



1400 10th Street, Second Floor ■ Sacramento, CA 95814 ■ (916) 323-7646 phone ■ (916) 445-8317 fax
CaliforniaVolunteers.CA.GOV

2024 AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity



AmeriCorps

MANDATORY SUPPLEMENT INFORMATION

Applications due November 2, 2023

Mandatory Supplemental Information

This document is intended to provide applicants with additional information for the preparation of their applications under the AmeriCorps State Funding Opportunity. The Supplemental Information provides both detailed definitions of certain terms included in the Request for Applications and Application Instructions as well as additional details regarding how to properly file an application. This Supplemental Information is incorporated by reference in the Request for Applications, and applicants must comply with any requirements stated in this Supplemental Information.

AmeriCorps Member: 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 a [Segal AmeriCorps Education Award](#) that they can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

Asset Based Approach/Frame: Instead of looking at what a community needs or lacks, the approach focuses on utilizing the 'assets' that are already there. The approach facilitates the empowerment of individuals and communities by helping them to identify and share their strengths and then work together to create their own social innovations.

Capacity Building: A set of activities that expand the scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of programs and organizations. These activities achieve lasting positive outcomes for the beneficiary populations served by AmeriCorps-supported organizations (i.e., AmeriCorps programs). As a general rule, AmeriCorps considers capacity building activities to be *indirect services* that enable AmeriCorps -supported organizations to provide more, better, and sustained *direct services*. Grantees cannot solely intend for capacity building activities to support the administration or operations of the organization. Capacity building activities must:

- 1) Support or enhance the program delivery model.
- 2) Respond to the program's goal of increasing, expanding, or enhancing services in order to address the most pressing needs identified in the community.
- 3) Enable the program to provide a sustained level of more or better direct services after the capacity building services end.

Child Care: The AmeriCorps Childcare Benefit Program is available for eligible, active, full-time AmeriCorps State and National members who need the benefit to serve. Visit the [AmeriCorps Childcare Program website](#) for more information on this member benefit.

Cost Reimbursement Grants: These grants fund a portion of program operating costs and AmeriCorps member living allowances, with flexibility to use all of the funds for allowable costs regardless of whether or not the program recruits and retains all AmeriCorps members. Cost reimbursement grants include a formal matching requirement and require the submission of a budget and financial reports.

Enrollment Rate: The AmeriCorps member enrollment rate is calculated as slots filled, plus refill slots filled, divided by slots awarded.

Evidence-based: Evidence-based programs that have been rigorously evaluated and have demonstrated positive results for at least one key desired outcome. Rigorous evaluation means conducting at least one Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) or Quasi-Experimental Design (QED) evaluation of the same intervention described in the application.

Evidence-based interventions on the AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange: Interventions supported by positive results from rigorous evaluations that are documented at [Evidence Exchange](#).

Evidence-based interventions include but are not limited to the following:

- Environmental Stewardship: [Evidence Brief: Effective AmeriCorps-Funded Environmental Stewardship Programs](#)
- Economic Opportunity: [Evidence Brief: Effective CNCS-Funded Economic Opportunity Programs](#)
- Education: [Evidence Brief: Effective CNCS-Funded Education Programs](#)
- Healthy Futures: [Evidence Brief: Effective CNCS-Funded Healthy Futures Programs](#)

Interventions funded in FY22 assessed as having strong or moderate evidence include:

- [Evaluation of College Possible's College-Fit Initiative 2018-2020](#)
- [REACH Corps FY19 End of Grant Evaluation](#)
- [Teach For America National AmeriCorps Evaluation: 2017–18 and 2018–19 School Years](#)
- [Birth and Beyond AmeriCorps: AmeriCorps Quasi- Experimental Program Evaluation 2018-2021](#)

Evidence-informed: Programs in this category use the best available knowledge, research, and evaluation to guide program design and implementation, but do not have scientific research or rigorous evaluation of the intervention described in the application.

Applicants may be evidence-informed if they have incorporated research from other evidence-based programs into their program designs and/or have collected performance measurement data on the intervention described in the application.

Evidence Tiers

Pre-preliminary evidence means the applicant has not submitted an outcome or impact evaluation of the same intervention described in the application, although the applicant may have collected some performance data on the intervention (e.g., data on intervention outputs and/or outcomes). Applicants in this tier must describe in the Evidence Base section of the application how their program design is evidence-informed (see definition above). Applicants may also cite prior performance measure data if applicable.

Preliminary evidence means the applicant has submitted up to two outcome evaluation reports (non-experimental) that evaluated the same intervention described in the application and yielded positive results on one or more key desired outcomes of interest as depicted in the applicant's logic model. The outcome evaluations may either have been conducted internally by the applicant organization or by an entity external to the applicant. The study design must include pre- and post-assessments without a statistically matched comparison group or a post-assessment comparison between intervention and comparison groups. In some cases, a retrospective pre-post assessment may be considered, but its use must be justified in the text of the evaluation report.

AmeriCorps grantees re-competing for their third competitive grant cycle are required to submit an evaluation report of their AmeriCorps funded program. The AmeriCorps - required evaluation report may count towards one of the two reports allowed for the Preliminary evidence tier or may be submitted in addition to this. In the latter case, all three evaluation reports will be considered against the review criteria.

If the applicant is not required to submit an evaluation report of their AmeriCorps funded program, then more than two reports will not be considered.

Moderate evidence means the applicant has submitted up to two well-designed and well-implemented evaluation reports that evaluated the same intervention described in the application and identified evidence of effectiveness on one or more key desired outcomes of interest as depicted in the applicant's logic model. Evidence of effectiveness (or positive findings) is determined using experimental design evaluations (i.e., Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT)) or Quasi-Experimental Design evaluations (QED) with statistically matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups. The ability to generalize the findings from the RCT or QED beyond the study context may be limited (e.g., single-site.) The evaluations were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.

AmeriCorps grantees re-competing for their third competitive grant cycle are required to submit an evaluation report of their AmeriCorps funded program. The AmeriCorps-required evaluation report may count towards one of the two reports allowed for the Moderate evidence tier or may be submitted in addition to this. In the latter case, all three evaluation reports will be considered against the review criteria.

If the applicant is not required to submit an evaluation report of their AmeriCorps funded program, then more than two reports will not be considered.

Strong evidence means the applicant has submitted up to two evaluation reports demonstrating that the same intervention described in the application has been tested nationally, regionally, or at the state-level (e.g., multi-site) using a well-designed and well-implemented experimental design evaluation (i.e., Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)) or a Quasi-Experimental Design evaluation (QED) with statistically matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups. Alternatively, the proposed intervention's evidence may be based on multiple (up to two) well-designed and well-implemented QEDs or RCTs of the same intervention described in the application in different locations or with different populations within a local geographic area. The overall pattern of evaluation findings must be consistently positive on one or more key desired outcomes of interest as depicted in the applicant's logic model. Findings from the RCT or QED evaluations may be generalized beyond the study context. The evaluations were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.

AmeriCorps grantees re-competing for their third competitive grant cycle are required to submit an evaluation report of their AmeriCorps funded program. The AmeriCorps required evaluation report may count towards one of the two reports allowed for the Strong evidence tier or may be submitted in addition to this. In the latter case, all three evaluation reports will be considered against the review criteria.

If the applicant is not required to submit an evaluation report of their AmeriCorps funded program, then more than two reports will not be considered.

Impact evaluation: An evaluation that provides statistical evidence of how well a program achieves its desired outcomes and what effect it has on service recipients and/or service participants compared to what would have happened in the absence of the program. Impact evaluations must be designed to provide evidence of a causal relationship between program activities and outcomes (45 C.F.R. § 2522.700). Grantees must use an experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation design (i.e., the evaluation must include a control group or a statistically matched comparison group).

Same intervention described in the application: The intervention evaluated in submitted evaluation reports must match the intervention proposed in the application in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the Program Design and Logic Model sections of the application:

- 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
- Outcomes of the intervention

Evaluation reports that do not sufficiently match the intervention proposed by the applicant will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points.

Fixed Amount Grants: These grants provide a fixed amount of funding per Member Service Year (MSY) that is substantially lower than the amount required to operate the program.

Organizations use their own or other resources to cover the remaining costs. Programs are not required to submit budgets or financial reports, there is no specific match requirement, and programs are not required to track and maintain documentation of match. However, AmeriCorps provides only a portion of the cost of running the program and organizations must raise the additional resources needed to run the program. Programs can access the funds, provided they recruit and retain the members supported under the grant based on the MSY level awarded. Professional Corps programs applying for operational funding through a Fixed Amount grant must submit a budget in support of their request for operational funds.

- **Full-cost Fixed Amount grants:** Fixed Amount grants are available for programs that enroll all types of member slots and use their own resources to cover all other costs. Professional Corps may only have full-time members. Programs can access funds under the grant based on enrolling and retaining the full complement of members supported under the grant.
- **Education Award Grants (EAP) Fixed Amount grant:** Programs apply for a small fixed amount per MSY, can enroll all types of member slots, and use their own resources to cover all other costs. Programs can access funds under the grant based on enrolling the full complement of members supported under the grant. As with full-cost fixed amount grants, there are no specific match or financial reporting requirements for EAP fixed amount grants.

State Commissions can withhold up to 2% administrative funds from fixed price grants from single state applicants that are not competitive planning grants.

Match Waiver: can be requested to decrease the required match amount. Please see the Match Waiver Request section of the Application Instructions.

Member Placement Site or Service Location: A member service location is the site at which an AmeriCorps member is placed to provide their service to the community.

Member Service Year (MSY): One Member Service Year (MSY) is equivalent to a full-time AmeriCorps position (at least 1,700 service hours.) Applicants are not required to apply for a minimum number of MSYs.

National Direct Applicants:

Multi-state: Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one state or territory apply directly to AmeriCorps.

Federally-recognized Indian Tribes: Applicants that are Indian Tribes apply directly to AmeriCorps.

New Applicant: For the purposes of determining eligibility for a full cost fixed price grant, AmeriCorps defines "new applicant" as an applicant that is applying for an AmeriCorps State and National grant for the first time or is a former grantee (non-formula) whose last AmeriCorps State and National grant was received more than five years ago. Current formula grantees applying for the first time for a full cost fixed grant are not considered new applicants.

Other Revenue: funds necessary to operate an AmeriCorps program that are not AmeriCorps funds or grantee share (match) identified in the budget. Programs should not enter the total operating budget for their organization unless the entire operating budget supports the AmeriCorps program. Programs that have additional revenue sources not included in the matching funds section of the budget should provide the amount of this additional revenue that supports the program. This amount should not include the AmeriCorps or grantee share amounts in the budget. Fixed amount grantees should enter all non-AmeriCorps funds that support the program in this field. All fixed grants will have other revenue.

Professional Corps: A Professional Corps is a program model composed of AmeriCorps members serving as professionals, i.e., teachers, health care providers, police officers, engineers, attorneys, or other professionals. The programs recruit and place qualified members in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Professional Corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a Professional Corps by AmeriCorps must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.

Professional Corps members' salaries/compensation, including childcare, are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve and are not included in the budget request to AmeriCorps. The living allowance or salary provided to AmeriCorps members in Professional Corps programs does not count toward the matching requirement. AmeriCorps requires Professional Corps programs to cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non-AmeriCorps resources. AmeriCorps 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 by AmeriCorps. These grants are fixed amount grants.

Applicants may propose any authorized program type. In the case that a proposed program fits more than one program type (e.g., a program could be either a professional corps or a traditional program), AmeriCorps staff will make a determination as to program type that will be considered for funding. The determination will be based on data provided within the application and supplemental materials submitted with the application. The determination may be different from the program type proposed by the applicant.

AmeriCorps reserves the right to determine if an applicant (whether or not the applicant has applied as a Professional Corps) has sufficiently demonstrated that they cannot effectively operate an AmeriCorps program without receiving AmeriCorps operating funds. There may be specific circumstances where AmeriCorps determines that a legal applicant has not demonstrated the need for operational grant funds due to other funding resources. Where AmeriCorps due diligence review of an application shows that the applicant has a historically high level of support from non-AmeriCorps sources and as a result has levels of unrestricted

funding that exceeds the requested level of AmeriCorps funding, AmeriCorps may choose to not provide operational grant funding.

Prohibited Activities: While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or AmeriCorps, staff and members may not engage in the following activities (see 45 CFR § 2520.65):

1. Attempting to influence legislation
2. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes
3. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing
4. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements
5. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office
6. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials
7. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization
8. Providing a direct benefit to a. a business organized for profit, b. a labor union, c. a partisan political organization, d. a nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative, and e. an organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph C. 7. above, unless AmeriCorps assistance is not used to support those religious activities
9. Conducting a voter registration drive or using AmeriCorps funds to conduct a voter registration drive
10. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services
11. Such other activities as AmeriCorps may prohibit.

AmeriCorps members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their own initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-AmeriCorps funds.

Retention Rate: The AmeriCorps member retention rate is calculated as the number of members exited with education award (full or partial award) divided by the number of members enrolled.

Rural Communities: AmeriCorps uses rural-urban commuting area (RUCA) codes to classify program addresses as either rural or urban for analytic purposes. RUCA codes classify U.S. census tracts using measures of population density, urbanization, and daily commuting. Census tracts with an urban cluster population less than 50,000 are considered rural (RUCA codes 4-10). Applicants are encouraged to designate themselves as serving rural communities if some or all service locations are in rural areas as defined by RUCA codes or if the program can provide other compelling evidence that the program is rural in the narrative portion of the application. This self-designation will be considered in grant-making decisions.

For more information about RUCA codes, please visit the [USDA website](#).

The Office of Grant Administration uses Beale Codes when assessing alternative match requirements as required by Statute (45 CFR 2521.60(c)).

Same Project: Two projects will be considered the same if they: address the same issue areas, address the same priorities, address the same objectives, serve the same target communities and population, or utilize the same sites.

Existing grantees must get approval from agency staff to be considered a new project. If an applicant is applying for a different program model (a new project), select New. Current and previous grantees need to get approval from agency staff to be considered a new project. AmeriCorps will consider a project to be new if there is a meaningful difference between it and previous projects in a comparison of the following characteristics, among others: the objectives and priorities of the projects; the nature of the services provided; the program staff, participants, and volunteers involved; the geographic locations in which the services are provided; the populations served; and the proposed community partnerships. (§ 2522.340).

Requests to be considered a new project should include information about how the new project differs from the previous project in the characteristics noted above. The request should also include the proposed name of the new project. AmeriCorps staff will review the request to determine if the proposed project does represent a meaningful difference from the previous project or if the proposed project is an example of natural program evolution over time. If it is determined that the project is new, agency staff will create a new project in eGrants. Applicants must request new projects significantly in advance of their application deadline.

Unallowable Activities: In addition to the *Prohibited Activities*, the following restrictions also apply to the service of AmeriCorps members:

Nonduplication: AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program. AmeriCorps assistance will not be provided to a private nonprofit entity to conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities provided by a State or local government agency in which such entity resides unless the entity complies with the following "nondisplacement" requirements. Note: In section below Corporation = AmeriCorps

Nondisplacement:

1. An employer may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the use by such employer of a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance.
2. An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance.
3. A service opportunity will not be created under this chapter that will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual.
4. A participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance may not perform any services or duties or engage in activities that would otherwise be performed by an employee as part of the assigned duties of such employee.
5. A participant in any program receiving assistance may not perform any services or duties, or engage in activities, that—
 - i. Will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or
 - ii. Are services, duties, or activities with respect to which an individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures.

6. A participant in any program receiving assistance may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any—
 - i. Presently employed worker;
 - ii. Employee who recently resigned or was discharged;
 - iii. Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures;
 - iv. Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick); or
 - v. Employee who is on strike or who is being locked out.