CALIFORNIA VOLUNTEERS

2022 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity

AmeriCorps

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Applications due November 8, 2021

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO APPLICANTS: The following documents are necessary to complete a 2022-23 operating grant application for AmeriCorps funding. All can be found on the California Volunteers website, https://californiavolunteers.ca.gov/grants/americorps/.

(1) Request for Applications (RFA)
(2) Mandatory Supplemental Guidance
(3) Application Instructions
(4) Application Forms
(5) National Performance Measures Instructions

NOTE FOR CONTINUATION PROGRAMS: If you are currently funded by CaliforniaVolunteers (CV) and need to apply for year two or three of continuation funding, this RFA does **not** apply to you. Instructions will be e-mailed directly to you by CV.

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CONTACT INFORMATION

This Request for Applications (RFA) is available on the California Volunteers (CV) AmeriCorps funding webpage at californiavolunteers.ca.gov/grants/americorps.

California Volunteers is committed to providing the most current information available to all applicants. We will rely primarily upon our website to keep applicants aware of changes. Please check our website frequently for updates and information on technical assistance opportunities.

Please submit questions about this funding opportunity to Funding@cv.ca.gov. Responses will be included in a list of *Frequently Asked Questions* (FAQs) that we will update periodically on the CV AmeriCorps funding webpage. Applicants are encouraged to submit their questions well in advance of the application deadline as CV is not obligated to respond to questions that are received 48 hours prior to the application due date.

For questions regarding multi-state or Indian Tribes applications submitted directly to AmeriCorps, please contact:

AmeriCorps
Phone: (202) 606-7508
TTY: (202) 606-3472
Email: americorpsnational@cns.gov

OVERVIEW

State Entity Name: California Volunteers
Funding Opportunity Title: 2022 AmeriCorps State Grants
Announcement Type: Initial Announcement
CFDA Number: 94.006

Disclosure: Publication of this Announcement of AmeriCorps State Grant Funding Opportunity (RFA) does not obligate California Volunteers (CV) to award any specific number of grants or to obligate any particular amount of funding. The actual level and timing of grant funding will be subject to the availability of annual federal appropriations.

Funds requested under this opportunity are subject to applicable federal laws, rules, and regulations. References to specific regulations will be linked to e-CFR at www.ecfr.gov.

Important Dates:
- Deadline: The **Complete Application** is due to CV by **5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on Tuesday, November 8, 2021**.

- Application Notification: Applicants will be notified of their status in December 2021. Final funding decisions will be made in May 2022. See section IV. Application Review Information A. California Volunteers Review and Selection Process for more information.

Our Purpose:
California Volunteers is the State Service Commission responsible for engaging Californians in service, volunteering, and civic action to tackle our State's most pressing challenges and lift up all communities. California Volunteers has engaged local communities through innovative and impactful grant making and program development at both the state and local levels for nearly 30 years. By supporting more than 4,000 AmeriCorps State members annually, California Volunteers aims to inspire the next generation of civic leaders, create a pathway to debt-free college, and build a culture of service and civic engagement in California.

The *2022 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity* awards AmeriCorps grants to community partnerships that will engage AmeriCorps members in *evidence-informed* or *evidence-based* service solutions (see *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*) to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn up to $10,000 in scholarship awards that they can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

This *2022 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity* should be read together with the AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR Sections 2520-2550. The following documents are necessary to complete the application for 2022-2023 AmeriCorps Funding:
(1) 2022 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Request for Applications (RFA)
(2) 2022 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Mandatory Supplemental Guidance (Mandatory Supplemental Guidance)
(3) 2022 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Application Instructions (Application Instructions)
(4) 2022 AmeriCorps State Grant Application Forms
(5) 2022 National Performance Measures Instructions

Note for Continuation Programs: If you are currently funded by CV and need to apply for year two or three continuation funding, this RFA does not apply to you. Instructions will be e-mailed directly to you by CV for both competitive and formula continuation programs at a later time.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

This timeline is subject to change due to federal announcements and other events.

November 8, 2021	**Applications due to CV in eGrants by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time***
November 10 – December 8, 2021	Application Review Period
December, 2021	Applicants Selected for Competitive Submission, Formula Waitlist, or Release Notified
December 9 - 22, 2021	Competitive Applicant Clarification and Strengthening Period**
December 27, 2021 – January 4, 2022	Competitive Electronic Application Review/Final Edits ***
May 2022	Final funding decisions announced
July-October 2022	Contracting process and program launch

* Applicants should give themselves ample time ahead of the deadline to submit their application in eGrants.

** Applicants and their partnership representatives must be available during this timeframe to respond to CVs' clarification requests and feedback to strengthen their application.

*** During this period, applicants must have appropriate staff available to enter and submit application into AmeriCorps's web-based management system.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Funding Program Description

California Volunteers
As the State Service Commission for California, California Volunteers (CV) is tasked with engaging Californians in service, volunteering, and civic action to tackle our State's most pressing challenges while lifting up all communities. Josh Fryday, State of California Chief Service Officer, leads the agency in consultation with a 25-member Commission appointed by the Governor. The Commission develops and adopts policies that guide the State's AmeriCorps grantmaking process.

California Volunteers receives funds to support service programs in California from AmeriCorps, a federal agency that brings people to tackle the country's most pressing challenges, through national service and volunteering. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities. Learn more at AmeriCorps.gov.

Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding
AmeriCorps is a national service program that provides opportunities for Americans each year to serve their country as AmeriCorps members by engaging in intensive results-driven service that addresses community problems. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. AmeriCorps members are recruited, trained, supervised, and managed by the funded organization, and may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, AmeriCorps members are eligible to receive up to $10,000 in scholarship funds from California Volunteers and the National Service Trust that they can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

To be eligible to serve in an AmeriCorps program, an individual must be: U.S. Citizen, U.S. National or Lawful Permanent Resident of the United States, at least 17 years of age (no upper age limit), and high school graduate or GED recipients (or working towards this goal). Additionally, selected candidates must meet criminal history checks requirements.

AmeriCorps grants are awarded on a competitive basis to eligible organizations proposing to engage members in *evidence-based or evidence-informed* interventions to strengthen communities (see *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*). Grants are solely for program expenses and cannot be used for general organizational operating expenses. AmeriCorps members or grant funds can help meet unmet needs or can expand an organization's ability to better address community needs, but cannot be used to duplicate, displace or supplant resources that already exist in a community.

B. Funding Priorities
The following are priority areas that will receive preference in the California Volunteers grant selection process:
- Efforts to help local communities respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants may propose programming to aid communities in their efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, including outcomes of COVID-19 on student subgroups described in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
- Climate change and environmental stewardship including urban greening, food recovery and sustainable food systems, wildfire mitigation, renewable energy and energy efficiency, building community resilience, and conservation and habitat preservation.
- Educational opportunity and economic mobility for communities experiencing persistent unemployment or underemployment, and students experiencing homelessness or those in foster care.
- Programs that address food insecurity.
- Programs that foster community engagement and social cohesion.

In addition, California Volunteers seek to support programs that address unmet needs in any of the following communities or geographic areas:
- The five California neighborhood clusters with the lowest American Human Development Index for California[1]:
    - Tulare County: Visalia, Tulare, and Porterville
    - Los Angeles County: Huntington Park, Florence-Graham and Walnut Park
    - Kern County: Bakersfield
    - Los Angeles County: Los Angeles City (Southeast/East Vermont)
    - Los Angeles County: South Central/Watts
- Counties that currently have no AmeriCorps state presence[2]:
    Amador, Kings, Lassen, Modoc, Mono, Sierra, Sutter

To receive priority consideration, applicants must demonstrate that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes. Proposing programs that receive priority consideration does not guarantee funding. Applications addressing community challenges outside of the stated priorities are welcomed.

Additional Focus Areas
In addition to the Priority Areas, The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. National AmeriCorps has the following focus areas that California Volunteers will consider grant applications, although not at equal weight as the Priority Areas:

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 prepare for success in post-secondary educational institutions.

4. *Environmental Stewardship*— Grants will support responsible stewardship of the environment, while preparing communities for challenging circumstances and helping Americans respond to and recover from disruptive life events: programs that conserve natural habitats; protect clean air and water; maintain public lands; support wildland fire mitigation and sustainable forest management;

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[1] The American Human Development Index for California measures three fundamental human development dimensions: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living. The index combines, health, education, and income indicators into a composite measure expressed on a scale of 0 to 10. The identified neighborhood clusters have HDI scores less than 3. Source: Lewis, K. Burd-Sharps, S. (2014). The Measure of America Series: A Portrait of California 2014-2015.

[2] Counties with no AmeriCorps presence based on partnership information reported by programs funded in the most recent complete program year (2017-18).

cultivate individual and community resilience; and provide reforestation services after floods or fires, such as nature-based solutions.

5. *Healthy Futures*— Grants will provide support for activities that will address the opioid crisis; improve access to primary and preventive health care for communities; 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 in youth with the purpose of reducing childhood obesity.

6. *Veterans and Military Families*— Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength; increase the number of veterans, wounded warriors, military service members, and their families served by AmeriCorps-supported programs; and/or increase the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through AmeriCorps-supported programs.

Capacity Building: In addition to the above core focus areas, grants can provide support for capacity building activities provided by AmeriCorps members. CV considers capacity building activities to be *indirect services* that enable CV-supported organizations to provide stronger, expanded, and sustained *direct services* in the six focus areas. 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.

C. Estimated Funds Available Funds
The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual federal appropriations, which has yet to be determined for FY 2022. Generally, CV receives AmeriCorps grant funding from AmeriCorps through two federal pots of money: **formula** and **competitive** funds. California Volunteers receives formula funds from AmeriCorps through a population-based allocation. Competitive funds are awarded to CV to support a select number of programs that have competed successfully in both the state grant competition administered by CV and the national grant competition administered by AmeriCorps. All applicants first apply for funding through CV to receive a state ranking and then CV selects which applications are submitted to the AmeriCorps State and National competition for competitive funding consideration. Applications submitted to the national competition are not guaranteed funding at any level. AmeriCorps makes final award decisions for competitive funds; those applicants approved for competitive grant awards are considered grantees of CV. Unsuccessful applicants submitted to the AmeriCorps State and National grant competition will return to a rank-order list for consideration of formula funds based on results from the CV grant review process.

In making formula funding decisions, CV will award funds in the following order: Governor's Initiatives, continuation programs followed by successful new/recompeting applicants in rank order.

D. Estimated Award Amount
Grant awards have two components: operating funds and AmeriCorps member positions. Grant award amounts vary – both in the level of operating funds and in the type and amount of AmeriCorps member positions - as determined by the scope of the program. CV will review applications and determine the final award amount based on availability of funds. Award amounts may vary from the requested amounts.

E. Performance Measurement Requirements
All applications must include a set of performance measures using the California Performance Measurement Worksheets (PMWs) that addresses requirements described in the *Application Instructions.* Each applicant will need to complete at least <u>three PMWs</u> as follows:

- *Primary Needs and Service Performance Measurement Worksheet*—Applicants must have at least one aligned performance measure (output paired with outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary program needs and service activity. This may be a National Performance Measure or an applicant determined measure depending on the program's theory of change. Applicants proposing more than one program activity must include at least an output without associated outcome(s) for each additional program activity proposed, provided that the output measures a significant program activity. Please note that CV values the quality of performance measures over the quantity of performance measures. Applicants are strongly encouraged to focus member service hours in service activities that are significant to the program's theory of change and intended outcomes.
- *Member Development Worksheet*—Applicants must describe the training and other professional development that members will gain through the program.
- *Community Engagement Worksheet*—Successful applicants are required to engage one or more of its AmeriCorps members in volunteer recruitment to expand the impact and reach of the program in the communities served. As such, all applications must include two output measures-- the number of volunteers recruited by AmeriCorps members and service hours contributed by those volunteers.

National Performance Measures
National Performance Measures are developed by AmeriCorps for each focus area. CV expects applicants to use National Performance Measures if they align with the applicant's theory of change. The National Performance Measures can be found in the *2022 National Performance Measures Instructions*. For more information, see the *Application Instructions* for specific requirements for each required performance measurement area.

F. Authority
These funds are available under authority of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1990, as amended, (NCSA) (42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.).

II. ELIGIBILITY

A. Eligible Applicants

Typically, the following non-federal entities (as defined in 2 CFR §200.69) that propose to operate only within California who have DUNS numbers and are registered in System for Award Management (SAM) are eligible to apply for AmeriCorps funding through California Volunteers:

- Nonprofit organizations (2 CFR §200.70)
- Institutions of higher education(2 CFR §200.55)
- Local government/public agencies (2 CFR §200.64)
- State government agencies (2 CFR §200.90)
- Indian Tribes within the state of California (2 CFR §200.54)

Note: Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one State or Territory apply directly to AmeriCorps. Federally-recognized Indian Tribes may also apply directly to AmeriCorps.

Other Requirements

Under section 132A(b) of the National & Community Service Act, organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this RFA.

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—

1) Has been assessed,
2) For which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and
3) That 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. A similar restriction may be enacted with the appropriation which will fund awards under this RFA.

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, any organization described in Section 501 (c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501 (c)(4) that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for funding.

B. Community Partnerships Requirements

In order to maximize community involvement in the AmeriCorps program, all applicants are required to develop partnerships with at least three independent entities that include *one public and one private* partner (nonprofit or for-profit entity). Partners should have a significant role in planning, operating, and sustaining the program (e.g. match contribution, training resources, continuous improvement assessment, etc.).

C. Dun and Bradstreet University Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management System (SAM)

All applicants **must** register with the System for Award Management (SAM) at https://www.sam.gov/SAM/ and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If an applicant is awarded a grant, it must maintain an active SAM registration throughout the life of the award. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees at:
https://sam.gov/SAM/transcript/Quick_Guide_for_Grants_Registrations.pdf.

SAM registration must be renewed annually. CV suggests that applicants finalize a new registration or renew an existing one at least three weeks before the application deadline, to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise. **Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and address on all grant applications.**

AmeriCorps will not make awards to entities that do not have a valid SAM registration and DUNS or Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time AmeriCorps is ready to make a Federal award, AmeriCorps may determine that the applicant is not

qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Applicants must include an Employer Identification Number.

Applicants can obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online at the [DUNS Request Service](#). AmeriCorps recommends registering at least 30 days before the application due date if applicants do not yet have their UEI.

The Federal government is implementing Unique Entity Identifiers (UEI) as part of the SAM registration process to eventually replace DUNS numbers. AmeriCorps may ask applicants to add the UEI to their application as part of the clarification or pre-award process. AmeriCorps is adding a field to capture the UEI in eGrants. If you already have a UEI and the UEI field is available in eGrants, you can enter it at the time you submit your application.

III. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

A. Project and Award Period

The project period is generally one year. The grant award covers a three-year project period unless otherwise specified. Applications must include proposed activities and a detailed proposed budget for the first year of operation. California Volunteers expects that programmatic activities for the second and third years of operation will build upon and be similar in scope to those of the first year. Continuation funding for subsequent years is not guaranteed and shall be dependent upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance. California Volunteers reserves the right to adjust the amount of a grant award for subsequent years or elect to discontinue funding for subsequent years.

Grants awarded through this funding opportunity will support programming beginning in August of 2022. Successful applicants must start member service activities no later than mid-October 2022 and allow up to 12 months for members to complete a term of service. Additionally, the program may not start prior to the execution of the program's contract with California Volunteers, which means AmeriCorps members may not begin service, certify any member hours, or accrue costs on the federal share of the budget prior to the conclusion of the contracting process. More information on the contracting process will be provided at funding notification.

B. Cost per Member Service Year (MSY) - Funding Request Maximums

Applicants request for the **number and types of AmeriCorps member positions (slots)** that are needed to address the community need stated in their application **as well as the federal funds to partially support those**. Applicants are responsible to recruit and manage AmeriCorps members to fill those positions. Types of member positions (slot types) available are Full-time (1,700 hour service term), Three-Quarter-time (1,200 hours), Half-time (900 hours), Reduced Half-time (675 hours), Quarter-time (450 hours), Minimum-time (300 hours), and Abbreviated-time (100 hours).

A 1700-hour (Full-time) AmeriCorps member position is designed for one service year; hereafter referred to as one Member Service Year (MSY). The MSY is similar to a Full Time Equivalent (FTE), measuring positions as a fraction of full-time, so a full-time member is 1 MSY and a half-time member is .5 MSY.

Funding requests are in proportion to the number of members (MSYs) that a grantee will support. This is known as the *cost per MSY*. It is the 'cost' to the federal government, in support of the AmeriCorps program. The grant *cost per MSY* is determined by dividing the total AmeriCorps/federal share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested.

The *maximum amount of federal funds that an applicant may request from AmeriCorps per MSY* is determined on an annual basis for each grant type (See Table 1).

Table 1: Maximum Cost per MSY

Grant Program	Maximum
Cost reimbursement	$21,600
Full-Cost Fixed Amount Grant	$21,600
Professional Corps Fixed Amount Applicants	$1,000*
Education Award Program Fixed Amount Grant	$800 or $1,000**

For example, an applicant requesting for 25 MSYs (or 25 full-time equivalent service positions) may request **up to $21,600 to support each MSY requested** (or the number of full-time equivalent service positions requested). In this instance, the maximum amount of AmeriCorps funds the applicant may request would be $540,000 (25 MSYs x $21,600 cost per MSY = $540,000).

*AmeriCorps requires **Professional Corps** programs to cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non-AmeriCorps resources. CV will only consider operating funds of up to

$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate significant organizational financial need based on the materials reviewed. CV reserves the right to treat an applicant that meets the statutory requirements of a Professional Corps as such, whether or not they submitted their application as a professional corps program.

 ** Per 42 U.S.C. 12581a, AmeriCorps may provide the operational support under this section for a program in an amount that is not more than $800 per individual enrolled in an approved national service position, or not more than $1,000 per such individual if at least 50 percent of the persons enrolled in the program are disadvantaged youth.

C. Types of Grants

AmeriCorps grants can be awarded on a Cost Reimbursement or Fixed Amount basis. CV will not provide both types of grants for the same program in one fiscal year. Applicants will need to select and indicate which type of grant they are applying for in their application. The following types of AmeriCorps grants are offered through this funding opportunity. The chart below provides a summary of each grant type available through this RFA: Please see the *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance* for detailed explanations of each grant type.

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement	Fixed Amount			
Available Subtypes	Traditional	Full-Cost	Education Award Program (EAP)	Professional Corps	No Cost Slots
Maximum Cost per MSY	$21,600	$21,600	$800 or $1,000*	$1,000	$0
Type of Slots in the National Service Trust	All slot types	All slot types	All slot types	Full-time only	All slot types
Budget Submission Required at time of Application	Yes	Yes		Yes, if requesting operating funds	No
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		

*Per 42 U.S.C. § 12581a, AmeriCorps may provide the operational support under this section for a program in an amount that is not more than $800 per individual enrolled in an approved national service position, or not more than $1,000 per such individual if at least 50 percent of the persons enrolled in the program are disadvantaged youth.

D. Cost Sharing or Matching
Cost Reimbursement Grants
A first-time successful applicant is required to provide a single overall match of 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to minimum overall share chart found in 45 CFR § 2521.60 and below:

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

Section 121(e)(5) of the National Community Service Act (42 U.S.C. 12571(e)) requires that programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant report the amount and source of these funds to CV and AmeriCorps on the Federal Financial Report. Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout.

Grantees may request that partnering organizations provide a share of the match funding necessary to meet matching requirements. Programs may match their share of operating costs through cash or in-kind resources. Successful applicants must demonstrate matching funds are secured before CV can issue the grant award.

Alternative Match
Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in the regulations at 45 CFR §2521.60(b). To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Application Instructions. Applicants that plan to request an alternative match schedule must submit a request at the time the application is submitted.

Fixed Amount Grants (EAP, Full-Cost, Professional Corps, No-Cost Slots)
There is no specific match requirement for Fixed Amount Grants. AmeriCorps does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program; therefore, organizations should raise any additional revenue required.

E. Indirect Costs
Application budgets may include indirect costs. Based on qualifying factors, applicants will either use a federally-approved indirect cost rate, a 10 percent *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly as outlined in 2 CFR § 200.413. States, local governments, and Indian Tribes may use previously-approved indirect cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across federal awards. Applicants that have a federal negotiated indirect cost rate or that will be using the 10% *de minimis* rate must include the agreement in the application. However, under section 121(d) of the NCSA and AmeriCorps's regulations at 45 CFR 2517.710, 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.

See *Application Instructions* for more information on calculating indirect costs.

F. Minimum Program Size
The minimum program size funded by CV is 20 MSY (full-time equivalent member positions). California Volunteers believes this MSY requirement is necessary to provide members in quantities that make a substantial difference in meeting community needs. Applicants requesting less than the minimum required MSY level must include a compelling rationale with the application in order for the application to not be disqualified.

G. Maximum Grant Size

Applications being considered by CV for competitive funds do not have a maximum limit. Applicants who are unsuccessful in securing competitive funding will be considered for formula funding, based on their state ranking. Such programs may be subjected to a reduced budget up to $850,000.

H. Minimum Number of Members per Service Site

To ensure strong program design and to provide members with at least a minimal mutual support network, successful applicants must place a minimum of two AmeriCorps members at each service location as part of their program design. Exceptions to this requirement must be supported by compelling rationale in the application and receive approval from CV.

I. Member Living Allowance

A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage. The proposed budget must include a living allowance for full-time members that are within the required range per member (except as noted below). Due to the high costs of living in California, programs are strongly encouraged to provide a living allowance of $25,500 for Full Time members serving a 1700 hour term of service. Applications including a living allowance for Full Time members at this target level will receive preference consideration in the selection process.

Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members who serve less than full-time terms of service. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time member, it must comply with the maximum limits in the table below. The amount must be included in the proposed budget as either federal or grantee share.

Table 3: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance

Term of Service	MSY Equivalence	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Living Allowance
Full Time	1.00	1,700	$16,502	$33,004
Three-Quarter Time	.700	1,200	n/a	$23,103
Half Time	.500	900	n/a	$16,502
Reduced Half Time	.3809524	675	n/a	$12,542
Quarter Time	.26455027	450	n/a	$8,581
Minimum Time	.21164022	300	n/a	$6,931
Abbreviated Time	.05627705	100	n/a	$1,980

In most instances, the grant received by an applicant will not cover the full amount of the living allowance provided to members and the applicant must use its own or other resources to supplement member living allowance. Because the living allowance is taxable, subject to FICA, and the minimum living allowance may not fully cover the actual living expenses of members, programs may wish to offer living allowances in excess of the minimum requirements.

Exceptions to Living Allowance Requirements
EAP Grantees are not required to provide a living allowance, but if but if a living allowance is provided, it must comply with the maximum requirements set forth in the Living Allowance Table above.

Professional Corps Grantees must provide members a living allowance or salary, which must meet the minimum, but may exceed the maximum living allowance set in the Living Allowance Table above. Professional Corps member salaries are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve and are not included in the budget request (Federal Share).

J. Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards

AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service will be eligible for an Education Award paid outside of the grant from the National Service Trust. The amount of the Education Award is linked to the value of the Pell Grant. A member has up to seven years after his or her term of service to use the Education Award. CV will provide the updated Education Award amounts at the time of grant award.

K. Enrollment Requirements

Grantees are expected to enroll all MSYs awarded in the grant. California Volunteers reserves the right to adjust a program's grant amount due to low enrollment in order to maintain the awarded cost per member MSY. Successful applicants that do not fully enroll may be subject to a reduction in grant award amount and are likely to receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years.

L. Retention Requirements

Retention is determined by enrolled members who complete their service term. Members who quit the program effect your retention rate. These are an indicator of the grantee's ability to properly design and manage an AmeriCorps program that results in achieving the outcomes proposed. Though some attrition is normal, we expect grantees to pursue a strong member experience leading to at least the AmeriCorps desired minimum of 85% retention. Low retention rates 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 members are likely to receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years.

M. Evaluation Requirements (Required for recompeting grantees)

If the applicant has previously received three or more years of competitive funding for the same project being proposed (see the Mandatory Supplemental Information for the AmeriCorps definition of "same project"), the applicant must submit an evaluation plan as an attachment (see the *Submission of Additional Documents* section for more information). If the applicant has previously received six or more years of competitive funding for the same project being proposed, the applicant must submit both an evaluation plan and an evaluation report as attachments.

Applicants should use the Evaluation Plan Template provided in the Application Forms as part of their application. The template document provides detailed information about the AmeriCorps evaluation requirements (45 CFR 2522.700-710) and specifies the information that must be provided for the evaluation plan to be approved by AmeriCorps. The evaluation plan will not be scored and will not be reviewed until after funding decisions have been made.

IV. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. California Volunteers Review and Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed and selected for funding using a multi-stage process that includes CV Staff Review, Clarification and Feedback, and CV Commission approval. The review and selection process is intended to produce a balanced set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and strategic considerations described in this RFA. California Volunteers' review and selection process will occur in several stages as follow.

Compliance Check

California Volunteers staff will review all applications to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completeness requirements. Applications that are submitted by eligible organizations by the deadline and that address any compliance issues within 24 hours will advance to Staff Review. See the *Application Instructions* and *Application Forms* to ensure submission of a compliant grant application. Applications that have noncompliant issues identified may be disqualified or have points deducted from the application's total raw score.

An application is compliant if the applicant:
- is an eligible organizations
- submitted an application by the submission deadline
- includes are required application components

Staff Review

In Staff Review, reviewers will evaluate each application against assessment criteria outlined in this RFA and the accompanying Application Instructions. Staff will review applications in teams of at least three and come to a consensus score for each criterion. Applications that do not meet the minimum score threshold will be released from consideration.

Clarification Period

The application review process for this grant competition will include a Clarification Period. During the Clarification Period, applicants may be asked for clarifying information regarding issues of significance in the application and budget. This information is used by CV in making final funding recommendations. Not all applications are clarified. A request for clarification does not guarantee an award. Applications may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked clarification questions. An applicant's failure to respond to a request for clarification adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of its application from consideration.

NOTE: Applicants selected for competitive submission may need to respond to another round of clarification from AmeriCorps as part of their national grant application review process. This is scheduled to occur between March and April. AmeriCorps will send clarification to CV during that time, which will then be forwarded to the applicant with instructions for submission.

Risk Assessment Evaluation

CV staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant, including conducting due diligence to ensure an applicant's ability to manage federal funds and the applicant's past performance (if applicable.) This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding and the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If CV determines that an award will be made, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award. In evaluating risks, CV may consider the following, but not limited to:

Due Diligence:
- Federal debt delinquency
- suspension and debarment

- information available through OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as:
  - Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)
  - U.S. Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services
  - System for Award Management (SAM)
  - "Do Not Pay"
- reports and findings from single audits performed under Uniform Administrative Guidance and findings of any other available audits or investigations
- IRS Tax Form 990
- Oversight.gov
- Public Litigation Records

Operational and Financial Management:
- financial stability
- Operational and Financial Management Survey [3]

Past Performance:
- applicant's record in managing previous AmeriCorps awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
  - timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements
  - conformance to the terms and conditions of previous Federal awards
  - applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on award recipients
  - meeting matching requirements
  - the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
  - national service criminal history check compliance.

Other Programmatic Risks:
- publicly available information, including information from the applicant organization's website

Applications submitted to the national grant competition will be subjected to a similar Risk Assessment Evaluation conducted by AmeriCorps.

CV/AmeriCorps may use the results of the review of the risk assessment evaluation in determining which applications to fund. If CV/AmeriCorps concludes that the reasons for applicants having poor risk assessment evaluations are not likely to be mitigated, those applications may not be selected for funding.

Selection
The primary consideration in the selection of AmeriCorps programs is merit. Applicants must meet a minimum score threshold **and** satisfactorily address all clarification issues in order to be considered for funding. In lieu of a three-year operating grant, California Volunteers may award an application a limited-term "planning" or "program development" grant. A planning grant provides funds to support the development of an AmeriCorps program design and infrastructures needed to operate the program. A program development grant provides funds to support one year of implementation, where continued funding would be subject to available funds and satisfactory performance. Applicants not selected for competitive submission may be placed on the formula waitlist. Applicants will be notified at the time of Clarification if they have been conditionally approved for competitive submission, placed on the formula waitlist, or if they are being recommended for a planning grant or program development grant.

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[3] https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management/financial-and-grants-management

To help achieve a balanced portfolio for the State of California, final selections will be made based on key strategic considerations including the following:

- California Volunteers' Statewide Geographic Distribution Policy, in which the Commission will seek to ensure a minimum of 40 MSYs are placed in the Los Angeles region and 20 MSYs are placed in the remaining eight regions as determined by the California's Economic Strategy Panel. In order to achieve geographic parity, a program in an already represented region may be skipped, and another program may be selected. Under no circumstances will the Commission provide formula funding to an applicant that receives a score that is 10 or more points below the applicant it may displace.
- Ensure a minimum amount of funding for programs led by non-profit and non-state governmental organizations as required by AmeriCorps regulations.
- Distribution of service positions across funding priorities
- Supporting communities historically excluded and/or underserved from government services, addressing structural and institutional inequities, and/or increasing opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities.
- Meeting California Volunteers' equity goal of providing a livable stipend to AmeriCorps members

California Volunteers reserves the right to bypass an applicant's state ranking on a case-by-case basis under the following circumstances:

- An applicant has multiple national service funding opportunities available;
- The Commission has constrained resources; and/or
- The applicant presents serious concerns around grant performance and/or fiduciary responsibilities discovered after rankings have been completed.

Based on the evaluation of these strategic considerations, applications may be selected for funding over applications with a greater degree of alignment with the review criteria. In selecting applicants to receive awards under this RFA, the Chief Service Officer will endeavor to include a diverse portfolio of applications based on staff recommendations and strategic considerations. Applications selected by the Chief Service Officer will be presented to the California Volunteers Commission for final approval. Funding decisions are final—there is no appeal process.

California Volunteers reserves the right to award applications in an amount other than at the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so.

California Volunteers reserves the right to adjust or make changes to the review process, in the event that unforeseen challenges or exigent circumstances make it impossible, impractical or inefficient to execute the review process as planned. Any such adjustments or changes will not affect the selection criteria that will be used to assess applications submitted to CV in response to this RFA.

Feedback to Applicants
Applicants selected to proceed to the federal competition will receive feedback to strengthen their application at the time of Clarification. California Volunteers will work with applicants to shore up their application to ensure maximum viability at the national level. California Volunteers will provide feedback to all other applicants when funding decisions are announced.

B. Assessment Criteria
Each application must clearly describe a project that will effectively deploy AmeriCorps members to address a significant community problem. We urge all applicants to submit a high-quality application which carefully follows the guidance in the RFA and in the *Application Instructions.* The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization will receive funding.

Categories/Subcategories	Percentage
Program Design	**50**
Theory of Change and Logic Model	24
Evidence Tier	6
Evidence Quality	4
California Volunteers RFA Priority	10
Member Experience	6
Organizational Capability	**25**
Organizational Background and Staffing	9
Compliance and Accountability	8
Culture That Values Learning	4
Member Supervision	4
Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	**25**

Program Design (50 percent)
Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value. Please ensure the Theory of Change and Logic Model incorporates the funding priorities listed above, for example supporting communities historically excluded and/or underserved from government services, addressing structural and institutional inequities, or increasing opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities.

1. *Theory of Change and Logic Model (24 points)*
   The Theory of Change shall address:
   - The problem is prevalent and severe in communities where the program plans to serve and has been documented with relevant data.
   - The proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community problem.
   - The applicant's proposed intervention is clearly articulated including the design, dosage, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) leveraged volunteers.
   - The applicant's intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change.
   - The expected outcomes articulated in the application narrative and logic model represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem identified by the applicant.
   - The rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention(s) is reasonable.
   - The service role of AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.

   The Logic Model shall depict:
   - A summary of the community problem, including the role current or historical inequities faced by underserved communities may play in contributing to the problem.
   - The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:
     - Locations or sites in which members will provide services
     - Number of AmeriCorps members who will deliver the intervention
   - The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
     - The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions, or months of the intervention)
     - The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the total number of hours to be received by each service recipient to achieve the outcome, the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
     - The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level)

- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e., number of beneficiaries served, types and number of activities conducted.) If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as output indicators
- Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

Note: The logic model is a visual representation of the applicant's theory of change. Programs may include short, medium, or long-term outcomes in the logic model. Applicants are not required to measure all components of their Theory of Change. The applicant's performance measures should be consistent with the program's Theory of Change and should represent significant program activities.

In the application narrative, applicants should discuss the community need as it relates to the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index: https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html.
Also in the application narrative, applicants should discuss their rationale for setting output and outcome targets for their performance measures.

Rationales and justifications should be informed by the organization's performance data (e.g., program data observed over time that suggests targets are reasonable), relevant research (e.g., targets documented by organizations running similar programs with similar populations), or prior program evaluation findings.

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

2. *Evidence Base (10 points)*
The assessment of an applicant's evidence base has two parts. First, the applicant will be assigned to an evidence tier (see the *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*.) Second, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the degree to which it supports the proposed program design, including program aligned with the priority areas identified above, will be assessed and scored.

Evidence Tier (6 points):
An evidence tier will be assessed for each applicant for the purpose of understanding the relative strength of each applicant's evidence base and the likelihood that the proposed intervention will lead to outcomes identified in the logic model.[4]

Applicants who have outcome or impact evaluation reports of the same intervention described in the application (see *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance* for a definition of "same intervention") may submit up to 2 of those reports, plus (if applicable) the evaluation report from their last three-year grant cycle, to qualify for the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tier. In order to qualify for consideration, the intervention evaluated in the submitted report(s) must match the intervention proposed by the applicant in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the Program Narrative and Logic Model:

- Characteristics of the beneficiary population
- Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention
- Dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities

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[4] In 2021, the evidence tiers of successful AmeriCorps State and National applicants that were competing were as follows: Strong 38%, Moderate 19%, Preliminary 16%, and Pre-Preliminary 26%. As these figures indicate, AmeriCorps values and funds programs at all points along the evidence continuum and expects programs to progress along the evidence continuum over time. Thus, do not be deterred from applying for funding due to your current evidence level.

- The context in which the intervention is delivered
- Outcomes of the intervention

Submitted reports that do not sufficiently match the intervention proposed by the applicant in all of these areas will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points. Submission of additional documents that are not consistent with the guidance and requirements described in the RFA (e.g., advocacy pieces, policy briefs, other narratives that are not research studies or program evaluations) will not be reviewed.

In the Evidence Tier section of the application narrative, applicants must (1) summarize the study design and key findings of any outcome or impact evaluation report(s) submitted and (2) describe any other evidence that supports their program, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies that inform their program design. Applicants who submit evaluation reports for consideration must also describe in the Evidence Base section of the application narrative how the intervention described in the submitted reports is the same as the intervention described in the application (see *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*).

Applicants should provide citations for the studies they describe, if applicable; however, reviewers will not review any documents external to the application other than evaluation report(s) submitted in accordance with the Application Instructions.

Applicants must meet all requirements of an evidence tier in order to be considered for that tier.

If the evaluation reports submitted by the applicant do not meet the definitions in the *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance*, the applicant may be considered for a lower evidence tier.

Evidence Quality (4 points)
After the applicant's evidence tier has been assessed, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the extent to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored.

For applicants who are assessed as being in the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tiers, reviewers will score the submitted evaluation reports using the following standards:
- The submitted reports are of satisfactory methodological quality and rigor for the type of evaluation conducted (e.g., adequate sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, appropriate use of control or comparison groups, etc.)
- The submitted reports describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years
- The submitted reports show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest

For applicants who are assessed as being in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier, reviewers will score the narrative provided in the Evidence Base section of the application using the following standards:
- The applicant uses relevant evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies, to inform their proposed program design
- The described evidence is relatively recent, preferably from the last six years
- The evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest

Applicants assessed in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier who do not provide adequate responses to the Evaluation Quality standards will not meet the threshold requirements for this Funding Opportunity and will not be considered for competitive funding.

3. *Funding Priority (10 points)*

- The applicant proposed program fits within one or more of the California Volunteers funding priorities as outlined in the Funding Priorities section of the RFA, and the proposed program meets all of the requirements detailed in the Funding Priorities section of the RFA and in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance.

4. *Member Experience (6 points)*
- AmeriCorps members as a result of their service will have opportunities to develop as leaders.
- 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 has a well-defined plan to 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.
- The applicant's organization and/or program has a diversity, equity, and inclusion council that seeks to diversify its staff and board and create a supportive and safe environment as well as ensure that its programming is culturally and community appropriate.

Organizational Capability (25 percent)
Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

1. *Organizational Background and Staffing (9 points)*
- The organization details the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing the AmeriCorps program as well as providing oversight and monitoring for the program.
- The organization has facilitated, partnered, or participated in educational or workforce development programs (i.e., pre-apprenticeship/registered apprenticeship, work experience and job training programs, etc.) or operated a national service program.
- The organization has a stated commitment and plan to advance diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) throughout its mission, for example by using a DEI council or strategic plan.

2. *Compliance and Accountability (8 points)*
- The organization has a monitoring and oversight plan to prevent and detect non-compliance and enforce compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities and criminal history checks at the grantee, subgrantee (if applicable), and service site locations.
- The organization has sufficient policies, procedures, and controls in place to prevent, detect, and mitigate the risk of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, such as appropriate segregation of duties, internal oversight activities, measures to prevent timekeeping fraud, etc.
- The organization has an effective mechanism in place to report, without delay, any suspected criminal activity, waste, fraud, and/or abuse to both the AmeriCorps Office of Inspector General and AmeriCorps and a plan for training staff and participants on these reporting protocols.

3. *Culture that Values Learning (4 points)*
- The applicant's board, management, and staff collect and use information, including performance data, for learning and decision making.
- The applicant's board, management, and staff collect and use information to determine its programmatic effectiveness in serving in a community with members that are diverse.

4. *Member Supervision (4 points)*
- AmeriCorps members will receive sufficient guidance and support from their supervisor to provide effective service.
- AmeriCorps supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations.

Cost Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy (25%)
Reviewers will assess the quality of the application's budget to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

These criteria will be assessed based on the budget submitted. Do <u>not</u> include narrative in the narrative field except for "See budget."

1. *Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 points)*
   - Budget is submitted without mathematical errors.
   - Proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award.
   - Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
   - Budget complies with the budget instructions.
   - Match is submitted with adequate information to support the amount written in the budget.
   - The budgeted match is equal to or more than the required match for the given program year.
   - The cost per MSY is equal to or less than the maximum cost per MSY.
   - Proposed member living allowance is sufficient to support basic living costs.

Proposed budgets that contain MSY costs that exceed the maximum cost per MSY and/or less than required match will be considered unresponsive to the application criteria.

Applicants must complete the budget and ensure the following information is included:
   - Current indirect rate cost if used to claim indirect/administrative costs.
   - Identify the non-AmeriCorps funding and resources necessary to support the project, including for Fixed Amount applicants.
   - Indicate the amount of non-AmeriCorps resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash), the sources of these commitments, and if the commitments are proposed or secured.

C. Threshold Issues
Applications should reflect that they meet the following threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying.
   - All applicants should request at least 20 MSY. Applicants requesting less than 20 MSYs must include a compelling rationale as part of the program narrative or their application will be deemed noncompliant and will not be reviewed.
   - Professional Corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a Professional Corps by CV must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.
   - If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: 45 CFR §2522.910-.940), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.
   - All applicants must propose program designs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. Applicants assessed as lower than the Preliminary evidence tier (i.e., Pre-Preliminary) must provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality review criteria in order to be considered for funding.

D. Consideration of Integrity and Performance System Information
Prior to making any award that exceeds $150,000, AmeriCorps is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

Any applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency

previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM;

AmeriCorps will consider any comments by any applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing its review of risk posed by the applicant under this section.

E. Potential Change to RFA Guidelines and Supplemental Guidance

This *Request for Applications* was created in good faith and based on the most recent federal guidance available. The amount of funds available for AmeriCorps, as well as new grant limits and requirements, are contingent on final federal appropriations and AmeriCorps's final allocation of formula funds. These and other factors may require changes to the guidance and to this RFA. As necessary, CV will issue all updates and supplemental materials at the earliest possible date. All supplemental materials and updates will be available on the CV website at CaliforniaVolunteers.ca.gov. **Applicants are advised to check the website at least weekly.**

This RFA provides a broad overview of AmeriCorps guidance, highlighting many basic components and rules to provide a general understanding of the complexities and intricacies of AmeriCorps programming and requirements.

The full AmeriCorps regulations, 45 CFR § 2520-2550, are available online at www.ecfr.gov. Successful applicants will be required to comply with these regulations, AmeriCorps provisions, and federal and state policies. Federal funds provided under this grant are identified by the Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 94.006.

V. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Submission to California Volunteers

Applicants must submit their application **electronically through eGrants**, AmeriCorps's web-based application system, and submit additional documents to California Volunteers using the CV AmeriCorps Community in Salesforce.

To complete the application, please:

1. Download the following documents from the CV website at
   https://californiavolunteers.ca.gov/grants/americorps/:
   a. *Request for Applications* (this document),
   b. *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance,*
   c. *Application Instructions*,
   d. *Application Forms,*
   e. *National Performance Measures Instructions*

2. Follow the instructions included in this document for preparing an application.

3. Submit a complete Application in eGrants.

4. Submit all required Additional Documents by following the guidance in the *Application Instructions.*

CV recommends that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application at least two weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a Word document, then copy and paste the text into the appropriate eGrants field no later than 5 days before the deadline.

The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must use his or her own eGrants account 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.

Applicants should contact the National Service Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via eGrants Questions if they have a problem when they create an account, prepare, or submit the application. National Service Hotline hours are posted at https://questions.nationalservice.gov/

Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the competition to which the organization is applying. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit via eGrants.

If circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit in eGrants, applicants may send a paper copy of the application via overnight carrier to the address below. Applicants must include a written explanation and any other documentation or evidence that support their inability to submit their application electronically. Due to office closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, applicants in this situation must coordinate with California Volunteers to ensure their application is received on time.

California Volunteers
ATTN: AmeriCorps 2022
1400 10th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Please use a non-U.S. Postal Service carrier to avoid security-related delays. **All deadlines and requirements in this RFA also apply to paper applications. CV does not accept applications submitted via fax or email.**

Page Limits
Applications must not exceed <u>10 double-spaced pages as printed from eGrants</u>. This limit does not include other aspects of the application (e.g., the budget, logic model, performance measures, or program diagram), though individual documents may have their own limits. The application sections that count towards the page limit are the:
- SF-424 Face Sheet
- Executive Summary
- Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy narratives.

The other documents with page, word, or character limitations are as follows:
- Logic Model may not exceed 3 pages
- Request for Alternative Match Schedule (if applicable) may not exceed 4 double-spaced pages

B. Application Submission Deadline
Applications (both the eGrants submission and the Additional Documents) must be received no later than **Tuesday, November 8, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time** in order to be considered.

CV will not consider applications received after the deadline, except when noted below. CV reserves the right to extend the submission deadline and any notice of such extended deadline will be posted on the funding opportunity website.

Late Applications
All applications received after the submission deadline published in this RFA are presumed to be non-compliant. CV may, at its discretion, consider an application received after the deadline, but only if the applicant submits a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that caused the delay, including the timing and specific cause(s) of the delay and any evidence that substantiates the claimed extenuating circumstance(s) via email to funding@cv.ca.gov. The written explanation and evidence must be received no later than one business day after the application deadline stated in the RFA. CV determines whether or not to accept a late application for review on a case-by-case basis.

Communication with CV staff, including program officer of a current grantee, is not a substitution for the above protocol. Applicants that do not submit a justification or any other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the required timeframe will not be reviewed or selected for award.

Please note: CV will not consider an advance request to submit a late application. Applicants are encouraged to continue working on their application until it is submitted. If you are experiencing technical difficulties, please carefully review and follow the guidance above, and submit your application as soon as possible.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Governing Documents
A grantee's fully executed AmeriCorps contract incorporates the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant as well as the AmeriCorps regulations (45 CFR Sections 2520-2550), AmeriCorps General and Specific Terms and Conditions, and California Volunteers Policies and Requirements.

B. AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions
All awards made under this *RFA* will be subject to the 2022 AmeriCorps General Terms and Conditions, and the 2022 Specific Terms and Conditions for the particular program (when applicable.) These Terms and Conditions contain detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the AmeriCorps General and Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available at https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/directs-territories-tribes.

C. Uniform Guidance
All awards under this RFA are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), now consolidated in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 2205.

D. Reporting Requirements
Successful applicants are required to submit a variety of reports which are due to CV at specific times during the life cycle of an award. All reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time.

Once the grant is awarded, grantees will be expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are providing CV with high-quality performance measure data. At a minimum, grantees should have policies and practices which address the following areas of data quality:
- The data measures what it intends to measure
- The data reported is complete
- The grantee collects data in a consistent manner
- The grantee takes steps to correct data errors
- The grantee actively reviews data for accuracy prior to submission

Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the grantee's ability to secure future AmeriCorps funding.

E. National Service Criminal History Check Requirement

All AmeriCorps members and staff charging time (including match) to an AmeriCorps cost-reimbursement grant must have completed National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC) prior to start. In California, these are conducted by two approved vendors - Truescreen and Fieldprint. All required check components must be conducted and results considered according to AmeriCorps, CV and the program's own policy, with the individual <u>cleared prior</u> to the start of service and/or time on the grant. No one convicted of murder (as defined in 18 USC 1111) and/or registered or required to be registered on a state sex offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry; nor who refuses to undergo the checks or who provides a false statement with regards to the checks process, may be deemed eligible. The program must set its own selection criteria that include at least these minimum disqualifiers while being mindful of state and federal Civil Rights & nondiscrimination laws, including Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Required Criminal History Check Components are defined as follows:
1. Nationwide name-based National Sex Offender Public Registry Check via *Truescreen**;

2. Statewide Criminal History Registry Check(s) in the State of residence (out-of-state applicants)[1] in the State where the individual will serve / work (California)* using ***Truescreen***
3. <u>FBI National Fingerprint-based Check</u> using ***Fieldprint* or** using the **California Dept of Justice (CA DOJ)** via CV's <u>waiver</u>

Refer to the <u>CV National Service Criminal History Checks Policy</u> for detailed requirements and the <u>CV NSCHC Guide</u> for details on how to properly conduct the checks using the approved vendors.

F. Requests for Improper Payment Information

At the request of AmeriCorps, CV may, from time to time, request documentation from grantees in order to monitor the award or to comply with other legal requirements, such as the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002, as amended. Failure to make timely responses to these requests may result in award funds being placed on temporary manual hold, reimbursement only, or other remedies as appropriate. In addition, CV/AmeriCorps may, in appropriate circumstances, consider in its funding decisions any previous failures to make timely responses.

G. Use of Material

To ensure that materials generated with AmeriCorps funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, CV and AmeriCorps 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 (<u>2 CFR §200.315 (b)</u>).

H. Re-Focusing of Funding

California Volunteers reserves the right to re-focus program dollars in the event of disaster or other compelling need for service.