



## Frequently Asked Questions

\*Note: This document will be updated during the application period to incorporate responses to written questions submitted to California Volunteers, as per instructions in the RFA. Please scroll to page 17 to see the most recent updates as of December 8, 2021.

### **Student Eligibility**

*1. Are graduate students eligible?*

No, only undergraduate students are eligible to participate in this Fellowship. Seniors can participate during their senior year, but not after graduating.

*2. Are part-time students eligible?*

No, only full-time enrolled students are eligible. The intent of this initiative is to support college completion for all Fellows, so we encourage campuses to align their program design with this goal. We recognize that partner campuses will have different ways to measure full-time status, so the precise threshold will be up to each partner campus.

*3. Are first year students eligible?*

This is up to the partner campus, but could cause challenges in terms of the recruitment timeline. Partner campuses need to report their Fellow recruitment number [to date] for the 2022-2023 cohort by June 2022.

*4. Is there a minimum GPA for eligibility?*

There is not a minimum GPA to participate, although students should be in good academic standing.

*5. Can a student do the program twice?*

This is up to the partner campus; technically it is allowed.

*6. Is any undocumented student eligible?*

AB 540-eligible Dreamers may apply. For Dreamers/AB-540 eligible students, they must meet the requirements outlined by the California Student Aid Commission's (CSAC)

Dreamer Service Incentive Grant Program. More information on eligibility requirements can be viewed here: <https://www.csac.ca.gov/post/california-dream-act-service-incentive-grant-program-1>.

## Fellow Recruitment

7. *Will partner campuses have to meet a minimum Fellow enrollment target?*

Yes, as part of their application, colleges and universities will need to state their Fellow enrollment target, which should fall within the ranges outlined in Section II A of the RFA. It is imperative that California Volunteers select partner campuses with the capacity to implement this program at the desired scale. This will maximize available state resources through supporting the budgeted number of Fellows (3,250 college students per year). The minimum annual Fellow enrollment target for an individual campus applying directly is 100 Fellows per year. The *collective* minimum annual target for a Consortium of 3 or more campuses applying together (with a Lead Partner) is 200 Fellows per year. Any single campus that is part of a Consortium should commit to enroll at least 50 Fellows per year.

8. *What is the deadline to report Fellow enrollment numbers to California Volunteers?*

The interim deadline to report Cohort 1 Fellow enrollment numbers is June 1, 2022. We hope this number will be close to final, but understand that some changes may occur over the summer so will ask partner campuses to update us again in August 2022 if their Fellow enrollment number has changed.

9. *What happens if a partner campus is unable to reach its target Fellow enrollment numbers?*

If in June 2022 a partner campus is more than 10% below the Fellow recruitment target identified in their initial grant application, California Volunteers will propose a grant amendment process to adjust the amount of funding available for the first year of implementation.

## Service Positions

10. *Is virtual service allowed?*

The intent of this Fellowship is to primarily offer in-person service activities. However, due to the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, partners may include some virtual service options, at least for the first year of implementation (2022-2023).

11. *What are the expected activities of the students?*

Students are expected to support core activities led by the community host organization where they are placed. These activities can include a mix of direct service to community beneficiaries (e.g. tutoring K-12 students, planting trees, serving meals at a Food Bank) and programmatic support to the organization, such as volunteer mobilization, scheduling, or communications. Direct service is key to building cross-cultural understanding and civic

responsibility, while programmatic support should be designed to cultivate 21st century employability skills.

12. *Can any of the service positions be with an on-campus partner, for example a campus food pantry?*

Yes, provided the on-campus partner is focused on one of the three Focus Areas and is able to provide Fellows with a meaningful service experience, as described above.

13. *Can any of the service positions be focused on supporting the implementation of the Fellowship?*

Service positions should not focus on the administration of the Fellowship, since California Volunteers is providing separate funding to each partner campus for that purpose. However, campus partners may choose to offer a small number of service positions each year for "Team Leaders." These 450-hour service positions would include a primary service placement with a community partner organization, as well as a smaller number of hours (within the 450-hour requirement) dedicated to providing support to the Fellowship cohort on their campus as a peer leader / mentor.

14. *Can service hours be completed during the summer or on school breaks?*

This is allowable, as long as the partner campus can ensure proper oversight is in place to support students and verify service completion.

15. *Could a student complete the 450 hours in one semester?*

This is not encouraged, but is allowed, provided there is a strong rationale.

16. *How will service hours be tracked, and who needs to approve?*

Each partner campus will establish its own system for tracking and approving Fellow service hours, which must be verified to ensure eligibility for the Education Award. California Volunteers will consider developing a centralized platform for partner campuses to use for this purpose; more details will be forthcoming.

17. *If a student completes less than 450 hours of service, will they still receive a pro-rated living allowance (stipend) and a pro-rated Education Award?*

Only Fellows who complete the 450-hour service requirement will be eligible for the \$3,000 Education Award; it cannot be pro-rated. With regard to the stipend, students will receive compensation by pay period, which is normally every two weeks. If the student earned any service hours during a particular pay period they are subject to the full stipend amount for that period. We strongly encourage each partner campus to make every effort to maximize Fellow retention, which will be a key metric for securing future funding.

18. *Does completing this Fellowship affect student eligibility for a future, full-time AmeriCorps position?*

In general, individuals are eligible to serve up to four terms of service with AmeriCorps, so this should not be an issue. The only exception would be if a Fellow received an unfavorable

performance review by the campus partner, which could disqualify them from serving in future AmeriCorps service positions.

## Community Host Partners

19. *Can students be placed at for-profit organizations?*

No, community host partners must be not-for-profit (NGOs or government).

20. *Are there any other minimal eligibility criteria for community host organizations, e.g. minimum staff size, budget size, or years of operation?*

Community host organizations must have the capacity to host and effectively supervise at least two participating Fellows. In addition, California Volunteers strongly encourages college and university partners to carefully consider an organization's track record and reputation in the community before selecting them as a host organization for your Fellows. Each partner campus will need to follow their own institution's guidelines and policies for establishing MOUs with community host organizations.

21. *Could multiple campuses develop 'blanket' MOUs with one or more community host organizations in their region?*

This may be possible, particularly for partner campuses from the same system and/or in the same region. We encourage college partners to explore this option during the Planning and Program Development Phase.

22. *Will California Volunteers require a common application for community host partners?*

No, each partner campus will design their own application process, though the application must include the minimum eligibility criteria outlined in the RFA. California Volunteers may require one or more statewide orientation sessions for community host partners that are new to the program; more details forthcoming.

23. *How will California Volunteers support the recruitment of new community host partners?*

CV will launch a significant publicity effort in early 2022 to raise awareness about the CaliforniansForAll College Fellowship and encourage local organizations to get engaged. In addition, and where appropriate, CV staff will play a matchmaking role between campus partners and our existing regional or statewide partner organizations that have a successful track record in one or more of the Focus Areas and are interested in hosting Fellows.

## Academic Integration

24. *Is it required that partner campuses offer some form of academic credit to Fellows?*

While this is not required, it is strongly encouraged. Applicants that put forward a compelling proposal for integrating the service experience with student learning and academic outcomes will be favorably considered in the selection process. Again, the focus should be on ensuring timely college completion for all Fellows.

*25. What form could/should academic credit take?*

California Volunteers encourages partner campuses to consider the following options for providing credit: 1) Link to degree programs (e.g. Teacher Preparation, environmental studies, etc.); 2) Link to existing or new service learning courses; and/or 3) Independent study or internship credit. Regardless of the approach taken, partner campuses should have a strong rationale for how this approach will help ensure that Fellows graduate on time and with less debt. That said, each partner campus should balance the importance of both student outcomes and community outcomes as they finalize their program design.

*26. Can any funding under this grant be used to provide incentives to faculty to get engaged?*

Yes, this is up to the partner campus.

## **Regional Collaboration**

*27. Why is California Volunteers encouraging regional collaboration?*

We see value in regional collaboration, as it has the potential to increase local community impact within shared Focus Areas, facilitate peer learning and exchange for continuous program improvement, and put more money on the ground by consolidating some administrative functions. We see particular value in inter-segmental collaboration to help strengthen the higher education system overall and to ensure strong participation by community colleges.

*28. What are the different models that a regional collaboration can take?*

As outlined in the RFA, applicants may choose from the following models:

- a) Apply as an individual campus and then coordinate with other selected partners from your region during the Planning and Program Development Phase.
- b) Apply as an *inter-segmental* regional Consortium with a Lead Partner (designated legal applicant). In this model, the Lead Partner submits a single application on behalf of the Consortium, and then submits one *College Fellowship Implementation Plan* for the Consortium at the conclusion of the Planning and Program Development Phase. The Lead Partner then manages sub-grants to all of its partner campuses.
- c) Apply as a *single system* - statewide or regional - Consortium with a Lead Partner (designated legal applicant). Again, the Lead Partner would submit a single application on behalf of the Consortium and have the same responsibilities as outlined above.
- d) Apply as a regional collaboration *without* a Lead Partner. In this case, each institution submits their own grant application, but they agree to work together in implementing the College Fellowship if their applications are selected. Applications should include letters of support from partner campuses, as well as an initial description of how these institutions plan to collaborate at the regional level.

*29. Why is California Volunteers offering multiple options for applying?*

Based on input from consultations with many higher education leaders, we decided to leave as much flexibility as possible in the application process. We recognize that in some regions

strong inter-segmental collaboration already exists, and in other regions it could prove more challenging. We are eager to see what applicants will propose and hope that this flexibility will spur both innovation and genuine, on-the-ground collaboration.

*30. Can community host partners be part of a Regional Consortium under this grant?*

Community host partners can be part of a Regional Consortium, but not as a direct grantee. Only higher education institutions (or a foundation that represents a higher education institution) are eligible to receive a grant award from California Volunteers as part of this funding opportunity. That said, it is up to the college or university how best to engage their community host partners and whether to offer them any kind of financial support, e.g. example, in the form of a sub-grant. An application from a regional Consortium OR from an individual institution may include a letter of support from one or more community partners that are already committed to hosting Fellows under this program. This is welcome, but not required, in the initial application, since college and university partners will have the opportunity to recruit community host organizations during the Planning and Program Development Phase.

## **Fellow Onboarding and Training**

*31. Will California Volunteers require standardized training for Fellows serving in particular Focus Areas?*

California Volunteers reserves the right to review proposed training methods and content for quality assurance and alignment with best practices. Where relevant, partner campuses may be asked to collaborate with California Volunteers staff in developing and delivering content-specific training for particular Focus Areas, e.g. training on high-impact tutoring for those Fellows serving in K-12 schools.

*32. Will California Volunteers support Fellow onboarding and training in other ways?*

Yes, CV will offer a number of statewide training, networking and professional development opportunities to build an esprit de corps for the statewide Fellowship cohort. All Fellows will be expected to participate in these statewide sessions. That said, college and university partners are expected to design and deliver customized orientation and training program for their own campus cohort.

## **Living Allowance (Stipend) Payments**

*33. How is the living allowance/ stipend categorized?*

The stipend is categorized as taxable income, not financial aid. However, based on AmeriCorps guidelines it should not be described as a salary or wage.

*34. Who should pay the stipend?*

The legal applicant (partner campus) is responsible for paying the stipend to all Fellows. Each partner campus will determine how best to pay the stipends to their Fellows in the way that maximizes the benefit of the stipend to the greatest number of students.

*35. Does the stipend affect a student's financial aid package?*

Because the stipend is defined as income, it can impact a student's financial aid. Campus partners are asked to work in close coordination with their Financial Aid office to mitigate any impact.

*36. Will AB 540-eligible Dreamers receive both the stipend and the Education Award?*

AB 540-eligible Dreamers will receive both the stipend and a Californians For All Education Award, fully funded by the state. The Californians For All Education Award will be administered by the California Student Aid Commission.

## Education Award

*37. Can the Education Award be used to cover the cost of on-campus housing? What else can it cover?*

Yes, the Education Award can be used to cover the Cost of Attendance as determined by the institution at a Title IV school, which may include tuition, books and supplies, transportation, room and board, and other expenses. In general, Fellows can use the Education Award to repay qualified student loans and pay current\* educational expenses at eligible schools and at certain GI Bill-approved educational programs for veterans. Eligible schools are higher educational institutions, both domestic and foreign, that currently participate in the Department of Education's Title IV student aid programs.

The Segal AmeriCorps Education Award can only be used to repay the qualified student loans listed below:

- Loans backed by the federal government under the Title IV of the Higher Education Act (except PLUS Loans to parents of students)
- Loans under Titles VII or VIII of the Public Service Health Act
- Loans made by a state agency, including state institutions of higher education.

Note: "Current" educational expenses are defined as expenses that a fellow incurred after the start of their service.

*38. How is the Education Award paid, and to whom?*

The Segal AmeriCorps Education Award is administered by the National Service Trust and payments are made directly to eligible schools at the request of the [AmeriCorps] Fellows. Fellows can manage their earned Education Award through the [MyAmeriCorps Portal](#). The Californians For All Education Award will be administered by the California Student Aid Commission. More information regarding the payment process will be shared at a later time.

## Reporting Requirements

*39. Can you clarify the reporting requirements? Will there be samples or templates?*

At the conclusion of the Planning and Program Development Phase (by June 1, 2022) each campus must be prepared to submit a *College Fellowship Implementation Plan* to California Volunteers including the following core elements (as detailed in the RFA):

- Program Logic Model
- Performance Measurement Targets (at least one student outcome and at least one community outcome, by Focus Area)
- Status Report on Fellow Recruitment (Actions taken, # of students recruited)
- Status Report on Host Organization Recruitment (Actions taken, # of partners committed)
- Regional Collaboration Plan (with other participating campuses in the region)
- Program Staffing Plan for Implementation Phase
- Fellow Training and Support Plan - \*campus cohort experience
- Community Host Partner Training and Support Plan
- Data Collection Plan
- Service Position Descriptions
- Operating Budget

For the Operating Phase, reporting requirements will include quarterly progress reports, as well as an annual program report at the conclusion of each Fellowship cohort. The annual program report will include final data on both the student outputs/outcomes and the community outputs/outcomes for that cohort. During the Planning and Program Development Phase, all college and university partners will work with California Volunteers to finalize their output and outcome metrics, which will be the basis for future reporting. Reporting templates and deadlines will be provided at a later date by California Volunteers.

*40. What needs to be reported to California Volunteers, and what needs to be reported directly to AmeriCorps?*

Selected college and university partners will only be submitting reports directly to California Volunteers. California Volunteers is responsible for reporting directly to AmeriCorps and will use the information provided by partner campuses to address reporting requirements for AmeriCorps.

## **Relationship to Civic Action Fellowship**

*41. Will the current Civic Action Fellowship be merged into the CaliforniansForAll College Fellowship, or can it continue to run concurrently?*

Current Civic Action Fellowship campus partners will have the following options to participate in the CaliforniansForAll College Fellowship:

- a) Apply for a grant under the CaliforniansFor All College Fellowship with the intent to expand their Civic Action program by folding it into the new College Fellowship. If their application is selected, the institution will receive a new grant award for the College Fellowship and will therefore opt OUT of the 2021-2022 Civic Action Fellowship continuation grant.

- b) Continue to run the Civic Action Fellowship for one more year through the 2021-2022 Civic Action Fellowship continuation grant, and then decide whether to wind down the program OR apply for additional resources for the Civic Action Fellowship via traditional AmeriCorps funding.
- c) IF the current Civic Action Fellowship on your campus clearly does not align with the required design elements of the new CaliforniansForAll College Fellowship, a partner campus may have the option to apply for this new funding opportunity, and then run the two Fellowship programs concurrently during the 2022-2023 academic year. California Volunteers will consider this exception on a case-by-case basis. Partner campuses that wish to pursue this option should consider the substantial difference in funding structure between the two Fellowship opportunities, which may impact student recruitment numbers and potentially cause confusion.

**#CaliforniansForAll College Fellowship**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**  
*Addendum as of November 22, 2021*

**1. Will private institutions be allowed fewer than the minimum 100 Fellows per year enrollment target?**

No, the same minimum target applies for both private and public institutions.

**2. How much funding will be disbursed to Fellows?**

Please refer to Annex 3, page 25 of the RFA.

**3. Is \$7000 the maximum stipend amount, or can it be raised?**

This is the maximum stipend amount that California Volunteers can reimburse per Fellow. However, if individual partner campuses wish to supplement the \$7,000 stipend with their own resources *from a different funding source*, this could be a possibility. Please note that any increase in the amount of the Fellow stipend must not exceed \$8,581 per fellow serving in a 450-hour term of service, as set by AmeriCorps for FY 2022.

**4. If a student is receiving Section 8 funding is there a way these funds can be converted into scholarships?**

Section 8 funding is operated by a separate federal agency, and it cannot be converted into scholarships. Scholarship funds are independent from income given as living allowance.

**5. How does the funding via this Fellowship impact a student's financial aid package?**

Please see the response to question #35 of the original FAQ document:

*“Because the stipend is defined as income, it can impact a student's financial aid. Campus partners are asked to work in close coordination with their Financial Aid office to mitigate any impact.”*

To add to this response:

- California Volunteers is seeking additional guidance from AmeriCorps to determine how the living allowance and AmeriCorps Education Awards should be reported on the FAFSA and will share this information as soon as it is available.

- California Volunteers will pursue conversations with the leadership of the UC, CSU and Community College systems during the Planning and Program Development Phase to determine whether there are system-wide policies that could help maximize the benefit of the stipend payments, particularly for low-income students.

**6. Could summer work and work during breaks count toward a Fellow's hours, and how would this impact when they get their stipend payments and Ed Award?**

Yes, it is up to each partner campus to structure service placements and hours in a way that works for their students, as long as there is proper supervision and tracking of service hours. That said, we encourage applicants to design programs that maximize the number of Fellows engaged throughout the academic year, since the cohort experience is a critical aspect of a high-impact Fellowship program.

In terms of payment, Fellows should receive the stipend on a regular basis as they are completing their service hours. The Education Award can only be paid once the Fellow has completed all 450 service hours.

**7. Is there a cap on the percentage of Fellows' service hours that can be in training and development?**

Yes, based on AmeriCorps guidelines [45 CFR 2520.50\(a\)](#), no more than 20 percent of the aggregate of all AmeriCorps member service hours in your program may be spent in education and training activities, which could include a service learning course that is tied to the program design.

**8. Is there any additional guidance regarding indirect cost rates for this funding opportunity?**

As stated in the RFA, applicants are allowed to include indirect costs in application budgets. All colleges have federally approved indirect cost rates, and California Volunteers cannot remove or adjust these rates. It is the legal applicant's decision whether and how to recover these costs. Indirect costs may be covered in the \$8K portion of the \$15K per Fellow allotment to the partner campus for the Implementation Phase. For the Planning and Program Development Phase, we have included an indirect cost line on the budget template. If there are concerns about indirect cost rates, applicants are encouraged to discuss this with their office that handles budgeting to explore potential solutions.

**9. Can CA College Fellows serve with state and federal land management agencies (e.g., Forest Service, California/National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Cal Forestry/Cal Fire)?**

Yes.

**10. How will California Volunteers support institutions that wish to apply as a Regional Consortium?**

California Volunteers is not able to help facilitate the formation of new Consortia during the College Fellowship application and review process. However, during the Planning and Program Development Phase, California Volunteers staff will help facilitate collaboration and (as appropriate) the formation of Regional Consortia among partner campuses operating in the same region.

**11. How will California Volunteers support the program leads at each partner campus that is selected to run the Fellowship?**

Each partner campus will have a lead point of contact at California Volunteers. This staff person will check in regularly with each partner campus in their portfolio to address questions, provide guidance on program design and performance measurement, share training resources, and facilitate peer exchange between partner campuses in the same region.

**12. Can Fellows pursue an independent service project not affiliated with a non-profit organization?**

This is possible, provided that: 1) The majority of the Fellow's service hours are focused on direct service to the community; 2) The service work is supervised by a professional with expertise in that area; and 3) There are proper systems in place to track and verify the Fellow's service hours. That said, California Volunteers encourages partnership with existing community organizations or government agencies as the preferred pathway to achieve the objectives of the Fellowship program. As a reminder, service placements may not be with for-profit companies.

**13. Can a college or university applying individually partner with one other institution to recruit and engage Fellows, without applying as a Consortium of 3+ institutions?**

Yes, this is possible. This would not be considered a Consortium, as there are only two partners, and only one institution would receive the grant and administer the Fellowship. In this scenario, the legal applicant would administer the Fellowship, but recruit some students from its [nearby] partner institution to join each cohort. Since this is an individual application, the legal applicant can only request up to a total of \$300K for the Planning and Program Development Phase. California Volunteers does see this as a viable strategy to encourage participation by community college students in particular.

**14. Will you please describe the level of specificity you wish to see in the proposed budget? Can similar expenditures for multiple student assistant/graduate assistant positions be lumped into a single line item, or should each position have its own line item?**

Yes, multiple staff positions could be combined in a single line item for personnel expenses.

**15. Can there be any flexibility in the deadline to notify California Volunteers about the Fellow enrollment numbers, given the number of students who may register over the summer?**

Yes. During the Planning and Program Development phase California Volunteers will work with grantees to maximize student enrollment in the Fellowship, and may therefore adjust the June cut-off for an interim report on Fellow enrollment numbers.

**16. Can the living allowance (stipend) be distributed monthly?**

Yes.

**17. Can living allowances be delivered directly to student university accounts?**

This is possible, provided there is no violation of AmeriCorps rules on funding disbursement and reporting of income.

**18. Are there restrictions (beyond what's stated in the RFA) for international students participating as long as they meet other requirements?**

No, there are no other restrictions.

**19. If students, including Dreamers, don't have a temporary Social Security Number is that a roadblock for participation?**

California Volunteers will work with the California Student Aid Commission to determine eligibility criteria and provide this information when it is available.

**20. Can students be paid to participate in the Planning and Program Development phase?**

This is possible, although these students would not be considered Fellows, they would be considered staff.

**21. Can faculty reassigned time in the Planning Phase be a line item in the budget?**

Yes, this is up to the applicant.

**22. What support is available for meeting the reporting requirements, particularly for AmeriCorps?**

California Volunteers will provide templates, training, and resources to all partner campuses to clearly explain reporting requirements. Beyond this, it is understood that the resources provided directly to partner campuses (the \$8K allotment per Fellow) will allow colleges and universities to hire the necessary staff to support program administration, reporting and compliance.

California Volunteers will provide ongoing technical assistance as needed to explain the templates and requirements.

**23. If small institutions partner with larger institutions, which minimum enrollment targets would apply?**

The minimum Fellow enrollment targets are not based on the size of the institution.

**24. Can private colleges partner with public colleges or universities in a Consortium model? In such a public-private partnership, would the estimated number of Fellow slots fit into the public or private system allocation (page 10 of the RFA)?**

Each Regional Consortium should list the planned Fellow enrollment target for each partner campus in their Consortium, so California Volunteers will take these numbers into account just as with individual applicants. However, as stated in the RFA (page 10), California Volunteers may adjust the planned Fellow allocations per system based on the number and type of applications received in this RFA process, so there is some flexibility in this regard.

**25. How specifically are you defining a Regional Consortium in terms of geographic proximity?**

The RFA does not provide specific parameters regarding the geographic proximity of institutions that come together to form a Regional Consortium. Applicants should address the following language on page 11 of the RFA in explaining the rationale for their Regional Consortium: *“Member institutions of a Consortium should be concentrated in a particular geographic region and ideally have some track record of previous collaboration. They should be committed to working with a common set of community partners and champions to maximize impact.”*

**26. Is there any flexibility on including graduate students as Fellows?**

No, not for this program.

**27. For institutions that are part of the current Civic Action pilot, is there an option to extend their funding via that program, rather than applying for the new College Fellowship program?**

Please see question #41 on the original FAQ document, which includes the following text:

*A current Civic Action partner may choose to “continue to run the Civic Action Fellowship for one more year through the 2021-2022 Civic Action Fellowship continuation grant, and then decide whether to wind down the program OR apply for additional resources for the Civic Action Fellowship via traditional AmeriCorps funding.”*

**28. Could an organization focused on supporting colleges and universities apply for this RFA on behalf of college and universities in their region? Would they qualify for a Consortium application?**

To apply for this RFA, an organization must be an accredited higher education institution OR a foundation designated to apply on behalf of one or more higher education institutions. In the latter case, an entity applying on behalf of a college or university should have an official relationship and a pre-existing financial agreement with that college or university and should reference this in their application.

Questions submitted by email:

**29. In connection with the requirement to be registered in the AmeriCorps system for award management (SAM), is this the same registration as the Federal Government SAM registration?**

Yes, it is the same.

**30. Does a Consortium have to have three partners? If not, do we get fewer points if we have two partners?**

Yes, a Regional Consortium should have a minimum of three partner institutions, as specified in the RFA. In a situation where just two institutions are collaborating, these applicants may apply individually but name their partner institution in the application. This allows both institutions the opportunity to earn points in the Regional Collaboration section of the proposal (See RFA IV B, Section 2 Regional Collaboration, Question #4). Alternatively, one institution might apply as the legal applicant, and the other institution would simply be a recruitment partner, as explained above in the response to question #13 of the 11/22/21 FAQ update.

**31. Does the number of Dreamers we plan to recruit factor into the points awarded in section 3?**

Yes, this will be a factor in our scoring, since we do want to see a serious commitment to recruiting AB-540-eligible Dreamers. However, we have not specified a minimum number or percentage of Dreamers in the RFA, as we recognize that different institutions have different demographics and will need to take this into account. We ask all applicants to provide a clear rationale for their target number of AB 540-eligible Dreamers, as well as initial thinking on how to target this student demographic in the recruitment phase.

**32. If we do not recruit as many Dreamers as we had planned, do we need to return that money since it cannot be reallocated?**

Yes, because the funding source is different, this funding would need to be 'returned', and California Volunteers may run a separate RFA process to reallocate unspent funds.

**33. If we are applying as an inter-segmental regional Consortium with a Lead Partner, will the Lead Partner submit one comprehensive budget that reflects all consortium partners? Or, will you want to see individual campus details? How would the distribution of funds and slots across campuses be reflected in an inter-segmental regional consortium budget?**

Yes, the Lead Partner (aka legal applicant) should submit one comprehensive budget that includes the total budget for all partner campuses that are part of the Regional Consortium. The budget should show the amount of funding that will be allocated to each Consortium partner for the Planning Phase, as well as the estimated amount of funding for the implementation of Cohort 1, based on the Fellow enrollment target for each partner institution.

**#CaliforniansForAll College Fellowship**  
Frequently Asked Questions  
*Addendum as of December 8, 2021*

- 1. Given the strict page limit, do all partners involved in a Consortium with a Lead Partner need to address each question in the RFA regarding what the program would look like on their campus?**

In a Consortium with Lead Partner application, the Lead Partner should thoroughly answer for their institution and include in the proposal some context and examples from each partner – particularly if the program design will be quite different across various partner institutions. In addition, the application should include a letter of support from each partner institution, and those letters of support do not count toward the page limit. Reviewers will not separately score letters of support, but their content can be taken into account in scoring Section 1 (Experience and Leadership) and Section 3 (Student Recruitment).

- 2. Is this the only opportunity for colleges and universities to apply as a partner for the College Fellowship program, or will there be another opportunity next year?**

As of now, this is the only planned RFA for this funding opportunity. A subsequent RFA will depend on whether there are unused resources (due to a failure to meet recruitment targets) that need to be reallocated.

- 3. Do partner institutions in a Consortium need to have a formal MOU in place before applying?**

No, partner institutions just need to submit a letter of support with the application to indicate that they are part of the Consortium. In the case of a Consortium with a Lead Partner, letters of support should be addressed to the legal applicant (Lead Partner). It is also permitted for these expressions of support to be combined in one document signed by all participating institutions.

- 4. Can charts or tables submitted as part of the application be single-spaced?**

Yes, this is fine and up to the applicant, as long as charts include data or other information that makes sense to organize in this way.

- 5. Do RFA applicants need to include the actual application questions in their proposals?**

This is not required; it is up to the applicant.

**6. Would the following items be considered allowable costs that can be included in the budget portion of the application? 1) professional development conferences; 2) cultural events related to focus areas, or 3) member appreciation days (including food)?**

All of the above are considered allowable costs, as long as they are directly related to program impact. This rationale should be summarized in the narrative proposal. As referenced in the RFA, costs under this grant need to be allowable under the federal guidelines. That said, for this application, California Volunteers is requesting a *more* detailed budget for the Planning and Program Development Phase, but a *less* detailed budget is sufficient for the Implementation Phase. There will be an opportunity during the Planning Phase to create a more detailed operational budget, which will be submitted as part of the College Fellowship Implementation Plan.

**7. Is an entity within the Chancellor's office eligible to apply for this funding opportunity?**

Yes, such an entity is eligible, given that it has a formal affiliation with the institutions that would be administering the program. For more detail, please see response to question #28 in the FAQ update from November 22, 2021.

**8. Would a community choice energy agency be eligible to become a community host organization for Fellows?**

Yes, assuming it is a not-for-profit agency.

**9. We want to include some of our formerly incarcerated students in this program. Are there challenges in including them due to the background check requirements?**

If a student has been convicted of murder or sexual offenses they will be unable to participate. If they have been convicted for another type of crime, it could pose a challenge, but should not disqualify them from participation.

**10. Are there penalties for not reaching your Fellow enrollment target?**

There are no penalties, but as explained in the RFA, partner campuses may be asked to return unallocated funds through a grant amendment process in the Fall of 2022.

**11. Is it possible for a Consortium [of 3 or more partner institutions] to add additional partner institutions during the Planning and Program Development Phase?**

Yes, during the Planning and Program Development Phase it is allowable to add one or more partner institutions to an existing Consortium. However, there is no possibility to add additional resources to the Consortium's budget for the Planning phase, so any planning resources for the new partner institutions would need to come out of the existing budget.

**12. Can any of the \$8K in funding allocated to AB 540 students be used to support non-AB 540 students?**

No, since AB 540 students are supported by state funds, and non-AB 540 students are supported by federal funds, the costs associated with these different groups of students must be tracked separately.

**13. If three campuses are applying as a Consortium *without* a Lead Partner, do they still share the minimum Fellow enrollment target?**

Yes, any Consortium (with or without a Lead Partner) has a *collective* minimum enrollment target of 200 Fellows per year across the institutions that are part of the Consortium.

**14. Do we have some leeway as to when dedicated staff start during the Planning and Program Development Phase?**

Yes, we recognize that hiring new staff will take some time, so it is up to the applicant to make realistic estimates for the purposes of planning and budgeting and to allocate time of existing staff as needed.

**15. If we apply as a Consortium, but wish to work with an outside NGO to support the Consortium in convening quarterly meetings, etc., would they be considered a sub-grantee or a consultant?**

Most likely they would be considered a consultant, although the applicant should determine how best to structure the budget.

**16. The RFA requires a staff person who works on this grant 100% of their time. However, this could cause challenges with our faculty and classified unions due to the Education Code. Is there any flexibility?**

As stated in the RFA, California Volunteers requires at least one FTE dedicated to the program, but how you structure this FTE is up to the applicant. This requirement is intended to ensure that each partner campus has sufficient staff capacity to effectively manage the grant and deliver a high-impact program.

**17. The point system for the Consortium partners didn't seem to be in the budget; will a Consortium score higher points in the review process?**

Please see Section 2 under Application Process and Requirements. Only Consortia respond to question 5 or question 6, giving them the opportunity to earn the full 15 points for this section. There are no additional points for Consortia in the review of Section 6, Budget and Staffing.

Questions submitted by email:

**18. Do Fellows need to pass a background check to be an AmeriCorps member? If so, will they need a social security number in order to do this? How will this affect students without documentation?**

Yes, AmeriCorps members must have completed and cleared all required background checks prior to start of service. The required check components are: 1) Nationwide name-based National Sex Offender Public Registry; 2) Statewide Criminal History Registry Check(s); and 3) FBI National Fingerprint-based Check. It is our understanding that a government-issued ID is needed for the purpose of the background check, but not necessarily a SS#.

Only Fellows enrolled in an AmeriCorps service slot are subject to the above background check requirements. Since AB 540 Dreamers will not be registered as AmeriCorps members, California Volunteers does not have specific background check requirements for Dreamers at this time. As we are identifying the components for the first ever Dreamer Service program, we will work with grantees during the Planning and Program Development Phase to ensure we are addressing any challenges that might arise for these students.

**19. Students serving in K-12 schools will likely need to undergo a background check required by school districts. Are AB 540 students (or students without social security numbers) able to pass background checks without revealing their status?**

College and university partners will need to consult with their community host partners during the Planning and Program Development Phase to work through any challenges with regard to required background checks for students without a social security number. It is our understanding that not all background checks require a social security number.

**20. If we have students who enroll in the program, but drop out during the first semester, can we replace them with other students, as long as they are able to meet the 450-hour service requirement?**

Yes, slots that have been vacated by a Fellow who has served less than 15 % of their hours may be back-filled with another student. However, the college or university partner will need to account for this in their budgeting, since this would have cost implications.

**21. Will the stipends be disbursed according to the actual hours worked or in training, or are the stipends disbursed in regular allotments?**

Partners will be required to follow the following guidelines provided in the [AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions \(page 12\)](#) for distributing living allowance:

"A living allowance is not a wage. Recipients must not pay a living allowance on an hourly basis. Recipients should pay the living allowance in regular increments, such as weekly or bi-weekly, paying an increased increment only on the basis of increased living expenses such as food, housing, or transportation. Payments should not fluctuate based on the number of hours served in a particular time period and must cease when the member's service ceases. If a member serves all required hours and is permitted to conclude his or her term of service before the originally agreed upon end of term, the recipient may not provide a lump sum payment to the member. Similarly, if a member is selected after the program's start date, the recipient must provide regular living allowance payments from the member's start date and may not increase the member's living allowance incremental payment or provide a lump sum to make up any missed payments."

**22. Can partner campuses make subgrants to community host organizations through the implementation grant? What are the restrictions on subgrant use?**

Yes, college and university partners can make subgrants to community host organizations during the Implementation Phase. These grants would have the same rules and restrictions as the grants issued to partner campuses by California Volunteers. It seems less likely that college and university partners would make sub-grants to a community partner during the Planning and Program Development Phase, however there are no particular restrictions in this regard. If this is proposed in the budget, the applicant will need to justify the rationale in their narrative proposal.

**23. For the distribution of Fellow placements, are the Focus Area target percentages applicable to each partner campus, or are the targets for the whole program?**

These percentages are simply guidelines for the overall statewide initiative, not for individual institutions administering the Fellowship. Each applicant may choose whether to focus on one, two or all three of the Focus Areas in designing their program. As stated in the RFA (page 6), partner campuses "*may propose unique opportunities outside of the priority Focus Areas, provided they clearly respond to an identified community need. The number of slots dedicated to activities outside of the priority Focus Areas must be no more than 10% of the Fellow slots requested.*"

**26. Can an institution submit an application as an individual university AND separately as part of a Consortium?**

No, each college or university can only be a part of one application for this funding opportunity. An institution must decide whether to apply directly (bringing together multiple units or

departments within the institution is fine and encouraged!), or whether to apply as part of a Consortium.

**27. If we have a different Indirect Cost (IDC) Rate for state and federal funds, how should we account for this in our budget?**

Applicants should use the federal IDC rate for the entire Planning Phase budget. For the Implementation Phase, all activities related to non-Dreamers are supported by federal funds, and all activities related to AB 540-eligible Dreamers are supported by state funds.

**28. Does the \$300K for the Planning and Program Development Phase repeat for the second cohort, or is it just before the first cohort?**

The \$300K is a one-time funding allotment for the Planning and Program Development Phase that does not “repeat” for the second cohort. However, as indicated in the RFA, these resources can be spent throughout the first grant period (Jan 2022 – July 2023).

**29. Is it possible to exceed your initial Fellow enrollment target, and are there any repercussions for doing so?**

While there is no penalty per se for exceeding the Fellow enrollment target, there is also no guarantee that additional funding would be available to add to a grantee’s contract if this were to happen. The initial grant award does cover both the Planning and Program Development Phase, as well as the first year of implementation.

**30. Should we plan to incorporate worker’s compensation for the Fellows in our implementation budgets?**

Yes workers comp for Fellows will need to be factored in when the partner campus updates their operating budget during the Planning and Program Development Phase. A more detailed operating budget will be submitted to California Volunteers as part of the College Fellowship Implementation Plan.

**#CaliforniansForAll College Fellowship**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**  
*Final Addendum as of December 10, 2021*

**1. Can Fellows do policy work as part of their service placement?**

The intent of this program is to ensure that students learn by doing and make a positive impact through working directly with communities. In this spirit, Fellows should spend the majority of their service hours on direct service. That said, we recognize that many of the challenges in our three Focus Areas are systemic and structural, and we therefore see value in Fellows combining their direct service with activities that help them better understand and confront these barriers to progress. Fellows may spend up to 25% of their service hours on indirect service, including policy work (e.g. research, analysis, outreach) at their host organization, provided that this work does not include any of the Prohibited Activities outlined in Annex 6 of the RFA.

**2. Can Fellows in K-12 Education service placements work on curriculum development?**

Please see response above; the same guideline would apply.

**3. Could private or parochial schools be community host organizations for Fellows within the K-12 Education Focus Area?**

This would likely be problematic due to restrictions on the use of federal funds.

**4. Are there any penalties or repercussions for a partner campus that fails to meet their Fellow recruitment target in Year 1?**

If a partner campus is more than 10% below their Fellow enrollment target they will be subject to a grant amendment process to return unallocated funds (\$15,000 per Fellowship slot) to California Volunteers for redistribution to other partners. In addition, if an institution is significantly below their Fellow enrollment target for Cohort 1, they are unlikely to receive a second grant to fund Cohort 2. We therefore encourage all applicants to apply for the number of Fellowship slots that you believe your institution can realistically fill. On this note, Section 3 of the application – which is worth 15 points – asks applicants to outline their student recruitment targets and strategy, and reviewers will be paying close attention to question #9 about how your institution will ensure that this is a campus-wide effort.