

Request for Proposal Questions

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. The questions are organized by issue area.

GENERAL

Q 1. *When are the 2017 New York State AmeriCorps applications due?*

- A. All applications in response to the 2017 New York State AmeriCorps Request for Proposals (RFP) are due no later than **5:00 pm EST on November 29, 2016** to the New York State Commission on National and Community Service. This deadline is for all single-state applicants who are requesting Competitive funding to operate an AmeriCorps program (*including Cost Reimbursement, Education Award, & Fixed-Cost Grant*). “Single-State” applicants are those eligible entities proposing to operate any of the aforementioned grant programs in New York State ONLY.

The application due date of January 18, 2017 on the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), the CNCS website <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities/2017/ameri-corps-state-and-national-grants-fy-2017> and in the CNCS Application Instructions DOES NOT APPLY to applicants who wish to operate solely in New York State.

The New York State Commission for National and Community Service’s due date for all New, Recompeting and Continuation applications is 5:00 pm on November 29, 2016.

Q 2. *Do I need to submit a proposal to the 2017 State AmeriCorps RFP if I am a current grantee with Competitive Funding?*

- A. Current Competitive funded AmeriCorps programs completing their first or second year of operation within a three-year grant cycle must submit a proposal for Continuation funding. If your program is currently in the third and final year of its grant cycle and plans to compete for another three years of AmeriCorps funding, you must apply by referring to the Application Instructions for “New and Recompeting” Applicants in the 2017 State AmeriCorps RFP.

Q 3. *How do I access the eGrants system to prepare and submit my AmeriCorps application?*

- A. The eGrants system can be accessed here: <http://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 Recompeting 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 8, below).

Q 4. Where might I find past projects that were supported by your organization?

- A. CNCS makes information available on its website regarding applicants funded in previous competitions. A direct link to previous grant competitions is here: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/open-government-initiative/transparency/results-grants-competition>.

Q. 5. If an organization is awarded funding through AmeriCorps, is it possible to increase the funding request when you re-apply in years 2 and 3? If so, is it common practice for organizations to do so, or would this be out of the ordinary?

- A. Yes. 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; funding priorities; and funding decisions for New and Re-competing applicants.

Please note that continuation requests for increases in funding are rarely approved and are considered against the criteria outlined in the Notice and subject to available funding.”

Q. 6. 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?

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?

- A. **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.

Q. 7 What is the required matching amount for planning grants?

- A. *Planning grants do not require matching funds.*

Q 8. Which Notice of Funding Available (NOFA) do I apply to in the eGrants system?

- A. Only the following are eligible for funding through the 2017-2018 New York State Competitive AmeriCorps RFP.

**Grant Application ID: 17AC189553
Grant #: 15ACHNY001**

NOFA: FY 2017 AmeriCorps State and Territory Commission (New and Continuations)

Type: Continuation
 Status: Prime Applicant Initial Entry

Grant Application ID: 17ES189554
 NOFA: FY 2017 AmeriCorps State and Terr Comm Fixed Amount, EAP (New and Continuation)
 Type: New Grant/Previous Grantee
 Status: Prime Applicant Initial Entry

Although The NOFA/NOFO due date is listed as January 18, 2017, this does not apply for applicants for funding through the 2017 New York State Competitive AmeriCorps RFP. Again, the application due date for this competition is November 29, 2016

Q. 9 *We are currently a program in year-3 of Formula Funding. Should we apply for Competitive Funding or wait to apply as a Recompete to an upcoming Formula AmeriCorps Request for Proposal.*

A. The Commission advises all organizations interested in AmeriCorps funding through the Commission for 2017-2018 to respond to this Competitive RFP. Information regarding any opportunities for Formula funding will be issued at a later date.

Q. 10 *Will applications that are sent to CNCS for competitive consideration and do not receive competitive funding be considered for NYS Formula dollars? Can information be released to define how a formula funded program can apply for competitive? If a current formula grantee applies for competitive funding does it disqualify them from formula consideration?*

A. As of this writing, the federal budget has not yet been adopted and New York State's formula allocation for 2017-2018 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.

The Commission encourages all potential applicants, including those currently operating formula programs not eligible for continuation, to carefully consider whether they wish to apply for Competitive funding. Applying for competitive funding does not disqualify any applicant, whether a current grantee or otherwise, from formula consideration.

Evaluation Plan

Q. 11 *I need clarification regarding the Evaluation plan measures. How can I obtain this information?*

A. Specific responses regarding standardized performance measures, complementary measures and applicant determined performance measures are found at the following links:

Evaluation Resources

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities/2017/ameri-corps-state-and-national-grants-fy-2017>

Performance Measure Outcomes

Q. 12. I need clarification regarding the performance measures. How can I obtain this information?

- A. Specific responses regarding standardized performance measures, complementary measures and applicant determined performance measures are found at the following links:

Performance Measure Instructions

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities/2017/ameri-corps-state-and-national-grants-fy-2017>

Members

Q. 13. What does Cost per MSY mean? How is it different from a member living allowance?

- A. Cost per MSY stands for Cost per Member Service Year (MSY) and represents the 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 MSYs requested. For example, if the application requests \$274,000 in CNCS funds and 20 MSYs, then the cost per MSY is \$13,700. The cost per MSY does not include child care or the cost of the Segal Education Award a member may earn. **Please note that the \$13,700 per member cost ceiling 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.**

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.

Please keep in mind that no new or re-competing applicant should submit an application with less than 10 MSY and/or less than 20 member slots for the 2017-2018 competition.

Q.14 Are there any restrictions on the activities members can undertake?

- A. 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):

- 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.

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 initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-CNCS funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.

Nonduplication.

Corporation assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program. And, unless there is nondisplacement, 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.

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.

Q. 15 *Can organizations set their own rules for selection of AmeriCorps members?*

- A. Yes, 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.

Q. 16 *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?*

- A. This depends on several factors, such as the nature of your 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).

Q.17 *Do individuals under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) meet the citizenship requirements to be AmeriCorps members?*

- A. No, individuals must be US citizens or permanent residents to be eligible to serve in AmeriCorps.

Q. 18 *Is it mandatory to provide AmeriCorps Members with unemployment insurance in New York State?*

- A. 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.