WV State AmeriCorps Competitive Grant

Technical Assistance Call FAQ

November 14, 2016

Q: Where do I look for my continuation application?

A: Select Continuation/Renewal under the Creating an Application heading on your organization's eGrants homepage (see image below).

If you are unable to find the application from this link, please select View All under View My Grants/Applications on your organization's eGrants home page, search for your grant number, and select the correct application to edit (see image below).

If still can't find the correct application, please contact the help desk by submitting a help ticket from the eGrants website or call 1-800-942-2677 for assistance.

Q: We are a currently funded formula applicant who is applying under the competitive grants process for the first time. Do we use the same eGrants site, account, and log-in information?

A: Yes. You will use the same eGrants site, account, and log-in information to submit a competitive grant application.

Q: We are a currently funded formula applicant who is applying under the competitive grants process for the first time, so do we select New or Continuation?

A: As a first time competitive grant applicant, you will select New; however, your match level will remain on the same schedule. For instance, if you were a 3rd year formula applicant, your match level for your new competitive application will advance to the year 4 level of 26%.

Q: There seems to be a lot of repetition in the narrative sections (need, intervention, theory of change, evidence). What are your suggestions for lessening the amount of repetition in each section?

A: Please review each section's requirements alongside our suggestions below:

- Need: Evidence of the community need/documentation of a critical community need

- Intervention: Specific details related to the members service/what the members will be doing to address the evidenced need

- Logic Model: Everything included in summary form but in specific detail that matches the narrative

- Evidence: Specific studies (or high quality performance measure data) that indicate the individual program's intervention is likely to succeed. Review the list on page 12 of the NOFO to ensure that each item is specifically addressed in this section.

* Distinguish the need and intervention of your planned program as a state level priority as well as a compelling competitively funded program.

* Make sure everything (dosage, frequency, etc.) matches throughout the narratives, logic model, and performance measures.

Q: Am I correct in believing that the evidence only needs to address a single aspect of our program's intervention and not each intervention?

A: You are correct. Applicants are only required to provide evidence for a single intervention outlined in the application.

Q: We are a currently funded formula applicant who will be applying under a new legal applicant. Does our new legal applicant need to create their own eGrants account under which we should submit our competitive application?

A: Yes, a new eGrants account must be created for the new legal applicant.

Q: What is the CNCS definition of a federally approved indirect cost rate?

A: A negotiated indirect cost rate received from the Nonfederal entity's cognizant agency for indirect costs. CNCS has provided this Indirect Cost Rate FAQ as well as details on how to budget using a federally approved indirect cost rate on pages 31-32 of the Application Instructions.

Q: If we cannot submit the application by the deadline, how do we request an extension?

A: Applicants who need to request an extension must submit an e-mail to Cassandra.L.Argo@wv.gov no later than the day before the deadline. The e-mail must include a detailed description of the extenuating circumstances that are preventing the delayed submission.

Q: Where do I find the funding priorities?

A: The funding priorities can be found on page 3 of the NOFO as well as in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance.

Q: Can we continue to submit questions to Cassandra.L.Argo@wv.gov throughout this week?

A: Yes. Questions will continue to be accepted via e-mail through the November 21, 2016 deadline. All questions will be addressed in written form, distributed to all applicants, and posted at www.volunteerwv.org.

Q: If our performance measures are still being worked on, what does that mean?

A: Volunteer West Virginia staff is working diligently to return final performance measure recommendations to applicants prior to the November 21, 2016 deadline. In the event that final recommendations cannot be returned prior to the submission deadline, Volunteer West Virginia will direct applicants to submit the most recent version of the performance measure(s) with the acknowledgement that final revisions to performance measures will occur as part of the clarification process.

Q: As a first time competitive applicant who is currently funded in the formula portfolio, will our match level reset to 24%?

A: No, your match level will remain on the same schedule. For instance, if you were a 3rd year formula applicant, your match level for your new competitive application will advance to the year 4 level of 26%.

Q: We have not yet reached the 35% match level; however, we are interested in applying for the alternative match waiver. Should we apply now or wait until we reach the 35% threshold?

A: Volunteer West Virginia is reaching out to our CNCS Program Officer for a definitive answer to this question. We will relay the answer as soon as we receive it. Please stay tuned to our website and look for a follow-up e-mail.

Q: If we are approved for the alternative match waiver, is it a permanent approval or will we have to reapply every year?

A: Volunteer West Virginia is reaching out to our CNCS Program Officer for a definitive answer to this question. We will relay the answer as soon as we receive it. Please stay tuned to our website and look for a follow-up e-mail.

Q: Is it possible to request an alternative match waiver level higher than 35%?

A: Volunteer West Virginia is reaching out to our CNCS Program Officer for a definitive answer to this question. We will relay the answer as soon as we receive it. Please stay tuned to our website and look for a follow-up e-mail.

Q: When is the full application due in eGrants?

A: The full application is due no later than 5 pm on Monday, November 21, 2016.

2017 WV State AmeriCorps Formula Grant

Member Management Technical Assistance Call FAQ

March 29, 2017

Q: Which funding opportunity is best for my organization?

A: There are currently two funding opportunities

- Targeted Communities – this opportunity is designed for organizations interested in utilizing AmeriCorps members in innovative ways to promote safer communities and/or address the state's opioid and substance abuse epidemic. Programs may choose to focus on any aspect of substance abuse: prevention, treatment, or recovery. Programs may also choose to propose projects that address issues of public safety, especially projects that engage community members in improving community-police relations, reducing blighted properties, providing youth with economic opportunity, or creating prisoner and addict re-entry and support programs. Programs may address one of the two issues or a combination.

- Formula – this opportunity is designed for organizations interested in utilizing AmeriCorps members to address one of the five key focus areas in the West Virginia Unified State Service Plan. Those areas are Education, Healthy Futures, Community Investment, Disaster Services, and Veterans. Programs may also propose to place AmeriCorps members in priority geographies identified within the State Service Plan. Geographies include the southern coalfield counties and north central West Virginia counties.

Q: Can we select a performance measure that is focused on member change?

A: Yes, applicants may choose a performance measure that is focused on member change.

Q: Do we select the evidence level we believe our organization has in the evidence section?

A: Yes, applicants are required to state the level of evidence in the evidence section. For new programs, please describe interventions your organization has tried and why you want to expand these interventions through AmeriCorps.

Q: Does the living allowance impact a member's benefits such as disability?

A: The living allowance can impact benefits such as SSDI; therefore, members should discuss how the living allowance might impact his or her benefits prior to enrollment. Members can waive part or all of the living allowance should their service negatively impact other benefits. To learn more, please review questions C.76 through C.80 in the AmeriCorps State and National Policy FAQs.

Q: What are the education award amounts for program year 2017?

A:

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1700	$12,630	$24,930
Half-time	900	n/a	$13,199
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	$9,899
Quarter-time	450	n/a	$6,599
Minimum-time	300	n/a	$4,400

Q: Where can I learn more about the education award?

A: Please visit the Corporation for National & Community's Education Award webpage to learn more.

Q: Do AmeriCorps State members have a choice between the education award and a cash stipend?

A: No, AmeriCorps State members do not have an option. AmeriCorps State members are only eligible for an education award. AmeriCorps VISTA members, however, have the option to choose between an education award and a cash stipend upon completing a term of service.

Q: What West Virginia institutions of higher education match the education award?

A: Bethany College, Future Generations University, Ohio Valley University, and the University of Charleston all match the education award.

Q: How does recruitment work?

A: Programs can recruit in a variety of ways including: posting service opportunities on the My AmeriCorps Portal, the Service Year Exchange, and job boards such as Indeed, Monster, and CareerBuilder. Programs can also attend college and career fairs. One of the best practices in recruitment is developing relationships with specific college departments related to your program's design and intervention.

Q: Are there restrictions to members raising funds?

A: Yes, there are fundraising restrictions for members. The following restrictions apply:

- Members cannot spend more than 10% of their time raising funds.

- Members may only raise resources directly in support of your program's service activities.

- Members cannot write grants to the Corporation for National & Community Service or any other federal agency

- Members cannot write grants to provide their own living allowances

- Members cannot write grants to assist the organization with its general/operational budget

Q: Is member supervisory time allowable match?

A: Yes. Applicants may include member supervision as match. Please review the Detailed Budget Instructions for more information on how to include this in your budget.

2017 WV State AmeriCorps Formula Grant

Budget Technical Assistance Call FAQ

March 22, 2017

Q: We have never submitted an AmeriCorps budget before. Is there a template or checklist that will help us submit an accurate budget?

A: Yes. As reviewed on the Budget TA Call, there is a Budget Checklist (Attachment F) on page 41 of the 2017 Application Instructions.

Q: Are there specific instructions for creating a budget specific to new, cost reimbursement grantees?

A: Yes. As reviewed on the Budget TA Call, there is a Detailed Budget Instructions document (Attachment B) on page 28 of the 2017 Application Instructions.

Q: What are the functions of the CNCS Program Budget?

A: The program budget becomes part of the grantee's contractual obligation, serves as a blueprint for the activities supported under the grant, ensures conformance to provisions and regulatory restrictions, used to monitor and measure progress towards meeting match requirement, and used to monitor and compare budget to actual expenses.

Q: What is an effective budget?

A: An effective budget is realistic, consistent, and flexible. The budget reflects expected program revenues and expenses as well as the capacity to carry out program activities. The budget is aligned with program's approved goals and objectives. The budget is created to adapt to changing financial and operating circumstances.

Q: Why is a good budget design essential?

A: A good budget design establishes a realistic scope, ensures all details are covered, creates a highly competitive application, complies with all requirements, serves as a solid guide for program execution, and defines expectations.

Q: What should the budget narrative preparation process entail?

A: Applicants should review program/project goals and objectives, estimate the resources needed to achieve those goals and objectives, follow all instructions in the NOFO and Application Instructions, organize narrative to fit budget categories, provide adequate descriptions and calculations to support budget, and allocate costs based on a consistent and documented cost allocation plan.

Q: What is the difference between direct and indirect cost types?

A: Direct Costs are directly attributable to meeting the goals and objectives of the program such as travel reimbursement, AmeriCorps gear, and independent program evaluations while Indirect Costs are general or centralized expenses of an organization such as general liability insurance, internal evaluations, and general legal services.

Q: What are some examples of unallowable costs?

A: Unallowable costs include, but are not limited to: lobbying, fines and penalties, alcohol, bands for member celebration, etc.

Q: What is the match requirement?

A: The match level begins at 24% in years one through three and gradually increases to 50% by year ten. The full match chart can be found on page 10 of the 2017 Formula NOFO.

Q: What are some key tips to ensuring that our budget meets CNCS cost guidelines?

A: A few of our best key tips include: reviewing living allowance amounts for each slot type to ensure the amount falls within the minimum and maximum amount outlined on page 9 of the 2017 Formula NOFO, confirming the budget meets the minimum match requirement, and that all the required cost components are included in the appropriate section of the budget.

Q: What are some common budget errors that we should keep in mind?

A: The most common budget errors are incorrect mathematical calculations, the numbers in the narrative not matching the numbers in the budget, and the budget being inefficient to meet the program's outlined plan in the logic model and narrative. The best way to avoid these errors is to have an individual who is unfamiliar with your program/application review the full application for mistakes and inconsistencies.

Q: Who is responsible for the required health care costs?

A: The program is responsible for ensuring that full-time AmeriCorps members receive ACA-compliant health care.

Q: What are the health care options?

A: Most members will be eligible for expanded Medicaid or will still be on their parents' insurance at no cost to the program; however, there are two other options available for members who do not fall into either of the aforementioned categories. The first option is for members to register for health insurance through the Marketplace then programs can either a) reimburse the member a certain percentage or up to a set healthcare allowance amount or b) the program can incur the cost directly. The second option is for the program to enroll in The Corps Network which provides members ACA-compliant health care. The Corps Network option would cost programs around $250 per month per member.

Q: Health care as we know it might change. What should we consider when creating our budget?

A: Since health care is currently in flux, we recommend programs allot additional funding in the healthcare line to cover member health care costs if Expanded Medicaid funding is not renewed.

Q: What happens if we allot more funds in the health care line then we end up needing?

A: If the allotted health care funds exceed actual health care expenses, the program can submit a budget modification request to reallocate the funds to a different open line item (subject to CNCS guidelines).

Q: If we are a continuation applicant and we have budget changes, can we make them now?

A: Yes. Please review the instructions on page 2 of the Continuation Application Instructions for the questions that need answered and the steps needed to change a budget during a continuation year.

Q: Do continuation applicants need to submit a Notice of Intent?

A: No. Per the NOFO, only new and re-competing applicants are required to submit a Notice of Intent.

Q: If we realize that what we need is capacity building, what are our options?

A: Individuals that need a capacity building member can contact the CNCS - West Virginia State Office at 304-347-5246 to learn more.

Q: What should be included in the member service descriptions?

A: Programs should include all direct service activities that members are expected to finish to successfully complete a term of service. Indirect activities that are necessary to complete direct service objectives (such as marketing an event, filing intake forms, or calculating event evaluation forms) do not need to be included on the member service descriptions. Member service descriptions should be specific and clear (ex. Member will use the Multicultural Youth Leadership curriculum to teach leadership skills to 100 Charleston area youth ages 14 to 18.)

Q: We have narrowed our performance measure options down to two. What do we need to keep in mind?

A: Applicants should make sure that the performance measure output they choose has an aligned outcome. Most National Performance Measure outputs come with an aligned outcome; however, several outputs require the applicant to determine their own outcome. Applicants need to ensure they can meet each of the requirements for the chosen aligned output and outcome as described in the Performance Measure Instructions.

Q: I see that we are required to keep member and program staff timesheets. Are we also required to keep timesheets for task (site) supervisors?

A: Yes. Applicants need to create timekeeping policies and procedures for members, site supervisors, and program staff. Applicants can use OnCorps for everyone; however, many programs keep paper timesheets for program staff and site supervisors which include a place to record the date, times, amount of salary, hourly wage, and signatures from both the individual and his or her supervisor.

Q: When is the Notice of Intent due?

A: The Notice of Intent is due by March 24, 2017. All individuals who are interested should submit a Notice to Moya.Doneghy@wv.gov by the deadline because only applicants who submit the Notice will be eligible to submit the full application. Applicants who submit a Notice, but then decide not to compete this year can withdraw at any time without consequence.

Q: When is the next TA Call?

A: The next TA Call is March 29, 2017 at 12 pm. Applicants can dial 1-866-453-5550 then enter pin 3730200# at the prompt.

Q: I saw that there will be a special in-person training for new and re-compete applicants. Will this coincide with the TA Call?

A: The Training will begin at 9 am while the TA Call will begin at 12 pm. Individuals who attend the in-person training are welcome to sit in on the TA Call. We will open the conference call line at 11:55 am for those unable to attend the in-person training. Lunch will be provided during the TA Call then an afternoon session for targeted community applicants will begin.

2017 WV State AmeriCorps Formula Grant

Continuation Technical Assistance Call FAQ

Narrative 101 Technical Assistance Call FAQ

Q: What is the minimum number of members required?

A: Volunteer West Virginia requires programs to request a minimum number of 5 members.

Q: How does Volunteer West Virginia define capacity building versus direct service?

A: Volunteer West Virginia considers direct service to be most activities that directly benefit a single individual or a group such as after-school mentoring, financial literacy class for veterans, and/or assisting low-income families complete a state and/or federal tax return while capacity building is activities that mainly benefit the organization or increase the organization's ability to better serve the community such as social media coordination, volunteer recruitment, and/or curriculum development.

Q: As a first-year program, we are required to provide 24% match. Are there any requirements on how that match is provided?

A: Sub-grantees are permitted to provide the required match either as cash or in-kind as long as the overall amount equals or exceeds the required match level. Cash includes any costs in which the sub-grantee expends funds such as personnel salaries, AmeriCorps gear, and office supplies while in-kind includes any costs in which the sub-grantee is being provided a service or item at no cost to their organization such as donated meeting space, donated food for a member/site supervisor training, and donated trainer services/time.

Q: Can members write grants and or participate in program development?

A: Members cannot write grants to the Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS) or to any other federal agency, grants that benefit the organization's general budget, or grants that cover the members' living stipend. Members can spend 10% or less of their service time raising funds for projects that are specifically detailed in their member service description. For example, if the member's service description describes organizing a backpack program, the member can develop the resources necessary for the backpacks and the materials in the backpacks. Members' main activities should be direct service (answer help line calls, medical transportation, drug-free education); however, as a first-year program there will be small amounts of program development/capacity building that will need to take place. These non-direct service activities (streamlining intake forms across community partners, coordinating medical transport drivers, and creating or preparing education materials) should be 20-25% of the members' time or less.

Q: How do we go about recruiting?

A: Programs can recruit via the My AmeriCorps Portal, Service Year Exchange, and online career boards. Volunteer West Virginia also creates a recruitment flyer of all AmeriCorps programs in West Virginia that is available online and provided to programs to take to college and career fairs. Programs also help each other recruit by handing out materials and referring individuals to the appropriate program.

Q: What are the financial reporting requirements?

A: Programs are required to submit a paper invoice by mail and an accompanying Periodic Expense Report (PER) in OnCorps (an online software platform that we provide and train programs on) each month to request reimbursement of actual expenses. New programs must submit all backup documentation (such as a general ledger, receipts, invoices, etc.) for each invoice/PER throughout the entire year. Returning programs are required to submit backup documentation for pre-determined invoices/PERs based on the program's assigned risk level (which is an assessment completed by Volunteer West Virginia prior to the program year starts) and detailed in the program's Individual Monitoring Plan.

Q: How many performance measures are we required to have?

A: All programs are required to have one, aligned performance measure. First year programs will be encouraged to only select or create one, aligned performance measure while returning programs will have the option to select or create more than one.

Q: As a continuation applicant, our match level has increased this year. Do we change this in our budget?

A: Yes. You will need to make the changes to the actual budget in eGrants and provide your justification for the change in the Continuation Narrative section of your application.

Q: We are using site supervisor time as match for the first time. What do we need to do?

A: You will need to add the site supervisor to the Personnel and the Source of Funds sections of the budget. Remember to budget additional funds to cover the required National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC) for all personnel listed on the budget.

Q: Do we document the site supervisor time the same way we document time for the program director?

A: Yes. You will need to follow the same policies and procedures for documenting site supervisor time as you do for the program director.

Q: Do we leave Year 2 Continuation changes in the application or do we remove that previous narrative prior to submission?

A: You will leave the Year 2 changes and add a new Year 3 heading above the previous narrative where you will address this year's changes.

Q: As a continuation applicant, can we make changes to the narrative even though it isn't required?

A: No. Continuation applicants cannot make changes to the narrative unless there is a major change to program design, intervention, etc. that is needed. Continuation applicants should answer the questions found on the [Continuation Application Instructions](#) and make any budgetary changes only.

Q: We requested slot conversions this year. In terms of the budget, do we automatically revert to the original slots or can we make those changes to the budget as needed?

A: This is up to the program. If you are not happy with the changes, the program can revert to the original awarded slot amounts and types; however, if the program believes the slot conversions have been beneficial to the program's success, then the program is encouraged to make those changes in the budget now.

Q: What is the earliest date members can begin serving?

A: Members can typically begin serving on August 1st, 2017; however, this date could be delayed in 2017. Members cannot begin serving until the Corporation for National & Community Service issues Volunteer West Virginia an award letter. Upon receipt of this award letter, Volunteer West Virginia will notify programs with the first eligible date of service.

Q: In the Continuation Application Instructions, one of the questions asks us to state whether we have achieved 100% enrollment; however, we are only in the first 3 months of our program year and have a non-traditional design with members starting throughout the spring. How do we answer this question?

A: Please indicate in your answer that your program is in its first year of enrollment and has enrolled all winter start members and are on track to enroll all spring start members.

Q: What are the reporting requirements for this grant?

A: Awarded programs will be required to submit monthly invoices and periodic expense reports, timesheets for members, site supervisors, and program staff on a program determined timeframe, and bi-annual grantee progress reports while members will need to submit a Survey Monkey service project report for each service project they organize or participate in.

Q: Can a member's main activity be capacity building – specifically, social media?

A: No. AmeriCorps State members are direct service members who should spend no more than 20-25% of their time on non-direct service activities such as social media, volunteer recruitment, and curriculum development.

Q: Are members able to fundraise?

A: Members can spend no more than 10% of their time fundraising. Members cannot write grants to the Corporation for National & Community Service, to other federal agencies, or for the organization's general budget or the member's living stipend. Fundraising federal code can be found here.

Q: Would members training Try This volunteers be considered direct service?

A: Yes, training individuals is considered direct service.

Q: Am I right to say that we should not select capacity building performance measures as our one, aligned performance measure?

A: You are correct. New applicants should choose one, aligned direct service performance measure for the first three-year grant cycle.

Q: If we plan to have members hosted at various sites throughout the community/state, do we need to have a different performance measure for each site/member?

A: No. It is our recommendation that you select one, aligned performance measure that the majority of your members are spending the majority of their time on.

Q: Can Volunteer West Virginia assist us in selecting a performance measure?

A: Yes. We can discuss the selection of your performance measure on future TA Calls as well as during the clarification process.

Q: Is there a page limit for the grant?

A: Yes. The narrative section may not exceed 15 pages (18 pages for multi-focus intermediaries) while the logic model cannot exceed 3 pages.

Q: Does developing web content (blogs, video, memes, podcast, etc.) for a community project as a way to raise awareness and attract volunteers count as direct service? What percentage of someone's time could this take?

A: This activity will always be considered capacity building; however, if the member is developing web content for a specific project that is a part of his or her approved member service description, these activities are allowable; however, these activities should be limited to the least amount of time possible to produce high quality, effective web content and not take up the majority of the member's service time. Capacity building activities should always remain at or below 20-25% of the member's time.

Q: Does generating press or press materials for a community project count as direct service? What percentage could this take?

A: This activity will always be considered capacity building; however, if the member is generating press or press materials for a specific community project that is a part of his or her approved member service description, these activities are allowable; however, these activities should be limited to the least amount of time possible to produce high quality, effective web content and not take up the majority of the member's service time. Capacity building activities should always remain at or below 20-25% of the member's time.

Q: Does on-line volunteer recruitment count as direct service? What percentage could this take?

A: Volunteer recruitment falls under capacity building while volunteer training falls under direct service. However, if the member is recruiting volunteers for a specific project that is a part of his or her approved member service description, these activities are allowable. These activities should be limited to the least amount of time possible to produce high quality, effective web content and not take up the majority of the member's service time. Capacity building activities should always remain at or below 20-25% of the member's time.

Q: Does providing direct support/mentoring to our student chapters fit?

A: Based on the language used in the question, yes, providing direct support/mentoring to your organization's student chapters fits under direct service. However, without a more detailed description of what these proposed service activities entail, we cannot provide a definitive and concrete answer.

Q: Our organization has an old eGrants account, but the log-in information is not working. What do we do?

A: On the eGrants homepage, individuals can either click the link that says "Forgot your password? Get Help" or contact the Help Desk directly for assistance in resetting the old log-in information.

9

2017 WV State AmeriCorps Formula Grant

Lunch & Learn Information Sessions (Morgantown, Charleston, & Beckley) FAQ

Eligibility & Threshold Technical Assistance Call FAQ

Q: Where can I find the Formula Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and resources?

A: The NOFO, Application Instructions, and other resources can be found here.

Q: If I have a question after this information session, what is the process?

A: Volunteer West Virginia supports an open and fair grants process; therefore, all questions will be addressed in an open, public format. Questions can be e-mailed to Cassandra.L.Argo@wv.gov between Technical Assistance (TA) Calls. Questions will be addressed at the next scheduled TA Call then added to the Volunteer West Virginia TA Call FAQ document located on the Volunteer West Virginia Grants web page located here. Individuals can also wait until the next schedule TA Call to ask questions.

Q: Where can I find a list of the scheduled TA Calls?

A: The list of TA Calls can be found at the Volunteer West Virginia Grants web page located here or by looking at page 1 in the West Virginia Formula Grant NOFO located here. The next TA Call will be held on March 15, 2017 by dialing 866-453-5550 and entering pin number 3730200# at the prompt.

Q: Who is eligible to apply for this funding?

A: The following entities are eligible to apply: public or private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and other community organizations; institutions of higher education; government entities within states or territories (e.g., cities, counties); labor organizations; partnerships and consortia; and Indian Tribes. Receiving funding previously from Volunteer West Virginia is not a prerequisite to applying under this *Notice*. Organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime are disqualified from receiving the assistance described in this *Notice.* Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Section 501 (c)(4) of the Internal Revenue code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. § 501 (c)(4), that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply. Please review the Eligibility Document located here.

Q: Can my organization apply even though we were once a planning grantee?

A: The formula competition is open to all organizations that meet the eligibility requirements in the previous question as detailed in the NOFO.

Q: Can I be employed by one AmeriCorps program, but create an application for a different program?

A: There are no regulations that prevent individuals from contributing to multiple program applications.

10

Q: What are the different types of programs?

A: There are a variety of program types (cost-reimbursement, fixed amount, and Education Award Programs (EAP)) available to applicants. Specific information on the type of programs can be found in the 2017 Mandatory Supplemental Guidance located here.

Q: Who provides the funding for AmeriCorps?

A: The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) provides funding for National Service Programs including AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. AmeriCorps has three branches: AmeriCorps Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA), AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), and AmeriCorps State and National. In each state, a Governor-appointed Commission administers funds for the AmeriCorps State programs which make up 75% of all AmeriCorps funding. Field offices of CNCS administer the NCCC and VISTA programs separately. More information about CNCS or AmeriCorps can be found at www.nationalservice.gov.

Q: What is the purpose of AmeriCorps funding?

A: The purpose of AmeriCorps funding is to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities.

Q: If awarded an AmeriCorps grant, how long is the funding for?

A: Funding for AmeriCorps is generally available on a three year cycle. Programs are typically funded in one year installments and must make minor changes to their application each year. All funding is subject to availability as well as to federal and state appropriations.

Q: What are the key dates and overall timeline for this grants process?

A: The overall timeline including key dates can be found on pages 1 of the 2017 WV Formula NOFO located here. The key dates to keep in mind are:

- March 24, 2017 (5 pm): Intent to Apply from new and re-competing applicants (both formula and targeted community applicants) due via e-mail to Moya.Doneghy@wv.gov
- April 3, 2017 (5 pm): Optional Draft Targeted Communities Application to Moya.Doneghy@wv.gov
- April 10, 2017 (5 pm): Draft Targeted Communities Application due to Moya.Doneghy@wv.gov
- April 12, 2017 (5 pm): Full Formula Application due in eGrants
- May 1, 2017 (5 pm): Full Targeted Communities Application due in eGrants

Q: How will I know if my Notice of Intent has been received and if I am eligible to continue the process?

A: Applicants will receive an e-mail response to their Notice of Intent e-mail indicating receipt of Notice and eligibility for full application process.

Q: What is the Notice of Intent and who is required to submit?

A: In order to prepare for the application review, all new and re-compete applicants must submit a Notice of Intent to Moya.Doneghy@wv.gov by 5 pm on March 24, 2017 in order to be eligible for the 2017 WV Formula Grants competition. To find more information on the Notice of Intent requirements and a template, please review pages 20-22 in the 2017 WV Formula Grant NOFO found here.

Q: What does the grant review process look like?

A: Applicants will submit their full applications in eGrants by 5 pm on the deadline for their grant type (formula or targeted communities. Once the applications are received they will go through both an external peer review and an internal staff review. Applicants may receive clarifying questions following both reviews. A variety of feedback is gathered in order to rank applications. In May, Volunteer West Virginia Commissioners will review the recommendations and approve the portfolio of programs that best meets West Virginia's needs. Informal notifications of funding will be made by the end of June while the formal notifications of funding will be made by the end of July.

Q: Which document is most important to the application process?

A: The first document applicants should review and will use most often throughout the application process is the 2017 WV Formula Grant NOFO located here.

Q: How important is the application format as detailed in the NOFO?

A: The application format detailed in the NOFO is very important to the review process. Reviewers are provided a tool that exactly follows the headings, sub-headings, and bullet point questions within the NOFO. Reviewers who can't find headings, sub-headings, and answers to the corresponding bullet point questions tend to score applications lower than those applications who follow the NOFO format exactly. This is especially important for re-competing applicants who have not submitted an application with this new format and may need to reorganize or rewrite parts of the application.

Q: What are the Application Instructions?

A: The Application Instructions should be reviewed after the NOFO and provide step by step instructions for completing the application in eGrants. They include detailed instructions about constructing the AmeriCorps budget; however, the budget should be drafted in a separate Excel spreadsheet before it is entered in eGrants. The Application Instructions can be found here.

Q: What are the Performance Measure Instructions?

A: The Performance Measure Instructions can be used in determining the applicant's 2017 program performance measures. Each applicant must include at least one performance measure in their application that aligns with the program design and logic model. The Performance Measure Instructions can be found here. We have also provided a Performance Measure Checklist and Performance Measure Template online.

Q: What is the State Service Plan and how does it impact the grant process?

A: The State Service Plan is a "strategy for directing national service and volunteer resources to address the state's most pressing community challenges." The full State Service Plan can be reviewed [here](). Applications are awarded 10 points for meeting the Notice Priority Area/State Service Plan as detailed on pages 10 and 11 of the 2017 WV Formula Grant [NOFO](). In particular, priority for funding will go to applicants who want to place national service resources in the southern coalfields, in north central and the northern panhandle, and in the areas of substance abuse, economic opportunity, and grade level reading.

Q: What are the 2017 CNCS focus areas?

A: The 2017 CNCS focus areas are: Education, Community Investment, Healthy Futures, Disaster Services, and Veterans/Military Families. More information of focus areas can be found on pages 2 & 3 of the [NOFO]().

Q: Is there a minimum number of members required to apply?

A: Yes. Applicants are required to apply for a minimum of 5 members.

Q: What is the difference between competitive and formula programs?

A: Competitive programs are required to have a minimum of 20 members and compete on a national level that includes an application review and final selection by CNCS staff. Formula programs are required to have a minimum of 5 members, meet West Virginia priority areas, and are selected by the State Commission. Both competitive and formula grants are managed by Volunteer West Virginia.

Q: Were any programs denied funding last year?

A: Yes. Several applicants were asked to partner with current programs as sites in order to receive a limited number of national service resources rather than a full program.

Q: Were any programs denied funding last year?

A: Yes. Several applicants were asked to partner with current programs as sites in order to receive a limited number of national service resources rather than a full program.

Q: Can I expand my current program?

A: Continuation applicants are encouraged to request expansions this year. Programs in this category should review the instructions in the Notice for continuation changes. Programs always have the option to request an expansion of their current program; however, Volunteer West Virginia reserves the right to limit or deny expansions based on past performance, availability of funds, State Service Plan priority areas, and other factors reviewed during the review and ranking process.

Q: What are the financial requirements at the startup of the grant cycle?

A: For cost reimbursement programs, the organization applying for AmeriCorps State funding should have a minimum of two months of funding available to cover living stipends, salaries, and other costs associated with the AmeriCorps Grant. Programs incur the costs then request reimbursement through Volunteer West Virginia. This includes submitting an online Periodic Expense Report (PER) by the 15th of each month, a paper invoice signed in blue ink, and the supporting documentation for each expense.

Q: Doesn't volunteer management fall under direct service?

A: Yes, AmeriCorps State members (direct service only members) can manage volunteers to an extent. Members must be working directly with the volunteers to accomplish goals outlined in the member's service position description. AmeriCorps State members may perform capacity building activities as part of their service. Programs that are eliminating poverty and are focused on building new programs rather than implementation should review the guidelines for VISTA projects.

Q: Did Volunteer West Virginia expend all of its funding for the previous grant period?

A: Yes, every dollar available for AmeriCorps State programs in West Virginia was allocated to a program for the 2016-2017 program year.

Q: If I have more program specific questions, can I ask them on the next TA Call?

A: Yes. The best time to receive feedback from Volunteer West Virginia regarding your specific program, design, intervention, or application is during TA Calls. We will be happy to answer any questions you have about your program, AmeriCorps, or the application process on the next TA Call which will occur at 10 am on March 15, 2017.

Q: How many hours per week is a member expected to serve?

A: One of the perks of AmeriCorps State is that there is no minimum number of hours required per week. AmeriCorps state members are only required to reach the total number of hours for their slot type by the end of their term of service. Each program will determine its internal process for time served.

Q: If our organization already has an eGrants account, do we need to create a new account to apply under this NOFO?

A: You will not need to create a new account unless your organization plans to use a different tax id number for the new application. If your organization uses the same tax id number, you will simply select create new application and select the appropriate NOFO from the drop-down box. If your organization plans to use a different tax id number, then you will need to create a separate eGrants account for the new tax id number.

Q: What are the different service and living allowance options for AmeriCorps State?

A:

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1700	$12,630	$24,930
Half-time	900	n/a	$13,199
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	$9,899
Quarter-time	450	n/a	$6,599
Minimum-time	300	n/a	$4,400

Q: What are the education award amounts for Program Year 2017?

A:

Term of Service	Minimum # of Hours	Education Award
Full Time	1700	$5,815.00
Half Time	900	$2,907.50
Reduced Half Time	675	$2,215.24
Quarter Time	450	$1,538.36
Minimum Time	300	$1,230.69

Q: What are the match level thresholds?

A: A first-time successful applicant is required to match at 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 the minimum overall share chart found in 45 C.F.R. §2521.60 and below.

AmeriCorps Funding Year	1, 2, 3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Grantee Share Requirements	24%	26%	30%	34%	38%	42%	46%	50%

Q: What topics will be covered on each Technical Assistance (TA) Call?

A: To join the TA Calls, please dial 866-453-5550 then enter pin 3730200# at the prompt. The topics are as follows:

- March 8, 2017 - Eligibility and Thresholds for Administering a Successful Program, Q & A
- March 15, 2017 - Tips on What to Include in Your Narrative, Open Discussion, Q & A
- March 22, 2017 - Creating an AmeriCorps Program Budget, Q & A
- March 29, 2017 - Administration of AmeriCorps Members, Q & A

Q: Where can I find the NOFO for the Targeted Communities grant opportunity?

A: The Targeted Communities Grant NOFO can be found [here](#).

Q: What are the important dates for the Targeted Communities grant opportunity?

A: Below are the key dates for the Targeted Communities grant opportunity

- Required Notification of Intent to Apply: Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a Notification of Intent to Apply for this competition. Notifications of Intent to Apply should be filed by Friday, March 24, 2017. Provide a Notification of Intent to Apply by sending an email to Moya.Doneghy@wv.gov including your name, program/organization name and address, primary point of contact name, email address and phone number. Include in the email a brief statement (250 words or less) describing the focus of your intended project and the number of AmeriCorps member positions you plan to request.
- Draft Deadline #1: One aligned performance measure and content for the Organizational Capability Section are due for review on or before 5:00 p.m. on April 3, 2017. Submit both documents via Microsoft Word as an email attachment to Moya.Doneghy@wv.gov. A performance measure template and example is provided for applicant reference at www.volunteerwv.org with grant resource documents. Applicants who miss this deadline will not receive feedback on the Organizational Capability Section or Performance Measures from Volunteer West Virginia.
- Required Draft Deadline #2: By 5:00 p.m. on April 10, 2017 the full application including budget and logic model must be submitted to Volunteer West Virginia in the eGrants system. Please reference the 2017 AmeriCorps Application Instructions for more information on submitting grant applications in the eGrants system. This deadline is required for all applicants. Late applications are not eligible for submission to CNCS.
- Required Final Revision Deadline: Final Applications are due Monday, May 1, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. to Volunteer West Virginia. Applications will be submitted in the eGrants online system. Late applications will not be considered.
- Application Notification: Successful applicants will be notified no later than Wednesday, July 12, 2017.