

2021-2022 Serve Wisconsin AmeriCorps RFP Questions and Answers

Serve Wisconsin is collecting all questions that are received in writing to servewisconsin@wisconsin.gov regarding the AmeriCorps State RFP. Redacted questions and answers are posted here for your reference.

All questions must be received in writing no later than midnight on November 2, 2020. This document will be updated periodically and posted on <https://www.servewisconsin.wi.gov/start-a-program>.

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A. Questions Raised During the Current Competition

A1. I see that we have the ability to submit our application electronically to Serve Wisconsin by 4:30pm CST on the deadline, including all attachments. But if I am understanding correctly, we also have to submit the same application in eGrants by that same deadline?

The application must be submitted in eGrants. The additional documents may be submitted electronically or via hard copy to Serve Wisconsin. Both are due by the deadline at 4:30pm CST.

A2. I was wondering if the webinars were recorded? If so, where is it stored to listen to?

All Technical Assistance is recorded and posted on our website for playback listening. Here is the direct link: <https://www.servewisconsin.wi.gov/start-a-program>.

A3. Is there a limit to the number of research/articles I can use in my theory of change to support my narrative?

The RFP and Application Instructions do not specify a limit to the number of research/articles that can be used in the Theory of Change.

A4. On the Intent to Apply, when we list the number of expected member slots, do that have to match what we submit in the grant application?

This is the expected number of member slots – not the final count. You are not held to that number.

A5. I know that Serve Wisconsin has a partnership with Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC) that allows programs to consult with them, but I could not find that information.

On the RFP page of the Serve Wisconsin website, it lists all information regarding WEC. Here is the link: <https://www.servewisconsin.wi.gov/start-a-program>.

A6. My program is eligible for competitive continuation, but I do not see that option in my eGrants account.

Please log in to your eGrants account. On the right side of the home page, click the list of awarded grants, then look to see if there is an orange “Continue” or “Renew” for the current grant. If the Continue/Renew option is unavailable, please contact the National Service Hotline.

B. Questions Raised During Previous Competitions

B1. Can you apply if you are receiving AmeriCorps funds through a National Direct application?

Yes, an organization that currently receives AmeriCorps members through a National Direct program may apply for their own AmeriCorps program through Serve Wisconsin.

B2. Is there a minimum number of Member Service Years (MSY) that we can request?

No, Serve Wisconsin prefers to make awards to organizations engaging 10 or more *members*, but there is no minimum number of MSY that you can request.

B3. Are grantees able to pay stipends under this grant? If so, what slots are able to receive stipends?

Yes, programs may pay a living allowance to members in any slot type, and must provide a living allowance to full-time members. Review the RFP for information about the minimum and maximum amounts for the living allowances.

B4. Will we be held to the number of members our program plans as noted on the Notice of Intent to Apply form? If we submit for 10-20, but realize after we want to bump up to 10-20, would that change be allowable in our grant application?

The Notice of Intent to Apply does not obligate you to anything. It is simply a mandatory step for applicants.

B5. How do we know if we need to submit a cost allocation plan?

Applicants would only be expected to provide a cost allocation plan if they use one to determine how costs will be allocated to their grant. Consider asking someone familiar with the accounting for your program to determine if you will be using a cost allocation plan when charging expenses to the grant.

B6. For the Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy bullet points, which are listed in section 2.3.3.D of the RFP, do we need to write a specific, separate narrative providing additional explanation about our submitted budget, or are these are the criteria our submitted budget will be reviewed on?

Regarding the Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy section, peer reviewers will not be asked to review those criteria, so if an applicant were to include narrative addressing the criteria in that section that narrative would not be sent to peer reviewers because it would be irrelevant to the sections they have been asked to review.

This is supported by the RFP. The beginning of the Cost Effectiveness section says, "Reviewers will assess the quality of the application's budget based on the following criteria..."

C. General Application Questions

C1. Do I register for an individual or system account on SAM?

You should register for an individual account. Follow the directions in the SAM User Guide:

https://www.sam.gov/sam/SAM_Guide/SAM_User_Guide.htm

C2. I work in a school and had to undergo a background check. Do I still need [National Service Criminal History Checks]?

Yes, if your personnel expenses will be funded with grant funds (meaning, CNCS share OR Grantee share), you must complete the two or three point National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) prior to charging any time to the grant.

C3. If CNCS funds are used only by my organization but member agencies contribute matching funds to cover their local agency's involvement, do we need to budget for criminal background checks for all staff involved, or just our organization's?

Individuals who are required to have multi-component National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC) run on them are those who work or serve in a covered position. A covered position is those who are funded, partially or wholly, by federal funds or shown as match (in-kind or cash) on the grant. So, for example, if you have organization staff who will be charging in-kind time to the grant, a NSCHC is required. If, however, that individuals will be involved in discussions and working on the program but not charging any of their time as federal or match, then a NSCHC is not required.

C4. Where do I get an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement?

Indirect cost rates may be negotiated with either the federal cognizant agency or a state agency. The federal cognizant agency is typically the federal agency with the largest direct dollar value of federal awards; however Institutions of Higher Education use HHS or DOD and Tribal Governments use DOI.

If CNCS is cognizant, send an email to Indirectcostrate@cns.gov, and instructions will be sent to you on the steps necessary to negotiate an indirect cost rate.

C5. Do I use my name or my superintendent's name when applying?

The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must be using eGrants under his or her own account in order to sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

C6. What is an organizational chart?

It is a chart that shows the staffing structure of your organization.

C7. If we hire a consultant, do I need to factor in their mileage in the budget?

This is entirely up to you.

C8. Can someone review my proposal prior to submission?

Serve Wisconsin staff may not review any part of the application or provide any feedback prior to submission once the RFP has been released. You will need to find someone you know or work with to complete a review.

C9. Who should sign the Assurances and Certifications?

The Authorized Representative for the organization needs to be the one to review and sign the Assurances and Certifications and submit the application in eGrants.