2022 AmeriCorps State Grant Funding Opportunity
Frequently Asked Questions

Updated October 13, 2021

General/Grant Application

Q: If we are currently funded by CV (one year award) are we considered a continuation program? Do we apply for continuation via this RFP or will be emailed instructions?

A: Grants currently funded with a one-year award (as opposed to a three-year grant) are considered to be recompete applicants in this funding opportunity.

Q: Is there a possibility of the one-year funding happening again or will it definitely be three-year?

A: Applications funded competitively will receive a three-year grant. The intention is to award formula funds on a three-year basis as well.

Q: What happens if our program's application is submitted competitively to AmeriCorps and declined? Is there any opportunity to be considered for Formula funding?

A: If an application passes California Volunteers review and is submitted to the national grant competition but is not selected for funding, that application would be considered for formula funds in rank order, based on the availability of funds. So, applicants submitted to the national competition have two opportunities to be considered for funding.

Q: What is Healthy Futures?

A: Healthy Futures is a national service focus area. Grants in Healthy Futures 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.

Q: Is there a place where we can see the character limits for each section?

A: Character limits are not shown in eGrants. For the Narratives, exceeding the character limits would exceed the page limit as well. The Performance Measure Module is where character limits are most relevant. Be mindful of the information you enter in those fields, and verify that information has not been cutoff before submitting your application.

Q: You covered some of them, but what are the biggest changes to this RFA from last year's?

A: The biggest changes in this RFA are:

- Funding Priorities and their impact on the score
- Additional narrative prompts
- Increased living allowance and cost per MSY
- Process for submitting Additional Documents

Q: Do you know if we will have the ability to ask for increase of MSY in subsequent years 2 and 3? To accommodate future growth?

A: There are usually opportunities to request an expansion in continuation for years 2 and 3, but it is not certain that the request would be approved.

Q: If we are in Year 1 now of competitive grant and will be applying as a Continuation grantee for Year 2, will we receive separate instructions and a different deadline as we have in the past?

A: The Continuation process for competitive programs will commence soon.

Q: Can you remind recompete programs if their last application will automatically transfer over to a new eGrants record? Or is the new application completely blank?

A: Currently, recompeting competitive applicants will have their application roll-over in eGrants if they create an application through "Continuation/Renewal". Recompeting formula grantees will need to create a New application and select the recompeting program name in the Applicant Info section of the application.

Q: Do you know when you will know more about the special CA state funding that we (reading corps) currently receive to use as match? Will it be available again and what will the process be for those funds?

A: State funds are not being offered as part of this opportunity.

Q: Is the three pages for the logic model separate from the ten pages of narrative?

A: Yes, the 3-page limit for the Logic Model is separate from the 10-page limit for the Application Face Sheet & Narratives.

Q: We do not have program/organization-level data required for the diversity questionnaire. How would you recommend we proceed?

A: Complete the Diversity Questionnaire using the data available to your organization.

Q: Is the site location included in the page count? Is the site location form scored?

A: The proposed service site locations are not included in the page limit and the form is not scored.

Q: On the Diversity Questionnaire it asks for information related to the organization's and project. Can you define what is meant by organization?

A: The organization is the entity that houses the AmeriCorps project/project (i.e. the California Conservation Corps organization houses the Backcountry Trails AmeriCorps program).

Q: Can you please confirm whether the SF 424 Face Sheet and Executive Summary count toward the 10-page limit for narratives? I ask because the EGrants Submission Checklist states that we should make sure that the "Face Sheet, Exec. Summ., Pgm Design, Org Capability and Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy narratives do not exceed 10 pages when printed."

A: As stated on page 27 of the RFA:

> "Applications must not exceed 10 double-spaced pages as printed from eGrants. 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."

Q: In reference to fixed amount, the RFP states it is not available to new applicants. If an organization has previously received grant awards under a CNCS contract, is it considered a new applicant under this funding opportunity?

A: Yes. If a program has not received funds from California Volunteers in the past, it is considered a new applicant for this funding opportunity.

Q: Can you tell me where I can find the Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement that I need to upload into salesforce?

A: The Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement should be on file with your organizations finance team. This document is something that your organization negotiates with another federal agency, it is not something that CV can provide.

Funding Priorities and Selection Criteria

Q: If we have 1200 hour term slots instead of full time members, should we prorate the $25,500 to $17,850 in order to receive preference consideration? Or does the preference only apply to programs with full time members?

A: There is no requirement to provide a living allowance for less-than-full-time members, but CV encourages applicants to do so.

Q: Is Cost Effectiveness basically judged by our submitted budget? Or are we also addressing this in narrative?

A: Cost Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy is scored solely on the budget.

Q: Is the diversity questionnaire scored?

A: The Diversity Questionnaire does not factor into California Volunteers' score of your application.

Q: Will retention rates will be considered as part of our performance outcomes?

A: Retention rates are one of many factors considered in the risk assessment of your program. Retention rates themselves are not a competitive consideration.

Q: If we have chosen "COVID-19 Recovery" as a funding priority, are we required to design a performance measure for that priority? If so, are we required to use the Nat'l Performance measure or can we submit a program-designed PM?

A: There are no specific performance measures explicitly related to COVID-19. If your program continues to provide services related to your original PMWs, but has shifted focus slightly due to COVID, you could still use your original performance measures while being responding to the impacts of COVID-19. Alternatively, if you prefer to create a new performance measure for new activities related to COVID-19, you can create an applicant-determined performance measure.

Q: If we do focus on COVID-19 as priority, just to be clear, our program can include that as a non primary PMW and/or include in the community engagement PMW?

A: If you focus on COVID-19 as a priority, you may include a new non-primary performance measure. The community engagement PMW is intended to describe activities related to volunteer recruitment.

Q: Can we incorporate COVID-19 recovery under the Community Engagement PMW?

A: The Community Engagement PMW is intended to capture the number of volunteer hours served as a result of the AmeriCorps program. Volunteer hours may be spent on COVID-19 recovery activities if those activities align with other program performance measures.

AmeriCorps Members

Q: What is the maximum living allowance?

A: See the table below:

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

Budget/Match Requirements

Q: Can the administration the grant (by the legal applicant) be supported by AmeriCorps funds or must the agency support the administrative staff?

A: AmeriCorps grant funds may be used to support program administration but cannot be used to support general organizational expenses. Staffing is an allowable expense that would be included in Section I. A. Personnel Expenses.

Q: Just to clarify, we do NOT need to submit the Excel version of the Budget Worksheet?

A: An Excel version of the Budget Worksheet is required of all Fixed-Amount Grant applicants.

Q: For the budget, the directions state to allot 2 staff members to attend the CV conference. Does CV have plans to have in-person conferences and the location be somewhere other than Sacramento?

A: Plans for the upcoming conference have not yet been determined. However, your budget should reflect costs associated with an in-person conference in Sacramento.

Q: Can general office supplies be calculated by FTE?

A: Office Supplies could be calculated proportional to the FTE in the program. This could be the case if the program shares supplies with other programs in the organization while supplies are purchased for the organization as a whole. The cost for office supplies could be calculated using that methodology in such a situation.

Q: For existing staff that have had background check done when they are hired, do we need to have it done annually?

A: Please see page 11 of the NSCHC Manual:

> "It is not necessary to redo the NSCHC for individuals who serve consecutive terms of service with the same organization if the break in service or work is less than 180 calendar days and the original NSCHC checks are compliant."

Q: Can the 100% FTE dedicated to the grant be divided between more than 1 employee? (Eg: between program and administrative roles?)

A: Please see page 21 of the Application Instructions:

> "At least one full-time staff member must have 100% of their time allocated to managing the AmeriCorps program."

Q: Is in person travel for CNCS sponsored required for this upcoming budget or is there an option for zoom?

A: Plans for the upcoming conference have not yet been determined. However, your budget should reflect costs associated with an in-person conference in Sacramento.

Q: If we work with a PEO (professional employment org) for payroll and hr compliance, where should we enter PEO fees in the budget associated w/ adding AC members to payroll? (Consultant Services or Program Operating costs?)

A: This depends on whether the PEO has been hired as a consultancy firm for a short-term contract or whether they are integrated into your organization.

Q: In the past we've been required to include the cost of the NSCHC checks (fieldprint and truescreen) on the CNCS share. Is that still a requirement or are we able to decide if we want to include that on the CNCS share or the grantee match?

A: Applicants may determine where to allocate funds related to criminal history checks. See page 23 of the Application Instructions for more details.

Q: How important is it that a living allowance meet the CA FT standard of $25,500?

A: Please see page 15 of the Request for Applications:

> "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."

Q: For Fixed Award, can we omit all Grantee Share costs from the egrants submission, since we need to be covering any and all Grantee Share expenses?

A: Fixed Amount grant applicants do not include the Grantee Share in their budget in eGrants.

Q: We are struggling to secure enough match funds from our partners for the increase for the member living allowance so much from one year to the next. Our program is 10 month are we able to strive for $21,250?

A: The proposed budget must include a living allowance for full-time members that are within the required range per member. Please see page 15 of the Request for Applications for more information.

Q: I know that member living allowances are not required for less-than-FT members. How important is it, if we offer living allowances to HT and QT members, that they be proportional to the FT rate.

A: There is no requirement for a program to provide living allowance for members serving less than fulltime. If a program chooses to offer a living allowance, the program may determine the appropriate amount based on a variety of factors, including proportionality to the FT rate.

Q: We'll be matching the CNCS share via a combination of other unrestricted grants and gifts. How specific do we need to get when listing these. Ok to list, "Org General Fund" as the source of the match?

A: Please specify whether each source is public or private and be prepared to furnish documentation to support each funding source.

Q: If a program places members in different sites across the state, how do we calculate Workmen's Comp? Also, should unemployment costs included?

A: Please see page 24 of the [Application Instructions](#) for more information about member support costs.

Q: I have a question from our fiscal partner:

a.   Although in our meeting yesterday it was said that the AmeriCorps workers are not employees, the fact that California Volunteers/AmeriCorps is requiring payments to FICA and Unemployment Insurance, this also mean that a W-2 (IRS Salary & Wage Reporting) would need to be issued to each of the workers at the end of the year. Therefore, they cannot be classified as a contract worker.

b.   Paying workers comp insurance would require additional research to understand the liability for the Workers Compensation Insurance and may include requiring us to change our current Workers Compensation insurance.

c.   It would also be assumed that if we are acting as an employer, we are liable for any action the AmeriCorps worker would take out in the field.

A: Please see page 24 of the [Application Instructions](#) for more information about member support costs.

Performance Measures/Evaluation

Q: Can you cover some of the new performance measures related to Covid-19. If you are a mentoring program helping students and as part of that recovering learning lost- does that also apply to the Covid priority and education?

A: There are no specific performance measures explicitly related to COVID-19. If your program provides mentoring services and has had to shift focus to address the learning lost due to the pandemic, you could still use the Education performance measures while being responding to the impacts of COVID-19.

Q: Would you mind clarifying whether ALL members must have mid- and end-of-term performance reviews, or only 1,700-hour members? (We use this information in our Member Dev PMW)

Q: If we were not able to complete the evaluation report due to COVID, can we request for an alternative evaluation approach or is there other suggestions to address this?

A: An Alternative Evaluation Approach may be requested in this case. See the Evaluation Plan Template document for more information.

Q: If an Alternative Evaluation Approach was approved and we have not been able to complete the evaluation due to COVID is there a waiver? How should we document it?

A: If an Alternative Evaluation Approach was previously approved that extended the timing of your evaluation past the application due date, please provide a copy of the approved Alternative Evaluation Approach and an interim report covering what has been completed to date.

Q: Further information/support for evaluation summary/plan? I'm not familiar with this requirement and not sure where to start trying to put together an external evaluation of our program.

A: Evaluation resources can be found on the AmeriCorps website here: https://www.americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/evaluation-resources.

Q: Where can we find guidance on the first time conducting an RCT for moving up evidence tiers?

A: Evaluation resources can be found on the AmeriCorps website here: https://www.americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/evaluation-resources.

Q: Can you say a little bit about the fact that Eval Plans will not be scored until funding decisions are made? Does that mean we may be awarded and start operating before we know if our eval plan is approved?

A: Evaluation plans are reviewed and approved by a third party once funding decisions have been made. If your evaluation plan has not been approved, you will have until the end of your first year of operation to have it finalized by AmeriCorps. This may result in a contingency placed on the award, wherein if your evaluation plan is not approved it could impact future funding.

Q: Is there an expectation that programs will conduct more than one impact evaluation in the course of their operations?

A: Please see Page 16 of the Request for Applications for evaluation requirements.

Q: If we are planning to have a Recruitment Capacity Member, and are creating a separate PMW, do we also need to include them in the narrative and logic model separately from the other Members?

A: If a Recruitment Capacity Member is included in your request, those activities should be briefly described in the narrative and logic model but should not be included in the Performance Measures.

Q: Does the Recruitment Capacity Member need research evidence supporting the activities?

A: No.

Q: If there was an AmeriCorps initiative that was similar in 2010, with an evaluation, is it worth citing that evaluation if the intervention is the same?

A: The strongest evaluations are those that are recent (within the last six years).

Q: If the intervention is NOT the same, or it's the same intervention but the assessment is different, what would you do?

A: Please see pages 21 and 22 of the [Request for Applications](#) for information about evidence quality and evidence tiers.