

Responses to Questions for 2018-2019 AmeriCorps Competitive Funding
CFS01-RFP#2017-26 (12/1/2017)

The following is a list of frequently asked questions and answers generated during the current and previous New York State AmeriCorps Requests for Proposals process.

Important Note: The answers below reference the New York State AmeriCorps Request for Proposals (RFP). Applicants should ensure that they refer to the November 27, 2017 version of the RFP.

Q1	<i>When are the 2018-19 New York State AmeriCorps applications due?</i>
A1	<p>All applications in response to the 2018-19 New York State AmeriCorps Request for Proposals (RFP) are due no later than noon on December 11, 2017 to the New York State Commission on National and Community Service (The Commission). This deadline is for all single-state applicants who are requesting Competitive funding to operate an AmeriCorps program (<i>including Cost Reimbursement, Education Award, & Fixed-Cost Grant</i>). “Single-State” applicants are those eligible entities proposing to operate programs in New York State (NYS) ONLY.</p> <p>The application due date of January 17, 2018, on the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), the CNCS website, and in the CNCS Application Instructions DOES NOT APPLY to applicants who wish to operate solely in New York State, applicants who wish to operate solely in New York State must meet the December 11, 2017 deadline.</p>
Q2	<i>Do I need to submit a proposal to the 2018-19 State AmeriCorps RFP if I am a current grantee with Competitive Funding?</i>
A2	<p>Current Competitively funded AmeriCorps programs completing their first or second year of operation within a three-year grant cycle must submit a proposal for Continuation funding.</p> <p>Any NYS program that is currently in the third and final year of its grant cycle and plans to compete for another three years of AmeriCorps funding, may apply by referring to the Application Instructions for “New and Re-competing” Applicants in the 2018-19 State AmeriCorps RFP.</p>
Q3	<i>How do I access the eGrants system to prepare and submit my AmeriCorps application?</i>
A3	<p>The eGrants system can be accessed with this link: eGrants Log-in or by visiting https://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/egrants New users must first create an eGrants Account. When submitting an application using eGrants, the Corporation for National and Community Service’s integrated, secure, web-based system for applications, New and Re-competing applicants for operating grants must select New York as the state to which they are applying. Select one of the Prime Application(s) depending upon the type of application you are submitting. (See the response to Question 7, below).</p>
Q4	<i>Where might I find past projects that were supported by your organization?</i>
A4	<p>CNCS makes information available on its website regarding applicants funded in previous competitions. A direct link to previous grant competitions is here: Results of Grant Competitions.</p>
Q5	<i>When an organization is awarded funding through AmeriCorps, is it possible to increase the funding request when you re-apply in year 2 or 3? If so, is it common practice for organizations to do so, or would this be out of the ordinary?</i>

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A5	Competitive-funded grantees in their first or second year of a three-year grant cycle may request additional funds, or additional members/staff positions, in their Continuation applications. Being awarded additional funding is dependent on several factors, including grantee performance, AmeriCorps funding availability, funding priorities, and funding decisions for New and Re-competing applicants.
Q6	<p><i>The program for which we are seeking funding is currently an Operation AmeriCorps program. 1) Given that we are a current Operation AmeriCorps program but we are applying through the State and National grant program for the first time, are we considered a New or a Re-competing grantee?</i></p> <p><i>Are we then required to complete the evaluation plan component of the RFP since we are a program that will be entering its 3rd year in 2017 but are applying through the S/N competitive pool for the first time?</i></p>
A6	If you are applying for this specific program for the first time through the New York State Commission AmeriCorps State and National competition, you are considered a new grantee. You should follow the instructions for “new” applicants.
Q7	<i>Which Notice of Funding Available (NOFA) do I apply to in the eGrants system?</i>
A7	<p>Only the following are eligible for funding through the 2018-19 New York State Competitive AmeriCorps RFP.</p> <p>Grant Application ID: 18AC199254 Grant #: 15ACHNY001</p> <p>NOFA: FY 2018 AmeriCorps State and Territory Commission (New and Continuations) Type: New Grant/Previous Grantee Status: Open for Sub-applications</p> <p>Although the NOFO due date is listed as January 17, 2018, this does not apply to applicants for funding through the 2018-19 New York State Competitive AmeriCorps RFP. Again, <u>the application due date for this competition is noon on December 11, 2017.</u></p> <p>Grant Application ID: 18ES199242 Grant #: 17ESHNY001</p> <p>NOFA: FY 2018 AmeriCorps State and Terr Comm Fixed Amount, EAP (New and Continuation)</p> <p>Type: Continuation Status: Open for Sub-applications</p> <p>Although the NOFO due date is listed as January 17, 2018, this does not apply to applicants for funding through the 2018-19 New York State Competitive AmeriCorps</p>

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	RFP. Again, the application due date for this competition is noon on December 11, 2017.
Q8	<i>We are currently a program in year three of Formula funding. Should we apply for Competitive Funding or wait to apply as a Re-compete to an upcoming Formula AmeriCorps Request for Proposal.</i>
A8	The Commission advises all organizations interested in AmeriCorps funding through the Commission for 2018-19 to respond to this Competitive RFP. Information regarding any opportunities for Formula funding will be issued later.
Q9	<i>A. Will applications that are sent to CNCS for competitive consideration but do not receive competitive funding be considered for New York State Formula dollars? B. Can information be released to define how a Formula funded program can apply for competitive? C. If a current Formula grantee applies for competitive funding does it disqualify them from Formula consideration?</i>
A9	<p>The New York State Formula grant process for 2018 has not yet been developed. No information is available. As of this writing, the federal budget has not yet been adopted and New York State's formula allocation for 2018-19 is unknown. Therefore, it is not possible to determine how much, if any, funding will be available for formula programs and for what types of programming.</p> <p>The Commission encourages all potential applicants, including those currently operating Formula programs not eligible for continuation, to consider whether they wish to apply for Competitive funding.</p> <p>Applying for Competitive funding does not disqualify any applicant, whether a current grantee or otherwise, from Formula consideration.</p>
Q10	<i>I need clarification regarding the Evaluation plan measures. How can I obtain this information?</i>
A10	Specific responses regarding evaluation requirements are found at the following link: Evaluation Resources .
Q11	<i>I need clarification regarding the performance measures. How can I obtain this information?</i>
A11	Specific responses regarding standardized performance measures, complementary measures, and applicant determined performance measures are found at the following links: AmeriCorps Performance Measures Other AmeriCorps Performance Measurement Resources
Q12	<i>What does Cost per MSY mean? How is it different from a member living allowance?</i>
A12	Cost per MSY stands for cost per Member Service Year (MSY) and represents the total cost to CNCS of your AmeriCorps program. One MSY is the equivalent of one full-time term of service (1700-member service hours). The cost per MSY is calculated by dividing the total amount of CNCS funds requested by the total number of MSY requested. For example, if the application

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	<p>requests \$294,000 in CNCS funds and 20 MSY, then the cost per MSY is \$14,700. The cost per MSY does not include child care or the cost of the Segal Education Award that a member may earn.</p> <p>Please note that the \$14,700 cost per MSY ceiling in the RFP is a New York State maximum and that the figure provided in the federal NOFO is not consistent with this New York State maximum. Applicants responding to this RFP should follow the New York State guidelines.</p> <p>The AmeriCorps living allowance is an amount provided to members to assist with supporting them during service and is one of the line items in the budget. The budget instructions provide details regarding budgeting for each type of AmeriCorps term of service.</p> <p>Please keep in mind that no New or Re-competing applicants should apply with less than 10 MSY and/or less than 20 member slots for the 2018-2019 competition.</p>
Q13	<i>Are there any restrictions on the activities members can undertake?</i>
A13	<p>Yes. While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or CNCS, staff and members may not engage in the following activities (see 45 CFR § 2520.65):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Attempting to influence legislation; -Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes; -Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing; Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements; -Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office; -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; -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; -Providing a direct benefit to: (1) a business organized for profit; (2) a labor union; (3) a partisan political organization; (4) a nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (participating in partisan political activities or spending funds on lobbying and grassroots efforts in excess of allowable limits); and (5) an organization engaged in the religious activities described above, (unless CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities); -Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive; -Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services. <p>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</p>

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	<p>participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-CNCS funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.</p> <p>Nonduplication.</p> <p>Corporation assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program. And, unless there is non-displacement, Corporation 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.</p> <p>Nondisplacement</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(2) An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving Corporation assistance.</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(5) A participant in any program receiving assistance may not perform any services or duties, or engage in activities, that—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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. <p>(6) A participant in any program receiving assistance may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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.
Q14	<i>Can organizations set their own rules for selection of AmeriCorps members?</i>
A14	<p>AmeriCorps members must be US Citizens or Lawful Permanent Residents and be at least 17 years of age (or 16 if in an approved program for out-of-school youth). All members must also meet baseline criminal background check requirements. See eligibility requirements here: https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps/join-ameri-corps/ameri-corps-faqs.</p> <p>Beyond those requirements, a program can make rules about selection based on specific qualities relevant to the program or type of service, as long as the selection rules are consistent with AmeriCorps' eligibility requirements and are not discriminatory.</p>

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Q15	<i>We are trying to decide whether to have full-time or half-time members. How do we determine the feasibility of the member types to determine what is right for the program?</i>
A15	This depends on several factors, such as the nature of your proposed AmeriCorps program, population served, proposed interventions and specific member activities, etc. The applicant must determine the appropriate member roles and ensure that proposed positions would provide members with the opportunity to serve the necessary number of hours for their slot type while addressing the demonstrated community need(s).
Q16	<i>Do individuals under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) meet the citizenship requirements to be AmeriCorps members?</i>
A16	No, individuals must be US citizens or permanent residents to be eligible to serve in AmeriCorps State programs.
Q17	<i>Is it mandatory to provide AmeriCorps Members with unemployment insurance in New York State?</i>
A17	In New York State, funded organizations do not withhold unemployment insurance premiums for AmeriCorps members, in accordance with the New York Department of Labor's memorandum issued in 1995 that service with AmeriCorps is not covered employment.
Q18	<i>Has the member living allowance increased in 2018-19?</i>
A18	Please see the chart on page 23 of the RFP for more information about minimum and maximum living allowance amounts.
Q19	<i>On page 19 of the RFP, it states, "The general practice is to cap the number of member slots for new grantees at 50." Is that an annual cap or is that the maximum number of member slots a new grantee can apply for the duration of their three-year grant?</i>
A19	New grantees are limited to applying for 50 member slots per year.
Q20	<i>How can our organization tell if it is prequalified in the Grants Gateway System?</i>
A20	Contact the Grants Gateway. The contact information for the Grants Gateway is available on page 16 on the RFP. (Email grantsreform@budget.ny.gov .)
Q21	<i>Organizations awarded a grant through this application process contract with New York State. On page 13 of the RFP, it states that contracts consist of three 15-month periods for a total of no more than 39 months. Shouldn't the total contract term be 45 months?</i>
A21	Contract periods overlap. Contract terms must not exceed 39 months.
Q22	<i>If we're not planning on using contractors, does our organization still have to complete MWBE forms?</i>
A22	Yes. For more information about MWBE requirements, email MWBEinfo@OCFS.NY.gov .
Q23	<i>Where do re-competing applicants send learning memos?</i>
A23	Information about learning memos can be found on page 8 of the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance .
Q24	<i>Can my organization apply for the maximum cost per MSY with part-time members?</i>
A24	Yes. The requirement is that an organization applies for no more than \$14,700 per MSY, which is like a Full Time Equivalent (FTE).
Q25	<i>Are MWBE documents available in eGrants?</i>
A25	No. MWBE is a state requirement and eGrants is a federal system.
Q26	<i>On page 5 of the RFP, the link for the MWBE Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy Statement form is not working. Where can I access that form?</i>
A26	Please use this link to access the OCFS-3460 form .

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Q27	<i>On page 38 of the RFP, it instructs applicants to only enter “See Budget” in the narrative. However, on the Commission’s TA call, applicants were instructed to explain their budget. Can you please clarify?</i>
A27	Please refer to the instructions written in the RFP on page 38, D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy. Note: This criteria will be assessed based on the budget submitted. No narrative should be entered in the narrative box except for “See budget.” Budget methodology should be explained in the Budget Narrative. See Section 5.2 of the RFP, page 45. Follow the detailed budget instructions in the 2018 AmeriCorps Application Instructions Corporation for National and Community Service to prepare your budget. We recommend that you prepare your budget in the same order as indicated in the Budget Worksheets in the Attachments.
Q28	<i>Are the documents that are required to be emailed in support of a bid also required of a planning grant applicant?</i>
A28	Yes, the documents listed in 1.6 Submission of Proposals, Required with Bid submission are also required of a planning grant applicant.
Q29	<i>What is the Letter of intent for?</i>
A29	The Letter of Intent, which is ONLY Required for Planning Grant applications enables the Commission to anticipate the number of expected planning grants.
Q30	<i>Can I apply for more than one grant?</i>
A30	Applicants may apply for more than one grant if the proposed projects are different. See RFP p. 12-13, 2.3 Purpose and Funding Availability, Multiple Projects and 2018 AmeriCorps State & National Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, Same Project p.11.

Additional Resources:

[2018 Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\) Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[CNCS Technical Assistance Call Schedule and Registrations](#) (includes links to replays of technical assistance calls).