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[CaliforniaVolunteers.CA.GOV](https://californiavolunteers.ca.gov)

2023 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity



AmeriCorps

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Applications due October 27, 2022

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/ameri-corps.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF SERVICE OFFICER

We are thrilled to release the FY 2023 AmeriCorps Request for Applications (RFA) to provide opportunities for individuals to serve communities by addressing the most pressing issues in California. Each year, with the release of the Request for Applications, California Volunteers articulates our strategy for addressing the state's most pressing challenges. We welcome applicants to consider how they may partner with us, using the AmeriCorps national service model to engage individuals and communities in making a better California for all.

You may notice some significant changes in this year's Request for Applications that signify a new direction for California Volunteers. First, over the next four years, California Volunteers will prioritize our AmeriCorps investments in response to the most pressing challenges facing California. We anticipate focusing funding with programs that address the following priorities:

- **Climate Action:** Supporting and educating communities to become more resilient through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prevent and mitigate wildfires, conserve land and water, reduce resource use, and/or increase renewable energy use.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Improving at-risk ecosystems, improving use and protection of natural environment, and/or increasing sustainable practices and education to build resilience in natural ecosystems and communities.
- **Education:** Improving educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children, including improved school readiness; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or increasing readiness and access for post-secondary education and career opportunities.
- **Food Security:** Increasing food security and stability for our most vulnerable communities
- **Disaster Services:** Helping individuals and communities prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of disasters and increasing community resiliency.
- **Resource Access:** Providing access to vital resources, services, and benefits critical to moving our most vulnerable communities from crisis to stability through peer support, resource navigation, and case management.

Secondly, at California Volunteers, we are proud to lead the nation in recognizing the critical contributions of AmeriCorps members. We are committed to prioritizing funding to programs that enhance the member service experience in two ways: 1) by supporting members with an increased stipend; and 2) by providing additional benefits for members, such as housing, transportation, or training opportunities. We are acutely aware of the significant financial burden placed on AmeriCorps members due to the historically low stipend and partly because of the high cost of living in our state. Moving forward, California Volunteers will require members are provided a minimum living allowance for all slot types equivalent to minimum wage in California, making service an accessible and feasible option for more Californians and showing our AmeriCorps members that their service is valued.

Finally, we look forward to partnering more closely with our AmeriCorps programs in the future through additional California Volunteers resources to support collaborative recruitment efforts, intentional connection-building, storytelling, and the establishment of an Alumni Network to engage members in lifelong service beyond their initial AmeriCorps commitment. Please review the RFA closely, as it provides details on specific areas of collaboration we expect to have with programs towards these efforts. Thank you for all you do for California; we look forward to reviewing your application.

Warmly,

Josh Fryday
Chief Service Officer for the State of California

OVERVIEW

State Entity Name:	California Volunteers
Funding Opportunity Title:	2023 AmeriCorps State Grants
Announcement Type:	Initial Announcement
Assistance Listing 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:

- Notice of Intent: Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a Notice of Intent to Apply to CV by **Friday, October 14, 2022. Complete the short survey by clicking here: [Notice of Intent 2023-24](#)**
- Application Deadline: The **Complete Application** is due to CV by **5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on Thursday, October 27, 2022.**
- Application Notification: Applicants will be notified of their status in December 2022. Final funding decisions will be made in mid-April 2023.

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. California Volunteers has engaged local communities through innovative and impactful grantmaking 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 *2023 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 *2023 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 2023-2024 AmeriCorps Funding:

- (1) 2023 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Request for Applications (RFA)
- (2) 2023 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Mandatory Supplemental Guidance (Mandatory Supplemental Guidance)
- (3) 2023 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity Application Instructions (Application Instructions)
- (4) 2023 AmeriCorps State Grant Application Forms
- (5) 2023 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.

October 14, 2022	Applicants strongly encouraged to submit Notice of Intent to Apply to California Volunteers
October 27, 2022	Applications due to CV in eGrants by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time*
November 1 – November 18, 2022	Application Review Period
November, 2022	Applicants Selected for Competitive Submission, Formula Waitlist, or Release Notified
December 2 - 16, 2022	Competitive Applicant Clarification and Strengthening Period**
December 17, 2022 – December 23, 2022	Competitive Electronic Application Review/Final Edits ***
April 2023	Final funding decisions announced
July-October 2023	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.

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. 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. 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 National Service Criminal History Check requirements (see Award Administration Information Section).

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

To be eligible for funding, applicants must propose a service program that will place AmeriCorps members in communities to address unmet needs in one or more of the following focus areas:

- **Climate Action:** Supporting and educating communities to become more resilient through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prevent and mitigate wildfires, conserve land and water, reduce resource use, and/or increase renewable energy use.

- Environmental Stewardship: Improving at-risk ecosystems, improving use and protection of natural environment, and/or increasing sustainable practices and education to build resilience in natural ecosystems and communities.
- Education: Improving educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children, including improved school readiness; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or increasing readiness and access for post-secondary education and career opportunities.
- Food Security: Increasing food security and stability for our most vulnerable communities
- Disaster Services: Helping individuals and communities prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of disasters and increasing community resiliency.
- Resource Access: Providing access to vital resources, services, and benefits critical to moving our most vulnerable communities from crisis to stability through peer support, resource navigation, and case management.

In addition to proposing a program in one or more of the above focus areas, applications that have one or more of the following components as a key program design element will receive preference in the California Volunteers grant review selection process:

- Organizations leading service in communities with concentrated poverty (based on the Human Development Index as reported in [The Measure of America Series: A Portrait of California 2021-2022](#)), rural communities, tribal communities, and those organizations serving historically underrepresented and underserved individuals, including but not limited to communities of color, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, people who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, people with arrest and/or conviction records, and religious minorities ;
- Programs that provide additional benefits to AmeriCorps members aimed at **enhancing member experience** and bolstering member recruitment and retention such as transportation, housing, food, etc.;
- Programs that create **workforce pathways for AmeriCorps members** through onsite experience and training that lead to career pathways, including pre-apprenticeship or registered apprenticeship programs, work experience and job training programs, other workforce training and development programs, and hiring preferences or support

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.

C. Estimated Funds Available

The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual federal appropriations, which has yet to be determined for FY 2023. 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 that assesses impact on the beneficiary population(s) served, the member experience, and community engagement as follows:

- One output and at least one corresponding outcome for the primary needs and service activity performed by AmeriCorps members. 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 for each additional program activity proposed, provided that the output measures a significant program activity.

Note: 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.

- One output and at least one corresponding outcome that measures the knowledge and/or skills gained by AmeriCorps members as a result of their participation in the program.
- Two output measures that track the number of volunteers recruited by AmeriCorps members to expand the impact and reach of the program in the communities served and the number of hours contributed by those volunteers.

Please see the California Performance Measurement Worksheets (PMWs) additional details and instructions.

National Performance Measures

National Performance Measures are developed by AmeriCorps (the federal agency). 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 *2023 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.).

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 UEI 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](#))

All eligible applicants must propose a program intervention that aligns with one or more of California Volunteers' focus areas.

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.

New Applicants

California Volunteers encourages organizations that have not received prior AmeriCorps funding to apply. To ensure accessibility to AmeriCorps resources and level the competition among experienced and new applicants/programs, California Volunteers may apply up to an additional 10% of the total possible score to eligible new applicants. A new applicant is one in which the legal applicant has not received prior AmeriCorps funding, and/or whose staff have not been employed as core program staff of a funded program, National Direct organization staff, state commission staff, or Corporation staff in the last five years.

A new applicant submitting a re-competing application for a funded program would not qualify for the additional 10% points. Similarly, a new applicant that intends to pass on the program implementation responsibility to an existing grantee or another entity that has experience operating an AmeriCorps program in the last five years, would not qualify for the additional 10% points.

New applicants are eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement and Education Award Program (EAP) grants but are not eligible to apply for Full Cost Fixed Amount grants.

Other Requirements

Under section 132A(b) of [the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended](#), 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 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. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number and System for Award Management System (SAM)

Applicants must have a valid SAM registration and Unique Entity Identifier to be considered and reviewed as an applicant..

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](#).

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. The program's legal applicant name and physical address in eGrants must match SAM exactly before an award can be issued.**

AmeriCorps will not make awards to entities that do not have a valid SAM registration and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements at the time of application submission, 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.

FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

A. Project and Award Period

California Volunteers anticipates making three-year grant awards. California Volunteers generally make an initial award for the first year of the period of performance, based on a one-year budget. Applications must include proposed activities and a detailed proposed budget for one 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 2023. Successful applicants must start member service activities no later than mid-October 2023 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	\$23,000
Full-Cost Fixed Amount Grant	\$23,000
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 \$23,000 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 \$575,000 (25 MSYs x \$23,000 cost per MSY = \$575,000).

*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.

Subject to funding availability, California Volunteers reserves the right to waive the \$23,000 cost per member limit on a case by case basis and award a cost per MSY up to \$28,800 in formula funds for applications that meet certain California Volunteers strategic criteria and/or funding priorities.

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.

California Volunteers may award a Cost Reimbursement or a Fixed Amount grant to any successful applicant, but the availability of a Full-Cost Fixed Amount grant is limited to certain applicants as stated in the chart below

Professional Corps applicants are ineligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement grants. Please see the *Mandatory Supplemental Guidance* for more information, including definitions of terminology.

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement	Fixed Amount			
		Full-Cost	Education Award Program (EAP)	Professional Corps	No Cost Slots
Available Subtypes	Traditional	Full-Cost	Education Award Program (EAP)	Professional Corps	No Cost Slots
Maximum Cost per MSY	\$23,000	\$23,000	\$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 operational funds	Yes
Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSYs	No	Yes			Yes
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. For those programs that are choosing to apply as a Fixed program, California Volunteers will recover a 2% fee off of Fixed grant awards, similar to cost-reimbursement grants.

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 all members that are within the required range per member (except as noted below).

Due to the high costs of living in California, in 2023-24, programs will be required to provide a living allowance of \$25,500 for Full Time members serving a 1700-hour term of service and a prorated amount for all other slot types.

Applications that do not include a living allowance for Full Time members at this target level may not be considered for funding. The living allowance 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	\$25,500	\$35,200
Three-Quarter Time	.700	1,200	\$18,000	\$24,640
Half Time	.500	900	\$13,500	\$17,600
Reduced Half Time	.3809524	675	\$10,125	\$13,376
Quarter Time	.26455027	450	\$6,750	\$9,152
Minimum Time	.21164022	300	\$4,500	\$7,392
Abbreviated Time	.05627705	100	\$1,500	\$2,112

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 more than 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. Education Awards

All AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service will be eligible for a federal 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.

In addition to the federal education award, AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a 1700-hour term of service will earn a supplemental state education award for a combined total of up to \$10,000.

K. Enrollment Requirements

Grantees are expected to enroll all MSYs/slots 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 recompetete processes. Successful applicants that do not retain members are likely to receive a decrease in funding in subsequent years.

M. Evaluation Requirements (Required for recompetiting 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.

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 organization
- has an active SAM registration and UEI
- submitted an application by the submission deadline
- includes all 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 criteria. 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 and/or AmeriCorps 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 (FAPIS)
 - 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
 - NOTE: Grant awards received through this RFA are cost-reimbursement unless otherwise noted. Payment of invoices can take in excess of 45 days. Applicant should ensure their organization has enough funds on hand to meet payroll and other critical expenses to operate the program.
- Operational and Financial Management Survey ¹

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.

¹ <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management/financial-and-grants-management>

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 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.

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.
- 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
- Meeting California Volunteers’ goal of building a strong shared member experience, including bridging differences and fostering stronger feelings of connection among members and the communities they serve.
- Meeting California Volunteers’ goal of creating workforce pathways for AmeriCorps members through onsite experience and training that lead to career pathways, including pre-apprenticeship or registered apprenticeship programs, work experience and job training programs, other workforce training and development programs, and hiring preferences or support

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.

Applications should include a well-designed plan with clear and compelling justifications for receiving the requested funds. Reviewers will assess the quality of applications by using the selection criteria described below and will rate them accordingly. They will also consider the weights assigned to each criterion.

Categories/Subcategories	Percentage
Program Design	50
Theory of Change and Logic Model	24
Evidence Tier	6
Evidence Quality	4
California Volunteers RFA Priority	9
Member Experience	7
Organizational Capability	25
Organizational Background and Staffing (New Applicants)	13
Organizational Background and Staffing (Recompeting)	6
Past Performance (Recompeting Programs Only)	7
Compliance and Accountability	8
Member Supervision	4
Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	25

Executive Summary (Required – 0 percent)

Please fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary. Do not deviate from the template below.

The [Name of the organization] will have [Number of] AmeriCorps members who will [service activities the members will be doing] in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will serve]. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing.]

The AmeriCorps investment will be matched with \$[amount of projected match], \$[amount of local, state, and Federal Funds] in public funding and \$[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.

Fixed-Amount grant applicants (EAP, Full-Cost Fixed, No Cost Slots) should list their Other Revenue here because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still raise significant additional resources to operate the program.

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 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 and help develop additional capacity 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.²

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, including evidence of current or historic inequities facing the population;
- Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention;
- Dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities;
- The context in which the intervention is delivered; and
- 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.

² In 2022, the evidence tiers of successful AmeriCorps State and National applicants that were competing were as follows: Strong 28%, Moderate 15%, Preliminary 25%, and Pre-Preliminary 32%. 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.

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.

NOTE: 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 (9 points)

The applicant proposed program design incorporates one or more (3 points for each of the following) program design elements:

- Organizations leading service in communities with concentrated poverty (based on the Human Development Index as reported in [The Measure of America Series: A Portrait of California 2021-2022](#)), rural communities, tribal communities, and those organizations serving historically underrepresented and underserved individuals, including but not limited to communities of color,

immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, people who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, people with arrest and/or conviction records, and religious minorities;

- Programs that provide additional benefits to AmeriCorps members aimed at **enhancing member experience** and bolstering member recruitment and retention such as transportation, housing, food, etc.;
- Programs that create **workforce pathways for AmeriCorps members** through onsite experience and training that lead to career pathways, including pre-apprenticeship or registered apprenticeship programs, work experience and job training programs, other workforce training and development programs, and hiring preferences or support

4. Member Experience (7 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.
- AmeriCorps members receive additional benefits.
- Description of the demographics of the community served and plans to recruit AmeriCorps members from geographic or demographic communities in which the program operates. This could include, but not limited to the following historically underserved, under-represented, and disadvantaged populations of:
 - communities of color
 - LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning or Intersex) communities
 - Individuals with varying degrees of English language proficiency
 - Individuals with disabilities
 - Veterans and military families as volunteers

Description of how the organization will ensure its project engages a diverse and inclusive group of members.

- The applicant's organization and/or program has a diversity, equity, and inclusion council or similar mechanism 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 (New Applicants - 13 points; Recompeting – 6 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.).
- The leadership and staff of the organization has the same lived experience as the beneficiary population and/or community being served.
- The applicant's (organization's or institution's) definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility demonstrate the organization is engaged in activities related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This can include the inclusion of diversity on the Board of Directors, agency staff and leadership, and/or volunteers.

Past Performance (Recompeting Applicants - 7 points)

- For recompeting programs only, past performance will be assessed as part of California Volunteers’s risk assessment. Reviewers will assess:
 - 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
 - Financial management including invoice processing and accuracy, timeliness and responsiveness to inquiries

NOTE: Applicant should not describe past performance in the application; CV will use internal data to assess past performance.

2. Compliance and Accountability (8 points)

- The extent to which 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 activities and criminal history checks at the grantee, subgrantee (if applicable), and service site locations.
- The extent to which 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 extent to which 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 the Inspector General and AmeriCorps and a plan for training staff and participants on these reporting protocols.

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 not 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 and is at least \$25,500 for full-time members (if applicable).

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 must propose programs that address the focus areas identified on page 6 of the RFA. The focus area should represent a significant portion of the program design and outcomes.
- 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.
- All applicants must provide a living allowance of at least \$25,500 for full-time AmeriCorps members (if applicable) and a prorated equivalent amount for all other slot types.
- 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. Evaluation Plan (required for recompeting applicants – 0 percent)

If the applicant has previously received three or more years of competitive funding for the same project being proposed (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for the AmeriCorps definition of “same project”), the applicant must submit an evaluation plan as an attachment. 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 template found on the California Volunteers’ RFA website to craft their evaluation plans. The template document provides detailed information about the AmeriCorps Evaluation requirements 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.

All applicants should enter “N/A” in the “Evaluation Summary or Plan” field of the Narrative. Any other text in this field will not be reviewed.

E. Amendment Justification (0 percent)

Enter “N/A” This field will be used if the applicant is awarded a grant and needs to amend it.

F. Clarification Information (0 percent)

Enter “N/A.”

G. Continuation Changes (0 percent)

Enter “N/A.” This field will be used to enter changes in the application narratives in continuation requests.

H. 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](http://www.ecfr.gov), 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.

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*
 - o *Proposed Site Locations List*
 - o *California Performance Measurement Worksheet*
 - o *Labor Organization Certification Form*
 - o *Operational and Financial Management Survey*
 - o *AmeriCorps Organizational Self-Assessment*
 - o *Evaluation Plan Template (if required)*
 - o *AmeriCorps Budget Worksheet*
 - o *Request for Alternative Match Schedule (optional)*
 - o *New Applicant Certification (if applicable)*
 - e. Note: Additional documents beyond the forms listed above are required. Please refer to *Application Instructions* for complete list of required documents.
 - f. *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 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.

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 **Thursday, October 27 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.

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 2023 AmeriCorps General Terms and Conditions, and the 2023 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 cleared prior 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) and in the State where the individual will serve / work (California)* using **Truescreen**
3. FBI National Fingerprint-based Check using **Fieldprint** or using the **California Dept of Justice (CA DOJ)** via CV's [waiver](#)

Refer to the [CV National Service Criminal History Checks Policy](#) for detailed requirements and the [CV National Service Criminal History Checks Guide](#) for details on how to properly conduct the checks using the approved vendors. The cost of checks must be included in the budget. Consider allocating some to the match share, as this is a common pre-launch expense. See the budget worksheet for more detail.

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 ([2 CFR §200.315 \(b\)](#)).

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.

I. Invoice Timeline

Grant awards received through this RFA are cost-reimbursement unless otherwise noted. Payment of invoices can take in excess of 45 days. Applicant should ensure their organization has enough funds on hand to meet payroll and other critical expenses to operate the program.