Questions and Answers from RFA Session on November 17, 2023

Questions submitted via email and not previously answered are also included.

1) Do training hours, professional development and convening hours count toward the 450-service hour requirement? And can these hours be met during the full calendar year, or does it need to be met during the academic year?

   Yes, 90 hours of the 450 service hours can be training hours. All service and training hours are met during the service term. A campus defines the service term. While most service terms are based on the academic year, some campuses choose to extend terms through the summer months.

2) For the application, does the 14-page requirement include any addendums to be submitted? Is there a separate document for the Budget?

   Applicants are required to answer a set of 24 questions listed in *Section IV B. Application Requirements and Review Criteria* beginning on page 17 of the RFA. This program narrative may not exceed 14 double spaced, single-sided pages. This limit does not include the cover sheet, the completed Excel budget document, or any letters of support. The Budget template can be downloaded from the RFA funding opportunity **webpage**.

3) We work in the community service-learning office at our university. Our staff manages service placements out in the community, at schools in tutoring programs and at churches. Would those service opportunities count as part of the 20% miscellaneous allotment? If our university sponsors and manages these placements, can they be included in the College Corps placements?

   The additional focus area flexibility of 20% of placements mentioned in the RFA refers to placements beyond the 3 priority focus areas of – K-12 education, food insecurity, or climate change outlined in the RFA. Up to 20% of placements can be made outside of the three identified areas.

   If a university or college manages the placements out in the community, that is allowable. College Corps is meant to provide Fellows a service experience out in the community and not primarily on a campus.

4) Is there a minimum of AB 540 students that we must enroll in the program? Are we allowed to change those numbers once in the implementation phase?

California Volunteers (CV) is committed to including AB 540 students in service opportunities through College Corps. Funding is set aside to support a statewide target percentage of 20% of AB-540 eligible students in each Fellow cohort. We recognize that not all partner colleges and universities will be able to meet the 20% target on their campus. However, all applicants will be asked to include a target number of AB 540 eligible students they will aim to include per cohort, and this should be a major focus of Fellow recruitment efforts.

Fellow slot types can be adjusted during the implementation phase of the grant upon request and approval by CV.

5) In the Eligibility Criteria it states that students should meet the following criteria, is there a chance that students who do not meet the criteria could be admitted in the program?

Students must meet the Fellow eligibility criteria outlined in Annex 4: Fellow Eligibility, Recruitment & Benefits on page 30 of the RFA to participate in College Corps.

6) For New Applicants, what activities should be focused on, and really make the greatest impact in the planning year?

Planning for staffing is a key activity during the planning year for this high touch/high impact program. A **resource** developed from the first year of the program describes the need for adequate staffing. A list of additional activities can be found in *Table 3: Funding Allocations for New and Returning Applicants* on page 14 of the RFA.

7) Is there a cost to using the data collection platform California Volunteers requires? Are there any types of office space costs, such as rent, that are not allowable by this grant?

California Volunteers provides a data collection system for all campuses to use. There is no cost to the campus. Office space costs such as paying rent are allowable costs for this grant.

8) In Question 21 on the Budget Adequacy Section of the narrative, it says the budget should include program expenses critical for program implementation, but it says we will be asked for a separate implementation budget.

CV is looking at just what is requested in the Budget template. Applicants won't be evaluated on anything not requested on the Budget template. The detailed implementation budget is completed after awarding. Applicants should describe budget expense planning in the remaining narrative questions 22-24.

9) Does the indirect cost need to be factored into the $15,000 per fellow cap, or is it an additional line item added to the overall project budget?

The Budget template we provide at the College Corps funding opportunity page describes an overall budget which calculates the maximum Indirect Cost Rate for the entire grant. Once campuses are selected, an implementation budget will be requested and submitted. Campuses can use the implementation budget to adjust the Indirect Cost Rate as needed.

10) Is there a list of allowable and unallowable costs for this grant? Particularly in relation to food for cohort training and support and marketing?

Examples of allowable costs are listed on *Table 3: Funding Allocations for New and Returning Applicants* on pages 14-15 of the RFA. Marketing and outreach are allowable costs. Generally, food is not an allowable expense. Partner Campuses should plan convenings to have enough time for Fellows to purchase their own food. However, on rare occasions, food may be an allowable expense. After grants are awarded, partner campuses will work with CV to ensure all expenses are in accordance with state and federal regulations.

11) Our campus is considering applying as a 4-year returning institution with 1 community college campus as a recruiting partner. Is there a minimum number of students the community college is required to support as transfers?

An individual 4-year institution applying with one community college partner supports a minimum of 100 Fellows. The four-year and two-year campuses identify the roles and responsibilities of the partnership, and how many Fellows will be supported by each.

12) Can a recruitment partner join a consortium? Would they apply for the grant?

A four-year Individual Institution can partner with one community college as a recruiting partner. The four-year campus is the legal applicant for this grant, so the recruiting partner would not apply directly.

13) As a new institution applying for this grant, what is the likelihood that this program will continue beyond the year of implementation? We just want to be planning and thinking proactively on my campus.

College Corps continues to build momentum, with more than 6,000 Fellows addressing California's most critical challenges. California Volunteers will request sustained funding from the Legislature to permanently fund the program.

14) Is the 1:25 staff-to-Fellow ratio a requirement or recommendation?

It is a recommended ratio based on what is needed to run a high-touch, high impact service professional development program.

15) What are the protocols if a Fellow were to drop out of the program? Would they need to return their living allowance? Is there an expectation to refill the slot?

During the recruitment period, backfilling of slots is possible. There is a system in place to support the Fellow in completing the required 450 hours. After the recruitment period ends, and if it is just not possible for the Fellow to meet the expectations over time, and with support, then the Fellow can be exited from the program. The living allowance stops at this point, but the Fellow is not required to return any living allowance they received for their service.

16) How is the living allowance paid out to the student?

It is paid out bi-weekly or monthly as determined by the campus and paid in equal installments over the service term. It is not based on hours served, although there is a minimum number of hours that must be served to receive the first payment of the living allowance.

17) Are all fellows required to be fingerprinted and background checked prior to service, or is it only required for fellows whose placement sites require it?

All Fellows who are eligible are required to have a background check and go through an SSN and Citizenship verification process. Some placement sites may require additional background checks.

18) Can you explain the additional funding for consortium lead partners? The RFA description mentions up to $50,000 for lead partner does this funding come out of the $738/fellow in supplemental funds or is this in addition to the amount per fellow?

These two types of supplemental funds are separate and for different purposes. The lead partner of the consortium can request up to $50,000 over the two-year grant period to support the administration of the Consortium. Additionally, the Consortium through the lead partner, can request $738 per fellow to expand and enhance Fellow cohort experience, or provide support for financial aid staffing to run College Corps. *Table 3: Funding Allocations for New and Returning Applicants* on page 14-15 of the RFA describes the separate funding amounts.

19) Who should the letters of support be addressed to?

Letters of support should be addressed to:

California Volunteers
1400 10th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

20) Government agencies can host fellows, but can elected official offices also host fellows? Also, what about religious institutions? A lot of churches are doing food insecurity work (pantries, food distributions, etc.) and they are non-profits so we wanted to see if we could partner with them.

College Corps is intended provide Fellows a service experience out in their community. Working with government agencies and nonprofits that offer Fellows community service placements is allowable. It is not allowable to have elected official offices host Fellows.

21) For a consortium *with a lead partner*, can one of the non-lead institutions serve fewer than 50 fellows, if the 200-consortium minimum is met?

Yes, if the 200-slot minimum is met collectively, one member of the consortium could support fewer than 50 Fellows. The final slot allocation is determined by the lead partner after awarding. *See Table 2: Applicant Type Options* on page 10 of the RFA.

22) Will CA Volunteers be able to fund requests from new consortiums for this funding cycle?

This funding opportunity is focused returning grantees. The ability to fund new grantees is dependent on how many slots, if any, remain available after returning grantee selections are made. All applications from new campuses, across all categories (individual, consortium) will be considered and rated on the strength of their application.