyone receiving a salary through a COST REIMBURSEMENT grant program, whether the costs are covered by federal or non-federal matching funds, regardless of their level of contact with a vulnerable population\*. See Criminal History Record Check requirements outlined on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**.

      \*Individuals under the age of 18 on the first day of service/work are not subject to NSCHC requirements.

An individual is not eligible to work or serve in a position subject to the NSCHC requirements if:

* the individual refuses to consent to a criminal history check;
* makes a false statement in connection with a criminal history check;
* is registered, or is required to be registered, on a state sex offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry; or
* has been convicted of murder.
* Programs are expected to fill all the member slots awarded in the grant and achieve a very high rate of retention. Continuation and recompeting grantees that have not achieved full enrollment and high retention in the prior year must provide an explanation and corrective action plan. Grantees with a history of under-enrollment and low enrollment are likely to receive a funding and slot decrease in subsequent years. Full-cost Fixed amount grantees are not reimbursed for unfilled positions.
* The project start date is proposed by the applicant. The project start date may not occur prior to the date of the grant award. AmeriCorps members may not enroll prior to the start date of the award. AmeriCorps members may not begin service prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period stated in the grant award. A program may not certify any hours a member performs prior to the beginning of the member enrollment date.
* Under certain conditions, programs may institute “fee for service” practices so long as the service activities relate to the program performance measures and the fees collected are used only to finance the grantee share of the AmeriCorps program costs (See 45 CFR §2541.250).
* *Cost or contributions counted towards other Federal costs-sharing requirements.* Neither costs nor the values of third party in-kind contributions may count towards satisfying a cost sharing or matching requirement of a grant agreement *if* they have been or will be counted towards satisfying a cost sharing or matching requirement of another Federal grant agreement, a Federal procurement contract, or any other award of Federal funds.
* Costs financed by program income, as defined in 45 CFR §2541.250, shall not count towards satisfying a cost sharing or matching requirement unless they are expressly permitted in the terms of the grant award. (This use of general program income is described in 45 CFR §2541.250(g).)
* If the proposed service activities require specialized member training and/or qualifications (for example, tutoring programs as outlined in 45CFR §2522.910-940), the applicant must describe how the program will meet those requirements in the “Member training” portion of the narrative.
* There are very specific AmeriCorps Rules related to tutoring programs. If you are considering a tutoring program, these should be read in full as they address the training of members, curriculum standards, student assessment, and Member supervision. See 45 CFR §2522.900-2522.950
* Programs must report on three sets of aligned performance measures. Member Development and Capacity Building measures are part of the proposal submitted through eGrants.
	+ Program service activities (outputs and outcomes) are selected from the National Performance Measures and entered in eGrants after proposal selection is completed.
	+ Member Development (outputs and outcomes) are state specific and can be found on page 27.
	+ Capacity Building (outputs and outcomes) performance measures for all Maine programs can be found on page 27.
* Operating Grants with annual AmeriCorps funding of $500,000 or more are required to arrange for an independent external program evaluation. Grantees with lesser amounts must perform a program evaluation but may use internal resources. Appropriate budgeting for evaluation expense is an expectation.
* Restrictions on use of federal (AmeriCorps) funds (CFR §2540).

(a) *Supplantation.* AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to replace State and local public funds that had been used to support programs of the type eligible to receive AmeriCorps support. For any given program, this condition will be satisfied if the aggregate non-Federal public expenditure for that program in the fiscal year that support is to be provided is not less than the previous fiscal year.

(b) *Religious use.* AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to provide religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any form of proselytization.

(c) *Political activity.* AmeriCorps assistance may not be used by program participants or staff to assist, promote, or deter union organizing; or finance, directly or indirectly, any activity designed to influence the outcome of a Federal, State or local election to public office.

(d) *Contracts or collective bargaining agreements.* AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to impair existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements.

(e) *Nonduplication.* AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program. And, unless the requirements of paragraph (f) of this section are met, AmeriCorps assistance will not be provided to a private nonprofit entity to conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities provided by a State or local government agency in which such entity resides.

(f) *Nondisplacement.*

(1) An employer may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the use by such employer of a participant in a program receiving AmeriCorps assistance.

(2) An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving AmeriCorps assistance.

(3) A service opportunity will not be created under this chapter that will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual.

(4) A participant in a program receiving AmeriCorps assistance may not perform any services or duties or engage in activities that would otherwise be performed by an employee as part of the assigned duties of such employee.

(5) A participant in any program receiving assistance under this chapter may not perform any services or duties, or engage in activities, that—

(i) Will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or

(ii) Are services, duties, or activities with respect to which an individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures.

(6) A participant in any program receiving assistance under this chapter may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any—

(i) Presently employed worker;

(ii) Employee who recently resigned or was discharged;

(iii) Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures;

(iv) Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick); or

(v) Employee who is on strike or who is being locked out.

## IV. Member Planning, Recruitment, Selection, and Accommodation

Planning. A critical element to success in AmeriCorps is planning how the additional human resources (members serving) will be used: supervision, tasks assigned, orientation, training, what they will do on a daily basis, who they will need access to and when, etc. Because part of their assignment will be engaging community members as volunteers to assist with the program, the organization needs to have a clear assessment of internal support and systems that will permit volunteers to contribute. Something to keep in mind is that a strong AmeriCorps program design relies on implementation of all the essential practices in volunteer management from “day one” of operations. For a list of these practices see the Attachment E (page 51).

Recruitment. Organizations with AmeriCorps grants are responsible for recruiting the AmeriCorps members to serve in their program. The recruitment plan must actively seek applicants from communities in which the program will operate as well as individuals from other areas whose demographics reflect those of the community residents. Programs are required to develop separate role descriptions for each service position type in their program design (e.g., tutor, health educator, coach) so AmeriCorps members understand what their duties will be, what is expected of them, and what training as well as supervision they will receive.

The federal agency has created a central recruiting site for AmeriCorps (see [https://my.americorps.gov/mp/listing/publicRequestSearch.do](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmy.americorps.gov%2Fmp%2Flisting%2FpublicRequestSearch.do&data=04%7C01%7CJeff.Cotnoir%40maine.gov%7C5c82ef2d15414600854008d9932a262c%7C413fa8ab207d4b629bcdea1a8f2f864e%7C0%7C0%7C637702631494599037%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=NiPBQUn3RXACPHQGqS%2BBHwyhXW3wpxMEtrg7cDntwCY%3D&reserved=0)). Grantees are able to establish accounts and receive applications from potential members directly through this portal *after* awards are final.

A more user-friendly option is a new nationwide site, [www.ServiceYear.org](http://www.ServiceYear.org) , which specializes in connecting adults with full year service opportunities. To explore that site go to <https://serviceyear.org/serveinmaine/>.

Maine AmeriCorps programs also have had success on MANP’s job board that permits volunteer listings.

Eligibility to Serve in AmeriCorps. The federal law that authorized AmeriCorps defines who may serve and requires grantees to document that Members selected to participate in a program are eligible to serve. Accordingly, an eligible member is an individual who:

* is a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States. See 45 CFR §2522.2 for documents that are acceptable means of certification;
* is at least 17 years old at the start of service unless the member is out of school and enrolled:
	1. in a full-time, 12-month Youth Corps Program or full-time summer Program as defined in the Act (42 U.S.C. §12572 (a) (2)), in which case he or she must be between the ages of 16 and 25, inclusive, or
	2. in a Program for economically disadvantaged youth as defined in the Act (42 U.S.C. §12572 (a)(9)), in which case he or she must be between the ages of 16 and 24, inclusive;
* has a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate [or agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent before using an education award] and who has not dropped out of elementary or secondary school in order to enroll as an AmeriCorps member (unless enrolled in an institution of higher education on an ability to benefit basis and is considered eligible for funds under section 484 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. §1091);
***OR***has been determined through an independent assessment conducted by the Program to be incapable of obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent (provided that AmeriCorps has waived the education attainment requirement for the individual).
* has not been convicted of murder
* is not listed, or is not required to be listed, on the sex offender registry *(*[www.nsopr.gov/](http://www.nsopr.gov/) )

Selection. Each AmeriCorps program selects its members at the local level and the selection criteria may vary according to the program service roles and work to be performed. In all cases, however, selection must be conducted in a fair and non-discriminatory manner that complies with §2540 of the AmeriCorps rules.

Programs must establish minimum qualifications (skills, knowledge, abilities) for service positions and base the qualifications on the service activities. Individuals recruited to serve need to reflect the community that will benefit from the service. In addition, the corps should offer members with different educational, work, or economic experiences an opportunity to serve together and learn from each other.

Position qualifications along with responsibilities or duties and essential as well as desired functions must be stated in a member role description (similar to a standard volunteer role description). Successful completion of an AmeriCorps orientation period is a mandatory qualification for members.

Eligibility for Additional Terms. An individual may serve up to four terms and may earn up to the equivalent value of two full education awards.

There are specific guidelines for determining whether someone who has done a term of service in AmeriCorps can serve again and earn an education award. Applicants who are awarded AmeriCorps grants will receive technical assistance on this topic as they implement their recruitment process.

Reasonable Accommodation For People with Disabilities. Increasing the participation of people with disabilities in national and community service programs is a key interest of the federal agency. Not only are AmeriCorps programs encouraged to actively reach out to and include people with disabilities but role descriptions must identify essential and desired functions so that potential AmeriCorps members can identify opportunities for themselves.

Programs and activities must be accessible. You must provide reasonable accommodation to known mental or physical disabilities of otherwise service recipients, qualified members, applicants, and program staff. All selections and project assignments must be made without regard to the need to provide reasonable accommodation. By far, the vast majority of accommodations are inexpensive. For those limited cases where reasonable accommodations are more costly, there may be money available through Volunteer Maine to provide accommodations for members serving in an AmeriCorps program.

Participation of Individuals Receiving Supplemental Security Income. On June 17, 2008, the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2008 (“the HEART Act”) was signed into law, making AmeriCorps more accessible to people with disabilities.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a Federal program that provides a monthly cash benefit to low-income individuals who are aged, blind, or who have a disability. In the past, receiving an AmeriCorps living allowance could disqualify an individual from eligibility. The HEART Act directs the Social Security Administration to ignore an individual's receipt of AmeriCorps benefits for purposes of SSI eligibility. The Act excludes “any benefit (whether cash or in-kind)” and so covers the living allowance, health insurance, child care, and the education award (and related interest payments). This brings all AmeriCorps members under one treatment of benefits rule for SSI. The exclusion of AmeriCorps benefits took effect for benefits payable after August 16, 2008.

Why doesn't the law cover both SSI and SSDI?Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) is a Federal program that provides money to individuals with disabilities based on their having paid into the insurance program. There are separate laws and regulations for SSDI eligibility and the HEART Act moved through Congress too quickly to include SSDI.

## V. Member Benefits.

Member Living Allowance. AmeriCorps members whose service assignments require an intense concentration of time (i.e., 40 hours or more weekly) receive a living allowance or stipend. The living allowance is not a wage but, rather, support that allows the member to give nearly all their time to the program’s service activities and have some funds for rent, heat, food, and transportation. Unlike a wage, the living allowance is the same for all members and does not vary according to the person’s skills, prior experience, service assignment in your program, or prior experience in AmeriCorps. In Maine, by law, members are not employees and do not qualify for unemployment insurance.

Operating grants must offer a living allowance for full-time members that is between the minimum $20,000 and maximum $33,004 per member. In the budget, the amount of living allowance can be entered under AmeriCorps or may be shared between the federal agency and the grantee share.

Examples of programs that might set stipends at a higher rate include those located in areas where travel, transportation, heating, or other essential costs are high.

**Housing.** Housing is not a required benefit but programs are strongly encouraged to develop a support as it is the most valued local benefit among AmeriCorps members. It is valued so much that it influences the number of applicants for positions. Examples of what Maine programs have done include housing stipends paid to landlords, organizing co-housing among members, locating “host families” or deeply discounted housing. Note that any funds paid to the member for housing would count as income and count toward the maximum living allowance. That is why program supports most often are paid to the property owners directly.

Education Awards. Funds for Education Awards are not part of program budgets. Congress makes a direct appropriation to the National Service Trust for these. The value of the education award for the coming year has not been announced but, for 1700 hours of service completed in the 2021-2022 program year, it is $6,495. Members may serve up to four terms but may not earn more than the equivalent of two full-time education awards.

Members who use the awards for their own educational goals have up to seven years from completion of service to use their education award. They may use their awards to pay for any combination of: (1) the costs of attendance at a qualified institution of higher education where the member is pursuing a degree or certificate; (2) the costs of approved school-to-work or technical training programs; or (3) the costs of repaying qualified student loans.

Members over age 55 may opt to transfer their education award to a child, grandchild, or foster child. In such cases, the education award is available to the designated person for 10 years after the AmeriCorps member completes his/her term of service.

While they serve, members who have outstanding qualified student loans may be eligible for forbearance on their payments. To qualify, they must contact their loan holders. Upon successful completion of a term of service, the National Service Trust will make payments for interest that accrued during the period of forbearance.

Service in AmeriCorps does count under the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. Individuals may want to weigh the benefits of forbearance against the payment requirements of this program. For information, visit <https://studentaid.gov/help-center/answers/article/pslf-credit-during-volunteer-service-period> .

For additional information on the Education Award, forbearance, and the National Service Trust, visit: [www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/segal-americorps-education-award](http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/segal-americorps-education-award).

Child Care. For full-time members who need childcare in order to participate, grantees must assist members in accessing the AmeriCorps childcare benefit (either childcare through an eligible provider or a child care allowance in an amount determined by the federal agency). The federal agency makes direct payments to childcare providers.  Therefore, this benefit is ***not paid*** from the grantee budget and should not be included as an expense.

Health Insurance. The grantee must provide, or make available, healthcare insurance to those members serving a 1700-hour full-time term who are not otherwise covered by a healthcare policy at the time the member begins his/her term of service. The grantee must also provide, or make available, healthcare insurance to members serving a 1700-hour full-time term who lose coverage during their term of service as a result of service or through no deliberate act of their own. The federal agency will not cover healthcare costs for dependent coverage.

Any of the following health insurance options will satisfy the requirement for MEC-compliant health insurance for full-time AmeriCorps members (or less than full-time members serving in a full-time capacity): staying on parents’ or spouse plan; insurance obtained through the Federal Health Insurance Marketplace of at least the Bronze level plan; insurance obtained through private insurance broker that is MEC compliant; Medicaid, Medicare or military benefits.

If coverage is being provided via the Healthcare Marketplace, and thus third-party payment is not an option, programs must develop a process to reimburse members for monthly premiums. Reimbursements for health insurance premiums are considered taxable income for the member, and programs must have a way to document such reimbursements.

**Member Assistance Program.** The AmeriCorps Member Assistance Program (MAP) is designed to support AmeriCorps programs in providing accessible and quality mental health services to AmeriCorps members. The annual fee is $250 flat rate plus $5 per member. Covered services are 24/7 toll-free telephonic access to services for members; unlimited in the moment telephonic counseling services with master’s degree-level counselors; mobile app with resources and appointment scheduling access; text/chat counseling and coaching; video counseling and coaching; medical advocacy; financial and legal assistance (30-minute consultations); life coaching; personal concierge for everyday needs; and work/life resources and referrals.

Grant Terms and Conditions, Policies. The AmeriCorps Grant Terms & Conditions and the federal General Terms and Conditions contain post-award details that should be considered in program design. Applicants would do well to review these documents in order to gauge the administrative systems that will be required.

Specific Terms and Conditions LINK: <https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/FY2022_ASN_Program-SpecificTermsandConditions__Revised_June2022%20%28002%29_2.pdf>

General Terms and Conditions LINK: <https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/FY2022-General-Terms-Conditions-508-20211119.pdf>

Issues with financial implications include but are not limited to the following:

* The grantee must have adequate general liability coverage for the organization, employees and members, *including coverage of members* engaged in on- and off-site project activities.
* The grantee must withhold Federal personal income taxes from member living allowances, requiring each member to complete a W-4 form at the beginning of the term of service and providing a W-2 form at the close of the tax year. The grantee must comply with any applicable state or local tax requirements.
* Worker’s Compensation is an allowable cost to the grant. Maine law does not require provision of worker’s compensation for members although it is encouraged if the applicant’s carrier offers the option. If a program opts not to provide worker’s compensation, it must obtain Occupational Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance coverage for members to cover in-service injury or incidents.
* Unless exempted by the IRS, all AmeriCorps programs must pay FICA for any member receiving a living allowance even when AmeriCorps funds are not covering the living allowance. Participation in FICA helps members earn quarters in the system and is particularly beneficial to individuals who may be older or have spent considerable time out of the workforce.
* A living allowance is not a wage. Programs ***may not*** pay a living allowance on an hourly basis. Programs should pay the living allowance in regular increments, such as weekly or bi-weekly, paying an increased increment only on the basis of increased living expenses such as food, housing, or transportation. Payments should not fluctuate based on the number of hours served in a particular time period and must cease when a member concludes a term of service.
* Grantees may enroll Federal Work Study students as AmeriCorps members. Only individuals who enroll in an AmeriCorps position in a program that has been approved by the federal agency are eligible to receive AmeriCorps member benefits. Except as required by Federal Work Study regulations, AmeriCorps members may not be paid on an hourly basis**.**  AmeriCorps does not consider a wage under the Federal Work Study program to be a living allowance for purposes of the National and Community Service Act. The grantee is not required to report such wages in the AmeriCorps grant.

## VI. Federal Financial Management & Grant Administration Requirements

**Fixed Amount Grants.** Fixed amount grants provide a specific dollar amount per MSY to an organization. In order to access all of the funds provided, programs must recruit and retain all AmeriCorps members supported under the grant based on the MSY level awarded. The grant does not use a line-item budget, match or expense reporting. The use of funds is not restricted or directed but reimbursement is made after a grantee submits an invoice that includes the names of members serving during the invoiced period along with the number of hours each of those members served. The grant management system calculates a reimbursable amount based on those metrics.

Fixed Amount grantees do not submit expense reports or Federal Financial Reports. The Commission does require quarterly reports of sources of funds used to support the program. These would include public and private external as well as allocated internal resources. This report confirms there are adequate resources to support the service members and activities for which the grant was made.

**Timely and Compliant Eligibility Verification.** Programs will still use the AmeriCorps online system to offer a position to an applicant and the applicant will use the system to respond with an acceptance. Then the system will automatically use other federal databases to confirm identity using social security numbers and birthdates. If verification cannot be done using the automated system (e.g., applicant uses different surname due to marriage or adoption), documents must be submitted manually, and a manual check will be done. This can take up to two weeks. No applicant may be enrolled or start service until eligibility is verified. Recruitment plans *must provide sufficient time for this step to be completed before the member starts service.*

**National Service Criminal History Check Requirements.** The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. The law requires recipients to conduct and document NSCHCs on any person (including award-funded staff, national service participant, or volunteer) receiving a salary, living allowance, stipend, or education award through a program receiving AmeriCorps funds.  An individual is ineligible to serve in a position that receives such AmeriCorps funding if the individual is registered, or required to be registered, as a sex offender or has been convicted of murder.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR FIXED AMOUNT AWARDS: Because there is no line-item budget, program staff do not required to have a NSCHC but all individuals selected for service **must** be checked. Grantees **must include funds to check each position** even though the program budget is not part of the application. Commission compliance monitoring will include review of NSCHCs and a comparison of the service start date with the date they were done, reviewed, and a determination made.

Maine AmeriCorps programs are required to use the federally designated vendor, Truescreen, for NSOPW checks. Programs use the state Maine State Bureau of Identification system for Maine, other state of residence, and FBI fingerprint-based checks which provide results directly to a designated program representative who considers any findings in the context of local policy about criminal history and AmeriCorps regulations. (Programs may use the federally designated vendor, Fieldprint. That vendor is prohibited from sharing results so programs would need to repeat the search to assess findings in the context of local policy.)

All National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC) must include:

* A nationwide name-based check of the National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW)
* Either a name- or fingerprint-based search of the statewide criminal history registry in the candidate’s state of residence and in the state where the person will serve or work; AND
* A fingerprint-based FBI check.

All aspects of the background check MUST be completed and adjudicated[[6]](#footnote-6) before any paid work or service time is recorded. *See* 45 C.F.R. § 2540.200–§ 2540.207 and <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check> for complete information and FAQs. If a grantee is not able to prove that they have conducted an NSOPW and other required criminal history checks, the consequence may be *disallowance of all or part of the costs* associated with the instance of noncompliance.

**Use of Material.** To ensure that materials generated with AmeriCorps funding are available to the public and readily accessible to other grantees, the federal agency reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so.45 CFR § 2543.36; 2541.30

**Civil Rights and Accessibility Compliance**. As with all Federal grant programs, you must assure that your programs will be conducted, and facilities operated, in compliance with the applicable civil rights statutes and their implementing regulations. You must obtain assurances of such compliance prior to extending Federal financial assistance to partner organizations that host AmeriCorps members. For civil rights purposes, all programs and projects funded or receiving service members under the National and Community Service Act, as amended, are programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance.

## VII. Reporting and Compliance Requirements

Every program must develop policies and a system for collecting, organizing, and analyzing data on an ongoing basis. The categories of data include member records, service activities and impact, identities of partners, as well as financial (in-kind and cash) data when applicable. Typical reporting requirements are fiscal reports (if applicable), quarterly progress reports, and final closeout reports at the end of year 3.

All grantees will be expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are providing the Commission with high quality programmatic and financial data. At a minimum, grantees should have policies and practices which address the following five aspects of data quality:

* The data measures what it intends to measure;
* The grantee collects data in a consistent manner;
* The grantee takes steps to correct data errors;
* The grantee ensures that the data reported is complete; and
* The grantee actively reviews data prior to submission.

In addition, the program must cooperate with state or national program evaluation studies the funders may undertake. These studies do not supplant the evaluation requirements of each grantee. Also, you must compile data on civil rights compliance, as detailed in the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions that are part of your grant award if selected.

## VIII. Continuous Improvement

Every program that receives AmeriCorps funding must design and implement a continuous quality improvement system. Such a system assesses management effectiveness, the quality of services provided, and the satisfaction of AmeriCorps members, project volunteers, and persons served. Internal evaluation activities should seek frequent feedback and provide for quick correction of weaknesses. Typical components of internal evaluation are community advisory councils, participant advisory councils, peer reviews, quality control inspections, and customer and participant surveys.

In continuation applications, the results of continuous improvement systems are used to explain changes in program operations, services, or plans.

## IX.  Performance Measures

Performance measurement is the process of systematically and regularly collecting and monitoring data related to measurable changes (positive or negative) in communities, members, or the people receiving program services. Performance measures track how much is being done (units of service; outputs), how often, for what duration of time, by how many AmeriCorps members, for how many community beneficiaries, and how much change is occurring as a result (outcomes).

All applicants will be required to select *one* aligned set of performance measures from the federal standard service activity list to track the impact of the *primary* intervention. The current options can be found here:
<https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/ASN_FY2022_PerformanceMeasuresInstructions_FINAL.508.pdf>

All Maine programs are required to track aligned sets of Member Development and Capacity Building measures to demonstrate the impact the program has on increasing local ability to sustain the service without AmeriCorps. Applicants in this competition must enter these measures in eGrants as part of the application.

For AmeriCorps Member Development (training and professional development), use these state-defined performance measures and note the measurement instructions:

* *OUTPUT*: Number of AmeriCorps program training and other formal development activities that result in increased AmeriCorps member skills, knowledge, and abilities related to the service assignment (community, tasks, and sector).
*How to calculate/measure*: Count of program sponsored/conducted events that resulted in a majority of participants acquiring service-related skills, knowledge, abilities.
*How to collect data*: Event agenda/curriculum outline with enrollment, date, instructor, duration, and pre/post test measurement of participant knowledge/skill gain to confirm effectiveness of training.
* *OUTCOME*: Number of AmeriCorps members demonstrating increased competency in skills or application of knowledge.
*How to calculate/measure*: Unduplicated count of members who demonstrate increased competency while carrying out their service assignment.
*How to collect data*: Documented Member mid-term and/or final evaluations assessment of specific competencies by supervisor or program staff showing increased ability to apply skills or knowledge.

For Capacity Building, applicants will measure state-defined performance measures as described below.

* *OUTPUTS*. The number of 1) volunteers recruited and/or managed **plus** 2) hours contributed to program or host site services by those volunteers. Applicants want to plan for this data collection.
* *OUTCOME*: Number of additional service activities and/or units of service completed for organizations by volunteers recruited/managed by AmeriCorps members.

The total number of volunteers recruited or managed should be an unduplicated count of community volunteers engaged by the applicant organization or the AmeriCorps members during the program year. Applicants/grantees need to use a system that prevents double counting.

National service participants may not recruit volunteers to do activities that they themselves are prohibited from doing.

Note that all performance measures must tightly connected to the program’s Theory of Change as described in the narrative and reflected in the logic model. AmeriCorps also values thorough data collection plans. These are outlined in the application logic model and performance measurement fields. Instructions for completing the application’s performance measure section can be found in Attachment B, page 39.

## X. Cost-per-Member

AmeriCorps annually sets a maximum cost per Member Service Year (MSY = 1700 hours) that it will award. The maximum cost per member for this competition is $26,000.

The size of a grant request is easily determined by multiplying the number of MSY by the maximum cost-per-member: \_\_ MSY X $26,000 = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# E. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

## I. eGrants Application System

Both Volunteer Maine and the federal agency conduct business *primarily* through electronic systems. These systems use the Internet for grant application, award notification, contract negotiation, progress reporting and fiscal and program administration. Grant applicants must ensure *at least* one member of their proposed administrative team has the skills to accomplish this.

All proposal narratives and budgets must be submitted through eGrants, the on-line grant application and management system developed by AmeriCorps. The system operates over the internet and can be accessed at <https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp> . It is not the eGrants system used by other federal agencies.

Proposals received through eGrants will be reviewed, assessed, accepted or rejected by Volunteer Maine. Although the proposals are submitted on the federal eGrants system, the federal agency does not have access to, nor the ability to view proposals until the Maine selection process has been completed.

The eGrants Help Desk is limited to the mechanical operation of the system. The Help Desk staff are not familiar with the various application instructions and cannot answer questions about content or interpret any portion of the instructions. Should you need technical assistance, the Help Desk is available by webform email at all times and by phone via the National Service Hotline (1-800-942-2677) on the following schedule: Mon - Fri, 9 am – 7 pm ET (Jan, May, June, July, Aug, Sept) and Mon.-Thu, 9am – 7pm ET (Feb, March, April, Oct, Nov, Dec). Be prepared to provide your Application ID and your organization’s name.

***NOTE*:** If you intend to submit a proposal, visit eGrants *early* and set up your organization’s identity, user name, and password.

## II. Preparations

### Unique Entity Identifier and SAM.

The Federal government replaced DUNS numbers with a new Unique Entity Identifiers (UEI) in the System of Award Management (SAM). SAM collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data in support of Federal agency contracts, grant awards, cooperative agreements, and other forms of federal assistance.

Applicants must have an active SAM registration, a UEI number, and an Employer Identification Number. Registration does not have a cost and can be done through [https://sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/loginFAQ.jsf](https://sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/loginFAQ.jsfW) We strongly urge registering at least 30 days before the application due date. The change to UEIs is recent and has caused a significant delay in finalizing registrations.

## III. Starting an Application in eGrants

Applicants will need to establish an eGrants account if they have not submitted an application to the federal agency in another competition.

To set up a new account, an authorized person

1. goes to <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/egrants>
2. selects the blue button in the middle of the page that says “eGrants login”
3. on the next screen, find the gray text (middle of page) “Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account”
4. on the next screen, selects “Create a Grantee account” and follow the prompts.
5. information you will need to complete registration includes your organization’s Employer Identification Number (EIN) and DUNs number.

***Note: Anyone within your organization who will be entering information in the application at any point during application preparation and submission in the eGrants system must have their own eGrants account.*** The individual who first establishes an account and enters organizational information becomes the person who authorizes subsequent accounts and assigns user rights. This person will receive an email indicating someone new is trying to associate themselves with the organization’s account. Given this system, applicants should review their agency policies and internal controls.

Once an account is established and while you are logged in, use eGrants to complete the following steps in order to access the application sections. The texts in parentheses below are guides for making selections from the menus or lists.

* Under the header “Creating An Application” in the bottom left of your screen
	+ Select “New” (meaning New Application document)
	+ Under “Select a NOFA.” select AmeriCorps from the drop-down menu. A list will appear.
	+ Select a NOFA. This competition is *FY 2022 AmeriCorps State and Terr Comm Fixed Amount, EAP.* IGNORE the due date of January 2022. The federal agency does not edit the date text for this competition.
	+ Select the state (Maine)
	+ Select the State Prime ID (using the pull-down menu; there should be one choice only.)

Once these steps are completed, you can to fill out the Applicant Info and Application Info sections.

## IV. Contents of a Complete Application (eGrants and Electronic copies)

Your application consists of information submitted through the eGrants system AND emailed materials that must be submitted to the Maine Bureau of Purchases by the submission deadline. If any required component is not received at the time applications close – that application will be rejected and not considered. Volunteer Maine, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to recognize and waive minor informalities and irregularities found in proposals received in response to this RFA.

***Items I to VII: To be completed in eGrants***

1. **Applicant Info**Information entered in the Applicant Info, Application Info, and Budget sections will populate the SF 424 Facesheet.
	* Select **New**

Enter the requested information in the fields that appear. The contact person needs to be the person who can answer questions about the proposal.

**II. Application Info**

 In the Application Info Section enter:

* Areas affected by your proposed program. For city or county information, please follow each one with the two-letter capitalized state abbreviation. Use commas as separators.
* Requested project period start and end dates.
* State Application Identifier: Enter N/A.
* The Application is Subject to Review by State Executive Order 12372 Process: This is pre-filled as “No, this is not applicable.”
* Indicate Yes or No if you are delinquent on any federal debt. If yes, send explanation
* Request a waiver: Not applicable under this grant.

**III. Narratives**

**IV. Logic Model**

**V. Performance Measures**

**VI. Program Information**

**VII. Documents**

**VIII. Budget Narrative** (Budget Summary form is automatically created by eGrants from budget narrative)

**IX. Funding/Demographics**

**X. Review, Authorize, Submit**

## V. Instructions for Narratives

The application narrative section is your opportunity to convince reviewers your project meets the selection criteria. Below are some recommendations to help you present your project to reviewers.

#### General Advice on Narrative Form

* **Lead from your strengths and be explicit.** Do not make the mistake of trying to stretch your program concept to fit every special consideration and priority articulated in the regulations or RFA*.* Focus on the considerations and priorities that apply to your program.
* **Be clear and succinct. Answer the questions – don’t waste space.** Reviewers are not interested in jargon, boilerplate, rhetoric, or exaggeration. They want the answers to the questions asked, in the order in which they are asked, and without distracting stories or unrelated data. Use local not national data.
* **Explain how. Provide detail.** Avoid simply stating that the criteria will be met. Describe what AmeriCorps members will do, how often, for how many beneficiaries, for what length of time, with what impact or change or outcome.
* **Don’t make assumptions.** *Most peer reviewers are not from Maine*. Do not assume proposal reviewers know anything about your organization, its programs, the geographic area you intend to serve, the local issues, your partners, or your beneficiaries. Avoid overuse of acronyms.
* **Use an impartial proofreader.** Before you submit your application, let someone who is completely unfamiliar with your project read the selection criteria and critique your project narrative.
* **Follow the instructions and discuss each criterion in the order it is presented.** Use headings to differentiate narrative sections according to the criteria.
* **Enter narrative text into eGrants at least one week before the submission deadline.** All applicants are strongly urged to leave plenty of time for entering narrative and budget into the eGrant system.
* **eGrants does not recognize any text formatting.** To indicate headings, use CAPS; for lists use dashes rather than bullets. Bulleted lists, bold or emphasized text, indentations (outlines), charts, tables, diagrams, and other formatting WILL NOT translate to eGrants.
* **Prepare and save your application first as a word processing document** prior to uploading it into eGrants. Then, copy and paste the document into eGrants.

#### Application Page Limitations

* **Applications are limited to 18** **pages** for the Narratives, including the Executive Summary and SF424 Facesheet, as the pages print out from eGrants.To check the length, go to Review menu and use “View/Print” option. The system will generate a PDF version of the application.
* This limit does not include the budget, logic model, performance measures, nor required supplementary emailed materials. Do not submit items not required, they will not be considered or returned.
* The Logic Model has its own specific 3-page limit. Again, print using the menu option under Review.
* Reviewers will only read the 18 pages as they print out from eGrants. Any excess pages beyond 18 will be removed, even if eGrants allows you to enter and submit text over the limit.
* *Note:* eGrants handles text differently than word processing programs so the page lengths may not be comparable. Print the application **before** submitting.

In eGrants, each of the following narrative sections are one text box field in your application’s narrative record.

* Executive Summary
* Program Design
* Organizational Capability
* Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

*Note*: The Narratives Section also includes fields for Clarification Summary, Amendment Justification, and Continuation Changes. These are *not* required fields.They are used to enter information *after* awards are made.

Please enter N/A in these fields. The verification step in eGrants will not allow you to submit unless this notation (N/A) is entered.

#### Narrative Content

The outline below reflects aspects of AmeriCorps program design and operation that are most indicative of the likely success of a proposal. Peer reviewers will assess each application against the selection criteria noted below.

**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.

The [Name of the organization] proposes to have [Number of] AmeriCorps members who will [service activities the members will be doing] in [the geographic locations the AmeriCorps members will serve]. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps program will have [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional [number of community volunteers] who will be engaged in [what volunteers will be do.] *This program will concentrate on the - focus area(s) of [list Focus Area(s)].\** The AmeriCorps investment of $[amount of request] will be matched with $[amount of projected match], $[amount of local, state, and federal funds] in public funding and $[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.

\*The focus areas are the categories of permitted activity listed on page 12.

The federal agency will post all Executive Summaries of awarded grant applications on [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov) in the interest of transparency and Open Government. The Commission will use the Executive Summary on its website directory of AmeriCorps programs in Maine.

 **B. Program Design (50 percent)**

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application’s response to the criteria below. Therefore, note the criteria and respond to it literally, in the order listed.

***1. Need (5 points).*** Describe:

* How the community or communities where the service will occur satisfy the criteria of “rural.”
* The community need AmeriCorps service activities will address.
* Evidence the need is widespread and severe in communities where members will serve; use locally relevant data.
* How community members participated in designing the proposed program and how the community will be involved in program implementation.

***2. Intervention: What the program will do to meet the need and improve the situation (10 points)*** Describe clearly:

* The program model that AmeriCorps will implement including:
	+ The core activities to meet the need (e.g., energy use assessment, coaching or mentoring, wellness checks).
	+ The duration of program activities (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months required to complete the program).
	+ The intensity needed to be effective (how often, how much, for how long).
	+ The demographics of those who will benefit from AmeriCorps service (e.g., age, race, ethnicity, household income, education, employment status).
* Why the proposed intervention is the best fit for the identified community need.
* The types of AmeriCorps positions needed (terms of service), proposed roles and tasks for each type, and minimum qualifications of the positions. Provide a draft weekly schedule for the AmeriCorps members.
* Roles of key partners (e.g., trainers, sources of client/customer referrals, sources of materials)
* The roles community volunteers will have in program services and what actions AmeriCorps members will take to engage and support them.

***3. Theory of Change, Evidence of Effectiveness, and Logic Model (15 points)***
Describe:

* How the program and members will enhance or work with any existing efforts to meet this need. Include a rationale for adding AmeriCorps members to those efforts – what will happen that cannot or is not happening now?
* The quantity of service units Members will accomplish (e.g., how many adults, children will be served) and how much permanent change or improvement the intervention will be achieve by the end of the first, second, and third years. Provide a rationale for the output/quantity and outcome (change/improvement) targets set.
* Evidence the program and activities are proven by evaluation or research to be highly effective for this particular need/issue. Indicate whether the evaluated program has been implemented in communities like the ones you propose to serve. If it has not, describe any adaptations that need to be made to suit the Maine communities. Reviewers will consider the strength and sources of cited evaluations of the model, research, or standards promoted by subject experts (e.g., FEMA or CDC or SAMHSA or World Health Organization).

The Logic Model is entered as a chart in a specific section of eGrants (see Attachment F on page 52) and may not be longer than three pages. It is a visual representation of the program’s purpose and operation. Applicants are not required to measure all aspects of the program. Instead, they should commit to measuring the core program activities described in the intervention.

The Logic Model chart needs to have:

* A short synopsis of the community problem/need.
* The inputs or resources needed to conduct the program, including but not limited to:
	+ Locations or sites where members will provide services
	+ Number of AmeriCorps members and types of positions needed (both terms of service and functions or roles)
	+ Materials, curriculum, volunteers, other resources required to carry out service
* The core activities members will implement or deliver, including:
	+ The duration of the intervention
	+ The intensity needed to be effective
	+ The target population for the intervention.
* The alpha-numeric reference for the program’s national performance measure outputs and the measurable amounts that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served, types and number of activities conducted).
* The alpha-numeric reference for the program’s national outcome measure and the quantity of change in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that will occur as a result of the intervention.

Applicants with multiple interventions should complete a single logic model chart which incorporates each intervention. Logic model content that exceeds three pages will not be reviewed.

In eGrants, the logic model section of the application is completed using a 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.” Clicking this link will open a pop-up screen with fields for each column of the logic model. Complete any fields that are applicable; there are no required fields in this screen. When you are finished click “save and close.”

You may add an unlimited number of rows to the logic model by clicking “add a new row.” However, please be mindful of the 3-page limit. You may edit or delete an existing row by clicking “edit” or “delete” in the last column of the logic model.

***4. Funding Priority and Preferences (4 points)***Describe how the proposed program:

* fits within one or more of the funding priorities listed on page 9.
* Meets all requirements of one or more of the Commission funding preferences listed on page 11.

***5. Member Training (4 points)*** Describe how:

* AmeriCorps members will receive high quality training to perform service tasks effectively.
* The training will cover service-related skills/abilities and knowledge essential to understanding the community as well as the need.
* The skills, abilities, knowledge, and experience AmeriCorps members gain will be applicable to future employment and valued by future employers.
* AmeriCorps members will be aware of, and will adhere to, AmeriCorps requirements including the rules regarding prohibited activities (see page 18).
* If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example tutoring programs – 45CFR §2522.910-940), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.

***6. Member Supervision (4 points)***

* Describe the plan to provide AmeriCorps members with sufficient supervisor guidance and support so they provide effective service.
* Describe the plan for adequately training/preparing AmeriCorps supervisors to implement the proposed program and follow AmeriCorps as well as organizational regulations, priorities, and expectations.

***7. Member Experience (4 points)*** Describe:

* The program will recruit AmeriCorps members who reflect the community served and represent a diverse set of backgrounds, talents, and capabilities.
* The program will create a safe environment that honors diversity, equity, and inclusion.
* AmeriCorps members will have access to experiences outside their AmeriCorps assignment that help them develop as service leaders.
* AmeriCorps members will have opportunities to reflect on the service experience and learn from the reflection.
* AmeriCorps members will be connected to the broader National Service network.

***8. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification (4 points)***Describe*:*

* How members will know they are AmeriCorps members.
* How staff and community members where members are serving will recognize AmeriCorps members.
* How the applicant organization will co-brand the program to clearly identifies it as AmeriCorps. Note: The descriptive project title entered under “Applicant Information” at the start of the eGrants proposal, must include AmeriCorps in the name. The title appears in field 11a of the SF424 when it is printed.

**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 (12 points)***
Describe

* How the AmeriCorps program fits into the applicant organization’s mission and strategic goals. What will the program contribute to those goals and strategies?
* The internal capacity building the applicant organization needs to undertake in order to sustain and support the program. Describe what preparation has been done with agency leadership, board, staff, partners, and stakeholders to gain support including any education or awareness related to Service Enterprise. Demonstrate the organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to implement the proposed program.
* The organization’s experience with engaging volunteers in its mission-related services.
* Whether the organization has organized, partnered, or conducted any educational or training programs that aimed to prepare participants for employment.
* The names and credentials/qualifications of staff who will lead, provide oversight, and monitor the program. If individuals are not known, the qualifications the organization will use to select the program leadership.
* If the AmeriCorps members’ supervisor is not the program leader, identify the supervisor, qualifications, and percent (FTE) of time the person will devote to supporting members. If specific individuals have not been selected, describe the qualification criteria that will be applied to selecting the program leadership.

***2. Compliance and Accountability (13 points)***

* Describe how your organizational policies, practices, and procedures prevent and detect waste, fraud, or abuse of public or donor funds. What internal controls are in place to guard against such events?
* Describe organizational internal controls or processes that demonstrate
	+ an ability to self-monitor to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities.
	+ capacity to hold yourself and service site locations (if applicable) accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified. Is it able to develop and implement corrective actions that prevent repeat of the issues.

**D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)**

Reviewers will consider the following criteria. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value. Criteria will be assessed based on the budget submitted. **No narrative should be entered in the narrative box except for “See Budget.”**

Fixed Amount

* The cost per MSY is equal to or less than the maximum cost per MSY.
* The Source of Funds screen indicates the non-AmeriCorps funding and resources are sufficient to support the program described.
* The Source of Funds screen indicates the specific sources and amount of non-AmeriCorps resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash), and if the commitments are proposed or secured.

**Remaining eGrants Fields**

**Evaluation Summary or Plan**

Enter “not required.”

**Amendment Justification**

Enter N/A. This field will be used if you are awarded a grant and need to amend it.

**Clarification Information**

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter information that requires clarification in the post-review period. Please clearly label new information added during clarification with the date.

**Continuation Changes**

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter changes in your narratives in your continuation requests.

## VI. Performance Measures

All applicants must submit the Capacity Building, Member Development, and Service Activity performance measure with their application. For guidance on determining service activity, member development, and capacity building performance measures, see page 27 of this document. See Attachment B, page 39, for instructions on how to enter performance measures in eGrants.

##  VII. Program Information

In the Program Information Section, applicants should only check the boxes for those characteristics that represent a ***significant*** part of the program. There are no points for selecting more traits than those your program truly has.

**AmeriCorps Funding Priorities**

* Because this list is very specific to a limited number of 2022 federal funding priorities, please check “No NOFO priority area”. This state competition is not limited to these areas.

**Grant Characteristics**

Check any grant characteristics that are a significant part of the proposed program.

## VIII. Documents

See page 10 for the list of required documents along with instructions on compiling them, labeling the email subject line, and submitting the document package by email. If the documents required are part of the pre-filled list in this section, change the 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.”

##  IX. Funding and Demographics

In the Funding/Demographics Section enter:

* Other Revenue funds. Enter the amount of funds that your program uses to run the program that are not identified on the application budget as AmeriCorps share or grantee share (match). All fixed grants will have other revenue and the amount should be the same as the amount entered as the total under Sources of Funds.
Note: Programs should not enter the total operating budget for their organization unless the entire operating budget supports the AmeriCorps program. Programs that have additional revenue sources not included in the matching funds section of the budget should provide the amount of this additional revenue that supports the program. This amount should not include the AmeriCorps or grantee share amounts in the budget. Full-cost Fixed amount grantees should enter all non- AmeriCorps funds that support the program in this field.
* Number of Volunteers Generated by AmeriCorps members. Please enter the target number of volunteers that AmeriCorps members will engage in service projects (e.g., event or day of service) plus ongoing volunteer commitments (e.g., community mentors, boat inspectors, energy educators).

## X. Operating Sites

This eGrants field is not applicable to programs operating in just one state. ***Do not complete this section.***

# F. Budget Instructions: Fixed-Amount Grants

Fixed Amount Grant applicants request a fixed amount of funding per MSY. Therefore, these applicants are not required to complete a detailed budget or complete the “Grantee Share” column. However, you **must** select the “**Enter Source of Matching Funds**” link at the top of the budget entry screen and identify all the source(s) and amount(s) of the additional revenue you will use to operate the program. Identify each match source separately, whether the match is secured or proposed; include dollar amount, the match classification (cash or in-kind), and the source type (Private, State/Local, or Federal) for the non-AmeriCorps resources supporting your proposed program.

Applicants should plan on a Commission Technical Assistance fee equal to 1% of the total AmeriCorps share. Like all expenses for fixed price programs, this is not a detail in the budget.

Please note the final amount that a program receives will be adjusted to reflect actual hours served if a member does not serve the minimum hours necessary to complete a term of service (i.e., leaves the program early).

**Budget Section II: Fixed-Amount Grants**

Use the table below to organize your AmeriCorps request and calculate the MSYs.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Member Positions** | **Calculation statement** | **Resulting MSYs** |
| **Number** | **Type** | **Number** | **Fractional value** |  |
|  | 1700 hours |  | X 1.000 = |  |
|  | 1200 hours  |  | X 0.700 = |  |
|  | 900 hours  |  | X 0.500 = |  |
|  | 675 hours |  | X 0.3809524 = |  |
|  | 450 hours |  | X 0.26455027 = |  |
|  | 300 hours |  | X 0.21164022 = |  |
|  | 100 hours |  | X 0.07054674 = |  |
|  |  |  | Total Program MSYs |  |

In eGrants, enter the number of positions by category under the chart column labeled “**#w/o living allowance**.” This ensures the correct number and type of education awards are secured. **Leave all other columns blank**. The total number of MSYs will automatically calculate in the eGrants Member Positions chart.

Fixed amount grants may request *up to* $26,000 per MSY. Using the “Total MSY” figure, enter create a calculation to explain the total amount of funds requested. A mock eGrants budget entry screen appears below. Be sure to enter $0 in the Grantee Share column or the system will not process the calculation.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Purpose**  | **Calculation**  | **Total Amount**  | **CNCS Share**  | **Grantee Share**  | **edit**  | **del**  |
| **Program Grant Request**  | 20 MSY X $26,000/MSY  | $ 520,000  | $ 520,000  | $0  | view |  |
| **Subtotal**  |  | $ 520,000 | $ 520,000  | $0 |  |  |

After you save the Source of Funds and Budget Narrative section, the Budget Form (a summary by category) will be generated automatically by the eGrants system. No further action is required on your part.

NOTE: The Commission will charge successful applicants a training and technical assistance fee equal to 1% of the total AmeriCorps award. The fee will be calculated each time a reimbursement invoice is submitted and billed quarterly. The funds are similar to the 1% Commission share of indirect that is claimed on cost reimbursement grants (see next section).

# G. 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
* Certifications
* Verify and
* Submit

Read the Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications carefully (https://espan.cns.gov/cnsmisc/ECERTS.HTM, and https://espan.cns.gov/cnsmisc/EASSUR.HTM). 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.

If someone else is acting in the role of the applicant’s authorized representative, that person 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 generate a list of errors if there are sections that need to be corrected prior to submission when you verify.

# Attachment A: Facesheet as printed digitally (eGrants Inserts Data Using Applicant Info and Application Info Sections)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE**Standard Form 424 (Rev. 2-2007) Prescribed by OMB Circular A-102  | **1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION:** [x]  Application [x]  Non-Construction |
| **2. a. DATE SUBMITTED:** | **3. a. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:**      | 3. b. STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:      |
| 2. b. APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:       | **4. a. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:**      | 4. b. FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: (Staff Only)      |
| **5. APPLICANT INFORMATION** |
| 5. a. LEGAL NAME:       5. b. ORGANIZATIONAL DUNS:      5. c. ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT (DEPARTMENT/DIVISION):       | 5. e. NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ONMATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION *(give area code):*NAME:      TELEPHONE NUMBER: (     )       - FAX NUMBER: (     )       - EMAIL:      INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: WEBSITE:  |
| 5. d. ADDRESS *(give street address, city, county, state and zip code):*STREET:       CITY:       COUNTY:      STATE:       COUNTRY:       |
| **6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER *(EIN):***                   | **7. a. TYPE OF APPLICANT: (*enter appropriate letter in box)***  A. State H. Independent School District B. County I. State Controlled Institution of Higher Learning C. Municipal J. Private University  D. Township K. Indian Tribe E. Interstate L. Individual F. Intermunicipal M. Profit Organization G. Special District N. Private Non-Profit Organization O. Federal Government P. HQ Internal Organizations Q. State Education Agency R. Territory  S. Other (specify) 7. b. CNCS APPLICANT CHARACTERISTICS *Enter appropriate codes:*  |
| **8. TYPE OF APPLICATION** [ ]  NEW [ ]  NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE  [ ]  CONTINUATION [ ]  REVISION If Revision, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es):      A. AUGMENTATION B. BUDGET REVISION: C. NO COST EXTENSION to       *(enter date)*E. OTHER (*specify)*   |
| **9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY:**AmeriCorps |
| **10. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER:**           | **11. a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT’S PROJECT:** |
| **12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT *(List Cities, Counties, States, etc.):***       |  11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):  |
| **13. PROPOSED PROJECT:** START DATE: ENDING DATE:       **14. Performance Period (Staff Use Only\_**             |
| **15. ESTIMATED FUNDING:** Check applicable box: Yr 1: [ ]  Yr.2: [ ]  Yr. 3: [ ]   | **16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE** **ORDER 12372 PROCESS**? a. YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESSS FOR REVIEW ON: DATE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ b. NO. [x]  PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372  **17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT?** [ ]  YES If “Yes,”attach an explanation. [ ]  NO |
| a. FEDERAL | $       |
| b. APPLICANT | $       |
| c. STATE | $       |
| d. LOCAL | $       |
| e. OTHER | $       |
| f. PROGRAM NCOME | $       |
| g. TOTAL | $       |
| **18.** TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED. |
| a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:       | b. TITLE:       | c. TELEPHONE NUMBER:       |
| d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:       | e. DATE SIGNED: |

# Attachment B: Performance Measures Instructions (eGrants Performance Measures Module)

## I. Performance Measurement Module of eGrants

In the performance measures module, you will:

* Provide information about your program’s connection to AmeriCorps focus areas and objectives.
* Show MSY and member allocations.
* Create one or more aligned performance measure.
* Set targets and describe data collection plans for your performance measures.

**Home Page**

To start the module, select “Performance Measures” from the eGrants application menu (left sidebar) and then 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 member allocations for your application, click the “Edit Objectives/MSYs/Members” button.

After you have created at least one aligned performance measure, the Home Page will display a chart summarizing your measures. 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 a focus area. Then click on an objective. All national performance measures fall under a strategic plan objective. Only the performance measures that correspond to the strategic plan objectives you select on this tab will be available for selection as you continue through this module. To see which performance measures correspond to which objective, refer to the AmeriCorps Performance Measures Instructions: <https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/ASN_FY2022_PerformanceMeasuresInstructions_FINAL.508.pdf>

Next, select all interventions that are part of your program design. Interventions are the activities that members and volunteers will carry out to address the problem(s) identified in the application. Select “other” if one of your program’s interventions does not appear on the list. Repeat these actions for each of your program’s focus areas. Select “other” for your focus area and/or objective if your program activities do not fall within one of the AmeriCorps focus areas or objectives.

Choose your program’s primary focus area from the drop-down list. Only the focus areas that correspond to the objectives you selected above appear in the list. Next, select the primary intervention within your primary focus area. You will be required to create an aligned performance measure that contains your primary intervention.

Select “Capacity Building” as your secondary focus area and secondary intervention.

**MSYs/Members Tab**

On this tab, you will enter information about the allocation of MSYs and members across the focus areas and objectives you have selected. Begin by entering the total MSYs for your program.

Next, enter the number of MSYs your program will allocate to each objective. Only the objectives that were selected on the previous tab appear in the MSY chart. If some of your program’s objectives are not represented in the chart, return to the previous tab and select additional objectives. The MSY chart must show how all your program’s resources are allocated. If you have selected the Find Opportunity objective (under the Economic Opportunity focus area) and/or the Teacher Corps objective (under the Education focus area), enter 0 MSYs for these objectives and allocate your MSYs to the other objectives you selected. Note that you may be required to enter “0” (zero) for some other objectives if the only activity in that objective is focused on member development. Please refer to additional instructions for calculating and entering MSY and member allocations at the end of these instructions to ensure information is entered accurately.

 As you enter MSYs into the MSY column of the chart, the corresponding percentage of MSYs will calculate automatically. When you have finished entering your MSYs, the total percentage of MSYs in the chart must be 100%. The total number of MSYs in the chart must equal the number of MSYs in your budget (+/- 1 MSY).

In the members column, enter the number of members that will be assigned to each objective. Some members may perform services across more than one objective. If this is the case, allocate these members to all applicable objectives. For example, if one member works on both school readiness and K-12 success, allocate one member to each of these objectives. It is acceptable for members in this table to exceed total slots requested in the application due to counting members’ service across multiple objectives.

**Performance Measure Tab**

This tab allows you to create sets of aligned performance measures for all the grant activities you intend to measure. You must create at least one aligned performance measure that includes your primary intervention. You may create additional aligned performance measures.

To create an aligned performance measure, begin by selecting an objective. The list of objectives includes those you selected on the objectives tab.

Provide a short, descriptive title for your performance measure.

Briefly describe the problem your program will address in this performance measure.

Select the intervention(s) to be delivered by members and member-supported volunteers. The list of interventions includes the ones you selected previously for this objective. Select only the interventions that will lead to the outcomes of this aligned performance measure. If you selected “other” as an intervention and wish to include an applicant-determined intervention in your aligned performance measure, click “add user intervention” and enter a one- or two-word description of the intervention.

Select output(s) for your aligned performance measure. The output list includes only the National Performance Measure outputs that correspond to the objectives you have selected. If you do not wish to select National Performance Measures, you may create an applicant-determined output by clicking “Add User Output.”

Select outcome(s). If you have selected a National Performance Measures output with a corresponding National Performance Measures outcome, these outcomes will be available to select. If you have not selected a National Performance Measures output, or if there is no corresponding outcome, create an applicant-determined outcome by clicking “Add User Outcome.”

For Capacity Building National Performance Measures, you may select optional end outcomes. Complete the corresponding drop-down box for any end outcome selected. To select more than one focus area, click “Add new focus area.” To select more than one beneficiary population, click “Add new beneficiary.” To de-select an item in the drop-down box, click the first (blank) line in the drop-down. To identify focus area outcomes that are connected to your capacity building activities, check the “Focus Area Outcome” box. To select more than one focus area outcome, select “Add new outcome.” To de-select an item in the drop-down box, click the first (blank) line in the drop-down.

Enter the number of MSYs and members your program will allocate to achieving the outcomes you have selected in this performance measure. Since programs are not required to measure all grant activities, the number you enter does not have to correspond to the MSY chart you created on the MSY/Members tab; however, the total number of MSYs across all performance measures within a single objective cannot exceed the total number of MSYs previously allocated to that objective. Members may be double-counted across performance measures, but MSYs may not. Note that MSYs and members cannot be entered for performance measures associated with the Find Opportunity objectives. For the Teacher Corps objective, enter 0 MSYs and members.

Click “next” to proceed to the data collection tab. Later you can return to this tab to create additional aligned performance measures.

**Data Collection Tab**

On this tab, you will provide additional information about your interventions, instruments and plan for data collection. AmeriCorps pays close attention to the thoroughness of this section and will closely track in program reports the extent to which the data collection plan is followed.

Describe the design and dosage (frequency, intensity, duration) of the interventions you have selected. Frequency refers to how often an intervention occurs (for example, number of sessions per week); intensity refers to the length of time devoted to the intervention (for example, number of minutes per session); and duration refers to the period of time over which the intervention occurs (for example, how many total weeks of sessions).

Expand each output and outcome set of fields using the ► symbol and enter data collection information. For outputs that measure completion, define the minimum amount required to be counted as having completed the program.

The performance measures may be extracted from the proposal and used separately from the full application after awards are made. Thus, all information requested in the National Performance Measure Instructions must be included in the text of the performance measures themselves, and it must be evident in the performance measure text that all definitions and requirements outlined in the National Performance Measures Instructions and this RFA are met. Applicants should limit the amount of duplicate information they include in the narratives, focusing on ensuring performance measure required text is complete.

Select the data collection method you will use to measure the output or outcome. To select more than one method, click the “Add new method” button. To de-select a method, click the first (blank) line in the method drop-down.

Describe the specific instrument(s) you will use to measure the output or outcome. Include the title of the instrument(s), a brief description of what it measures and how it will be administered, and details about its reliability and validity if applicable. For outcomes, specify how much improvement in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition is required to be counted as having improved and clearly explain how the instrument measures this.

Enter the target number for your output or outcome. Targets must be numbers, not percent.

For applicant-determined outputs and outcomes, enter the unit of measure for your target. The unit of measure should describe the population you intend to count (children, miles, etc.). Do not enter percent or member hours as units of measure. In most cases, the unit of measure should be the same for the outputs and outcomes in an aligned performance measure.

After entering data collection information for all outputs and outcomes, click “Mark Complete.” You will return to the Performance Measure tab. If you wish to create another performance measure, repeat the process. If you would like 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.

## II. Understanding MSY and Member Allocations in the Performance Measure Section

**Tutorial on entering Performance Measures**

To understand how performance measures are entered into the Performance Measurement section of eGrants, go through the online tutorial for eGrants Performance Measures Module for AmeriCorps at: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement/egrants-performance-measures-module-americorps>

**How to Calculate MSY and Member Allocations**

In the performance measure module, applicants enter the total share of program resources (MSYs and members) that will be directed to each objective. Member and MSY allocations entered in the application are understood to be the program’s best estimate of how member time will be allocated to program objectives.

The charts below show how a sample program could calculate its MSY allocations for different member types and different percentages of member time spent per objective. In this example, the program has 110 members who serve 1700 hour terms and 25 members who serve 1200 hour terms, for a total of 135 members. 1700 hour members spend most of their time contributing to the K-12 Success objective. The 1200 hour members devote the rest of their time to the School Readiness objective.

|  |
| --- |
| Objective #1: K12 Success |
| **Type of Member** | **MSY Multiplier for Type** | **X** | **Number of Members for Type** | **X** | **% of Member Time for Objective** | **=** | **MSY Allocation** |
| FT | 1 | X | 110 | X | 1.00 | = | 110 |
| **Total Members** | **110** | **Total MSYs** | **110** |

|  |
| --- |
| Objective #2: School Readiness |
| **Type of Member** | **MSY Multiplier for Type** | **X** | **Number of Members for Type** | **X** | **% of Member Time for Objective** | **=** | **MSY Allocation** |
| FT | 0.70 | X | 25 | X | 1.00 | = | 17.5 MSY |
| **Total Members** | **25** | **Total MSYs** | **17.5** |

**How It Looks on the MSY Tab**

The program enters the total number of MSYs and members for each objective on the MSY/Members tab of the performance measures module. eGrants automatically calculates the MSY percentages allocated to each objective.

**How to Assign MSYs to Performance Measures**

When a program creates an aligned performance measure, it must indicate how many MSYs and how many members will contribute to the outcomes of the aligned measure.

Based on the 127.5 MSY allocations already entered for the sample program, the program may allocate no more than 110 MSYs to K-12 Success performance measures, and no more than 17.5 MSYs to School Readiness performance measures. However, programs are not required to measure all activities, so it is possible that not all of these MSYs will be allocated to performance measures.

Our sample program has two performance measures, one for the K-12 Success objective and one for the School Readiness objective.

|  |
| --- |
| Objective #1: K-12 Success |
| **Intervention** | **Aligned Performance Measure** | **Percent of K-12 Success Time Spent on Achieving PM Outcomes** | **X** | **Total MSYs in Objective** | **=** | **MSYs Allocated to Performance Measure** | **Percent of Total MSYs** |
| Mentoring | ED3A, ED4A, ED27A | 1.00 | X | 110 | = | 110 | 86% |

|  |
| --- |
| Objective #2: School Readiness |
| **Intervention** | **Aligned Performance Measure** | **Percent of K-12 Success Time Spent on Achieving PM Outcomes** | **X** | **Total MSYs in Objective** | **=** | **MSYs Allocated to Performance Measure** | **Percent of Total MSYs** |
| Tutoring 1:1 | ED20, ED21, ED23 | 1.00 | X | 25 | = | 17.5 | 14% |

*Note*: Member Development outcomes should have an MSY allocation of 0 members since MSY allocations are designed to show how programs’ resources are allocated to achieving community beneficiary outcomes.

# Attachment C: Financial Management Systems Survey

**Financial Management Systems Survey for Potential Grantees**

Legal Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Survey: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***A. General Information***

1. Has your organization received a federal cost-reimbursement award in the last two years? 🞏Yes 🞏No

 If yes, what is your cognizant federal oversight agency.

 Agency:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Telephone:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Name of Contact:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Has your organization been audited by an independent public accounting firm in the past 2 years? 🞏Yes 🞏No

3. Was this audit conducted in accordance with OMB Uniform Guidance? 🞏Yes 🞏No

 If “No”, what procedures were followed? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. Please indicate the fiscal year of your organization: Month start:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Month end:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the audit schedule for your organization? 🞏Annual 🞏 Biennial 🞏 Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. Does your organization have a cost allocation plan? 🞏Yes 🞏No (If “Yes”, attach a copy.)

7. Does your organization have a negotiated indirect cost rate with a state or federal agency? 🞏Yes 🞏No

 If “Yes”, what is your cognizant agency? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Please attach a copy of your most recent letter from this agency.

8. Has the Internal Revenue Service granted final approval for tax-exempt status? 🞏Yes 🞏No

9. Under which IRS Code did your organization file? 🞏 501(c)(3) 🞏 501(c)(4) 🞏 Other:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

10. Please provide a copy of your organization’s Articles of Incorporation or governing document in which its purpose and mission is codified.

Comments:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

11. On what date was your organization’s last 990 filed? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

12. Does the name of the organization filing the 990 exactly match the name of the legal applicant submitting this proposal? 🞏Yes 🞏No

If “No,” what name does appear on the 990? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***B. Accounting System***

1. Which of the following best describes the accounting system: 🞏 Manual 🞏Automated 🞏Combination

2. Is there a chart of accounts? 🞏Yes 🞏No

3. Is a double entry accounting system used? 🞏Yes 🞏No

4. What books of account are maintained?

a) General Ledger 🞏Yes 🞏No b) Project Cost Ledger 🞏Yes 🞏No

c) Cash Receipts Journal 🞏Yes 🞏No d) Cash Disbursements Journal 🞏Yes 🞏No

e) Payroll Journal 🞏Yes 🞏No f) Income (Sales) Journal 🞏Yes 🞏No

g) Purchase Journal 🞏Yes 🞏No h) General Journal 🞏Yes 🞏No

i) Other (please describe): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. Does the accounting system identify the receipt and expenditure of funds separately for each grant and contract? 🞏Yes 🞏No

6. Does the accounting system provide for documenting and recording the in-kind value or goods and services contributed to grant or contract projects? 🞏Yes 🞏No

7. Are time distribution records maintained for each employee to account for total effort (100%)? 🞏Yes 🞏No

 8. Is the accounting system able to disburse stipends that are not based on hours worked but do require withholding income tax and payment of FICA? 🞏Yes 🞏No

9 . Is the organization familiar with the cost principles (Uniform Guidance – formerly OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, or A-122 as appropriate) and procedures for the determination and allowance of costs in connection with federal grants and contracts? 🞏Yes 🞏No

 Comments: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***C. Funds Management***

1. Is a separate account maintained for Federal grant/contract funds? 🞏Yes 🞏No

2. If a separate account is not maintained, can the federal grant/cooperative agreement funds and related expenses be readily identified? 🞏Yes 🞏No

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Does your organization use electronic fund transfers to make or receive payments? 🞏Yes 🞏No

***D. Internal Controls***

1. Are the duties of the bookkeeper/record keeper separated from cash functions (receipt or payment of cash)? 🞏Yes 🞏No

2. Are checks signed by individuals whose duties exclude recording cash received, approving vouchers for payment and payroll preparation? 🞏Yes 🞏No

3. Are accounting entries supported by appropriate documentation (e.g., purchase orders, vouchers, etc.)?
🞏Yes 🞏No

4. Are employees who handle funds bonded against loss by reasons of fraud or dishonesty? 🞏Yes 🞏No

***E. Operational Management***

The policies identified below address some of the most critical elements for administration of a federal grant. As a recipient of federal funds, organizations are required to have a full complement of programmatic, financial, and administrative policies, as well as internal controls in place, as applicable. Should the applicant receive federal funding, full copies of the policies and procedures may be requested for monitoring purposes.

Please indicate whether the organization has current written policies and procedures in the following areas

(check Yes or No):

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | No |  |
|  |  | Personnel/Employee Handbook |
|  |  | Financial/Internal Controls |
|  |  | Sub-award Monitoring and Oversight |
|  |  | Timekeeping |
|  |  | Travel Guidance, including purchase/travel credit card use |
|  |  | Procurement |
|  |  | Standards for Use of Federal Funds |
|  |  | Code(s) of Conduct/Ethics, applicable to employment/purchasing |
|  |  | Document Retention |

Please indicate the training areas below that are provided to employees by the organization

(answer Yes or No)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | No |  |
|  |  | Personnel/HR Issues |
|  |  | Financial Accounting |
|  |  | Risk Management |
|  |  | Cyber-security |
|  |  | Fraud, Waste, and Abuse |

***F. Financial Management***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | No |  |
|  |  | Are financial reports (profit and loss, budget vs. actual, etc.) provided to and reviewed by leadership level staff, at least quarterly? |
|  |  | Does the organization utilize an automated accounting system? |
|  |  | Can the organization’s accounting system separate the receipts and payments of a federal grant from the receipts and payments of the organization’s other activities supported by separate funding streams?  |
|  |  | Can the organization’s accounting system summarize expenditures from a federal grant according to different budget categories such as salaries, rent, supplies, and equipment? |
|  |  | How often does the organization post transactions to the accounting system ledger(s)? |
|  |  | Does the organization use an automated payroll system? |

Please indicate whether organizational leadership approval is required for any of the following financial transactions (answer Yes or No):

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | No |  |
|  |  | Opening/Closing Bank Accounts |
|  |  | Opening Lines of Credit |
|  |  | Assigning Credit Cards |
|  |  | Buying/Selling Property |
|  |  | Financial Investment/Divestment |
|  |  | Has the organization issued loans to an employee or officer of the organization or forgiven/written-off any loans or debts in the last year? |
|  |  | Has the organization experienced cash flow deficits an any point in the previous 2 years? |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Please identify who is authorized to write-off any debt owed to the organization as a bad debt.  |

Please provide any clarifications or similar remarks/information in the section below (optional):

***G. Preparer’s Certification***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Preparer’s Name (First, Last) |
|  | Preparer’s Position Title |
|  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| I certify that the above information is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and ability. |
|  | SIGNATURE |
|  | Date of Certification |

# Attachment D: AmeriCorps Program Start-up Plan

The list below outlines the elements that need to be in place for a successful AmeriCorps program operation. Some items may already exist in organizations that handle other federal programs or have well-developed volunteer programs. The list only covers tasks that need to occur early in program start-up and does not cover the full year of a program’s operation.

Indicate the status of each element and, if it needs to be developed, identify who will do so and the date by which it will be in place.

| **Proposed Program Start Date**:  | Responsible Person | Completion Date  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Administrative** |  |  |
| Meet with agency finance and human resource staff to review grant requirements and budget |  |  |
| Set up accounting system to track program expenses |  |  |
| Conduct National Service Criminal History background checks on every employee who will be supported by AmeriCorps funds or shown as grantee share on budget |  |  |
| Modify time/effort reporting of employees working on grant to record time devoted to this grant (see Uniform Guidance for requirements) |  |  |
| Determine whether organization needs permission to incur costs ahead of grant start date and take appropriate action |  |  |
| Complete “Signature Authorization Form” to let Commission know what names/signatures should appear on grant agreement |  |  |
| Determine what agency human resource policies will apply to AmeriCorps members (travel reimbursement, building access, use of technology, confidentiality, access to their records, health and safety requirements, etc.). Include review of any differences in conducting background checks and review of social media or other publicly available information sources. |  |  |
| Register Human Resource, Financial, and Program staff for the Commission grantee training sessions and attend  |  |  |
| Consult with worker compensation and liability insurance company to determine if members will be covered or if alternative coverage must be obtained. |  |  |
| Check health insurance options and determine what will be offered by program. |  |  |
| Establish program policies and procedures for the issues that are not covered by standard agency policies or procedures. If accompaniment will be required, establish policy and procedure for complying. |  |  |
| Complete/submit to Commission OnCorps Report Authorization form. |  |  |
| * **Member Management**
 |  |  |
| Identify the basic qualifications required/essential for selection to serve in the program. Include any background check findings that would disqualify someone from service (e.g., driving under the influence for a position that will transport students).  |  |  |
| Develop the member training plan starting with orientation and going through the year of growing member skills, knowledge, and abilities related to service, the community, and citizenship. Leave some time for opportunities that will emerge during the year. |  |  |
| Using the template from the Commission, create a service position description for each different type of Member (e.g., nutrition educator, fall prevention educator) using basic qualifications as the foundation for adding specific qualifications, responsibilities, service term, etc. Factor training to be provided into essential and preferred/desired qualifications. |  |  |
| Develop selection process including application (if using supplement to federal portal), releases, interview protocol, process for determining eligibility, process for making decision to offer, and all the steps through enrollment. Be sure to include process for showing how findings in background check were applied to selection especially if applicant has a record or conviction. Engage agency HR leader in design of this process, especially in how to document steps, decisions, and compliance with equal opportunity laws.  |  |  |
| Develop application tracking system that will flag critical time requirements and prevent overlooking significant detail. Include all steps for background checks including calling references (even those who submitted written ones). |  |  |
| Extract from service position description the details required in the federal MyAmeriCorps portal used for final selection and enrollment. Enter information in the portal which uses the language “service opportunity.” |  |  |
| Outline recruitment plan to include balance of local, regional, national avenues as well as targeted outreach to communities that could bring diverse perspectives to effort |  |  |
| Add position description to your own website. |  |  |
| Develop recruitment postings for ServiceYear and other recruitment sites or opportunities. Disbribute.according to plan.  |  |  |
| Review agency code of conduct and code of ethics and determine if modifications/adaptation is needed for AmeriCorps members. |  |  |
| Develop grievance policy and procedure for AmeriCorps members. It may be a modification/adaptation of agency policy. |  |  |
| Review agency policy and procedure for employee disciplinary actions. Modify and adapt to AmeriCorps members. |  |  |
| Create AmeriCorps Member agreement using template from Commission. Check Cooperative Agreement including terms and conditions for information/updates on member management issues that impact member agreement. |  |  |
| Develop AmeriCorps Member handbook with policies, procedures, program information they will need. |  |  |
| Set up record keeping system that protects PII and other information submitted as part of applying to program. |  |  |
| Learn Member record and reporting interface in OnCorps and determine which of the timesheet options best suits program. |  |  |
| Create AmeriCorps member orientation covering program purpose, service activities, AmeriCorps requirements, member roles and responsibilities, introduction to agency (and supervisors if serving at host sites), etc. |  |  |
| Learn National Service Trust portal workflow for inviting applicant to accept position, getting citizenship clearance, enrollment, and site assignment. |  |  |
| Set up MEVHCS account and Truescreen account and become familiar with how the systems work |  |  |
| Conduct interview and selection process for applicants to serve. |  |  |
| Enroll AmeriCorps members in National Service Trust (portal). |  |  |
| Download Trust information and import into OnCorps. |  |  |
| Complete OnCorps program management set-up: Enter Member position descriptions, host sites (if applicable), member information, site supervisors, program budget, and program performance measures. |  |  |
| Establish calendar for member supervision, meetings, site visits (if they will serve at other locations), submission of service timesheets, member reports, all-team community service projects, trainings, and member evaluations. |  |  |
| Develop Member evaluation process and assessment tool for use at mid-term and end-of-term performance review. |  |  |
| * **Program Management**
 |  |  |
| *If members will serve at locations other than grantee facility:* |  |  |
| Develop host site agreement detailing what program will do, what member will do, and what site will do. Under site responsibilities, include orientation to agency/facility, regular supervision meetings, verification of service reported by member, provision of tools/materials to accomplish service, access to pertinent training or coaching, enforcement of prohibited activities, AmeriCorps identification, inkind documentation (if applicable), cost share and payments (if applicable), attendance at program meetings, etc. |  |  |
| Identify supervisor at host site and ensure the person has appropriate credentials. |  |  |
| Develop site supervisor guide with checklist for site orientation, schedule for approving time logs, meeting dates, etc. |  |  |
| Plan and conduct host site supervisor training. Include review of program, goals, performance measures, site agreement, supervisor role in program compliance and success, supervision basics (many supervisors have not held this role before), AmeriCorps introduction and regulatory requirements of sites. |  |  |
| Establish schedule of check-ins between program director and site supervisors. Determine support needs of supervisors in the context of program. Plan appropriate training/coaching. |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| *All programs* |  |  |
| Develop a clear understanding of the tasks to be done in the portal and what tasks are done in OnCorps |  |  |
| Complete tutorials on using OnCorps platform. |  |  |
| Review reports in portal under S&N Reports menu and determine schedule for running them to check federal data against your records. |  |  |
| Copy approved grant budget into OnCorps so finance official can request reimbursements.  |  |  |
| Develop data collection plan in preparations for progress reporting and evaluation. |  |  |
| Design feedback/assessment survey for service beneficiaries to use in giving feedback on experience or quality. |  |  |
| Determine membership of advisory council, meeting schedule, and procedures for getting their assistance on securing resources, reviewing survey feedback, assessing/promoting community awareness, conducting days of service, etc. |  |  |

# Attachment E: Essential Volunteer Management Practices

For some organizations, AmeriCorps is the first introduction to implementation of all the essential practices of volunteer management. Successful grantees that have these volunteer management practices in place will have a head start on implementing an AmeriCorps program.

* Volunteer involvement is linked to organizational or program outcomes
* Designated manager/leader for overseeing management of volunteers agency-wide
* Written statement of philosophy related to volunteer involvement
* Written policies and procedures for volunteer involvement
* Periodic needs assessment to determine how volunteers should be involved to address the mission
* Organizational budget reflects expenses related to volunteer involvement
* Periodic risk management assessment related to volunteer roles
* Orientation for new paid staff about why and how volunteers are involved in the organization's work
* Written position descriptions for volunteer roles
* Liability insurance coverage for volunteers
* Specific strategies for ongoing volunteer recruitment
* Standardized screening and matching procedures for determining appropriate placement of volunteers
* Consistent general orientation for new volunteers
* Consistent training for new volunteers regarding specific duties and responsibilities
* Designated supervisors for all volunteer roles
* Periodic assessments of volunteer performance
* Periodic assessments of staff support for volunteers
* Consistent activities for recognizing volunteer contributions
* Consistent activities for recognizing staff support for volunteers
* Regular collection of information (numerical and anecdotal) regarding volunteer involvement
* Information related to volunteer involvement is shared with board members and other stakeholders at least twice annually
* Volunteer manager and fund development manager work closely together
* Volunteer manager is included in top-level planning

# Attachment F: Logic Model Format

Completing the format below will prepare applicants to enter Logic Model Text in eGrants as part of the application. REMINDER: The page limit for this element is 3 pages as printed out from the eGrants platform. Use phrases, lists, and brief(!) description to maximize space available.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Problem**  | **Inputs** | **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Short-Term Outcomes** | **Mid-Term****Outcomes** | **Long-Term Outcomes** |
| The community need/problem that the program activities (interventions) are designed to address. | Resources needed to deliver the program activities (interventions), including the number of locations/sites and number/slot types of AmeriCorps members. | The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including duration, dosage and target population. | Direct productsfrom programactivities. | Changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes and opinions. These outcomes, if applicable to the program design, will almost always be measurable during the grant year. | Changes in behavior or action. Depending on program design,these outcomesmay or may not bemeasurable duringthe grant year. | Changes in condition or status in life. Depending on program design, these outcomes may or may not bemeasurable during the grant year but should be stated so the ultimate goal of the program is evident. |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Attachment G: Compilation of Links in RFA

Volunteer Maine: <http://volunteermaine.gov/>

AmeriCorps: <https://americorps.gov/>

5 MRSA §1825-E & 18-554 Code of Maine Rules, C. 120

<http://www.maine.gov/purchases/policies/120.shtml>

The Code of Federal Regulations sections on AmeriCorps

<https://ecfr.federalregister.gov/>

45 CFR §2520.20 - §2520.55, Member Service Activities

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=33a45bd4ae4a1b2ef10c18c2213daf80&mc=true&node=pt45.4.2520&rgn=div5#se45.4.2520_120>

45 CFR §2520.65, Prohibited Activities

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=33a45bd4ae4a1b2ef10c18c2213daf80&mc=true&node=pt45.4.2520&rgn=div5#se45.4.2520_165>

45 CFR §2522.100, Minimum Requirements for Every AmeriCorps Program Type

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=33a45bd4ae4a1b2ef10c18c2213daf80&mc=true&node=pt45.4.2522&rgn=div5#se45.4.2522_1100>

45 CFR §2522.110, Types of AmeriCorps Programs

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=33a45bd4ae4a1b2ef10c18c2213daf80&mc=true&node=pt45.4.2522&rgn=div5#se45.4.2522_1110>

45 CFR §2522.900-2522.950, Tutoring Programs

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=33a45bd4ae4a1b2ef10c18c2213daf80&mc=true&node=pt45.4.2522&rgn=div5#se45.4.2522_1900>

45 CFR §2521.35-2521.90, Matching Funds

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=33a45bd4ae4a1b2ef10c18c2213daf80&mc=true&node=pt45.4.2521&rgn=div5#se45.4.2521_135>

45 CFR§2522.240-2522.250, Member Benefits

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=33a45bd4ae4a1b2ef10c18c2213daf80&mc=true&node=pt45.4.2522&rgn=div5#se45.4.2522_1240>

45 CFR §2522.485, Calculating Cost Per Member Service Year (MSY)

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=33a45bd4ae4a1b2ef10c18c2213daf80&mc=true&node=pt45.4.2522&rgn=div5#se45.4.2522_1485>

45 CFR §2522.500-2522.650, Performance Measures

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=33a45bd4ae4a1b2ef10c18c2213daf80&mc=true&node=pt45.4.2522&rgn=div5#se45.4.2522_1500>

National Service Criminal History Check Information

https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check

45 CFR §2522.500-2522.540 and §2522.700-2522.740, Evaluation

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=33a45bd4ae4a1b2ef10c18c2213daf80&mc=true&node=pt45.4.2522&rgn=div5#se45.4.2522_1700>

45 CFR §2522.400-2522.475, Selection Criteria and Selection Process

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=33a45bd4ae4a1b2ef10c18c2213daf80&mc=true&node=pt45.4.2522&rgn=div5#se45.4.2522_1400>

National Performance Measures Text document version

<https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/ASN_FY2022_PerformanceMeasuresInstructions_FINAL.508.pdf>

How performance measures are entered into eGrants

https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/FY19%20Day%20of%20Service%20Performance%20Measure%20Module%20Application%20Instructions.508.pdf

Federal recruiting+enrollment site for AmeriCorps

<https://americorps.gov/join>

ServiceYear.org: <https://serviceyear.org/>

Segal Education Award, forbearance, Service Trust

https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/segal-americorps-education-award

AmeriCorps Grant Terms & Conditions

* Specific Terms and Conditions LINK:

<https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/FY2022_ASN_Program-SpecificTermsandConditions__Revised_June2022%20%28002%29_2.pdf>

* General Terms and Conditions LINK:

<https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/FY2022-General-Terms-Conditions-508-20211119.pdf>

National Sex Offender Website: <https://www.nsopw.gov/>

eGrants: <https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp>

eGrants account set up tutorial

<https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/2021_04_21_Create_and_Manage_an_eGrants_Account_ASN.pdf>

Register with SAM (System for Award Management)

 <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>

USDA rural-urban commuting area (RUCA) codes

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-commuting-area-codes.aspx>

State of Maine Division of Procurement Services site for a copy of this RFA

<https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants>

1. However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a Federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has made a determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the Federal Government. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See page 24 for exceptions. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Note that regulations direct states to establish their own policies in certain areas. This RFA contains applicable details and takes precedence over the minimum federal requirements. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. A resource that, when added to and employed by a service-delivery program, significantly increases the capacity of the effort and thus enhances the probability of successful mission accomplishment. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See 45 CFR 2520.35 for waiver information related to this requirement. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In this context, adjudicated means the program/grantee makes and documents a formal judgment or decision about the person’s qualification to serve based on local and AmeriCorps policies. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)