

2009 AmeriCorps*State and Education Award Program Grants



Technical Assistance Workshops

October 2008

New York State Commission
on National & Community Service



Introductions

- Name
- Agency
- Region Served
- Mission of Agency/Proposed Program
- Experience with AmeriCorps?

Is AmeriCorps for You?

- Are you extremely committed to service?
- Are you willing to dedicate staff towards administering your program?
- Do you have the organizational capability to effectively manage federal grants?
- Does your program have sound program and fiscal oversight?
- Do you have the ability to recruit and support volunteers.

Is AmeriCorps for You?

Are you operating solely in New York State as a

- Private not-for-profit corporation
- Public agency
- Local government
- Educational institution
- Labor organization
- Not-for-profit and community-based organization (secular and faith-based)

...AmeriCorps may be for your organization.

NYS Commission on National and Community Service

- What is the Corporation for National and Community Service?
- What is the Commission?
- Who are Commissioners?
- What is the structure?

Today's Agenda

- The AmeriCorps Program
- General Program Requirements
- Application Timeframe

Today's Agenda

- Application Instructions
- Forms
- Narrative
- Budget
- Performance Measures
- E-Grants

Glossary of Terms

AmeriCorps - AmeriCorps*State

EAP - Education Awards Program

MSY - Member Service Year (formerly FTE)

NOFO - Notice of Funding Opportunity

NOFA - Notice of Funding Availability

Instructions - Application Instructions

Rule - Final AmeriCorps Rule

New - Brand new applications

Recompete - Applying for a new 3-year grant

Continuation - Currently in 1st or 2nd year of operation

*See Section 6 p. 27-28 of the RFP for additional terms

The AmeriCorps Program

AmeriCorps provides grants to non-governmental and governmental entities that sponsor service programs.

These grants engage members in service to help meet critical community needs in:

- Education
- Public safety
- Homeland security
- Health
- Environment

The AmeriCorps Program

- Local programs design service activities for full- or part-time members. Activities may include tutoring and mentoring youth, assisting crime victims, building homes, cleaning local parks.
- Members also help recruit community volunteers to expand the reach and effectiveness of the organizations where they serve.

2009 AmeriCorps Grants

- New York State Commission is seeking proposals that address critical needs in New York State communities.
- New York currently receives *approximately \$14 million* to fund AmeriCorps programs.

Who are AmeriCorps members?

- US Citizens or Permanent Resident Aliens
- At least 17 years of age (16 if they are out of school and in an approved program)
- Committed to fulfilling AmeriCorps obligation
- Citizens in your community or national recruits who want to serve

AmeriCorps Member Benefits

- For Full-time members
- Living Allowance
 - minimum \$11,400
 - maximum \$22,800
- Health Insurance – for member (if eligible)
- Child Care – if income-eligible
- Training – provided by this grant
- Education Award - \$4,725
- Student Loan Deferment

AmeriCorps Member Benefits

Benefits are pro-rated proportionately for members serving less than full-time terms

- Living Allowance
- Education Award
- Student Loan Deferment

AmeriCorps Member Terms of Service

An individual can serve *two* AmeriCorps terms

- Full Time = 1700 hours
- At least 900 hours for one or two years
- At least 675 hours
- At least 450 hours
- At least 300 hours

Education Award

Member Benefits – The Education Award

- 1700 hours = \$4,725
- 900 hours = \$2,363
- 450 hours = \$1,181
- 300 hours = \$1,000

2009 Strategic Initiatives

- Mobilizing more volunteers
 - Ensuring a brighter future for all of America's youth
 - Engaging students in communities
 - Harnessing baby boomers' experience
 - Helping communities recover from and prepare for disasters
- ✓ Special consideration will be given to applications that propose service activities to benefit veterans or engage veterans in service activities.
- ✓ *Refer to CNCS Strategic Plan*

*2009 AmeriCorps*State Request for Proposals*

Read these materials before writing your application:

- 2009 AmeriCorps RFP
- 2009 AmeriCorps Federal Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- 2009 AmeriCorps Application Instructions
- 2009 AmeriCorps Final Rule
- Catalog of Federal Regulations

✓ *All documents can be found at www.ocfs.state.ny.us or www.newyorkersvolunteer.org*

Eligible Organizations

- Community & faith-based organizations
- Intermediary organizations
- Colleges and universities
- Local government or state agencies

- See Section 1.4 (Eligible Applicants) of the New York State RFP for details

General Program Requirements

- Minimum of 10 AmeriCorps Member Service Years (MSYs)
- New and Re compete: Minimum of one aligned Performance Measure for your primary activity.
- Continuation: Performance Measurements inherited in eGrants from prior year. Note any changes in Continuation Change field.
- Cost per MSY up to \$13,500, however CNCS required statewide average is \$12,600. Competitive Continuations see page 31.

Timeframes

All AmeriCorps*State and AmeriCorps Education Award Program applications must be submitted via eGrants by *October 31, 2008.*

- ✓ Applications submitted via eGrants after October 31, 2008 will NOT be accepted*

Paper Applications

2009 AmeriCorps paper will be accepted with justification of technical issues related to eGrants, including help desk ticket number.

- ✓ *Paper application must be post marked by October 31, 2008 (see RFP for details).*

Grant Terms

- Up to a three-year project period.
- Annual renewals are contingent upon availability of funding and adequate performance.

Questions/Answers

- Questions will be recorded
- Questions can also be submitted to americorps.rfp@ocfs.state.ny.us or faxed to Stefanie Perez at (518) 402-3817 until October 16, 2008
- FAQs from all workshops will be posted on October 20, 2008 at www.ocfs.state.ny.us *On-Line Bidders List* and www.newyorkersvolunteer.org

Questions



AmeriCorps State and Education Award Program (EAP)



New and Re-competing Proposals
Refer to 2009 AmeriCorps Application
Instructions



Application Instructions

- Applications must follow outline provided in 2009 Request For Proposals
- Answer each section completely
- Use the Application Instructions starting on page 4 to develop outline for proposal

Paper Attachments

- All attachments must be submitted in hardcopy to the NYS Office of National and Community Service with a copy of the SF 424 Face Sheet
- Attachments include, but are not limited to the following: Evaluation, Labor Union Concurrence, required OCFS forms, financial statements. See page 18 of RFP for details.

Program Narrative

- Refer to Narratives Section starting on Page 7 of Application Instructions for details
- *Note: the supporting AmeriCorps Regulations are cited in the boxes throughout the Narratives Section of the Application Instructions*

Program Design (50%)

Rationale and Approach (10%)

- Compelling Community Need
- Description of Activities and Member Roles
- Measurable Outputs and Outcomes
- Plan for Self-Assessment and Improvement
- Community Involvement – describe community participation
- Relationship to other NCS Programs
- Potential for Replication

Program Design Cont.

Measurable Outputs and Outcomes

Definitions:

- *Outputs* are the amount or units of service that members or volunteers will complete
- *Outcomes* specify a change that has occurred that is significant and lasting.

Program Design Cont.

Member Outputs and Outcomes (20%)

- Member Recruitment and Support
- Member Development, Training and Supervision
- Ethic of Service and Civic Responsibility
- Member Enrollment and Retention (current grantees only)

Helpful Hints

- *Current grantees should explain any member enrollment and/or retention issues in clear terms with plans for improvement. See Page 11 of Instructions.*
- *If retention rates are impacted by program model, please describe model and plans for improvement of retention.*
- *Describe how/when/how often members/staff will be provided information related to Prohibited Activities.*
- *Adhere to strict Tutoring requirements per AmeriCorps Regulations.*

Program Design Cont.

Community Outputs and Outcomes (20%)

- Sustainability
- Volunteer Recruitment and Support
- Capacity Building

✓ Be sure you are in sync with other initiatives in your community – collaboration not duplication

Helpful Hints

- *There are no specific benchmarks related to numbers of volunteers recruited by members, but programs should state targets of number and types of volunteers (ongoing vs episodic) and volunteer hours and plans to measure them.*
- *Be inclusive regarding volunteer recruitment – remember parents, students, other family*
- *Provide a detailed description of roles that members will play in your volunteer recruitment and support efforts and capacity building activities.*
 - ✓ *Be creative regarding volunteer recruitment – Creative Partnerships!*

Program Narrative - Organizational Capability (25%)

- Sound Organizational Structure – describe plans for self-assessment and improvement
- Sound Record of Accomplishment as an Organization
- Success in Securing Community Support

Reviewers are not able to take past performance into consideration. Be sure to include all organizational successes with AmeriCorps, previous grants, community partnerships, etc.

Helpful Hints

- *If you are proposing a multi-site program, be sure to carefully answer the questions in this section – describing relationships with sites, monitoring of sites, developing connections among sites to further the AmeriCorps program's mission and goals.*

Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25%)

Cost Effectiveness (15%)

- Corporation Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)
- Diverse Non-federal Support
- Decreased Reliance on Federal Support (current grantees only)
- *Hint: be sure to describe match in both program narrative and budget*

Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

Budget Adequacy (10%)

- Discuss the adequacy of your budget to support your program design, including how it is sufficient to support your program activities and is linked to your desired outputs and outcomes.

Evaluation

- Evaluations for News and Recompetes Must Cover at least one year
- Grantees with average annual grant of \$500,000 **REQUIRED** to have an independent evaluation
- Smaller and EAP grantees **REQUIRED** to perform an internal evaluation
- In first recompute application **AFTER** July 2005 - provide summary of evaluation plan
- In second recompute application - provide completed evaluation

Service Categories

- Enter the information requested in Attachment C (page 41).
- In eGrants, you will be required to select one primary and one secondary service category. One aligned performance measure will relate to your primary service category.

Performance Measures

- *Outputs* are the amount or units of service that members or volunteers will complete
- *Intermediate Outcomes* specify a change that has occurred in communities or beneficiaries or members
- *End Outcomes* specify a change that has occurred that is significant and lasting

Performance Measures

- All applicants (New, Continuation and Re-competing) must submit at least one set of aligned performance measures that relate to the program's primary service category.
- Programs are required to report on outputs at the end of year one, and outputs and intermediate outcomes in years two and three (but are not required to report on end-outcomes - See § 2522.620)

Performance Measures

- Performance measurement is the process of collecting and analyzing data related to observed changes in communities, participants (members), or end beneficiaries.
- Evaluation is a more in-depth, rigorous effort to measure the impact of programs, using scientific based research methods (refer to 45 CFR § 2522.700).

Performance Measures

- Technical Assistance related to the Performance Measures can be found in the Performance Measurement Toolkit at:
 - <http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/star/ac-program-toolkit>
- To enter Performance measures in eGrants see page 19 of Application Instructions

Documents

- Evaluation
- Labor Union Concurrence

See page 19 of Application Instructions for submission of paper and indicate in eGrants.

Send copies to NYS Commission on National and Community Service, 52 Washington St., Room 338 North, Rensselaer NY 12144

AmeriCorps State and Education Award Program (EAP)



**CONTINUATION
REQUESTS**



Continuation Requests

Begins on page 31 of Application Instructions

eGrants – When you create a continuation, you will need to indicate any changes in the “Continuation Changes” fields throughout. See pages 31- 32 of Application Instructions.

For Paper Attachments , see pg.19 of RFP

Continuation Requests Cont.

Performance Measures

Performance Measures are inherited from your original 2008 eGrants application, and may not be the current version in WBRS.

- Any changes must be made directly in the performance measure.
- Note in the Continuation Changes field that you have updated your performance measure.
- One aligned set of Performance Measures is required by CNCS and the Commission

Continuation Requests

Narrative – Instructions

- Describe any changes you are proposing to your program in the Rationale and Approach, Community Outputs and Outcomes, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy, within the Continuation Changes fields. If there are no changes, put “no changes”.
- Member outputs and outcomes – must provide explanation if less than 100% for enrollment and retention rates from last full year of operation.
- Include your plan for improvement for any recruitment or retention issues in the member Outputs and Outcomes field.

AmeriCorps*State Programs Budget



Refer to 2009 AmeriCorps Application Instructions



Budget

- Budget should be sufficient to perform tasks described in narrative. Make a clear connection. Do not include unexplained amounts.
- The size of an AmeriCorps grant is driven by the proposed number of member service years.
- Example: 20 MSY x \$12,600 = \$252,000.

Budget

- Minimum AmeriCorps Living Allowance is \$11,400/full-time
- Maximum AmeriCorps Living Allowance is \$22,800/full-time
- Part-time – see Instructions
- Refer to the Notice of Funding Opportunity

Budget

- The New York State Commission on National and Community Service is allowing programs to apply for up to \$13,500 per Member Service Year (MSY), however the average cost per member for the Commission will be \$12,600 for program year 2009-10.

Information on Match



What is match?

“Match” is the share of a project’s total cost that a grantee must meet with their own resources (also known as grantee share).

There are two types of match:

- Cash
- In-kind contributions

AmeriCorps programs may use non-Corporation federal funds as match, however, permission must be granted from the other federal agency.

Matching Requirement

- Requirements on match are located in the AmeriCorps regulations, modified by 2008 appropriations language.
- There is a single minimum overall match of 24% for the first 3-year funding period. Beginning in year 4 overall grantee share gradually increases to 50% by year 10.

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

AmeriCorps Education Awards Program (EAP)



New and Recompeting

Refer to 2009 AmeriCorps Application Instructions



Education Awards Program

- Provides organizations the opportunity to provide education awards for community service projects without many of the constraints (fiscal) of operating a traditional AmeriCorps program.

Education Awards Program

- Programs assume most/all operating costs
- Commission provides \$600 per enrolled member for operating costs
- Matching requirements do not apply to EAP applicants

Education Awards Programs

Grant Size

- 40 FT (1700 hr.) members x \$600 = \$24,000
- 40 QT (450 hr.) members x \$600 = \$6,000

Application Checklists for All AmeriCorps Grants

- Use the checklists beginning on pg.18 of the Request For Proposals to be sure your application is complete.
- *Budget Analysis checklist is for your benefit – Please use it!*

Scoring Program Narrative

- A scoring instrument will be used that directly correlates to items required in application materials.
- NYS will peer review all new and re-competing applications

Final Helpful Hints

- *You can only make a first impression once!*
- *Follow the Directions!*
- *Maximize the opportunity to use character limits.*
- *Don't claim too high*
- *Be careful with jargon*
- *Make the reviewer's job easy*
- *Run proposal by a novice*
- *Avoid fluff*
- *Start w/need by numbers, intervention by numbers, resolution by numbers*
- *Proof Read!*
- ***FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS!***

More Helpful Hints

- *Lead from your program strengths and be explicit.*
- *Be clear and succinct*
- *Avoid circular reasoning*
- *Explain how – avoid simply stating criteria will be met.*
- *Don't make assumptions.*
- *Use an impartial proofreader.*

Questions.....

The image features the text "eGrants" in a bold, italicized, yellow font with a black outline. The text is centered horizontally and positioned in the upper-middle part of the frame. The background is a solid dark blue. A large, light blue, curved shape, resembling a stylized 'e' or a swoosh, is positioned behind the text, extending from the top left towards the bottom right. The overall design is clean and modern.

eGrants

Things to remember when using eGrants

- Create an eGrants account at <http://www.cns.gov/egrants/index.asp>
- Have your Grantee Administrator activate your account.
- Do your application in Word and then copy into eGrants – check spelling and character count that includes spaces.
- Don't wait until the last minute to enter your application in eGrants.
- Adhere to all character limits indicated in the application instructions.

eGrants Technical Assistance

- Contact the eGrants Help Desk – phone number is 888-677-7849 or 202-606-7506. Contact via email at egrantshelp@cns.gov
- eGrants Help Manual.

Thank You!

- Commission Email address is americorps.rfp@ocfs.state.ny.us
- Questions must be submitted to that address by October 16th to be included in the Frequently Asked Questions Document which will be posted on October 20th





www.newyorkersvolunteer.org