

2019 AmeriCorps Service Fellowship Pilot Funding Opportunity

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

January 23, 2019

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A. General/Grant Application

- A1) Is there a limit on the amount of grant funds I may request?
CV Response: The total funds available for this opportunity is \$5.1 million. With this in mind, there is no specific limit on the amount of grant funds that you may request if it falls within the cost per MSY requirements. However, your level of requested funding should make sense for your proposed program design, desired impact, and the capacity of your organization.
- A2) Is the legal applicant responsible for identifying other public and/or private organizations to host and support the AmeriCorps Fellows as they perform service?
CV Response: Yes, the legal applicant is responsible for identifying organizations in the community to host and supervise the work of the AmeriCorps Fellows.
- A3) Is more than one placement site a requirement or can all Fellows be hosted at one site?
CV Response: There's no requirement on the number of Fellow placement sites that a program has to have. The number of Fellows at each site and the number of sites where Fellows will be placed to serve should make sense for your proposed program design, desired impact, and the capacity of your organization and partners.
- A4) Is an applicant locked into the proposed service locations/Fellows placement sites or can they change them later in the process?
CV Response: Since this is a pilot program with a shortened timeline for application submissions, proposed service locations and Fellow placement sites

can be adjusted during the planning grant period. The planning grant period is crucial to fully flush out program design pieces such as service locations.

- A5) Is the Executive Summary considered a part of the Program Narrative, and does it count towards the page limit?
CV Response: Yes.
- A6) Can we include charts in the Program Narrative? Can they be single-spaced?
CV Response: Yes. Charts are acceptable in the Program Narrative and may be single-spaced. However, if your application is approved for funding, you will later need to convert any charts into narrative in order to submit your application in eGrants to be awarded.
- A7) Should programs use links to research in the narrative? Is it realistic to think that peer/staff reviewers will use a link to read additional information?
CV Response: Reviewers will not view links in an application. The applicant has to provide sufficient information in the application narrative to describe the evidence that is being used to describe the community need or to support the program intervention.
- A8) Can you provide examples of other grantees' Fellow Development performance measures? It would be helpful to know how other programs have approached these measures successfully.
CV Response: Successful applications from previous years may be requested as part of a Public Records Act request. However, the Fellow Development performance measures are common measures across all programs that follow a standard format. Choose the activities and trainings that are most appropriate for your program design and that most effectively prepares and supports Fellows in their service and in connecting them with their community.
- A9) Could you please clarify whether or not there is one application being submitted where we are all proposing the same program format (with the other universities) or if we are individually submitting applications that define individual institutional programs.
CV Response: Given the purpose of this initiative, California Volunteers highly encourages universities to work collaboratively to define a common fellowship program design that assures a meaningful and consistent service experience for all students regardless of which institution they serve in. That said, each university may individually submit their own application to administer the fellowship program on their campus to address a different set of community challenges.
- A10) The university has to be the applicant, but if a partner administers the program, does the university need to have a program director connected to the university, or can the whole program be outsourced to the partner? Also, what happens with

the administrative overhead? Could it be forwarded to partner, or does it stay with the university?

CV Response: The university would need to be the legal applicant per the RFA. However, they university may subcontract with a partnering agency to implement the grant. In this case, the subcontract could have administrative overhead built in to ease the lift by the partner. In this scenario, the subcontracted entity implementing the grant should have a full-time program director at 100% time dedicated to the program. The university would still have legal fiduciary responsibility over the grant and would be required to oversee the subcontract.

A11) Per Page 17, it states the Planning Grant Narrative may not exceed 7 pages (in addition to the 14 pages limit for program narrative). And though not stated in the RFA, it would seem logical that we would submit 2 separate budgets, one for planning and one for operating.

CV Response: This is correct, two seperate program narratives and budgets are required for submission. Please refer to application instructions for further information.

A12) How would we calculate cost per MSY for 35 Fellows @ 675 hours; 25 in Fall 2020 and 10 in Spring 2021?

CV Response: $[35 \text{ Fellows} \times .3809524 \text{ conversion} \times \$20,000 \text{ state funds}] + [35 \text{ Fellows} \times .3809524 \text{ conversion} \times \$7,920 \text{ federal funds}] = \$372,267$

To clarify, this approach will fund all fellow positions using both state and federal funds. Universities will receive both a state and federal operating grant at the maximum cost per Fellows limit. The state grant will just need to be expended first by March 31, 2021, while the federal grant can be leveraged through June 30, 2021.

A13) Regarding "Please provide a justification if you will be requesting less than 20 MSYs" - does that justification go in the program narrative, the budget, a separate attached document?

CV Response: The justification should be on a separate attached document and does not count towards the program narrative page limit.

A14) Which application requirements are you waiving?

CV Response: The following are items we typically require at the time of application that we're waiving:

- Community Strengthening Performance Measure (volunteer recruitment)
- AmeriCorps Organizational Self-Assessment
- Evidence Base Supporting Documents

These items are waived at the time of application and will need to be completed during the planning period:

- Fellow Training Plan
- Data Collection Plan
- Labor Organization Certification

A15) The Pilot is for one year of funding. Will I need to do a separate submission for the year 2 and 3 funding under AmeriCorps (i.e., in case the state pilot is not extended)?

CV Response: That's correct, year 2 and 3 are subject to future state and federal appropriations. Depending upon the availability of funds, we may be in position to continue the program in year 2 and 3 without going through a full reapplication process.

A16) Can applying for the planning grant be disentangled from applying for the operations grant?

CV Response: No, not currently. If needed, the planning grant can span up to 12 months, and we can work with you to determine the implementation period. For example, you could choose to stay in the planning period until December 2020 and launch a program in January 2021. However, one important thing to note is that State Funds will need to be spent by March 31, 2021. Following that, you would only be able to access Federal grant dollars.

A17) Is the intent that everyone submits applications for both planning and implementation grant?

CV Response: Yes, due to the funding timeline, both planning and implementation grants application must be submitted concurrently for this program.

A18) If we have 24 full-time equivalent or MSYs, would we hypothetically receive \$27,920 per fellow for a total of \$670,080?

CV Response: Yes, the calculation is: (\$20,000 state dollars per MSY x 24 MSY) + (\$7,920 federal dollars per MSY x 24 MSY) = \$670,080 (\$480,000 in state funds + \$190,080 in federal funds).

A19) Is "living allowance" the term used for the Fellow funding above the education award?

CV Response: Yes, the living allowance is the term referring to any additional financial resource that the Fellows receive to support living expenses while performing service and does not include the education award.

A20) Our institution conducted a pilot program that we seek to expand with this program. Results from the pilot found statistical significance through research on the intervention. However, the research was not based a national study. Is that adequate evidence?

CV Response: Yes, it is fine to use evaluation data from a pilot program as the evidence base.

A21) Do we need to identify our exact placements in our grant application? We had originally imagined doing this during our spring planning period with the input of future Fellows recruited.

CV Response: Please provide what you know upon submission of your application. CV understands that placements will be further defined throughout the planning process.

A22) Can you explain MSY?

CV Response: 1 MSY (Member service year) = 1 FTE = 1,700 minimum service hours; Third Quarter Time = .70 MSY = 1,200 minimum service hours. Please see page 9 of the RFA for more information.

A23) Do we need our Performance Measurements figured out in advance of the planning period?

CV Response: Yes, performance measures need to be identified at the time of submission, but they can be fine tuned during the planning period.

A24) Are we required to grow the number of fellows we serve to 20 in subsequent years?

CV Response: Generally, programs are approved at the same level of MSY funded in year one in subsequent years, specifically year 2 and 3 of the same grant period and has the option to expand in year 2 and 3 if funds are available.

A25) We need help understanding how to budget for Living Allowance and Educational Award.

CV Response: You do not need to budget for the education award as that will be provided directly to Fellows outside of the grant. Any additional education award that the university will provide cannot be counted towards the match requirement as these are not program operating funds and therefore, do not need to be included in the budget. Please see page 25-26 of the Application Instructions for guidelines on minimum and maximum living allowance.

A26) Can the planning period be used to develop program design (p.15 of Request for Applications)?

CV Response: The planning period can be used to tighten and strengthen the program design but cannot be used to create it from scratch. The overall program design must be developed and a full application with associated documents must be submitted for funding consideration.

A27) Can we use our planning period to develop our Program Operational Readiness Deliverables (p. 21)?

CV Response: Yes, that is what the planning grant is intended for.

A28) Will funding still be considered for requests less than the required 20 MSY?

CV Response: Yes, as long as a Request to Waive Minimum Program Size Waiver is submitted with the application (see page 43 of Application Instructions for further information). As a general rule, California Volunteers has not funded requests below 10 MSYs. Universities requesting for less than 10 MSYs are

encouraged to bundle their requests and apply together under a single application.

A29) Could you please share details about the contracting process ahead of time to streamline the approval process from our institution?

CV Response: We recognize that navigating the bureaucracies of higher education institutions can be complex; therefore, we will share contract exhibits ahead of time.

A30) Can you provide more information about the Civic Action Fellows Leadership Council? When will it be held? Where? Who will be expected to attend?

CV Response: The Civic Action Fellows Council is a potential area for collaboration across all partners to come together to evaluate and scale the fellowship program. The exact structure and expectations for participation will be determined in partnership with university partners during the planning period.

A31) Will staff working on the planning grant need to get background checks? How long will this take for planning grant staff?

CV Response: Yes, staff working on the planning grant will need a background check. The timeline can vary. We will send out information about background checks prior to contracting so your institution can move ahead with initiating the process.

A32) Is the application still due in the mail?

CV Response: Yes, paper copies of the grant application are also due on Monday, January 27 by 5 PM. Please see the RFA for instructions for mailing in your application packet.

A33) As per required definitions, what is an "existing program?"

CV Response: An existing program is an AmeriCorps program previously funded by CV within the last five years.

A34) What type of civic engagement activities are permissible as it relates to voter education and outreach?

CV Response: Voter education and outreach is very risky for an AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps and the Corporation of National Community Service (CNCS) retains strong bipartisan support in Congress and continues to receive funding every year. In order to maintain appropriations, AmeriCorps has very strict guidelines on anything that can be seen as political or divisive. As such, political activities are prohibited (see AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities list). We discourage building a program where the Fellows/members are engaging in voting or even census outreach because the risks are too great. In the event a program is audited by CNCS and found to be in violation of the prohibited activities list, the program must pay back all costs associated with the activity and the member hours spent on the activity would be disqualified toward the education award.

- A35) Should the program name and fellow position name include "AmeriCorps?"
CV Response: It is not required to follow the traditional AmeriCorps branding standards, but programs are strongly encouraged to create a unified program experience for Fellows across university campuses.
- A36) Just confirming that our program design does NOT have to integrate academic work or offer academic credit? We were told it does not but still see it as a partnership requirement in the RFA.
CV Response: We are leaving this to the individual university to determine. CV hopes that the service Fellowship program does not interfere with the student Fellows' graduation timeline. Thus, CV had encouraged the idea of pairing academic credit with the service program so students do not fall behind academically.
- A37) Are we required to conduct a formal evaluation of our project, and if so, is an external evaluator required?
CV Response: A formal evaluation of the program is not required.
- A38) Is there a maximum amount we can ask for our proposal?
CV Response: The maximum amount that can be requested for the planning grant is \$75,000. The maximum amount that can be requested for the operating grant is \$27,920 cost per MSY combined—with no specific cap on the number of MSYs.
- A39) Is there a date when the grant decisions will be made, and a date for when you would want the planning period to be completed? We are trying to figure out the maximum amount of time we have for the planning period. (start and end date).
CV Response: We are hoping to convey grant decisions by February 7. Regarding preparing for the planning period, please remember that funds cannot be charged to the grant until a contract has been executed. Our aim is to contract as soon as a possible and we are hoping to do so by late February. The planning grant period can span up to 12 months, but we encourage you to launch the program sooner if operational readiness is achieved.
- A40) What will success look like from CV's perspective?
CV Response: A successfully program will achieve programmatic success by meeting the self-identified targets, making progress toward fulfilling the community need, and retaining and supporting students through the completion of the Fellowship. Furthermore, CV hopes that the program enriches student life by making college affordable, and creating lifelong service and civic engagement opportunities. We also hope this pilot program helps to strengthen partnerships between communities, universities, and the State to address California's pressing needs.

A41) What happens if the number of Fellows changes (either up or down) during the planning period? Obviously, this changes the budget. After the planning period could we ask for more funding than what we asked for in the proposal? What if during the planning period, we ended up needing less fellows? What are the implications?

CV Response: We ask that you determine the scale of the program at the time of grant application submission as the budget is directly tied to the number of MSY requested in the application. Once your grant has been awarded, there will not be the flexibility to request for more funding for year 1. Request for more funding in subsequent years are possible if funds are available. If you find you will need less fellows after the planning period, it is likely that you'll not expend all of the grant funds awarded as they're tied to the number of fellows enrolled. If this turns out to be the case, CV will work with you to explore whether those unused fellow slots can be transferred to another university that might need them. Please know that our team will provide feedback on the application and budget before it is submitted to CNCS to ensure the request is reasonable based on the design of your program.

B. Funding Priorities and Selection Criteria

B1) What do the listed funding priorities mean for funding distribution?

CV Response: There are no pre-determined funding distribution for the priorities listed. The identified priorities are intended to encourage programs to focus the service of Fellows in those state priority areas if they align with pressing local community challenges.

C. AmeriCorps Fellows

C1) Can AmeriCorps Fellows take the place of current staff or volunteers at my organization?

CV Response: No. AmeriCorps Fellows may not displace staff or volunteers at your organization, nor may they perform any services or duties that would supplant the hiring of employed workers.

C2) Are there certain activities in which AmeriCorps Fellows and staff cannot engage?

CV Response: Yes. While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or CNCS, staff and Fellows may not engage in the activities described in [45 CFR § 2520.65](#).

C3) Are programs required to provide health benefits to less than full-time Fellows serving in a full-time capacity?

CV Response: Less than full-time Fellows who are serving in a full-time capacity for a sustained period of time (e.g. a full-time summer project) are not required to be offered healthcare benefits but may be provided healthcare benefits at the discretion of the legal applicant. A Fellows is considered to be serving in a full-time capacity when his/her regular term of service will involve

performing service on a normal full-time schedule for a period of six weeks or more.

C4) Who is responsible to recruit the AmeriCorps Fellows?

CV Response: It is the university's responsibility to recruit enough Fellows to fully enroll all awarded Fellows slots. Each university must develop their own selection process and ensure that Fellows meet the minimum federal eligibility requirements.

C5) Do AmeriCorps Fellows need to be placed at different sites out in the community or can they be stationed at the grantee's office?

CV Response: AmeriCorps Fellows can be placed at partner sites in the community or be centrally located with the grantee; it all depends on the program design and the legal applicant's capacity to manage Fellows. Applicants can propose the design that best suits their program needs and justify it in the Program Narrative.

C6) Can we conduct students' criminal background checks prior to the start of the service period?

CV Response: Criminal background checks can and should be conducted prior to the start of the service period since the fellows are required to have cleared their background checks before they can serve or accrue any service hours. Costs of background checks are included in the grant so universities would be able to conduct checks as soon as they have pre-approved match expenses and/or an executed operating grant contract from CV.

C7) Given the modest size of our nonprofit partners and their capacity, our program can only support one person per location. Will this pose a problem?

CV Response: In keeping with the spirit of AmeriCorps and fostering a inclusive support environment for Fellows, it is highly encouraged to place at least two Fellows per site. However, we understand that certain circumstances may not permit this so it is fine to submit an application with a "Request to Waive Minimum Number of Members per Service Site" (please see page 43 of the Application Instructions).

C8) If Fellows are not full-time, are they eligible to receive a California for All Education Award? According to Table 4 on page 12 it looks like they are not.

CV Response: Fellows serving in a service term that is less than 1700 hours are not eligible for the California for All Education Award; however, they still may receive the federal Segal AmeriCorps Education Award if they successfully complete the minimum required number of service hours.

C9) If we do not provide a living allowance, the Fellows would receive no additional funding?

CV Response: Correct, Fellows would only receive the educational award.

- C10) Are retention requirements based on Fellows completing the entire term of service?
CV Response: Yes.
- C11) Can Fellows be permanent residents?
CV Response: Yes, an individual must be a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or lawful permanent resident alien at the time of enrollment in order to become an AmeriCorps Fellow. It is not sufficient that the individual's application for citizenship status is pending at the time of enrollment. If a Fellow's lawful permanent resident alien status expires during the Fellow's term of service, you must obtain proof of renewal from the Fellow.
- C12) How can recently graduated students use the education award? For example, can they pay off loans or pay for graduate school?
CV Response: Education awards can be used at accredited institutions to pay for higher education expenses or apply toward qualified student loans.
- C13) Can you explain (p. 9 of Request for Applications) "Fellows may not begin service prior to the conclusion of the contracting process"?
CV Response: Fellows may not begin their term of service prior to the university having a fully executed contract with CV.
- C14) Do Fellows have to be currently enrolled students? For example, may students who recently graduated serve as full-time fellows?
CV Response: This specific selection criteria are determined by the individual university and can include recently graduated students. The only requirements set by CV include the following minimum federal eligibility requirements: Be a U.S. Citizen, U.S. National or Lawful Permanent Resident of the United States, at least 17 years of age (no upper age limit), high school graduate or GED recipient (or working towards this goal), and pass all required criminal history checks.
- C15) Are universities required to offer Fellows university credit for participating in the service program?
CV Response: The intention of this program is to provide additional support to students; therefore, it is highly encouraged to offer Fellows course credit, but this decision is at the discretion of individual universities.
- C16) Are there other slot types available, or are we required to only use the 675 reduced half-time slots?
CV Response: Programs are not required to request the 675 reduced half-time slot type. Various slot types are available and further outlined on page 9 of the RFA.
- C17) Can class time count toward service hours for Fellows?
CV Response: Yes, if the coursework is relevant to the program, those hours can be claimed as member training hours. Member training hours cannot exceed

20% of the aggregate total of member hours for the program. Please note, time spent on studying at home or assignments outside of class are not eligible to be counted.

C18) If a Fellow receives a Federal Work Study award does this affect their AmeriCorps living allowance?

CV Response: A program with a Fellow who receives a federal Work-Study award is required by the Serve America Act to reduce the Fellow's living allowance by the amount of the work-study award.

C19) If a Fellow is not able to complete the fellowship (illness, move away, etc...), is the Fellow able to be replaced?

CV Response: Yes, a Fellow can be replaced if they have completed less than 30% of their total service hours.

C20) We don't understand the "Fellows will leverage additional volunteers" in the Executive Summary section.

CV Response: This is a requirement of our traditional AmeriCorps applications to include volunteer recruitment as part of the program design. This is not a requirement of this Fellowship pilot; however, universities can incorporate volunteer recruitment into program designs if this component can help meet community needs.

C21) How are students expected to fulfill 1700 service hours between the service period of September 2020 through June 2021? Is there a correction needed to calculate the MSY for FTEs in this program? For instance, if a student were to commit 35-hours/week during that time frame (including winter break) it would equate to 1,260 hours.

CV Response: The Full Time Fellow calculation is correct; this is a federally set guideline for all AmeriCorps programs. In order to meet the 1700 service hours, the program may need to begin earlier and extend into August 2021. As a general guideline, it takes about 10.5 months at 40-hour/weeks to achieve 1700 service hours.

C22) If an institution has a planning grant with the intention of starting in January 2021, how will FTEs be calculated? Will students qualify for the education awards if they volunteer 35 hours/week?

CV Response: In this scenario of starting the program in January 2021, a Full Time Fellow service year is not possible. We encourage you to calculate the anticipated number of hours based on your university's class schedule and work backwards to identify the best service position type. Keep in mind that the program can extend into August 2021. In this scenario, all state grant dollars will need to be spent by the end of March 2021, and the program can sustain using the federal grant thereafter.

- C23) Is it expected that students and staff attend both the CV and boot camp programs?
CV Response: The CV Boot Camp and CV Conference are only required for staff. Partners have expressed an interest a Fellows Summit, which would require students to travel to the Bay Area for multi-day convening.
- C24) What if any institutional commitment to tuition for the selected fellows is required for the grant?
CV Response: Tuition assistance is highly encouraged by the Governor's Office and the specific amount is to be determined by the individual University. Like the living allowance, or waiving tuition, it serves as financial assistance to the student.
- C25) How does the award the Fellows will earn for participating in the program impact their financial aid? Does it subtract from what they are already receiving? Is it a "net positive" for them or "net neutral" since the grant involves allocating federal dollars as well as state dollars? In other words, will the fellow's stipend have to replace other federal or state aid they would have received?
CV Response: The Education Awards that students receive from AmeriCorps or CV for completing a service year will not impact a current student's federal aid. However, the living allowance that universities choose to provide will likely impact affect the student's federal aid. A program with a Fellow who receives a federal Work-Study award is required by the Serve America Act to reduce the Fellow's living allowance by the amount of the work-study award.
- C26) Is there a mandatory attendance requirement for fellows to receive their stipend? We have some students interested who have mandatory travel with other programs they are a part of (e.g. if they are on the debate team and have to travel to tournaments, or are on a sports team and have to travel)--is there a way we can accommodate that on an individual student basis just through our relationship with the community partner organization to provide "make up" hours when a student has to miss some time of their service commitment?
CV Response: The only mandatory attendance requirement is that Fellows serve for at least one hour during the pay period to receive a stipend. Universities can set additional expectations to receive a stipend during a pay period.
- C27) Similarly, if some have PT jobs they want to retain, can they work PT on top of working as a fellow?
CV Response: This is at the discretion of the university and community partners. The only restriction regarding a Fellow's employment is that they cannot be dually employed by the organization where the service is occurring.
- C28) Some of our students receive federal work-study as part of their aid package; would they still be eligible to earn this?
CV Response: Students receiving federal Work-Study are eligible to serve as Fellows. A program with a Fellow who receives a federal Work-Study award is

required by the Serve America Act to reduce the Fellow's living allowance by the amount of the work-study award.

D. Budget/Match Requirements

- D1) How do we determine our budget? How much of the grantee match must be cash? What is the match requirement for living allowance?
CV Response: The budget should be determined based on your organization's needs/resources and the structure of your proposed program. There is no required percentage for the portion of grantee match that must be cash. There is also no specific match requirement for living allowance; it may be covered by CNCS funds, non-federal cash match, or a combination of both.
- D2) Can we use this grant to pay for general organizational expenses?
CV Response: No. AmeriCorps grants are only for costs directly related to implementing the proposed project, not general organizational expenses. Fundraising costs, including raising funds to meet your AmeriCorps grant matching costs, are considered general organizational expenses and cannot be paid with grant funds. However, to a limited degree, you may capture indirect administrative costs related to your AmeriCorps program. The Application Instructions provide guidance on charging administrative costs to the grant.
- D3) How will living allowance costs be covered if it exceeds our program's proposed Cost per MSY?
CV Response: In some instances the Cost per MSY or the grant received by an applicant will not cover the full amount of the living allowance provided to Fellows and the applicant must use its own or other resources to supplement the living allowance. It is up to the applicant what costs will be covered by the organization in match and what will be covered by the state and federal shares, as long as the required match percentage for each cost share is met.
- D4) Can federal work-study be used as match funds?
CV Response: Federal work-study may be used as match funds as long as a program has received approval from the other federal agency to use their funds for match on an AmeriCorps grant.
- D5) Can other state or federal grants be used as match funds?
CV Response: State grant funds may be used as match for an AmeriCorps State grant. In order to use federal grant funds as match, you must demonstrate that the administering agency has approved those funds to be used as match for an AmeriCorps State grant.
- D6) Does the required full-time AmeriCorps-dedicated staff person need to be reflected 100% in Section 1 A of the budget?

CV Response: Yes. The full-time staff member whose time is fully dedicated to the AmeriCorps grant must be reflected 100% in Section 1 A of the budget.

D7) Can payroll be administered by a third party?

CV Response: Yes, if needed.

D8) What is the difference between a Fellows living allowance and an employee salary/wage if both require FICA and tax payments?

CV Response: Both the employee salary/wage and the living allowance are paid by the grantee using federal grant funds, matching funds, or a combination of both. Unlike a wage, an AmeriCorps living allowance is paid in regular increments throughout the service term regardless of the number of hours served during a pay period.

D9) Are the Fellows on our payroll (with taxes and other deductions) or on CV/CNCS payroll?

CV Response: Grantees are responsible for distributing Fellows living allowance on their payroll. The grantee must pay FICA for any Fellows receiving a living allowance and must withhold Social Security and Medicare taxes from the Fellow's living allowance. The grantee must also withhold Federal personal income taxes from Fellow living allowances, requiring each Fellow 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. See Budget Narrative Instructions.

D10) What is the impact on the living allowance for residential programs, or programs that provide housing?

CV Response: Residential programs, or programs that otherwise provide housing, should ensure that the living allowance that they are providing, in addition to the value of the housing, does not equal more than the maximum living allowance.

D11) Do the Corporation Fixed Amount and CV Share come off the top of the federal funding amount requested?

CV Response: The Corporation Fixed Amount is for indirect administrative costs the organization incurs in administering the program. The CNCS share may be used for indirect administrative costs without documentation supporting the allocation; the grantee share is match for the same. CV Share is the fixed amount that CV withholds for administration expenses.

D12) Where are descriptions included in the Budget Narrative?

CV Response: For items in the budget, include descriptions in the "Item" and "Purpose" columns for each line item. For the sources of match, include descriptions (including whether the match is "proposed" or "secured") in the "Intended Purpose" column of the Sources and Types of Match Contributions table.

- D13) How likely is it that the State funds will be renewed for 2021-22?
CV Response: Though it is still early in the budget process, we've received early indications that there's interest to renew State funds for FY 2020, which if appropriated, would support operations in 2021-22. The state budget is subject to Governor's Office and Legislative approval. In the event that State funds are not renewed, universities will have the option to apply for competitive federal funds at a higher cost per Fellow to continue the fellowship. The current maximum federal cost per MSY cap is \$15,479.
- D14) Does a university's scholarship allocation for a Fellow count toward the required cost share?
CV Response: A university's scholarship allocation for a Fellow does not count toward the required cost share; however, any allocation towards program operating expenses would.
- D15) Please explain how the following works: "No more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on Americorps grants, of which up to two percent may be allocated to cover CV share of indirect costs." Does that mean we are allowed to allocate up to 3% of overall operating funds toward our indirect costs?
CV Response: For the federal grant, you're allowed to allocate up to 3% of the overall operating federal funds toward indirect costs and 10% of all direct expenditures in grantee share indirect costs. For the state grant, you're allowed to allocate up to 5% of the overall operating state funds toward indirect costs. It is important to note that the state grant is applied to the grantee share of indirect costs so the total grantee share including other match sources still needs to be within the 10% of all direct expenditures in grantee share indirect costs. If you have a federally approved indirect cost rate plan you may use that rate.
- D16) Can we apply our federally negotiated indirect rate toward the state operating funds, or just the federal operating funds?
CV Response: Since the state operating funds are considered part of the match needed for the federal grant, you cannot apply the federally negotiated indirect rate separately to the state operating funds.
- D17) Could I apply for a no cost extension through August 2021?
CV Response: Though we have not yet been granted a no cost extension through August 2021, we do not anticipate any problem getting this approved at the federal level.
- D18) Does the person managing the grant have to spend 100% of their time on the program?
CV Response: Grantees are, in general, most successful when they assign a full-time staff member to the grant 100% of the time. While we highly encourage one staff member to be dedicated to the planning grant, we understand staffing

can be challenging due to the collapsed timeline of this pilot program. We are open to alternate staffing patterns with multiple staff, as long as one person is spending a majority of their time overseeing the planning activities. During the program implementation period, at least one full-time staff member is required to dedicate 100% of their time to the grant. To ensure an optimal experience for your partners, student Fellows, and the program staff, this requirement is not flexible.

- D19) Can we pass funding onto partner nonprofit organizations? For example, can we provide small stipends to the staff working on the project at partner sites, or capacity building support in order to manage Fellows?
CV Response: Yes, if your institution would like to financially support nonprofit partner please build it into the “contractual and consultant services” section of the budget.
- D20) Are we able to be reimbursed for funds we’ve spent before we’re granted them? Page 13 indicates project start date may not occur prior to a grantee’s contract execution date with CV.
CV Response: Programs are not able to be reimbursed for planning grant activities prior to the contract execution. CV recognizes the tight timeframe and will contract grants as soon as possible. California Volunteers expects the contracting process to begin in February.
- D21) What fellowship work has to be finished by the March 31, 2021 California Volunteers grant deadline? Will we need to spend CA Volunteer funds first and then Americorps?
CV Response: Cost reimbursements for the State grant need to be submitted to California Volunteers by March 31st. The program can continue until July 2021 utilizing Federal grant dollars. Therefore, it is highly encouraged to spend State grant funds first and then draw down on the Federal funds.
- D22) Our match is primarily our investment in faculty and staff time. Is that sufficient as long as it constitutes 15% of the total costs of the program we propose?
CV Response: Yes, for the operating grant; you will need 24% match for the planning grant.
- D23) Can you elaborate/explain “developing matching fund strategies beyond the first year”? Does the funding for fellows go away after the first year or just the planning money?
CV Response: The planning grant is one time funding for a period of up to 12 months. The operating grant is also one year funding, and although it is still early in the budget process, we’ve received early indications that there’s interest to renew State funds for FY 2020, which if appropriated, would support operations in 2021-22. The budget is subject through Governor’s Office and Legislative approval. In the event that State funds are not renewed, universities will have the option to apply for competitive federal funds at a higher cost per Fellow to

continue the fellowship. The current maximum federal cost per MSY cap is \$15,479. Due to the uncertainty, CV is offering programs funding through planning grants to develop matching fund strategies beyond the first year, in the event that additional funds are needed.

D24) Which staff will require a background search?

CV Response: All staff with salaries listed on the both the planning and operating budget are required to meet all AmeriCorps background check requirements.

D25) Can we use planning grant funds for faculty stipends for professional development? Can we use it for training to better understand the Performance Measurement expectations?

CV Response: Budgeting for staff training is permitted if it is directly tied to program needs. Budgeting for staff training that is needed to train Fellows to perform service is also permitted.

D26) What types of things can we fund through the implementation grant vs. the planning grant? Can you provide examples?

CV Response: Details are provided in the Application Instructions (for implementation costs see page 22-27; for planning costs see pages 39-42).

D27) What do you anticipate matching requirements to be beyond year one?

CV Response: If State funds for FY 2020 are renewed, which if appropriated, would support operations in 2021-22, the match requirements would remain the same in Year 2. The budget is subject through Governor’s Office and Legislative approval. In the event that State funds are not renewed, universities will have the option to apply for competitive federal funds at 24% overall match to continue the fellowship. However, please note that the federal maximum cost per MSY is significantly lower (\$15,479 for FY 20) than the combined funding level available through this opportunity. The minimum federal match requirement is 24% for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year 10, according to the chart below:

AmeriCorps Funding Year	1, 2, 3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Grantee Share Requirements	24%	26%	30%	34%	38%	42%	46%	50%

D28) What training and technical assistance sessions do you anticipate CV providing and how should we budget for them?

CV Response: We will offer a variety of training and technical assistance via phone or webinar as well as a couple of in-person trainings. CV offers a one to two day Program Readiness Bootcamp for new programs in the spring, summer and fall. Bootcamp requires planning grant staff to travel to Sacramento overnight. This expense should be listed in the planning grant budget. CV also

hosts an annual conference for all grantees in the summer. This one-day conference will require staff travel to Sacramento overnight and this expense should be listed both in the operating and planning grant budgets. There may also be a potential opportunity to attend a regional conference in Albuquerque, NM in Spring 2020. While not required, this regional conference can be budgeted in the planning grant budget.

- D29) Is there a requirement for tuition assistance as mentioned in the California Civic Action Fellows Concept Paper?

CV Response: Tuition assistance is highly encouraged by the Governor's Office and the specific amount is to be determined by the individual University. Like the living allowance, or waiving tuition, it serves as financial assistance to the student.

- D30) Can we budget for teaching faculty time spent on the grant?

CV Response: Yes, teaching faculty time spent on grant specific activities can be billable to the grant. Please note that any staff that you list on the budget will also need to have background checks conducted.

- D31) When do we expect the payments for the planning grants to be released?

CV Response: Expenses for the planning can be charged to the grant as soon as the contract with CV is executed in March. The planning grant is on a cost reimbursement basis, and invoices can be submitted at the end of each month.

- D32) Confirming that you do not want us to list the living allowances for services in the personnel section of the operating budget.

CV Response: Yes, living allowance cost should be provided in Section II Member Costs in cost category "A. Living Allowance" of the operating budget..

- D33) You appear to put a limit on our federally negotiated rate so that when we use the total in section II for living allowances in our base, even if the 62% of wages and salaries is higher than 5% (or .0526) of the total costs in part 1 and 2, we cannot charge more than the .0526 of those combined amounts.

CV Response: If you are using an approved federal indirect cost rate you do not need to use the calculations leveraged in the indirect section. However, the CNCS grant side cannot exceed the 5% (.0526). The variance of your approved indirect cost rate may be placed in grantee share.

- D34) If we assume that our negotiated rate totals at or above the max rate, when the RFP says "as allowed by CNCS, California volunteers retains 40% of the federal share of administrative costs" does that mean we get 60% of the .0526 of the total award and the rest of our allowable IDC goes to CV?

CV Response: Of the 5% CNCS allowed California Volunteers retains 2% for fees.

- D35) IF we were using option A you would expect living allowances for volunteers to be included in the award total. You do not allow us to offer it as a personnel cost.
CV Response: Living allowances are approved for AmeriCorps members only and are not considered personnel cost. or stipends for non-AmeriCorps volunteers. Living allowances for AmeriCorps members are allowable program expenses that can be included in the total grant award.
- D36) Does scholarship or grant support count as a part of the institution's 15% contribution to the program? Furthermore, may institutions consider a student's financial need in determining the amount awarded to each student?
CV Response: A scholarship would not count toward the grant match unless it was given as part of the monthly living allowance. Please see living allowance guidance on pages 11 and 12 of the RFA for more information. As long as a student meets the minimum federal eligibility requirements, each institutions may impose additional qualification requirements.
- D37) On page 13 of the RFP, the match requirement is 24%, but on other sections of the RFP it indicates 15%. Please clarify why the different percentages are listed?
CV Response: To clarify, the 24% match requirement is for the planning grant, whereas the 15% is for the operating program grant (see page 10 of the RFA for more information).
- D38) We envision the students doing their service learning in fall, earning 675 hours ("Reduced Half-Time" from the Fellow Service Year Conversion chart), we want to make sure we understand what this means for the money they will earn and receive. Referencing the RFA pp. 11-12, are the below calculations right?: 10 Fellows at Reduced Half-Time (675=.3809524 equivalence) = 3.809525 x \$7,920 of federal grant funding (\$30,171.44) + 3.809525 x \$20,000 in state funds (\$76,190.50) = total of \$106,361.94 maximum we can request
CV Response: If you are requesting ten 675 reduced-half time slots, the following formula is used to calculate the maximum grant amount: [(\$20,000 state dollars per MSY x 3.809524 MSY= \$30,171.43) + (\$7,920 federal dollars per MSY x 3.809524 MSY=\$76,190.48) =\$106,361.91].
- D39) The maximum living allowance we can disperse for 10 Fellows is calculated as: \$11,111 per fellow for 675 hours (Reduced Half Time) = \$111,110. This exceeds the amount of grant funds calculated above so does this mean that it is up to us to decide how much of grant would go towards living allowances for the fellows?
CV Response: Yes, it is at the individual institution's discretion to decide how much of the grant can be allocated for living allowances as long as it does not exceed the minimum and maximum amount listed in the RFA for each slot type. To clarify, while it is strongly encouraged, there is no requirement to provide a living allowance for Fellows serving less than full-time. It may be useful to differentiate the two calculations being used, the cost per MSY is used to calculate the maximum grant request above. The living allowances are the

Fellow stipends that a university may choose to give to the Fellow. The cost per MSY calculation should not be used to calculate the living allowance for Fellows.

- D40) The Education Award for AmeriCorps Fellows (only Fed funds because ours will be Reduced Half Time) is \$2,321.90 per fellow (and these are federal funds), so we should request \$23,219.00.

CV Response: To clarify, the Education Award does not come out of the grant so it should not be included in the budget. AmeriCorps and CV provide the Education Awards separate from the grant and goes directly to the students. Upon receipt of the education awards, students may direct the awards to the appropriate higher education institution(s) of their choice.

E. Performance Measures/Logic Model

- E1) Do the AmeriCorps Fellows in my program have to be directly providing the service counted in California Performance Measurement Worksheets?

CV Response: The measures, including National Performance Measures, selected by an AmeriCorps program should reflect the expected result of the AmeriCorps program activities. The AmeriCorps Fellows do not have to interact directly with the beneficiaries of the service, but they must provide direct support that makes the program's results possible.

- E2) Do all Fellows have to work on the exact same activities or can the activities differ slightly, if they are all working toward the same performance measure targets?

CV Response: As long as the activities in which the AmeriCorps Fellows engage are consistent with your program's Theory of Change and align with the performance measure instructions for the National Performance Measures you wish to use, the activities do not have to be exactly the same for all Fellows.

- E3) Can I count the same people in more than one Performance Measure output?

CV Response: Unless otherwise specified, the same individuals may be counted more than once across different Measures for different services (interventions) they may be receiving. However, programs cannot count the same individual more than once within any one specific Performance Measure.

- E4) Am I allowed to allocate funds for collecting and analyzing data? If so, how much?

CV Response: Costs related to measuring the performance of a program are allowable grant expenses. There is no standard recommended amount. As with all cost reimbursement grants, these costs must be reasonable, allowable for the proposed program, and properly allocated across grant activities.

- E5) Can two or more outputs have the same outcome?

CV Response: It depends on the program model; if the program model represents a continuum of care/services where participating leads from one level

of service to another, then it makes sense to create an aligned measure of multiple outputs that lead to a single outcome. If there are two completely different interventions that lead to the same outcome, those should be reported with each output/outcome as their own aligned measure.

- E6) What is a “self-nominated” or “applicant-determined” performance measure?
CV Response: A self-nominated or applicant-determined performance measure is one in which the applicant identifies the outputs and/or outcomes that will be measured, based on its intervention. This is different from the National Performance Measures, where CNCS pre-determines common outputs and, in some instances, outcomes with specific definitions and data collection methods that applicants must use. In any case, performance measure targets are determined by the applicant.
- E7) Are National Performance Measures required?
CV Response: The use of National Performance Measures is not required but highly encouraged where there is alignment with your program’s theory of change and service activities.
- E8) How do I decide if my program should select National Performance Measures?
CV Response: If the National Performance Measures align with your program’s activities, then CV strongly advocates their selection. The *National Performance Measures Instructions* provide definitions, requirements, and guidelines that will help you determine which are right for you. These instructions can be found on the RFA webpage.
- E9) What are the reporting requirements if I am using National Performance Measures?
CV Response: Performance reporting requirements are the same for all grantees, regardless of performance measures.
- E10) If our program will have more than one focus area, do we need to have separate PMWs for each focus area?
CV Response: If Fellows are providing distinct interventions in different focus areas, you would need to include a separate PMW to cover those needs and services.
- E11) Does the logic model need to be fully flushed out at the time of our application submission?
CV Response: Since this funding opportunity is tied to a planning grant, the logic model submitted with the application can change. This is certainly something that can be further refined during the planning grant period.
- E12) How do I get more help understanding Performance Measures?
CV Response: The Performance Measure worksheet may look daunting at first, but we assure the document is very approachable. Remember, the PMW is an

expanded version of the Logic Model; and the Logic Model is a visual representation of your Program Narrative (Program Narrative -> Logic Model -> Performance Measure Worksheet). For more information on Performance Measures, please see (1) [CNCS Website: Best Practices in Performance Measure Design](#); (2) [High Quality Performance measurement \(eCourse\)](#); (3) [How to Use the CNCS National Performance Measure Instructions \(eCourse\)](#)

E13) I am having trouble with the PMW since our approach is capacity building v. direct service, could you please provide any guidance?

CV Response: We encourage you to keep the PMW very broad to capture success. So in filling out the PMW, consider the CNCS National Performance Measure output: "G3-3.4: Number of organizations that received capacity building services"; outcome: "G3-3.10A: Number of organizations that increase their efficiency, effectiveness, and/or program reach". Remember that output is the Fellow's work that is being measured at the end of the service (Fellow's direct work that contributes to building the capacity of the organization they're serving); and outcome is the organizational impact achieved as a result of the member's service (how much did the needle move on addressing the capacity needs of the nonprofits).

As a rule, CV considers capacity building activities to be *indirect services* that enable the grant supported organizations to provide stronger, expanded, and sustained *direct services* in meeting critical community needs. Capacity building activities cannot be solely intended to support the administration or operations of the organization. Examples of capacity building activities include:

- Recruiting and/or managing community volunteers.
- Implementing effective volunteer management practices.
- Completing community assessment that identifies goals and recommendations.
- Developing new systems and business processes (technology, performance management, training, etc.) or enhancing existing systems and business processes.

E14) Is a mid-term outcome required for the Logic Model?

CV Response: Each performance measure must have at least an aligned output and mid-term or medium-term outcome. A mid-term outcome is not required, but may be necessary in achieving the outcome targets at the end of the program year.

E15) Some of what is being asked in the PMW we will develop during the planning phase (e.g. - instruments). This is also the case for the Fellow Development PMW. We will develop the training and support activities as part of our planning phase. How do we then fill out this form?

CV Response: Please fully fill out the PMW to the best of your ability based on the knowledge you and your team have currently. The CV staff review team assigned to review your grant application will provide feedback on the materials

submitted and will work with you to iron out any critical details. After this clarification/feedback period, the application will then need to be transferred to CNCS's online grants management system, eGrants. Certain aspects of the application such as the budget and performance measurement targets will need to be in their final form for CNCS submission.

- E16) In the Target section of the PMW, examples are given regarding National Measure Output and Outcome Targets. Are we required to provide this type of info? If so where can we access examples? The link doesn't provide examples.

CV Response: Yes, the output and outcomes targets need to be filled out. The National Performance Measures can be accessed here:

<https://californiavolunteers.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/116/2018/09/2019-National-Performance-Measure-Instructions.pdf>

- E17) Can you explain the example of national measure output target in Section 8 of Needs and Service Performance Measurement Worksheet instructions (p.19 of RFA)?

CV Response: The national performance measure being referenced in the sample PMW can be found online here: <https://californiavolunteers.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/116/2018/09/2019-National-Performance-Measure-Instructions.pdf>. Section ED1A refers to specific national performance measures for education and can be paired with several outcomes (based on the objective and interventions).