

Responses to Questions for RFP # 1071
New York State AmeriCorps 2022 - 2023 Competitive Pool

Q1	Hope this email finds you well. I am out of the office during the scheduled webinars to learn more about the current proposal process. Will the webinars be recorded?
A1	<p>Yes, please see recording links below:</p> <p>Programmatic and Evidence Info Session: https://meetny.webex.com/meetny/ldr.php?RCID=5d324c2812165757df1644b2348c81f1</p> <p>Technical Info Session: https://meetny.webex.com/meetny/ldr.php?RCID=f9eafbb6b2606d4925e745ca471fb422</p>
Q2	How do you fund me for the Grant?
A2	Applications will be funded if they are selected for funding by the AmeriCorps Agency. Refer to RFP Section 6.0 Minimum Criteria/Review process for additional information.
Q3	I think my organization (name redacted) is a great candidate for AmeriCorps funding, but we would benefit from a planning year to get our performance and compliance systems up and running. Can I apply for a planning grant through this application cycle, or is there a different application round that I should wait for? I read a reference to the planning grant in the RFP but was unclear about whether we can apply for a planning grant through this cycle. This answer may be within the eGrants portal, but we're having some technical difficulties accessing our account.
A3	No. AmeriCorps did not include planning as a possible grant type in the PY2022 Competitive Notice of Funding Opportunities.
Q4	For those that have not done this before - what is the prequalification?
A4	All applicants are required to meet the minimum qualifications listed in Section 3.0 Minimum Qualifications to Propose and the Prequalification Process of the RFP as outlined in Section 3.2.
Q5	Is the difference between cost reimbursement grants and fixed-cost grants explained in the NOFO?
A5	<p>While the NOFO did explain the difference between the two types of AmeriCorps grants, they are scattered throughout the NOFO and Application instructions. There are two major differences in grant budgets and earned grant dollars between a fixed amount and cost reimbursement “standard” grant. To provide a summary:</p> <p>Cost Reimbursement Grant:</p> <p>Under a cost reimbursement grant, recipients have an approved grant budget established prior to grant award. Cost reimbursement grants must meet specific match requirements as described in the Notice of Funding Opportunity and the AmeriCorps regulations. Cost reimbursement programs require both federal grant funds and non- AmeriCorps funds documented in the grant budget, and both AmeriCorps and non-AmeriCorps funds may only be spent on allowable costs identified in federal grant regulations or consistent with the award Terms and Conditions. The grant budget identifies budget categories such as personnel, fringe, travel, supplies, and equipment; spending charged to federal or matching funds must fall within budget categories with approved line item costs. Adding new budget categories or modifications of an approved budget over certain thresholds must be reviewed by AmeriCorps. With respect to earned grant dollars, cost reimbursement grants are not at-risk of being reduced when a grantee’s performance does not meet member enrollment or service</p>

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	<p>hour targets in a program year. As long as a program devotes its efforts to reaching performance metrics, all the awarded funds may be drawn and retained to reimburse for allowable costs in that year.</p> <p>Fixed Amount Grant In contrast, fixed amount grant programs recipients are not required to present a grant application budget nor have one approved. In order to access all of the funds provided, programs must recruit and retain all AmeriCorps members supported under the grant based on the MSY level awarded. There is also no formal matching requirement. Fixed amount grants are limited to the grant amount earned based on performance with respect to member enrollment and members' hours served. Any amount drawn over the calculated earned amount must be returned to AmeriCorps.</p>
Q6	If we are planning to move to a 1200-hour program should that be reflected on the RFP or should we leave it as 1700? Also, members would be considered full-time? so to be a full time you have to do 1700?
A6	<p>A detail AmeriCorps member slot types configuration (Full-Time, Three-Quarter-Time, Half-Time, etc.) is required in cost reimbursement grant's budget narrative.</p> <p>Full-Time slot type refers to a member slot type that require a person to complete at least 1,700 hours in order to be considered successfully completed their term of service.</p> <p>Full-Time slot type is not the same as full-time capacity which is around 35+ hours per week. Any member slot type could serve in a full-time capacity schedule based on the program structure. For example, a summer camp position serving 37.5 hours a week for 8 weeks, while the member is serving in a full-time capacity, the most appropriate time slot the member should be enrolled in is Minimum-Time (300 hours). Please see Section 4.2 Program Requirements Based on AmeriCorps Grant Award and Application Types for additional information.</p>
Q7	We are in the third year of a formula grant. Do we submit to this RFP or wait for a formula?
A7	The NYS AmeriCorps Competitive RFP and NYS AmeriCorps Formula RFP are two (2) separate and unique funding opportunities.
Q8	And the biggest Education Award is only available to Full-Time, Yes?
A8	Yes.
Q9	Does the Bidder's Notice need any response from us as requesters?
A9	No, the bidder's notice is provided for your reference only and is intended to highlight changes from last year's NOFO.
Q10	The link on the bidder's notice is not working, can you fix this please?
A10	<p>The CDC's Social Vulnerability Index is as follows: https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html</p>

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Q11	Do AmeriCorps positions need to be recruited from a specific pool of applicants? Wondering if there was a pool of existing people applying to work for AmeriCorps that we would need to hire from?
A11	There are specific requirements for a person to be eligible to serve. For additional details on member eligibilities, please see: https://americorps.gov/serve/fit-finder/americorps-state-national While the AmeriCorps Portal provide a mutual place for programs to post recruitment and application access for interested applicants, it is generally expected programs will have to do additional promotional and recruitment effort outside of the application portal to successfully recruit for the full program.
Q12	Can AmeriCorps position duplicate positions that we already have at our organization?
A12	No. Additional information can be located in 2022 Mandatory Supplemental Instruction page 9 – 10: Unallowable Activities. Please see the link to this resource provided in RFP Section 1.0 General Information.
Q13	I just wanted to confirm the page length.
A13	It is essential for all applicants to carefully review RFP Section 5.0 Proposal Content and Submission. Applications must not exceed ten (10) double-spaced pages for the Narratives with the exception of twelve (12) pages for Intermediaries. Please note the narrative page limit includes the Cover Sheet. The Logic Model may not exceed three (3) pages when printed with the application from the “Review” tab in AmeriCorps’ web-based management system. Refer to Section 5.1 Technical Proposal Content/Work Plan for additional information.
Q14	What is a rural intermediary?
A14	Please see section 4.1 A. Funding Priorities for definition of Rural Intermediary. Additional information can be located in 2022 Mandatory Supplemental Instructions page 8. Please see the link to this resource provided in RFP Section 1.0 General Information.
Q15	If our programs plan to reduce the minimum hours requirement from 1700 hours to 1200, should we mention this in RFP?
A15	Please see A6.
Q16	Sorry if I missed this - but where exactly can we find that supplemental information to help with the application?
A16	The supplemental materials provided by AmeriCorps are listed and linked in RFP Section 1.0 Key Concepts, they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022 AmeriCorps State and National Grants NOFO • 2022 AmeriCorps Application Instructions • 2022 Mandatory Supplemental Instructions • 2022 Performance Measures Instructions
Q17	What is the Prime Application ID?
A17	Cost Reimbursement Prime Application ID is 22AC240959 and Fixed-Cost Prime Application ID is 22ES240961.

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Q18	Our Organization [name redacted] has been funded for a new three-year cycle beginning this October. 2021-2022 will be the first year. Do we apply as a recompet applicant?
A18	This RFP is ONLY for new and recompeting (in the final year of a competitive funding cycle and applying for a new grant cycle) applicants. Based on your statement, it appears you are seeking a continuation request. Please see Section 4.2 Program Requirements Based on AmeriCorps Grant Award and Application Types – Continuation Requests for additional information. Continuing programs should receive AmeriCorps Competitive Continuation Instructions for 2022-2023, under separate cover from this RFP. Please reach out to your Program Officer for questions related to continuation instructions.
Q19	Would you please indicate which of the NOFAs organizations should select below to apply for the New York State AmeriCorps 2021 Competitive Pool for the second year of a competitive funding cycle and applying for a new grant cycle? We would like to apply for a cost reimbursable grant. We currently have a national competitive grant.
A19	Please see A18.
Q20	Do municipal entities like housing authorities have to register in Grants Gateway?
A20	As per RFP Section 3.2 Prequalification Process, Government entities are not required to prequalify in the Grants Gateway but must register. When an organization exempt from not-for-profit prequalification register for the Grants gateway, they receive a document vault status that denotes their exemption.
Q21	Do we need to submit a new budget?
A21	All applicants responding to this RFP are required to submit a detailed budget. Please see Section 5.3 Proposed Budget and refer to 2022 AmeriCorps Application Instructions for the budget instructions.
Q22	Will CNCS be covering match costs if the applicant is unable to secure match?
A22	Currently, no match waiver has been issued for the 2022 Program Year. As per Section 5.3 Proposed Budget , matching funds may be required based on the application type. For specific instructions and regulations on match requirement, please see the 2022 AmeriCorps State and National Grants NOFO , Cost Sharing or Matching, p. 6.
Q23	Please provide further clarification on the “FY 2022 Match replacement.”
A23	The NYS Commission has not received further guidance on this. Please see G. Clarification Information on pg. 42 of the RFP.
Q24	Will an application which requests “FY 2022 Match replacement” be awarded fewer points?
A24	No, there are zero (0) points allocated to this requirement, it is for clarification purposes only.
Q25	Would you please provide a complete list of the documents to be sent to the New York State Commission at time of application? What email should we use?
A25	As per 5.5 Proposal Submittal Process , all supporting documents <u>must</u> be submitted via email to AmeriCorpsRFP@ocfs.ny.gov by the dates specified in RFP Section 1.2 Calendar of Events . See RFP Section 1.6 Submission of Proposals for additional information. Also, see A27.
Q26	Would you please provide a complete list of the documents to be sent to CNCS at the time of application? What email should we use?
A26	Supporting documents are <u>not</u> submitted to AmeriCorps the Federal Agency (formerly known as CNCS). They are submitted to the NYS Commission. Please see A25 and A27.

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Q27	Should evaluation studies and reports be submitted to both NYS Commission as well as CNCS?
A27	No. As per Section 1.6 Submission of Proposals , All evaluation <u>studies and reports</u> MUST be emailed to the NYS Commission at americorps.rfp@newyorkersvolunteer.ny.gov by the date and time specified in the Calendar of Events. Also see A25.
Q28	Please clarify the social cohesion and civic engagement priorities. Please provide examples and definitions.
A28	AmeriCorps did not provide specific examples or definitions in their NOFO. Applicants should use good judgement when determining whether projects meet these criteria.
Q29	Does your office expect issuing Addenda to the RFP
A29	No. However, conditions may change unexpectedly. In the event of an amendment, the Commission will post a notice on its website and the amendment will also be posted in the NYS Contract Reporter, NYS Grants Gateway, and to the OCFS public website.
Q30	Does your office expect extending the deadline?
A30	No. However, conditions may change unexpectedly. In the event of an amendment, the Commission will post a notice on its website and the amendment will also be posted in the NYS Contract Reporter, NYS Grants Gateway, and to the OCFS public website.
Q31	Please provide the link for the Programmatic and Evidence Information Meeting Session?
A31	Please see A1.
Q32	Please provide the link for the Technical Information Meeting Session.
A32	Please see A1.
Q33	What are the most common mistakes applicants make in the application submission?
A33	Several common mistakes include, but are not limited to: not being prequalified in the Grants Gateway by the proposal deadline, missing the submission deadline in eGrants, and failing to properly submit required NYS supporting documentation Please carefully review RFP Section 1.6 Submission of Proposals and RFP Section 3.0 Minimum Qualifications to Propose and Prequalification Process to reduce the likelihood of making an error when submitting your proposal.
Q34	If an organization previously had an AmeriCorps program for 6 years, then did not have a program for a number of years, and then applied for a new, different project this year, does their match requirement begin at the rate for year 1 again because it is a new program, or would they be expected to contribute a match at the rate for year 7 because it is the same organization?
A34	There are a few more factors to consider in the above scenario: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) If the previous program was a cost reimbursement grant and this organization intends to apply for cost reimbursement grant again, it first will have to submit the New / Additional Project request subject to AmeriCorps approval. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. In the event AmeriCorps approves such request the application will be considered new and subject to match requirement at the rate of Year 1.

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	<p>b. If the request is not approved and if the organization decided to use the same project code to file an application, this application will be subject to match requirement at the rate of Year 7.</p> <p>c. If the organization decided to use the previous project code without submitting the New/Additional Project request, it falls under scenario b above.</p> <p>2) If the previous program was a cost reimbursement grant and the organization intends to apply for a fixed cost grant, a New / Additional Project request is not required as the two applications fall on different prime; nor will the application be subject to any match requirement as match is not required for fixed-cost grants.</p>
Q35	<p>Are there any issues with paying certain members a higher living allowance rate to serve as team leaders? The AmeriCorps Team Leader is an AmeriCorps member with additional duties which would include coordinating a team AmeriCorps to develop positive team morale; foster teamwork; monitor standards of behavior; plan team schedules that result in the execution of project objectives and activities, implement work plan projects, support member development, ensure the development of good work habits on site as well as career and interpersonal skills and coordinate project logistics. This would help build AmeriCorps member leadership skills and prepare them for careers in helping professions. This will enhance the program by rewarding members for their performance and providing additional support for members.</p>
A35	<p>No, there is no issue. Paying the team leader at a higher rate is an allowable expense however, the National and Community Service Act, as amended, provides for approved national service positions to include a “position involving service as a crew leader in a youth corps program or a similar position supporting a national service program that receives an approved national service position” 42 U.S.C § 12573(6). This language allows programs, in addition to youth corps, to use AmeriCorps members to provide an additional layer of leadership and support for members under certain conditions.</p> <p>The following is guidance on the use of AmeriCorps members as Team Leaders. In general, all prohibited activities listed in Section 5 of the AmeriCorps Provisions apply to Team Leaders just as they do to all AmeriCorps members. Team Leaders are not permitted to act in a staff capacity. Supervising members is a staff responsibility. Team Leaders must not be responsible for program development and coordination; however, they may assist by providing information and resources on best practices or by helping to develop portions of the program such as the training curriculum. In essence, under no circumstances should an AmeriCorps member serving as a Team Leader be the individual legally responsible for the program or other members.</p> <p>The Team Leader position description should emphasize activities that involve them in performing direct service or providing support to members engaged in direct service. Examples of Team Leader activities: working alongside members performing direct service to serve as a model and to provide on the spot assistance; training members; providing guidance and support to members, including reflection exercises, conflict resolution, advice</p>

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	<p>for transitioning out of AmeriCorps, etc.; arranging member development activities; building a sense of esprit de corps and general team cohesion among members; leading monthly/weekly meeting of members; leading and facilitating team service projects; working with the community to develop partnerships, including community volunteers, that will support the members' projects; and communicating with program staff, site supervisors, and other members to ensure the execution of a quality program that is consistent with the AmeriCorps provisions.</p> <p>Examples of unallowable Team Leader activities: signing member timesheets; evaluating member performance; disciplining AmeriCorps members; enrolling/dismissing AmeriCorps members; writing and/or signing program reports; managing the program's payroll and budget.</p> <p>While Team Leaders are not to serve as the program's administrative staff, they may be engaged, on a limited basis, in activities that support the administration of the AmeriCorps program. These include raising funds or in-kind contributions in direct support of specific AmeriCorps projects, such as team service projects.</p>
Q36	Under the American Rescue Plan, the NYS Commission is offering Match replacement funds, what are the restrictions for the use of these funds? Are these CNCS funds with the same restrictions?
A36	The American Rescue Plan funding is not associated with this RFP.
Q37	Are there any special accounting procedures to be used in connection with match replacement funds provided by CNCS? Are they treated the same as the CNCS funds? Would they grouped together with the CNCS funds? Do we have to track them separately?
A37	Match replacement funds under American Rescue Plan fund are not associated with this RFP.
Q38	Are municipal agencies like municipal housing authorities required to submit vendor responsibility questionnaires?
A38	No. Government entities are not required to complete a vendor responsibility questionnaire.
Q39	Please provide the email for the CNCS evaluation assistance. Are they able or offer technical assistance to applicants?
A39	<p>AmeriCorps (CNCS) did not include a direct contact for technical assistance on evaluation. Please see their Pre-Recorded materials referenced below by clicking the provided link.</p> <p>FY 2022 AmeriCorps State & National Grant Competition: Best Practices in Writing an Evaluation Plan FY 2022 AmeriCorps State & National Grant Competition: Best Practices in Evaluation Reporting</p> <p>https://americorps.gov/funding-opportunity/fy-2022-ameri-corps-state-national-grants</p>

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Q40	Are there any M/WBE or other procurement t goals for grantees for the 2022—2023 grants?
A40	The Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise goal is listed in Section 7.10.2 MWBE Business Participation Opportunities – OCFS Established Goals of the RFP. Other procurement goals are located in Section 7.11 Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business (SDVOB) . MWBE requirements may between different procurement. This RFP covers only AmeriCorps grants in the competitive pool.
Q41	What sections of the egrants application are required for continuation applicants to submit?
A41	Please see section XII. Continuation Request of the PY2022 Application Instruction. Please see the link to this resource provided in RFP Section 1.0 General Information.
Q42	What changes should be included in the clarification section of the egrants section?
A42	Please see A41.
Q43	What are the minimum and maximum number of AmeriCorps members an applicant can propose?
A43	There is no minimum or maximum number of AmeriCorps members an applicant can propose in their application in response to this RFP; however, the Commission has determined that an AmeriCorps program under this RFP must have a minimum of ten (10) Member Service Years (MSYs). See 2022 Mandatory Supplemental Instructions for the definition of Member Service Year (MSY).
Q44	Does CNCS have additional funds to pay for new member slots? If so, how should that be incorporated into the budget?
A44	NYS Commission is a pass-thru entity in the AmeriCorps grant process and does not make final determination on AmeriCorps (CNCS) grant awards nor does the NYS Commission have any specific information on AmeriCorps' funding availability.
Q45	Would the Commission post the response to the questions as early as possible? The posting date of 11/15 does not allow sufficient time for grantees to modify their proposals if new information emerges.
A45	The written response will be posted on or about the date specified on Section 1.2 Calendar of Events. OCFS and the Commission will make every effort to publish the responses as soon as possible.
Q46	Will existing grantees receive an email notifying them of the answers to the Written question?
A46	No. Answers will be posted in accordance with RFP Section 1.4 Submission of Written Questions.