

2021-22 AMERICORPS STATE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

New Applicant Technical Assistance



Webinar is pre-recorded.

Outline



- Basics
- Dive into RFP materials
- General considerations for your proposal
- Funding process

The Basics



AmeriCorps

- ❑ AmeriCorps is a federally funded program
- ❑ Rebranding (AmeriCorps vs. CNCS)
- ❑ AmeriCorps' mission
- ❑ AmeriCorps members serve through an approved national service position
- ❑ Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving
- ❑ Earn an education award upon successful completion

Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding

- AmeriCorps grants create AmeriCorps positions
- Funding is NOT to pay for general organizational expenses or fundraising costs
- Funding is only for costs directly related to the proposed project and member support costs

New to AmeriCorps State and National?

Review the resources posted on [AmeriCorps' website](#).

Topics include:

- Intro to AmeriCorps Members and State & National
- Key Terms
- Categories of AmeriCorps Grants
- AmeriCorps Program Management and Design
- Note: these are from a 2017 competition, but are the most recent FYI videos

The [Knowledge Network](#) is FULL of resources.

Who is eligible to apply for funding?

- ❑ Public or private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations
- ❑ Institutions of higher education
- ❑ Government entities within states or territories
- ❑ Labor organizations
- ❑ Partnerships and consortia
- ❑ Indian Tribes



Organizations convicted of federal crime are disqualified.
501(c)(4) lobbying organizations are not eligible to apply.

Where should your program apply

- Applicants proposing to operate in Wisconsin only must apply through Serve Wisconsin
- Applicants proposing to operate in multiple states can apply directly to AmeriCorps (federal level)
 - ▣ See more on their website at www.nationalservice.gov for their *Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)*
- Indian Tribes can apply to either

AmeriCorps Members?

- ❑ Direct service or capacity building
- ❑ Enrolled for a specific term of service
 - ▣ (FT = 1,700 hours; QT = 450 hours)
- ❑ NOT volunteers and NOT employees
- ❑ Must not displace or supplant volunteers or employees
- ❑ Members have a contract with the program
- ❑ For more info, view [“Intro to AmeriCorps Members”](#)



Member Service Terms

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1,700	\$15,100	\$30,200
Three Quarter-time	1,200	n/a	\$21,318
Half-time	900	n/a	\$15,988
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	\$11,991
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$7,994
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$5,329
Abbreviated-time	100	n/a	\$1,776

MSYs and Capacity Considerations

- Member Service Years (MSYs)
 - ▣ Example: 1 Full-Time member = 1 MSY; 2 Half-Time members = 1 MSY; 4 Quarter-Time members = 1.06 MSY
- Applicants encouraged to apply for no fewer than 10 AmeriCorps members.

What Does New Mean?

“New” means many different things.

1. **New Organization** – an organization that has never received AmeriCorps funds.
2. **New Program** – a program distinct from any previous AmeriCorps programs by an organization
3. **New Application** – generally an application that is not a continuation

Make sure you understand if you are a new organization and/or new program based on definitions in the RFP.

Types of Awards (section 1.2.4)

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement	Fixed Amount			
Available Subtypes	Traditional	Full-time	Education Award Program (EAP)	Professional Corps	No Cost Slots
Maximum Cost per MSY	\$16,300	\$16,300	\$800 or \$1,000	\$1,000*	\$0
Type of Slots in the National Service Trust	Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum-time, Abbreviated-time	Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum-time, Abbreviated-time	Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum-time, Abbreviated-time	Full-time only	Full-time, Three Quarter-time, Half-time, Reduced half-time, Quarter-time, Minimum-time, Abbreviated-time
Budget Submission Required	Yes	No		Yes, if requesting operating funds	No

Types of Awards (section 1.2.4)

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement	Fixed Amount			
Available Subtypes	Traditional	Full-time	Education Award Program (EAP)	Professional Corps	No Cost Slots
Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSYs	No	Yes			No
Special Requirements	N/A	N/A		Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries and benefits must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in budget.	N/A
Financial Reporting Requirements	Yes	No			
Available to new Applicants	Yes	No	Yes		

AmeriCorps Focus Areas

- AmeriCorps has six focus areas for funding:
 - ▣ Disaster Services
 - ▣ Education
 - ▣ Economic Opportunity
 - ▣ Environmental Stewardship
 - ▣ Healthy Futures
 - ▣ Veterans and Military Families

Funding Priorities

- Priority consideration = demonstrated that priority area is a significant part of the program focus.
Information
 - ▣ Information about the Priorities can be found in section 1.1.2 and section 8.0.

- Using National Performance Measures or tailoring your program to fit a CNCS focus area/funding priority is not required!

How to Apply

- ❑ Determine that you should apply to Serve Wisconsin
- ❑ Obtain a DUNS number
- ❑ Register (or update) your organization with the System for Award Management
- ❑ Submit a Notification of Intent to Apply
- ❑ Establish an eGrants account
- ❑ Write a high-quality proposal
- ❑ Submit your proposal and send required additional documents to be received by the deadline

Section 2.3 & 2.4 Application Fields

- Executive Summary (use template provided)
- Program Design
 - ▣ Theory of Change and Logic Model
 - ▣ Evidence Base
 - ▣ Notice Priority
 - ▣ Member Experience

4. *Member Experience (6 points)*

- AmeriCorps members will gain skills as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed.
- The program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the program operates.
- The applicant will foster an inclusive service culture where different backgrounds, talents, and capabilities are welcomed and leveraged for learning and effective service delivery.

Logic Model

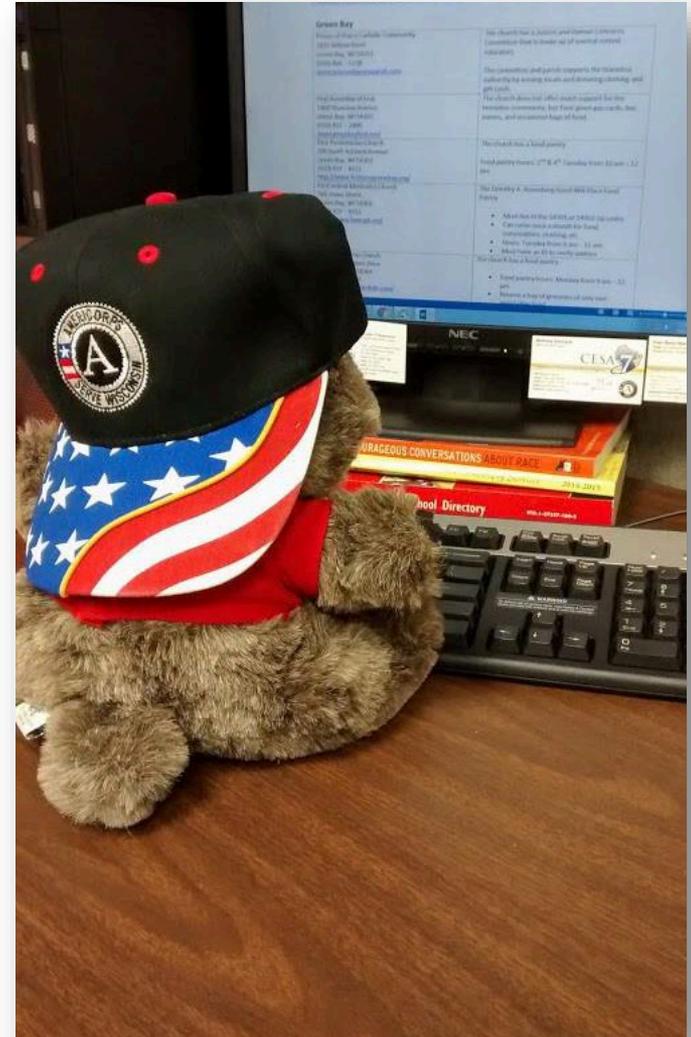
- Provides a concise visual representation of your proposal
- Must depict the criteria shown on RFP page 18
- Logically align elements
- Identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators. Not all outcomes need to be measured
- May not exceed 3 pages

Section 2.3 Application Fields

- Organizational Capacity
- Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
- Budget
- Evaluation Plan/Summary (if applicable)

What do I write about?

- ❑ Narrative requirements thoroughly described in RFP pages 17-23
- ❑ Address ALL criteria in those sections
- ❑ Do not assume the reviewers' knowledge
- ❑ Be succinct but clear in your descriptions and do not include information that is not requested

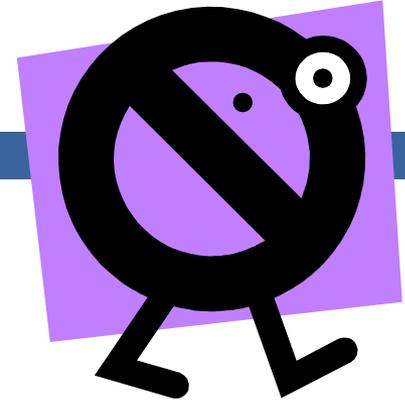


Tips for Grant Writing



- ❑ Lead from your program strengths, and be explicit
- ❑ Avoid circular reasoning – the problem you describe should not be defined as the lack of the solution you are proposing
- ❑ Explain how – explicitly describe how the proposed project will meet the criteria
- ❑ Use an impartial proofreader and have them use the Peer Review Form (Appendix A) to score your proposal

Prohibited Activities



- ❑ AmeriCorps programs, members, and volunteers must adhere to rules related to activities prohibited under Federal Law
- ❑ Your program design cannot include any of these activities
- ❑ You must describe how you will train staff, supervisors, members, and volunteers on the prohibited activities
- ❑ You can find the list of prohibited activities in:
 - ✓ The RFP Glossary (p. 40)
 - ✓ Code of Federal Regulations: [45 CFR § 2520.65](#)

Prohibited Activities



- Prohibited activities include non-duplication and non-displacement
 - ▣ AmeriCorps members may not engage in activities that are currently or were previously handled by your staff members or volunteers.
 - ▣ AmeriCorps programs may not duplicate the same services offered in the region.
- AmeriCorps programs should be bringing new services or expanding existing services to the community.
- When in doubt, ask. Findings of duplication or displacement may result in a disallowance of funds!

AmeriCorps Budgets

- Some required expenses include:
 - ▣ Criminal History Checks
 - ▣ Use of OnCorps Reporting System
 - ▣ Travel to Serve Wisconsin-approved training (\$2,000)
 - ▣ Living allowances and health insurance for full-time members
 - ▣ FICA and Worker's Compensation for all members
- Max cost per MSY
 - ▣ Example: $25 \text{ MSYs} \times \$15,479 = \$386,975$ maximum CNCS share.
- Match is required. Grantee match must be at least 24% for first 3 years of funding, and increases each year thereafter.
 - ▣ Grantee match can come from cash and/or in-kind sources
 - ▣ Must be documented. Except under special permission, may not come from Federal sources

Performance Measures

- All applicants must have at least one aligned PM.
 - ▣ Aligned means there is an intervention with an output (amount of service provided) and an outcome (changes or benefits that occur)
 - ▣ Either a National Performance Measure (one listed in the PM Instructions) or an applicant-determined measure.
- The AmeriCorps website has a LOT of resources on PMs. See:
<http://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement>

Required Additional Documents

- All documents must be received by the deadline
Submissions after the deadline will NOT be accepted
- Additional Documents may be submitted electronically
- Early submissions allow Serve Wisconsin staff time to review and notify you if any documents are missing
- Don't wait until the last minute to begin preparing these!

How to Submit Application & Documents

- Make sure all elements are addressed and review your entire application
- Print your application to make sure the proposal does not exceed page limits (see section 2.3.1)
- Read Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications
- Send your packet of Required Additional Documents
- More information on how to submit is found in the RFP

How is my proposal assessed?

- Initial compliance review
- Peer Review
 - At least 3 peers, screened for conflicts of interest, will review the Program Design portion of your application using Appendix A—Peer Review Form
 - Minimum average score of 80/100 needed to advance to next stage
- Staff Review
 - Serve WI staff assess your whole proposal and provide clarification and correction items

Proposal Assessment

If your proposal successfully passes peer review...

- Program Evaluation & Development Committee Review
 - Applicants give 5-minute presentation at December 1, 2020 meeting
 - Committee will use staff recommendation, average peer review score, performance score, fit in Wisconsin's portfolio, and your presentation to determine funding recommendation
- WI National & Community Service Board Review

Submitting to AmeriCorps (federal level) & their Review

- Prior to submission to the federal level, Serve WI staff will work with you to amend your proposal based on:
 - ▣ Peer Review Feedback
 - ▣ Staff Review
 - ▣ Committee and Board Recommendations

- Applications and additional documents are submitted to AmeriCorps (federal level) by Serve Wisconsin

- AmeriCorps (federal level) has their own Review Process. See RFP pages 27-30.

Then what?



We wait!

- Federal level may have clarification questions, which you must answer in a very short timeframe.
- Also, federal level may have you revise portions of your application.

If AmeriCorps (federal level) funds your application, you are considered “Competitively Funded”, and your project period will last three years (continued each year and subject to program performance and compliance).

What if I'm not funded?

- Applications not selected by AmeriCorps (federal level) will be considered for Formula funding
- This process is described in section 3.6 of the RFP
- Formula funding decisions will be made late spring/early summer; funding decision in summer 2021.

I'm funded, then what?



- ❑ The fun begins!
- ❑ Begin program start-up: marketing, recruiting, interviewing, and onboarding members
- ❑ Contract will be between your organization and WNCBS
- ❑ Programs must start on August 15 or September 1, 2021, and must complete on August 14 or August 31, 2022.
- ❑ More about contracting found on RFP pages 34-35

Documents!

- There are a LOT of things to read and understand
 - ▣ RFP & Appendixes
 - ▣ Application Instructions and Attachments
 - ▣ Performance Measures Instructions
 - ▣ AmeriCorps Terms & Conditions
 - ▣ AmeriCorps Regulations
- Yes, you really need to read them all to understand what you're getting into!

I still need help:

1. Please ask all questions via email (servewisconsin@wisconsin.gov) until **November 2** – after this date, only eGrants questions can be asked.
 - ▣ No questions accepted over the phone.
2. Review the Q&A document posted on our website
3. Continue to review documents and resources provided
4. Review the [Technical Assistance sessions and information](#) provided by AmeriCorps (federal).
5. Ask peers who have applied for AmeriCorps funding for guidance, tips, tricks

Help from UW-Madison (WEC)

- Utilize free 1:1 consultation that is available to you through the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (Dr. Good and Dr. Bowman)
 - ▣ Sign up for help through their intake form:
<https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV3NMIUHTZwhDx2Qd>
 - ▣ Reserve any non-application related questions until after November 9
- WEC pre-recorded webinars available on the Serve WI website

Schedule



- October 12 – Pre-recorded webinars available
- October 26 – NOI Due
- November 9 – proposal, additional documents, and alternative match requests due
- December 1 – PE&D Committee Meeting
- December 10 – WNCSB Meeting
- May 2020 – notification of competitive awards

Questions?



- Continued assistance:

- <https://www.servewisconsin.wi.gov/start-a-program>

- ServeWisconsin@wisconsin.gov

Thank you for your participation today!