AmeriCorps

RFA # 202502026

MAINE RURAL STATE AMERICORPS GRANTS

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

RFA Coordinator	*All communication regarding this RFA <u>must</u> be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below.* **Name:** Jamie McFaul **Title:** Proposal Coordinator **Contact Information:** service.commission@maine.gov 19 Elkins Lane, 105 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-1005 207-624-7792
Information Session	*There will be a virtual information session to answer questions about AmeriCorps and this grant application. Registration is required and can be done via the link below.* **Date:** March 12, **Time:** 1:00 p.m., local time https://mainestate.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_yp0g2sNbT3irB8K5Szmp-Q
Submitted Questions Due	*All questions <u>must</u> be received by the RFA Coordinator identified above by:* **Date:** March 21, 2025, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time
Proposal Submission	*Proposals <u>must</u> be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:* **Submission Deadline:** April 8, 2025 no later than 11:59 p.m., local time. *Proposals <u>must</u> be submitted 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 listed above. 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.

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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 to 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: A voluntary, team-based national service program supported by the U.S. federal government that engages individuals ages 17 and older in public direct-service projects with a goal of helping communities meet critical local educational, public safety, environmental, and human needs. The program is often seen as a domestic Peace Corps and is one of six different programs under the AmeriCorps umbrella.

This program operates through grants of positions and funds to support those who serve. Grants are awarded to nonprofits, units of government, educational institutions, and faith-based organizations. Those grantees provide the local share of resources needed to operate the program, such as but not limited to material costs, human resources, and training. If the AmeriCorps grantee operates solely within a single state, the grants are administered by the state's service commission. If the grantee operates in multiple states, the award is made directly by the federal AmeriCorps agency.

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.

Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps) dba AmeriCorps: A federal government agency that engages individuals in national service initiatives like AmeriCorps and the Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF). The Corporation was created by the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. In October of 2020, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) changed the operating name of the agency to "AmeriCorps.".

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.

Direct service: Action or service that directly affects the community or in the case of environmental protection, impact area, that an organization identifies as its customers or clients. The service purpose is to benefit entities external to the organization that provides it. The quality or resulting change is quantifiable through data or evaluation. Direct service is *not* planning, grant writing, administration, or research.

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.

Encore Programs: Congress set a goal that 10 percent of AmeriCorps funding should support encore service programs that engage a significant number of participants age 55 or older. AmeriCorps seeks to meet that 10 percent target in this competition and encourages encore programs to apply.

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.

Evidence Informed Program: uses the best available knowledge, research, and evaluation to guide program design and implementation, but does not have scientific research or rigorous evaluation of the program itself and is not replicating an evidence-based program.

Applicants that have not yet collected data from their own programs may be evidence-informed if they have incorporated research from other evidence-based programs into their program designs.

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.

Focus Areas for National Service: Congress has directed the federal AmeriCorps agency to focus on some specific areas of need. These categories encompass a broad range of service activities. The focus areas below describe _all permitted_ service activities, and each competition identifies a set as funding priorities.

1. **Disaster Services.** Grants will support increased and improved disaster services for individuals and communities to prepare and adapt to disasters, including but not limited to climate change events. Activities will provide support to increase preparedness for disasters, improve readiness to respond to disasters, support recovery efforts from disasters, and/or assist in the implementation of pre-disaster mitigation and adaptation measures. Grants will support communities and individuals in planning for disasters, in particular engaging disadvantaged communities in the planning process.
2. **Economic Opportunity**. Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people; help economically disadvantaged people, to have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy; transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing; and/or have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed.
3. **Education.** Grants will provide 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' preparation for success in post-secondary educational institutions.
4. **Environmental Stewardship.** Grants will support responsible stewardship of the environment, while preparing communities for challenging environmental circumstances and impacts helping Americans respond to and recover from disruptive events: programs that conserve natural habitats; protect clean air and water; maintain public lands; support wildland fire mitigation and sustainable forest management; cultivate individual and community resilience; and provide nature based solutions to reforestation services after floods or fires.
5. **Healthy Futures.** Grants will provide support for activities that will address the opioid crisis; increase seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible; and/or increase physical activity and improve nutrition with the purpose of reducing obesity.
6. **Veterans and Military Families.** Grants will improve the quality of life of veterans and improve military family well-being; increase the number of veterans, wounded warriors, military service members, and their caregivers, families, and survivors served by AmeriCorps programs; and/or

increase the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through AmeriCorps programs.

7. **Capacity Building.** As direct service, interventions are the set of activities intended to increase service capacity in the community rather than solely within the grantee. Beneficiaries are organizations that increase their effectiveness, efficiency, and/or program scale/reach as a result.

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.

Labor Surplus areas: Civil jurisdictions that have a civilian average annual unemployment rate during the previous two calendar years of 20 percent or more above the average annual civilian unemployment rate for all states during the same 24-month reference period. The US Dept of Labor webpage about labor surplus areas contains a link to a spreadsheet listing all the locations in Maine and other states. (https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/lsa)

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. AmeriCorps members are age 17 or older and are recruited, selected, trained, and supervised by the AmeriCorps grant recipient. A member commits to a term of service that is no more than 1700 hours over 11 months. As a team, members carry out a project from the nonprofit community organization or public agency that is tackling a community problem related to education, public safety, health care, or the environment. AmeriCorps members who serve 35-40 hours weekly receive living allowances, health insurance, childcare, and work-related accident/injury/death coverage.

In most programs, they also have access to assistance in resolving personal problems that may adversely impact their ability to serve. Upon successful completion of service, members qualify for an education award that can be used in any post-secondary program eligible to accept federal financial aid. Under federal law, members are not employees, apprentices, or interns.

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.

National Direct Applicants:
- *Multi-state*: Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one state or territory apply directly to AmeriCorps.
- *Federally-recognized Indian Tribes*: Applicants that are Indian Tribes apply directly to AmeriCorps (see the Eligible Applicants section in the *Notice.*)
- *State and Territories without Commissions*: Applicants in South Dakota, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands apply directly to AmeriCorps because this State and Territories have not established a State Commission

NOFO: Federal Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Opportunity Youth: Opportunity youth are economically disadvantaged individuals ages 16-24 who are disconnected from school or work for at least six months. AmeriCorps defines "economically disadvantaged" consistent with the definition used in the member development performance measures, "Receiving or meet the income eligibility requirements to receive: Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamps (SNAP), Medicaid, State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), Section 8 housing assistance." AmeriCorps defines "disconnected from school or work" as unemployed, underemployed, and not in school for at least six months prior.

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 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. Fixed amount grantees should enter all non- AmeriCorps funds that support the program in this field. All fixed grants will have other revenue.

Partner: An organization or agency that contributes to the Corps program by providing specific training, supplies, or financial resources.

Prohibited Activities: While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or AmeriCorps, staff and members may not engage in the following activities (see 45 CFR § 2520.65):
   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 are 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 a. a business organized for profit, b. a labor union, c. a partisan political organization, d. a nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative, and e. an organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph C. 7. above, unless AmeriCorps assistance is not used to support those religious activities
   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
   11. Such other activities as AmeriCorps may prohibit.

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 own initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-AmeriCorps funds.

Project: A set of actions completed over a defined period that result in a measurable change in a situation or quantifiable progress toward a goal. When carried out by Corps members, the project required additional human resources which were not available locally. Corps members may not displace employees or community volunteers.

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: 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/).

Rural Intermediaries: AmeriCorps recognizes that severely under-resourced communities may have limited capacity to successfully apply for and implement an AmeriCorps program, due to the size and organizational capacity of eligible applicant/host site organizations or the lack of available matching funds in these communities. Thus, it may be effective for a single eligible applicant (intermediary) to develop an application and oversee the implementation of an AmeriCorps program that engages multiple grassroots non-profits/eligible applicants (referred to as a consortium) that, individually, do not have the necessary organizational or fundraising capacity to apply for and run an AmeriCorps program. Given the desire to address community needs holistically, the nonprofits/eligible applicants that make up the consortium may have, but are not required to have, different focus areas (including the non-focus area capacity building) and thus the nonprofit/eligible applicant intermediary will be multi-focused.

Same intervention described in the application: The intervention evaluated in submitted evaluation reports must match the intervention proposed in the application in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the Program Design and Logic Model sections of the application:

- Characteristics of the beneficiary population, including evidence of current or historic inequities facing the population
- Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention
- Dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities
- The context in which the intervention is delivered
- Outcomes of the intervention

Evaluation reports that do not sufficiently match the intervention proposed by the applicant will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points.

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, or utilize the same sites. Programs must get approval from their AmeriCorps program officers to be considered a new project.

Current and previous grantees need to get approval from their Program Officer to be considered a new project. AmeriCorps will consider a project to be new if there is a meaningful difference between it and previous projects in a comparison of the following characteristics, among others: 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).

Single-State Applicants: Single state applicants are organizations that propose to operate in only one state; they must apply through the Governor-appointed State or Territory Commissions. Each state and territory commission administers its own selection process and submits to AmeriCorps the applicants it selects to compete for funding.

Unallowable Activities: In addition to the *Prohibited Activities*, the following restrictions also apply to the service of AmeriCorps members:

Nonduplication. AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program. 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 unless the entity complies with the following "non-displacement" requirements. Note: In section below Corporation = AmeriCorps

Non-displacement.
(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 Corporation assistance.
(2) An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving Corporation 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 Corporation 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 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 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.

Supplantation. Corporation 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 Corporation 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.

Religious use. Corporation assistance may not be used to provide religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any form of proselytization.

Political activity. Corporation assistance may not be used 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.

PART I. OVERVIEW OF GRANT OPPORTUNITY

A. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

I. PROGRAM GRANTS ARE A FEDERAL-STATE PARTNERSHIP

Volunteer Maine (The Maine Commission for Community Service)

Volunteer Maine is the state government partner for the federal AmeriCorps agency. It 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

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.

II. COMPETITION PURPOSE

Volunteer Maine, the Commission for Community Service, is seeking proposals for AmeriCorps programs under Maine Rural State AmeriCorps grant competition. A grant award covers three years of operation. Organizations that implement Rural AmeriCorps programs, design service activities that annually require between 3,400 and 8,500 hours of service by a team of AmeriCorps members serving full-time (37 hours/week).

Applicants must implement an evidence-based program model that addresses a critical local need. Congress directed AmeriCorps to focus efforts on six categories of issues. Within those categories, states can set priorities for grant investments based on the needs of their state.

Volunteer Maine will accept proposals that fit within any of the Focus Areas described on page 6 but it will award additional points to applications aligned with Volunteer Maine's funding priorities. These priority areas are:

- Public Health – including domestic violence, abuse or neglect, substance use, emergency preparedness/response, adverse childhood experiences, and mental health;
- Workforce development – combining service with skill development or certifications that lead to post-service employment
- Housing – affordable and safe housing; home energy conservation, weatherization, or repair including programs that perform the modifications, teach homeowners DIY skills, or help residents connect with programs that offer financial assistance to accomplish the projects and,
- Environmental/community resilience, adaptation, and sustainability including emergency preparedness.

In addition, Volunteer Maine will give preference points to applications

- From organizations with a physical presence in, and intending to serve, counties classified as 6, 7, or 8 on the USDA rural-urban continuum code. Those counties are Franklin, Hancock, Oxford, Somerset, Waldo, Aroostook, Knox, Washington, Lincoln, and Piscataquis.

This document contains

a. An introduction to AmeriCorps and its service culture;
b. Guidance on designing an AmeriCorps program;
c. Instructions for submitting applications; and
d. The procedure and criteria by which the awarded Applicant(s) will be selected, and the federal grant terms and conditions which will govern program implementation.

III. PROGRAM INFORMATION

AmeriCorps' Three Programs: Check that this grant is the one you want.

AmeriCorps is a national service program with three distinct branches:
- AmeriCorps State and National (team-based programs),
- AmeriCorps VISTA, and
- the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC).

The following chart shows a comparison of program traits. AmeriCorps VISTA and National Civilian Community Corps proposals are submitted directly to the federal agency. AmeriCorps National programs are multi-state or national nonprofit organizations that also submit proposals directly to AmeriCorps.

Instructions in this document are for AmeriCorps State, meaning the proposal would operate a program only in Maine; funding decisions will be made by the Commission; and the Commission will be responsible for issuing the grant cooperative agreement as well as compliance oversight.

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) multiple AmeriCorps positions (a team) needed to achieve performance measure targets 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 some 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 to carry out program direct service activities.	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 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. There is no upper age limit.	X		
Members generally need some college or a degree		X	

Comparison of AmeriCorps program types and grants (examples; not complete)	AmeriCorps State/Nat'l	AmeriCorps VISTA	AmeriCorps NCCC
Members who are 55 years of age or older at the start of service and successfully complete their service may transfer the use of the Education Award to a child, grandchild, or foster child.	X		

AmeriCorps State Program Overview

The AmeriCorps State program 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 resources to carry out the program.

The service activities target high priority, critical needs in specific communities with the goal of measurably improving/changing the situation. (The federal agency refers to the service activities as "the intervention.") AmeriCorps also builds the capacity of the community to meet its own needs and be more resilient. It does so by engaging citizens as volunteers who serve alongside the AmeriCorps members.

The third goal of AmeriCorps is to develop the skills, knowledge, and abilities of those who serve. The development focuses not only on the service work but also community and civic engagement, enabling these individuals to lead community initiatives after their year of service.

Organizations that operate Rural State AmeriCorps programs identify solutions proven to impact the need they intend to address. They design how a team of members will implement the program as they serve full-time for one year or during a season. The activities must require at least 3,400 hours of service and no more than 8,600 hours each year. The team of AmeriCorps members will be no fewer than 2 people serving 1700 hour terms or one Member Service year each. A Member Service Year (MSY) is to the AmeriCorps world what a Fulltime Equivalent (FTE) is to the employment world. MSYs can be divided into multiple positions.

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 federal benefits, including the education award. They help members acquire skills, training, education, certifications, and experience which they can carry into the workforce and future service to their communities.

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

One way to discern direct from indirect 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 into schools 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.

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 research-based approach to engaging skilled volunteers and increasing organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

Thus, Maine 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.

Organizations that receive AmeriCorps grants are responsible for recruiting AmeriCorps members to serve in their program. Programs are required to develop separate role descriptions for each service position category in their program design (e.g., tutor, health educator, coach) so applicants understand what their duties will be, what is expected of them, and what training as well as supervision they will receive. Programs are responsible for providing training that leads to skills and knowledge that increase their employability.

The federal agency has created a central recruiting site for AmeriCorps (see https://americorps.gov/join). Funded grantees are able to establish accounts and receive applications from potential members directly through this portal *after* awards are final.

There is also a nationwide site, ServiceYear.org, that specializes in connecting young adults with extended (full year or half) service opportunities. Maine AmeriCorps programs have had success there as well as on Idealist.org, Craigslist, and job sites that permit volunteer listings.

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.

Internal Planning*.* A critical element to success in AmeriCorps is planning how the additional human resources (members serving) will be integrated into agency operations through recruitment, selection, orientation, supervision, responsibilities, training, daily schedule and tasks, who they will need access to and when, performance evaluation, etc. A solid plan that is ready for implementation has involved all critical internal agency partners in the preparations. Risk management is apprised of the tasks and confirms AmeriCorps members will be covered by insurance. Financial staff understand the regulations around living allowances, reimbursements, policies, and procedures related to AmeriCorps. Senior leadership agrees to commit the local resources necessary and to educate agency constituents and public about the program.

Because part of their assignment will be engaging community members as volunteers to assist with the program, the organization also needs to have a clear assessment of internal support and systems that will permit volunteers to contribute. This assessment also reveals the program operating elements an applicant needs to implement during AmeriCorps start-up. 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 F (page 64).

Examples of the essential volunteer program practices that are required by 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.

Determining the AmeriCorps team size

There are six options for AmeriCorps members' terms of service. These terms of service must be completed within 12 months. The duration (number of weeks at 37-40 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 seasonal service such as weather-dependent 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	MSY Value	1 MSY converts to no more than...	MSY equivalent	# of weeks to complete term if serving 40 hrs/wk
Full-time	1,700	1.00	--------------	--------------	42.5 weeks
Three Quarter time	1,200	0.70	No conversion	0.7 MSY	30.0 weeks
Half-Time	900	0.50	2 slots	0.5 MSY	22.5 weeks
Reduced Half-Time	675	0.381	2 slots	0.381 MSY	17 weeks
Quarter-Time	450	0.265	3 slots	0.265 MSY	11.25 weeks
Minimum-Time	300	0.212	4 slots	0.212 MSY	7.25 weeks

Additional Program Elements

◆ 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.

◆ Grantees must design training, coaching, and educational opportunities that help AmeriCorps members develop an ethic of service, civic leadership skills, and technical skills including certifications that will be valuable for future employment. 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. Training that qualifies as a pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship is encouraged when appropriate.

◆ 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:
   o any portion of the match for AmeriCorps member living allowances or benefits;
   o the sponsor's general operating expenses or an endowment;
   o any facet of preparing grant application for funding by AmeriCorps or any other federal agency

◆ Members are prohibited by law from doing a specific set of activities. See page 8 for the list and how it extends to any official service activity with community volunteers.

- Programs are required to recruit and support community volunteers as an integral part of the program. Note there is a clear prohibition against AmeriCorps members displacing any unpaid volunteers.[1] Programs may recruit and enroll AmeriCorps members from their current volunteers.

- All fixed amount grantees must conduct National Service Criminal History Record Checks (NSCHCs) on any person receiving a living allowance, stipend, or national service education award, regardless of their level of contact with a vulnerable population*. See Criminal History Record Check requirements on page 29.

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

  An individual is <u>not eligible</u> to work or serve in a position subject to the NSCHC requirements if:
  o the individual refuses to consent to a criminal history check;
  o makes a false statement in connection with a criminal history check;
  o is registered, or is required to be registered, on a state sex offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry; or
  o has been convicted of murder.

- Programs are expected to fill (enroll) all the member slots awarded in the grant. Under-enrolled Full-cost Fixed amount grantees do not receive their entire award. Enrollment rates have a direct bearing on the number of slots and the size of awards approved in continuation (budget years 2 and 3) as well as in recompetition.

- The project start date is September 1 – August 31. 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 period.

- Programs are expected to pursue very high retention rates. These will have a direct bearing on the number of slots and the size of awards approved in the continuation and recompete processes. Successful applicants that do not retain their members are likely to receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years. They will also be required to submit an explanation and corrective action plan with continuation or recompete applications.

- 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 match share of the AmeriCorps program costs.

- *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 2 CFR §200.300, shall not count towards satisfying a cost sharing or matching requirement unless they are expressly permitted in the terms of the grant award.

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[1] See 45 CFR 2520.35 for waiver information related to this requirement.

- 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 experience" portion of the narrative.

  o There are very specific AmeriCorps Rules related to tutoring programs. See 45 CFR §2522.900-2522.950

- Programs must report on three sets of aligned performance measures:

  o Program service activities (outputs and outcomes) are selected from the National Performance Measures and entered in eGrants. Programs whose service activities are not covered by the National Performance Measures may propose self-determined measures.

  o Member Development and Capacity Building performance measures (outputs and outcomes) are **prescribed by the Commission**. They appear on page 33.

- Operating Grants with annual AmeriCorps funding of $500,000 or more are required to arrange for an independent external program impact evaluation. Grantees with lesser amounts must perform a program evaluation but may use internal resources. Appropriate budgeting for evaluation expense is an expectation.

Member Recruitment, Selection, and Accommodation

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

The federal agency has created a central recruiting site for AmeriCorps (see https://my.americorps.gov/mp/listing/publicRequestSearch.do). Grantees are able to establish accounts and receive applications from potential members directly through this portal *after* awards are final.

Maine AmeriCorps programs also have had success on MANP's job board that permits volunteer listings (https://www.nonprofitmaine.org/).

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 of age at the commencement of service unless the member is out of school and participating in a program described in § 2522.110(b)(3) or (g), or

- 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 USC §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
- ◆ does not appear on the National Sex Offender Public Registry Website (NSOPW)

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, 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 AmeriCorps. In fact, its commitment to including people with disabilities in service has been expressed in providing programs with additional positions and funding during second and third years of grants. In addition, 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 qualified members, service recipients, 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 separate from the grant award, available through state commissions to provide accommodations for members serving in an AmeriCorps program.

Participation of Individuals Receiving Supplemental Security Income. On June 17, 2008, H.R. 6081: 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, childcare, and the education award (and related interest payments). This brings all AmeriCorps members under one treatment of benefits rule for SSI. Note the law does not change how AmeriCorps benefits could impact SSDI. The exclusion of AmeriCorps benefits took effect for benefits payable after August 16, 2008.

Member Benefits.

Member Living Allowance. Only AmeriCorps members whose service assignments require an intense concentration of time (i.e., 37-40 hours) 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 serving the same types of service terms (minimum hours and position description) 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.

Grantees must offer a living allowance for members serving full-time. It cannot be any less than $23,460 for 1700 hr terms and the maximum is $37,400 per 1700 hr term of service. For positions requiring less than 1700 hours, the full living allowance is pro-rated.

Terms of Service, MSY Value and Conversion Equivalents, Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance Rates, Education Award Amounts

SERVICE TERM	SERVICE TERM MINIMUM HOURS	MSY VALUE	1 MSY CONVERTS TO NO MORE THAN	IF SERVE 40HR/WK, WEEKS TO COMPLETE	EDUCATION AWARD	MINIMUM LIVING ALLOWANCE FOR 37+HRS/WK	MAXIMUM LIVING ALLOWANCE
Full-time	1700	1.00	------	52	$7,395	$23,460	$37,400
Three Quarter - time	1200	0.70	No conversion	30	$5,176.50	$16,422	$26,180
Half-time	900	0.50	2 slots	22.5	$3,697.50	$11,730	$18,700
Reduced half-time	675	0.381	2 slots	17	$2,817.14	$8,938.26	$14,212
Quarter-time	450	0.265	3 slots	11.25	$1,956.35	$6,216.90	$9,724
Minimum-time	300	0.212	4 slots	7.5	$1,565.08	$4,973.52	$7,854

Housing. Housing is not a required benefit but programs are strongly encouraged to develop options 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.

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 2024-2025 education award is $ 7,395 for the 1700 hour service year. An individual may enroll to serve again at your program or change locations. 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 programs; or (3) the costs of repaying qualified student loans.

Members who are age 55 or older when they begin service may opt to transfer their education award to a child, grandchild, or foster child. In such cases, the education award is available to the person receiving it 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:
https://americorps.gov/members-volunteers/segal-americorps-education-award/find-out-more.

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 childcare 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.

AmeriCorps will not cover childcare costs for members serving less than 40 hr/wk.

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 health insurance compliant with Minimum Essential Coverage 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. It is not permissible to increase reimbursement amounts to cover the tax.

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.

B. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. From the time this Request for Applications (RFA) is issued until award notification is made, <u>all</u> contact with the State regarding this RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified on the cover page of this RFA. No other person/State employee is empowered to make binding statements regarding this RFA. Violation of this provision may lead to disqualification from the application process, at the State's discretion.

2. Issuance of the RFA does not commit Volunteer Maine to issue an award or to pay expenses incurred by an Applicant in the preparation of a response to the RFA. This includes attendance at personal interviews or other meetings, where applicable.

3. All applications must adhere to the instructions and format requirements outlined in the RFA and all written supplements and amendments (such as the Summary of Questions and Answers), issued by the Commission. Applications are to follow the format and respond to all questions and instructions specified in Part V of the RFA.

4. Applicants will take careful note that in evaluating an application submitted in response to this RFA, the Commission will consider materials provided in the application, information obtained through interviews, and internal Commission information about previous grant history with the Applicant (if any). Volunteer Maine also reserves the right to consider other reliable references and publicly available information in evaluating the Applicant's experience and capabilities.

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

6. The application must be digitally signed by a person authorized under organizational policy to submit proposals for project funding.

7. The RFA and the awarded Applicant's proposal, including all appendices or attachments, will be the basis for the final grant award, as determined by the Commission.

8. Following announcement of an award decision, all submissions in response to this RFA will be 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.

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

10. The Department, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to recognize and waive minor informalities and irregularities found in applications received in response to the RFA.

All applicable laws, whether or not herein contained, shall be included by this reference. It shall be the Applicant's responsibility to determine the applicability and requirements of any such laws and to abide by them.

C. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

I. ORGANIZATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Applicants must operate an AmeriCorps program only in Maine. Eligible types of organizations are 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.

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 were not fiscally responsible for the program _are eligible._

Eligible organizations that are primarily female or minority managed or led, and agencies within or primarily recruiting from designated labor surplus areas are encouraged to apply.

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, if AmeriCorps is aware that 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.[2] A similar restriction may be enacted with the appropriation which will fund awards under this RFA/Notice.

Special Note about proposals submitted to both AmeriCorps National and AmeriCorps State competitions. Volunteer Maine will not entertain proposals for the same project if an applicant submits to both the AmeriCorps National and AmeriCorps State competition since both competitions occur simultaneously and a project may not be funded from both sources for concurrent operation. See page 10 for "same project" definition criteria.

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[2] 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.

I. NUMBER OF AWARDS, SIZE, AND GRANT TYPES

NUMBER OF AWARDS AND SIZE.

Volunteer Maine intends to fund 2 to 4 proposals through this competition but retains the right to fund none if the quality of proposals does not merit support.

The grant amount is determined using the maximum cost per member ($27,000) multiplied by the number of AmeriCorps Member Service Years (MSYs) requested. Grants may range from $54,000 to
$135,000. The Commission will issue either full or partial awards at its discretion.

GRANT TYPES

Awards in this competition are Fixed Amount Grants. The AmeriCorps proposal can incorporate any term of service needed by the program design. The applicant may request up to $27,000 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 are reimbursed based on AmeriCorps member enrollment 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.

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. Decisions on all grant awards are not final until the federal agency formally awards AmeriCorps funds to Volunteer Maine. Programs are expected to begin soon after.

IV. AMERICORPS STATE GRANTS AWARD TWO KINDS OF RESOURCES

AmeriCorps grants award member positions (also called slots) and funds to support AmeriCorps members filling these slots during their service terms.

In other words, AmeriCorps grants partially cover the expenses 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.

V. 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 $27,000.

The size of a grant request is easily determined by multiplying the number of MSY by the maximum cost-per-member: ___ MSY X $27,000 = _____

VI. APPEAL OF GRANT DECISIONS

Any person aggrieved by Volunteer Maine'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: https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-120). The appeal must be in writing and filed with the Director of the Bureau of General Services, 77 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333-0009 within 15 calendar days of receipt of notification of contract award.

VII. FEDERAL REFERENCE MATERIALS

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

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.

The National Performance Measures. A text document version of the information can be downloaded using this link: https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/FY%202024%20ASN%20Performance%20Measures%20FINAL.508.pdf

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.

Key to Selected Program Elements in the AmeriCorps Regulations[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

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[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.

Requirements and Selection	Citation in the AmeriCorps Regulations
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

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/2024ASNProgram508TC.pdf

General Terms and Conditions Link: https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/FY2024-General-Terms-Conditions-508-20230919.pdf

Issues with financial implications are listed below; however, this list is not exhaustive and applicants should review the regulations, provisions and policies directly.

- 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. Note that members are exempt from state unemployment coverage and not eligible for benefits at the end of service.

- Workers' Compensation is an allowable cost to the grant. Maine law does not require provision of workers' compensation for members although it is encouraged if the applicant's carrier offers the option. If a program opts not to provide workers' 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 funding 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 ends 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 Corporation 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**.** The Corporation 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.

PART II. ACTIVITIES AND REQUIREMENTS

A. FEDERAL GRANT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

I. 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.

II. 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.*

III. 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[4] 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; 45 CFR § 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.

IV. RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF AMERICORPS FUNDS (45 CFR §2540)

The following section may be useful to organizations hoping AmeriCorps can assist with local challenges:

(a) *Supplantation.* Corporation 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 Corporation 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.* Corporation assistance may not be used to provide religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any form of proselytization.

(c) *Political activity.* Corporation 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.* Corporation assistance may not be used to impair existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements.

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[4] 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.

(e) *Nonduplication.* Corporation 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, Corporation 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 Corporation assistance.

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

V. LABOR UNION CONCURRENCE

Applicants must obtain a statement of concurrence and submit it with the proposal if either of the following are true:

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.

VI. 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). The most common reporting mechanisms are fiscal reports, quarterly progress reports, income 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.

Also, if selected you must compile data on civil rights compliance, as detailed in the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions that are part of your grant award.

Selected applicants will develop a data collection plan after the grant award is made. The grantee will test it over the first year, refine it, and submit it with the Year 2 Continuation application.

In addition, the program must cooperate with state or national program evaluation studies the funders may undertake.

VII. DATA COLLECTION TRAINING FOR SITES AND MEMBERS

Program models that propose to locate members in partner host organizations to perform service should orient and train both host supervisors and members on the program's objectives, performance measures, continuous quality improvement system, and evaluation plan. Experience shows that most data is collected at the host sites as part of the service activities. Therefore, the most critical players in a program's data collection need to have a thorough understanding of what information is needed, the format, the source, who needs to provide it, the frequency, and the methods by which it will be collected at the program level. These elements should be included in the required host site agreements.

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, 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 observed changes (positive or negative) in communities, members, or end beneficiaries receiving your program's 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 (intermediate outcomes).

All applicants will submit one set of aligned Service Activity (primary intervention) performance measures in the proposal. All funded programs will also be required to track and monitor one performance measure in the following categories: Member Development and Capacity Building.

Service Activity options are in the National Performance Measure Instructions (https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/FY%202024%20ASN%20Performance%20Measures%20FINAL.508.pdf). The Service Activity performance measures (output and outcome) must tie to the primary intervention of the program. A second performance measure can be submitted if it reflects an equally significant activity in the program. Do not select performance measures for every activity or impact.

State Performance Measures:

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 those contributed to program or host site services by those volunteers are now reported in data fields. 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 should control for double counting.

National service participants may not recruit volunteers to do activities that they themselves are prohibited from doing, including but not limited to managing the AmeriCorps-supported projects/grants or community organizing intended to promote advocacy activities.

Note: **All** performance measures must be consistent with 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 must be outlined in the application logic model and performance measurement fields. Instructions for completing the application's performance measure section can be found in Attachment D, page 53.

PART III. KEY PROCESS EVENTS

A. INFORMATION SESSION

A virtual information session will take place for interested applicants. Details and the registration link are on the cover of this RFA. The purpose of the Informational Session is to answer and/or field questions, clarify for Applicants any aspect of the RFA that may be necessary, and provide supplemental information to assist potential Applicants in submitting responses to the RFA. Although attendance at the Informational Session is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged that interested Applicants attend.

B. QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFA

I. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

It is the responsibility of all Applicants and other interested parties to examine the entire RFA and to seek clarification, in writing, if they do not understand any information or instructions.

  a. Applicants and other interested parties should use **Appendix A** (Submitted Questions Form) for submission of questions. The form is to be submitted as a WORD document.
  b. Questions must be submitted, by e-mail, and received by the RFA Coordinator identified on the cover page of the RFA as soon as possible but no later than the date and time specified on the RFA cover page.
  c. Submitted Questions must include the RFA Number and Title in the subject line of the e-mail. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on time e-mail transmission and receipt.

II. QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY

Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the State's Division of Procurement Services Grant RFPs and RFAs website.
https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants

It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain a copy of the Question & Answer Summary. Only those answers issued in writing on this website will be considered binding.

C. SUBMISSION DEADLINE, INSTRUCTIONS, AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

I. SUBMISSION DEADLINE

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. Receipt time will be established by the date/time stamp electronically recorded at the time of submission. <u>Proposals received after the 11:59 p.m. deadline will be rejected without exception.</u>

II. DELIVERY INSTRUCTIONS AND CONTENT

Complete means the proposal is submitted in eGrants <u>https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp</u> **and** all required additional documents listed below are submitted by **email** to the email address provided on the RFA Cover Page (Proposals@maine.gov).

    a. <u>Only proposals received through eGrants and email will be considered.</u> The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete e-mail transmission and receipt. 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.

        i. Application submission emails that are successfully received by the <u>Proposals@maine.gov</u> inbox will receive an automatic reply confirming receipt.

    b. <u>E-mails containing links to file sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions.</u> Only e-mail application submissions that have the requested files attached will be accepted.

    c. <u>Encrypted e-mails received which require opening attachments and logging into a proprietary system will not be accepted as submissions.</u> It is the Applicant's responsibility to check with its organization's information technology team to ensure that security settings will not encrypt its application submission.

    d. File size limits are 25MB per e-mail. Applicants may submit files across multiple e-mails, as necessary, due to file size concerns. All e-mails and files must be received by the due date and time as described above.

    e. Applicants are to insert the following into the subject line of their email submission: "**RFA# 202502026 Proposal Submission**"

    f. Applicant document 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*
       Proposal Cover Page SF424 (only) printed out from eGrants
       Table of Contents
       Organizational Chart showing the relationship of the program staff and AmeriCorps members to the rest of the organization
       AmeriCorps Readiness Survey & Program Start-up Plan -- (Attachment F, page 64)
       Labor Union Concurrence (If applicable. <u>If not applicable, please include an explanation statement in order to avoid the appearance of omitting this consideration.</u>)

- **File #2 Application ID# (from eGrants)** *PDF format preferred*
  Audit *PLUS* Management Letters and all findings
  Organization's most recently filed Form 990 (if applicable)
  Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (if applicable)
  Federal Financial Management Systems Survey (Attachment E, page 61)
  Explanation if delinquent on Federal Debt (if applicable)

PART IV. APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SELECTION

A. EVALUATION

I. PROCESS AND CRITERIA

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 procurement rules.

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

Phase One. Peer Review of application narrative, budget, and performance measure components using federally required scoring system. Reviewers are community service practitioners and individuals with relevant expertise. They 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 be excluded from Phase Two consideration.

Phase Two: Applications recommended for some level of review will undergo further evaluation 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 interview will be conducted through remote technology and recorded. Task Force members will review the recording during their assessment.

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)
- 10 points   Financial Plan
- 15 points   Fiscal Systems
- 10 points   Past Performance
- 15 points   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.

B. SELECTION

The Grant Selection and Performance Task Force will then formulate 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 next 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 funding of any proposals.

The Commission will vote on funding the applications recommended at the regular May 2025 business meeting. Following adjournment, the Commission will notify applicants, in writing, of conditional award or non-selection.

The proposals selected for grant awards will be required to execute a Cooperative Grant Agreement after the federal AmeriCorps agency reviews funding decisions and State of Maine Procurement reviews the selection process and authorizes the final award. Any changes or clarifications required by the Commission as part of its vote will be resolved before the grant agreement is issued for signatures. The Commission Grant Officer and Training Officer will work with applicants on these resolutions.

Grant Agreements are not considered fully executed and valid until approved by the State Procurement Review Committee and funds are encumbered. No grant will be approved based on an RFA which has an effective date less than fourteen (14) calendar days after award notification to Applicants. (Referenced in the regulations of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Chapter 110, § 3(B)(i)). This provision means that a grant cannot be final until at least 14 calendar days after award notification.

PART V. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

A. EGRANTS APPLICATION SYSTEM

Both Volunteer Maine and AmeriCorps 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.

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.

I. 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 (EIN). Registration does not have a cost and can be done through https://usfcr.com/sam-registration/We strongly urge registering at least 30 days before the application due date.

The applicant's Grant Administrator (the first individual who creates the agency's eGrants account) must enter the EIN and UEI during this process. Then, when an application record is opened, both identifiers will populate automatically.

II. 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. Applicants **must use** their SAM-registered legal name and address on all grant AmeriCorps applications. Characters, abbreviations, and capitalization must match SAM exactly because the SAM database information will be compared to the AmeriCorps database.

Beginning with slide 6, this presentation by AmeriCorps.gov explains how to manage the organization account and user permissions: https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/2021_04_21_Create_and_Manage_an_eGrants_Account_ASN.pdf

To set up a new account, an authorized person:
1. Goes to https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp

2. Finds the gray text (middle of page) "Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account"
3. On the next screen, selects "Create a Grantee account" and follow the prompts.
4. Information you will need to complete registration includes your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) and UEI number.

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 hierarchy, applicants should review their agency policies and internal controls to determine who should initiate set up.

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 <u>their own</u> eGrants account.

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" if you are applying for the first time, were a Maine Rural State grantee anytime in the last 5 years. or were an AmeriCorps Planning Grant recipient anytime in the last 5 years.
    - "Continuation/Renewal" if you have operated a Standard AmeriCorps program anytime in the last 5 years.
  - Under "Select a NOFA." select AmeriCorps from the drop-down menu. A list will appear.
  - Select a NOFA. This competition is FY 2024 AmeriCorps State and Territory <u>Commission Fixed and</u> EAP (New and Cont). IGNORE the due date. The federal agency does not edit the date text for state competitions.
  - 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 fill out the Applicant Info and Application Info sections.

B. APPLICATION CONTENTS (EGRANTS AND ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS)

Your application consists of information submitted through the eGrants system <u>AND</u> additional documents that must be submitted electronically (email) to the Maine Division of Procurement Services by the submission deadline. See page 35 for submission instructions.

I. EGRANTS PARTS OF APPLICATION (ITEMS A-J)

Information entered in the Applicant Info, Application Info, and Budget sections will populate the SF424 Facesheet.

A. Applicant Info

- New applicants enter the requested information in the fields that appear. Renewal applicants should review and update information that is auto-entered from the last proposal submitted. The contact person needs to be the person who can answer questions about the application.

- The <u>project/program name must include "AmeriCorps"</u> and be suitable for use as the "brand" for the program in community outreach.

B. 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. Start dates are generally September 1 and may not be earlier than August 15.
- 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.

C. Narratives
D. Logic Model
E. Performance Measures
F. Program Information
G. Documents (list of additional documents submitted)
H. Budget Narrative (Budget Summary form is automatically created by eGrants from budget narrative)
I. Funding/Demographics
J. Review, Authorize, Submit

II. 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
- **Be clear and succinct. Answer the questions – don't waste space.** Reviewers 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.
- **Don't make assumptions.** 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 the project read the selection criteria and critique the narrative.
- **Follow the instructions and discuss each criterion in the order they are presented in the instructions.** Use headings to differentiate narrative sections according to the criteria.
- **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 text into eGrants. Finally, print out the eGrants narrative to ensure all text made it into the system and the page limit was not exceeded. The text in eGrants will print as if it is double spaced.

- **Enter proposal components into eGrants at least one week before the submission deadline.** Applicants are strongly urged to start entering narrative and budget into the eGrant system very early.

Application Page Limitations
- **Applications are limited to 10 pages.** Sections included in this page count are SF424 Facesheet, the Executive Summary, Program Design, Organizational Capacity, and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy sections **as the pages print out from eGrants.** To check the length, go to Review menu and use "View/Print" option.
- Reviewers will only read the 10 pages as they print out from eGrants. Any excess pages beyond 10 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 even if your paragraph style is set to double space, the page lengths are not comparable. Volunteer Maine will not consider the results of any alternate printing methods in determining whether an application complies with the page limits.
- This page limit **does not include** the Logic Model, Budget, Performance Measures, nor <u>required</u> additional documents. Do not submit items not required, they will not be considered or returned.
- The Logic Model has its own specific 8-page limit. Print using the menu option under Review.

In eGrants, each of the narrative sections is a 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 Evaluation Summary and Plan, Clarification Summary, Amendment Justification, and Continuation Changes. These are *not* required fields.

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)

Fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary. <u>Do *not* deviate from the template below</u>.

> *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.] The AmeriCorps investment of $[amount of request] will leverage** $[amount of projected grantee share] comprised of $[total amount of local, state, and federal funds] in public funding and $[total amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.*

*The focus areas are the federal categories of permitted activity listed on page 6.

** The funds leveraged should match the information in the Source of Funds section of the budget.

The federal agency will post all Executive Summaries of awarded grant applications on www.AmeriCorps.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/points)

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below. Therefore, note the criteria and literally respond to it. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

1. The Community and the Need (8 points).
- Describe how the community or communities where the service will occur satisfy the criteria of "rural."
- Describe the need the AmeriCorps program will address, including the role current or historical inequities faced by underserved communities may play in contributing to the problem
- Demonstrate that it is prevalent and severe in the communities that would benefit. Use relevant local data in the description. It may be helpful to consult one of the databases listed at https://volunteermaine.gov/grants/prep-notes .
  Note: "community" can be a geographic region, a specific population among residents, or a combination of the two.
- Describe how people impacted by the need were engaged in identifying it as the priority to address.
- Describe the services, organizations, or planning efforts already working to address this need.
- Describe roles of key partners (e.g., trainers, sources of client/customer referrals, sources of materials)
- Describe the roles community volunteers will have in program services and what actions AmeriCorps members will take to engage and support them.

2. Logic Model (8 points)
The Logic Model is a visual representation of the program's operation and impact. It is entered as a chart (see format in Attachment C page 52) and may not be longer than eight pages.

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."

If a proposed program has more than one intervention, create a new row in the Logic Model section of eGrants for each one. For example, if all people served receive an energy assessment but then, some receive installation of energy conservation measures while others receive help navigating and applying for energy assistance programs, this example would likely have 3 rows in the logic model.

You may add rows to the logic model by clicking "add a new row." You may edit or delete an existing row by clicking "edit" or "delete" in the last column of the logic model.

Programs should include short, medium or long-term outcomes in the logic model. Applicants are not required to measure every component of the program. Instead, they should plan to measure the core program activities that have the greatest impact on the degree of change. Note the federal AmeriCorps agency uses medical-style language for the Logic Model. The "intervention" is what AmeriCorps members do (services or actions) to address the need.

In the Logic Model section of eGrants, enter a *brief* summary of the need/problem and then outline

- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:
  - o Locations or sites where members will provide services (e.g., towns, names of health center or community agencies)
  - o Context in which the intervention is delivered (e.g., the setting where the service occurs – classroom, after-school program, customer homes, public parks or lakes)
  - o Number of AmeriCorps members who will deliver the intervention
  - o Characteristics of AmeriCorps members, including specific knowledge, skills, and abilities required to implement the intervention
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
  - o Duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months the intervention lasts – is it an 8-week exercise program? a 3-visit energy assessment? Etc.)
  - o Dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
  - o Target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level, homeowners eligible for LIHEAP, people in recovery)
- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e., number of beneficiaries served, types and number of activities conducted, equity gaps closed). Include the alpha-numeric reference for the National Performance Output Measure the program will use.
- Outcomes that demonstrate meaningful changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. Include the alpha-numeric reference for the National Performance Outcome Measure the program will use.

3. Evidence of Effectiveness (8 points)

In narrative field describe:

- How the applicant's AmeriCorps members add significantly to any existing community efforts to address the stated problem
- Evidence the program model and intervention are proven by evaluation or research to be highly effective for this particular need/issue. 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).
- Why, in this community, the intervention is the best response and most likely to lead to the outcomes identified including any prior activity that set the stage for this program's efforts

.

4. Funding Priority and Preferences (3 points)

Describe how the proposed program:

- Fits within one or more of the funding priorities listed on page 13.
- Meets all requirements of one or more of Commission funding preferences listed on page 13.

5. Member Training (6 points) Describe how:

- AmeriCorps members training will teach them 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 8).

- 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 (6 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 (6 points) Describe:
- The program will recruit AmeriCorps members who reflect the community served and represent a varied set of backgrounds, talents, and capabilities.
- The program will create a safe environment.
- 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 (5 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 identify it as AmeriCorps. Note: The 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.

C. Organizational Capability (25 percent)

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

1. Organizational Background and Staffing (25 percent)
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 organization's experience serving the communities proposed to benefit from the program.
- The organization's actions that ensure beneficiaries participate in operations and decisions.
- The organization maintains a supportive and safe environment Describe what preparation has been done with agency leadership, board, staff, partners, and stakeholders to gain support. 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.
- The organization's experience in operating a federally funded program serving community residents. Describe the duration, purpose, funder, targets achieved, and how the work was carried out (employees, volunteers, contractors, payments to vendors, etc.).
- Whether the organization has organized, partnered, or conducted any educational or training programs that sought to prepare participants for employment.

- The names and credentials/qualifications of staff who will lead, provide oversight, manage finances, and monitor the program. On the organizational chart submitted with the application, show the individuals by name. If individuals are not known, outline the qualifications the organization will use to select staff for these roles.
- 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 supervisor(s).

D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent) [Fixed amount grants do not require a detailed budget]

Reviewers will assess the quality of the application's budget using the following responses.

1. Member Recruitment (5 percent)
Provide a description of budget expenses to support successful recruitment of AmeriCorps members best suited to serve the community, for example from geographic or demographic communities in which the program operates.

2. Member Retention (5 percent)
Describe the budget expenses that will be used to support retention of AmeriCorps members. Examples include a higher-than-minimum living allowance, housing support, certifications useful for future employment, member recognition, intensive training or skill development, actions to develop cohesion and connections in the corps, opportunities for networking with future employers, cultural connections to the community served, and leadership opportunities.

3. Data Collection (5 percent)
Provide a description of budgeted expenses that will be used to support data collection, continuous improvement activities, and evaluation of the program, its impact on the community, and impact on the member experience.

4. Source of Funds Adequacy (5 percent) secured or anticipated; describe whether the funds are restricted to a particular section of the budget

5. Budget Alignment to Program Design (5 percent)

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 in the narrative.
- The Source of Funds screen indicates the specific source and amount of each non-AmeriCorps financial resource, type of funds (in-kind and/or cash), and if the commitments are proposed or secured. For any proposed sources of funds, indicate how they will be secured and any conditions that need to be met before the contributor provides them.

E. Evaluation Summary or Plan
Enter N/A.

F. Amendment Justification
Enter N/A. This field is used if you are awarded a grant and need to amend it.

G. Clarification Information

Enter N/A. This field is used to enter information that requires clarification in the post-review period.

H. Continuation Changes

Enter N/A. This field is used to enter changes in application narratives in continuation requests.

III. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

All applicants must submit performance measures with their application. See Attachment D, page 53, for instructions for entering performance measures.

Applicants must check the relevant boxes in the Performance Measure tab in eGrants in order to be considered for AmeriCorps' assessment of the any strategic considerations or special initiatives.

For guidance and instructions on required service activity, member development, and capacity building performance measures, see page 33 of this document.

IV. PROGRAM INFORMATION

In the Program Information Section, applicants should only check the characteristics that represent a *significant* part of the program. There are no points for selecting traits the program doesn't have.

AmeriCorps Funding Priorities
Check "No NOFO priority area". This state competition is not limited to the areas listed.

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

V. DOCUMENTS

See page 35 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 you are required to provide in digital format are part of the pre-filled list, change their status in eGrants from the default "Not Sent" to "Sent" or to "Not Applicable."

For documents that are not part of the standard list, select "Enter New," name the new document (e.g., "AmeriCorps Readiness Assessment") and enter status "Sent."

VI. FUNDING AND DEMOGRAPHICS

In the Funding/Demographics Section enter the information requested which includes:

- Other Revenue funds. Enter the amount of non-AmeriCorps funds used to operate the program. All fixed grants will have other revenue. The amount entered in this field should be equal 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.
- Number of Volunteers Generated by AmeriCorps members. Enter the number of volunteers recruited or managed by AmeriCorps members for single event service projects or ongoing volunteer commitments at the service site(s).

VII. OPERATING SITES

This eGrants field is not applicable. It is used by applicants operating in more than one state. **_Do not complete this section._**

C. BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS: FIXED-AMOUNT GRANTS

I. SOURCE OF FUNDS

Select the "**Enter Source of Funds**" link at the top of the budget entry screen. Identify all the source(s) and amount(s) of the non-AmeriCorps revenue you will use to operate the program. Identify each source separately, indicate if it is secured or proposed, enter dollar amount, the classification (cash or in-kind), and the source type (Private, State/Local, or Federal).

II. BUDGET SECTION 2: FIXED-AMOUNT GRANTS

Fixed Amount Grant applicants request a fixed amount of funding per MSY. Do not complete the "Grantee Share" column.

Please note these grants are paid as reimbursements and calculated using the number of hours members served during the period invoiced by the program. The final amount that a grantee receives will be adjusted to reflect actual hours served if a member does not serve the minimum hours for a term of service (i.e., leaves early).

The instructions for this section are written to make the eGrants system calculate the correct total funds requested. Because the award is based on the number of MSYs, it has to be forced to use the "without allowance line." The request for living allowance on a different line permits the applicant to show the proposal complies with the minimum and may be offering more.

1. Identify the number of members you are requesting by category (i.e. full-time, three quarter-time, half-time, reduced half-time, quarter-time, minimum-time) and list under the column labeled "#Mbrs w/o Allow" (without AmeriCorps-funded living allowance.)
2. In the **Allowance Rate** field, enter the average amount of the living allowance for each type of member. Enter zero in the column labeled "#Mbrs w/ Allow". **Leave all other columns blank**. See screenshot below:

The total number of member service years (MSY) will **automatically calculate** at the bottom of the Member Positions chart. Use this chart to determine the total MSY:

Member Positions	Calculation	MSY
_____ Full-time (1700 hours)	(_____ members x 1.000)	= _____
_____ Three quarter-time (1200 hours)	(_____ members x 0.70000000)	= _____
_____ Half-time (900 hours)	(_____ members x 0.500)	= _____
_____ Reduced half-time (675 hours)	(_____ members x 0.3809524)	= _____
_____ Quarter-time (450 hours)	(_____ members x 0.26455027)	= _____
_____ Minimum-time (300 hours)	(_____ members x 0.21164022)	= _____
	Total MSY	= _____

Fixed amount grants may request *up to* $27,000 per MSY. Using the "Total MSY" figure, enter a calculation to explain the total amount of funds requested. A mock eGrants budget entry screen follows. 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	10 MSY X $27,000/MSY	$ 270,000	$ 270,000	$0	view	
Subtotal		$ 270,000	$ 270,000	$0		

After the Source of Funds and Budget Narrative section are saved, the Budget Form (a summary by category) will generate automatically in the eGrants system. No further action is required.

NOTES: 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.

All applicants should expect to cover costs for staff and site staff to attend Commission and AmeriCorps-sponsored events/meetings. These include the Annual Grantee Training (central Maine), the Maine Volunteer Leadership Conference, AmeriCorps Induction Ceremony, National Service Day at the Capitol (late winter), and quarterly in-person grantee meetings. Attendance at the national AmeriCorps grantee conference (rotates around the country) is required for program staff and fiscal staff of the legal applicant who are responsible for grant finances.

Programs should also plan for Member travel costs associated with local travel, such as bus passes to local sites, mileage reimbursement for use of car, etc. Member travel should also support member attendance at the Maine Volunteer Leadership Conference, AmeriCorps Induction Ceremony, National Service Day at the Capitol, and the AmeriCorps Member Conference.

AmeriCorps members must wear an AmeriCorps logo on a daily basis – preferably clothing with the AmeriCorps logo. The item with the AmeriCorps logo is a required budget expense. Please include the cost of the item with the AmeriCorps logo in your budget or explain how your program will be providing the item to AmeriCorps members without using grant funds. Grantees may add the AmeriCorps logo to their own local program uniform items using federal funds.

D. REVIEW, AUTHORIZE, AND SUBMIT EGRANTS SECTIONS

eGrants requires that you review and verify your entire application before submitting, by completing the following sections eGrants:
- Review and Authorize
- Assurances and Certifications
- Verify and Submit.

Read the Authorization, Assurances (https://egrants.cns.gov/cnsmisc/eCerts.htm), and Certifications (https://egrants.cns.gov/cnsmisc/eAssur.htm) carefully.

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.

If the grant author is not the applicant's authorized representative, that authorized representative must log into his/her eGrants account and proceed with Authorize and Submit. After signing off on the Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications, his/her name will override any previous signatory that may appear and show on the application as the Authorized Representative.

Be sure to check your entire application to make sure that there are no errors before submitting it. eGrants will also generate a list of errors if there are sections that need to be corrected prior to submission when you verify.

ATTACHMENT A: SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FORM

This form should be used by Applicants when submitting written questions to the RFA Coordinator.

If a question is not related to any section of the RFA, enter "N/A" under the RFA Section & Page Number. Add additional rows as necessary. Submit this document in WORD format, not PDF.

Organization Name:	

RFA Section & Page Number	Question

Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev. 11/02 to conform to the Corporation's eGrants system)

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE Standard Form 424 (Rev. 2-2007) Prescribed by OMB Circular A-102	1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: ☒ Application ☒ 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. d. ADDRESS *(give street address, city, county, state and zip code):* STREET: CITY: COUNTY: STATE: COUNTRY:	5. e. NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION *(give area code):* NAME: TELEPHONE NUMBER: ( ) - FAX NUMBER: ( ) - EMAIL: INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: WEBSITE:

6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER *(EIN):*	7. a. TYPE OF APPLICANT: *(enter appropriate letter in box)*

7. a. TYPE OF APPLICANT: *(enter appropriate letter in box)* ☐

A. State
B. County
C. Municipal
D. Township
E. Interstate
F. Intermunicipal
G. Special District
O. Federal Government
Q. State Education Agency
S. Other (specify)_____

H. Independent School District
I. State Controlled Institution of Higher Learning
J. Private University
K. Indian Tribe
L. Individual
M. Profit Organization
N. Private Non-Profit Organization
P. HQ Internal Organizations
R. Territory

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:
Corporation for National and Community Service

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: ☐

a. FEDERAL	$
b. APPLICANT	$
c. STATE	$
d. LOCAL	$
e. OTHER	$
f. PROGRAM INCOME	$
g. TOTAL	$

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 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON:
DATE _____

b. NO. ☒ PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372

17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT?
☐ YES   If "Yes," attach an explanation.   ☐ NO

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 C: LOGIC MODEL CHART

Use the format below to prepare the logic model for entry into the eGrants Logic Model Section. ***Do not*** enter text as paragraphs but use an outline or short phrase format. When ready to enter your logic model, from your eGrants application page select "Logic Model" in the left side navigation menu. 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 finished, click "save and close." You may add an unlimited number of rows to the logic model by clicking "add a new row." To edit or delete an existing row, select "edit" or "delete" in the last column of the logic model. **Print the eGrants logic model before submitting and check it does not exceed the 8 page limit**.

Community And Need	Project Resources	Core Components	Evidence of Project Implementation and Participation	Evidence of Change		
PROBLEM TO ADDRESS	INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES		
				Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
The community problem that the program activities (interventions) are designed to address.	*# and slot type of AmeriCorps members*	*What is done as part of the intervention selected, where it is done, and for how long (intensity and duration)*	*What units will be produced by program activities*	*Changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, opinions of beneficiaries or conditions in community*	*Changes in behavior or actions of service beneficiaries as a result from new knowledge, skills, etc.*	*Lasting changes or significant improvement in the lives of service beneficiaries or community conditions*

ATTACHMENT D: 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 the required performance measure(s).
- Set targets and describe data collection instruments and strategies for your performance measures.

Home Page
To start the module, click the "Begin" button on the Home Page.

As you proceed through the module, the Home Page will summarize your work and provide links to edit the parts of the module you have completed. You may also navigate sections of the module using the tab feature at the top of each page.

Once you have started the module, clicking "Continue Working" will return you to the tab you were on when you last closed the module.

To edit the interventions, objectives, MSYs, and member allocations for your application, click the "Edit Objectives/MSYs/Members" button.

After you have created at least one 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
On the objectives tab, applicants will account for the full range of their program activity. Applicants are not expected to create performance measures for every focus area, objective, or intervention they select on this 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. Only the performance measures that correspond to the 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 Measure Instructions.

Next, select all interventions that are part of your program design. Interventions are the activities that members and/or 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 (output paired with outcome) that contains your primary intervention. Note that your primary intervention, and the performance measure associated with your primary intervention, must be focused on the community impact of the program not on AmeriCorps member development.

You may select a secondary focus area and a secondary intervention. The primary and secondary focus area may be the same if you have more than one intervention within the focus area.

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. You must allocate 100% of your program's MSYs to focus areas and objectives. When you create your performance measures, you will be asked to allocate MSYs to each performance measure; however, you will not be required to assign 100% of your total MSYs to performance measures.

Begin by entering the total MSYs for your program. This must match the total MSYs in your budget. Please double-check your budget to make sure that the total MSY values match.

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 the only activity in another objective that you have selected is focused on AmeriCorps member development rather than beneficiary impact, enter 0 MSYs for that objective.

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.

In the members' column, enter the number of members who 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 performs service in both school readiness and K-12 success, allocate one member to each of these objectives. It is acceptable for the total number of members in this table to exceed total slots requested in the application due to counting members' service across multiple objectives. If the only activity in another objective that you have selected is focused on AmeriCorps member development rather than beneficiary impact, enter 0 members for that objective also.

To ensure that information is entered accurately, please refer to additional instructions in Appendix A of the National Performance Measure Instructions on calculating and entering MSY and member allocations.

Performance Measure Tab

This tab allows you to create performance measures for all the grant activities you intend to measure.

Begin by creating the aligned performance measure for your primary intervention. After creating your required performance measure, you will be able to create additional performance measures if desired.

To create a performance measure, begin by selecting an objective. The list of objectives includes those you selected on the objectives tab. Note that programs may not create performance measures for the Find Opportunity, Teacher Corps, Green Jobs, or Access & Attract objectives, since these are member-focused objectives. Member-focused outputs and outcomes related to these objectives may be reported as demographic indicators on grantee progress reports.

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/or 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 outputs (plus outcomes, if applicable) of the performance measure and that are applicable to all beneficiaries counted under the 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. (Do not a user-defined intervention that duplicates an intervention already available in the system.)

Select output(s) for your 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, and if the objective you selected permits applicant-determined outputs, you may create an applicant-determined output by clicking in the checkbox next to the empty output text box and entering the text of your output indicator. You may create additional applicant-determined outputs for the performance measure by clicking "Add User Output." (Note: you are not permitted to create an applicant-determined output that duplicates a National Performance Measure output. If you do not see the National Performance Measure output that you wish to use, check the Selection Rules in the National Performance Measure Instructions to make sure you selected the objective associated with that performance measure output.)

Select outcome(s). If you have selected a National Performance Measures output that has corresponding National Performance Measures outcome, these outcomes will be available to select. If you do not wish to select a National Performance Measure outcome, you may create an applicant-determined outcome by clicking in the checkbox next to the empty outcome text box and entering the text of your outcome indicator. If you do not wish to select any outcome

for your National Performance Measure output, click in the checkbox next to the empty outcome text box and enter "NA" in the outcome indicator text box.

If you have not selected a National Performance Measures output, or if there is no corresponding National Performance Measure outcome, create an applicant-determined outcome by clicking "Add User Outcome." All applicant-determined outputs must be paired with an applicant-determined outcome.

Enter the number of MSYs and members your program will allocate to achieving the outcomes and/or outputs 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.

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

Data Collection Tab
On this tab, you will provide additional information about your interventions, instruments, and plan for data collection.

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 and enter data collection information.

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 percents.

For applicant-determined outputs and outcomes, enter the unit of measure for your target. The unit of measure should describe the beneficiary population you intend to count (children, miles, etc.). Do not enter percents or member service 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.

For output-only performance measures, eGrants will require text in the outcome data collection fields. If you do not wish to have an outcome for your National Performance Measure output, enter the following:

- Method: Select "other."
- Instrument Description: Enter "NA"
- Target: Enter "1"
- Unit of Measure: Enter "NA"

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 want to continue to the module's next step, 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. You should also use the Performance Measures Checklist in Appendix B of the Performance Measure Instructions to self-assess your measure(s) prior to submission.

II. UNDERSTANDING MSY AND MEMBER ALLOCATIONS IN THE PERFORMANCE MEASURE SECTION

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 should be the program's best estimate of how member time will be allocated.

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 a total of 135 members representing a variety of different slot types. All members spend at least some of their time contributing to the K-12 Success objective. The program's full-time and half-time members also spend time contributing to the School Readiness objective: 50% of their time for full-time members and 20% for half-time members.

Objective #1: K-12 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	100	x	.50	=	50
TQT	.7	x	0	x	0	=	
HT	.5	x	5	x	.80	=	2
RHT	.3809524	x	10	x	1.00	=	3.81
QT	.26455027	x	10	x	1.00	=	2.65
MT	.21164022	x	10	x	1.00	=	2.17
	Total Members		135		Total MSYs		60.63

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	1	x	100	x	.50	=	50
TQT	.7	x	0	x	0	=	
HT	.5	x	5	x	.20	=	.5
RHT	.3809524	x	10	x	0	=	
QT	.26455027	x	10	x	0	=	
MT	.21164022	x	10	x	0	=	
	Total Members	105			Total MSYs		50.5

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. The system automatically calculates the percentage of MSYs allocated to each objective.
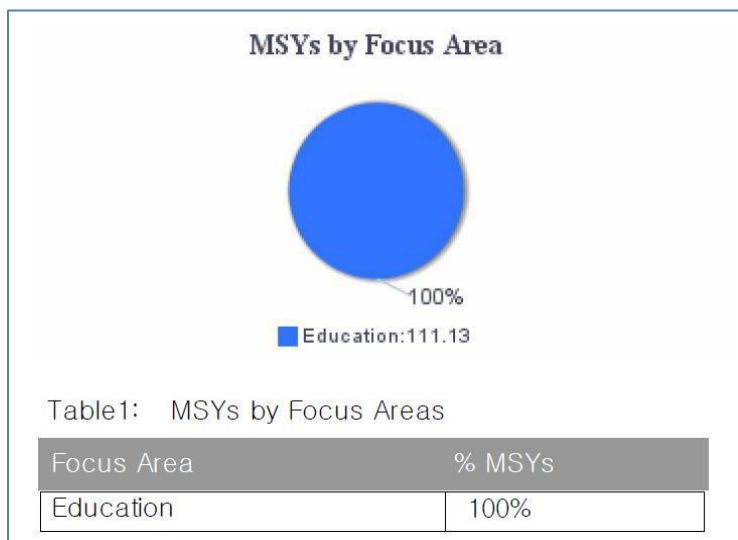

How It Looks in the 424 PDF

Table 1 and its corresponding pie chart show the total number of MSYs by Focus Area. Since both the K-12 Success and School Readiness objectives are in the Education Focus Area, Table 1 shows 100% of MSYs in Education.

Table4: No of MSY and Members by Objective

Objectives	No of MSYs	No of Members
K–12 Success	60.63	135
School Readiness	50.50	105
Total	**111.13**	**240**

Table 4 in the PDF report shows the number of MSYs and members allocated to each objective, as seen on the MSY/Members tab.

Note that the total number of members does not accurately reflect the number of slots requested since some members are performing service in both objectives. The total number of MSYs does, however, reflect the total number of MSYs requested by the program.

Because some members are performing service related to both K-12 Success and School Readiness, the total number of members listed in this table (240) is greater than the total number of slots the program is requesting (135).

This is OK; *individual members* can be counted more than once if they contribute to more than one objective.

In contrast, *MSY*s cannot be counted more than once, because they represent the amount of member time spent on a particular objective. As a result, the total number of MSYs listed in this table must be equal to the total MSYs the program is requesting (111.13).

Table 2 and its corresponding pie chart show the same MSY information expressed as percentages of the total MSYs.

MSYs by Objective

45% — 55%

K-12 Success:60.63   School Readiness:50.5

Table2: MSYs by Objectives

Objectives	%MSYs
K–12 Success	55%
School Readiness	45%

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 MSY allocations already entered for the sample program, the program may allocate no more than 60.63 MSYs to K-12 Success performance measures, and no more than 50.5 MSYs to School Readiness performance measures. However, programs are not required to measure all of their activities, so it is possible that not all of these MSYs will be allocated to performance measures.
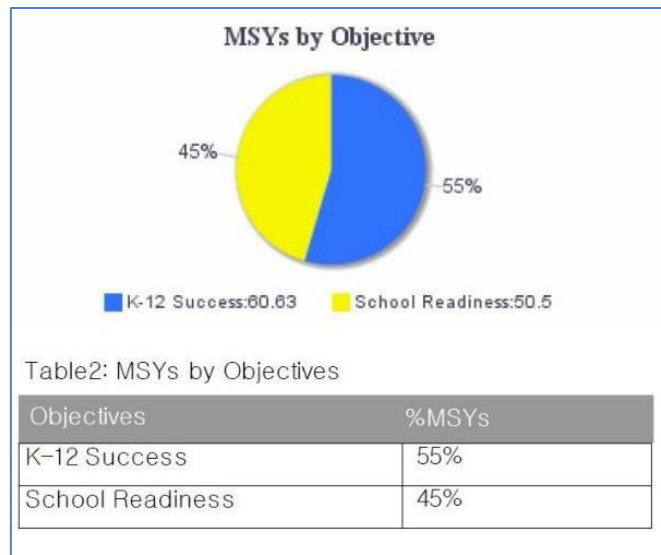
Our sample program has three performance measures, one for the K-12 Success objective and two for the School Readiness objective.

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	.75	X	60.63	=	45.47	41%
Parent Engagement	No performance measure.	.25	X	60.63		NA	14%
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	.75	X	50.5	=	37.88	34%
Parent Engagement	Applicant-Determined Measure	.25	X	50.5	=	12.62	11%

Note: Any aligned performance measure that has member outcomes rather than beneficiary outcomes should have an MSY allocation of 0 members since MSY allocations are designed to show how programs' resources are allocated to achieving beneficiary outcomes.
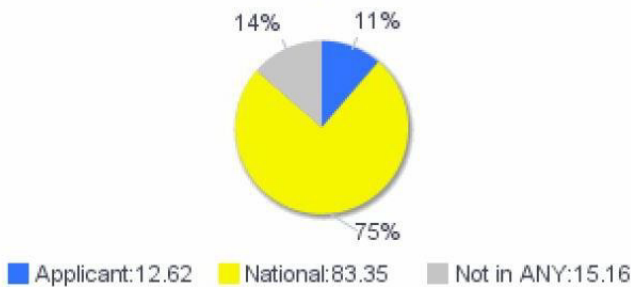

% of MSY NPM VS Applicant VS Not in ANY

14%   11%

75%

■ Applicant:12.62   ■ National:83.35   ■ Not in ANY:15.16

Table3: %MSYs by NPM vs. Applicant vs. Not in ANY

% MSYs	NPM	Applicant	Not in ANY
	75%	11%	14%

How It Looks in the 424 PDF

Table 3 and its corresponding pie chart in the 424 PDF report shows the percentage of MSYs allocated to National Performance Measures, applicant-determined performance measures, or to no performance measures.

As seen in the table above, the program has two National Performance Measures (ED3A/4A/27A and ED20/21/23), accounting for 75% of total MSYs.

The program has one applicant-determined measure, and a small percentage of program activity is not being measured.

This configuration meets the AmeriCorps requirement to have one aligned performance measure (output + outcome) corresponding to the primary intervention. Programs are not required to allocate 100% of their MSYs and members to National Performance Measures, or to any performance measures at all.

ATTACHMENT E: 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 F: AMERICORPS READINESS ASSESSMENT

This assessment tool is designed to assess the organizational readiness of applicants to complete development and prepare to administer an AmeriCorps State program. There are three sections: organizational, volunteer management, and grant management.

Section 1. These responses pertain to the organization/legal applicant. Check the appropriate box.

Yes	No	Unsure	
			1. Does your organization have a written mission statement that clearly expresses its reason for existence? (if no, skip to question 3)
			2. Is the mission frequently referred to (e.g. in annual planning, public relations, communication with stakeholders?)
			3. Does the organization have a clear and coherent written strategic plan? (if no, skip to question #9)
			4. Does the strategic plan have well defined goals, objectives, and action steps with timeframes?
			5. Is the strategic plan linked to the overall mission, vision and purpose of the organization?
			6. Is the strategic plan broadly known by the staff and board?
			7. Is this annual plan consistently used at all levels of the organization to direct operations?
			8. Does your organization conduct frequent assessments of the community needs?
			9. Does your organization analyze the results of needs assessments and implement changes?
			10. Does the organization have a track record of growing and/or creating programs to meet needs of its customers/clients/constituents?
			12. Do you have and use an evaluation system to measure the impact of programs and services?
			13. Do you analyze evaluation or performance data and report findings to stakeholders in a timely manner? (e.g. issue a public annual report)
			14. Does the organization conduct frequent assessment of existing programs' effectiveness in meeting recipient needs AND identify areas for improvement?
			15. Does the organization assess internal operations to assess efficiency and effectiveness?
			16. If yes to questions 15-16, are adjustments and/or improvements always made?
			17. Does your organization have networked computing hardware with a comprehensive range of up-to-date business software applications?
			18. Does every key staff member have a computer with up-to-date software?
			19. Does every key staff member have internet access and e-mail capabilities?
			20. Is computer technology used regularly by staff?
			21. Does the organization have a documented (written) process to recruit, develop and retain employees?
			22. Does the organization provide relevant and regular internal and external training?
			23. Are employee performance appraisals done annually, consistently, and in writing?
			24. Does the organization recruit, develop, and deploy volunteers to deliver mission-related services to its customers/constituents?
			25. Does your organization have more than 2 significant sources of operating funds?
			26. Does your organization have an active board of directors or other governing body?

Section 2. Essential Practices of Volunteer Management

For some organizations, AmeriCorps is the first introduction to implementation all the essential practices of volunteer management. Use this section to show the stage of volunteer management development in your organization. Check the box that best fits your organization.

Elements of Volunteer Resources Management	Fully implemented	Partially implemented	Not being done
Written statement of philosophy related to volunteer involvement			
Orientation for new paid staff about why and how volunteers are involved in the organization's work			
Designated manager/leader for overseeing management of volunteers agency-wide			
Periodic needs assessment to determine how volunteers should be involved to address the mission			
Written position descriptions for volunteer roles			
Written policies and procedures for volunteer involvement			
Organizational budget reflects expenses related to volunteer involvement			
Periodic risk management assessment related to 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			
Volunteer involvement is linked to organizational or program outcomes			

Section 3. 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 date an item will be completed or was completed and the person who was responsible.

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		

Proposed Program Start Date:	Responsible Person	Completion Date
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. Distribute 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.		

Proposed Program Start Date:	Responsible Person	Completion Date
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.		