AmeriCorps Formula Notice of Funding Opportunity

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For Program Year 2023/2024

Application Due Date: March 28, 2023

NEW JERSEY COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AND
COMMUNITY SERVICE
P.O. Box 456
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-633-9627
Funding provided by AmeriCorps

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DISCLOSURE

Publication of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (Notice) does not obligate AmeriCorps to award any specific number of grants or to commit any particular amount of funding. The actual level, timing, and process of grant funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

DESCRIPTION OF THE GRANT PROGRAM

AmeriCorps is a national service network that provides full- and part-time opportunities for AmeriCorps members to serve their communities and build the capacity of organizations to meet local needs. In exchange for their service, AmeriCorps members are provided with a living allowance ($17,600 for a FT term), training, and the ability to earn a Segal Education Award ($6,895 currently) for eligible college tuition, cost of attendance, or eligible college loans.

The New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service, in partnership with AmeriCorps State and National (ASN), seeks single-state applicants within New Jersey to apply for this AmeriCorps Formula Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Single-state applicants apply through their respective state commissions.

The New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service, New Jersey Department of State, seeks to fund local initiatives and utilize the AmeriCorps model to increase civic engagement and improve New Jersey's communities by deploying AmeriCorps members to provide services in the six focus areas i.e., Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, and/or Veterans and Military Families.

AmeriCorps Focus Areas

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. In order to maximize the impact of investment in national service, AmeriCorps has the following focus areas:

Disaster Services

Grants will support increased and improved disaster services for individuals and communities to prepare and adapt to disasters, including but not limited to climate change events. Activities will provide support to increase preparedness for disasters, improve readiness to respond to disasters, support recovery efforts from disasters, and/or assist in the implementation of pre-disaster mitigation and adaptation measures. Grants will support communities and individuals in planning for disasters, in particular engaging disadvantaged communities in the planning process.

Economic Opportunity

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people; help economically disadvantaged people, to have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy; transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing; and/or have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed, economic mobility for communities experiencing persistent unemployment or underemployment.

Education

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children; improved school readiness for economically disadvantaged young children; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or support economically disadvantaged students' preparation for success in post-secondary educational institutions. Also, educational opportunity for students experiencing homelessness or those in foster care.

Environmental Stewardship
Grants will support responsible stewardship of the environment, while preparing communities for challenging climate and environmental circumstances and helping Americans respond to and recover from disruptive events: programs that conserve natural habitats; protect clean air and water; maintain public lands; support wildland fire mitigation and sustainable forest management; cultivate individual and community resilience; and provide reforestation services after floods or fires, such as nature based solutions. Also, environmental stewardship and climate change including renewable energy and energy efficiency, building community resilience, sustainable food systems and agriculture, and conservation and habitat preservation.

Healthy Futures
Grants will provide support for activities that will address the opioid crisis; increase seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible; and/or increase physical activity and improve nutrition with the purpose of reducing obesity. Also, efforts to help local communities respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants may propose programming to aid communities in their efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, including outcomes of COVID-19 on student subgroups described in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Veterans and Military Families
Grants will improve the quality of life of veterans and improve military family well-being; increase the number of veterans, wounded warriors, military service members, and their caregivers, families, and survivors served by AmeriCorps programs; and/or increase the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through AmeriCorps programs

Through this AmeriCorps Formula Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), the New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service (hereinafter, the N J Commission) seeks submission of applications that demonstrate that they will engage AmeriCorps members in an evidence-informed and evidence-based approach to providing a service intervention that will result in intended solutions to community problems (e.g., based on proposed program's performance and evaluation data or research demonstrating the effectiveness of a similar intervention). Applicants will be awarded points for providing evidence that their proposal intervention will lead to the outcomes identified in the Theory of Change (logic model). Applicants shall provide evidence that the proposed intervention is effective for the proposed population and community challenge.

This Formula NOFO will fund the following types of grants:

PLANNING GRANTS: Planning Grants are available to agencies that are new to AmeriCorps. It provides funds for one year of planning and development of an infrastructure and application for an operating grant in the next program cycle. Planning grants do not include funds or slots for AmeriCorps members.

OPERATING GRANTS: Operating Grant funds are Cost Reimbursement Grants or Formula-Fixed Grants.

- **Cost Reimbursement** grants are available for programs that are currently in their third year of a three-year AmeriCorps program cycle. Operating grants are also available to applicants that have completed a prior planning grant. Funds are used for program operations and the living costs of a cadre of AmeriCorps members who will perform service.

- **Formula-Fixed** grants are operating grants that have completed one full three-year cycle of an operating grant. Formula Fixed grantees do not have to demonstrate a budget and match. However, in order to successfully operate the program, the applicant will need to provide additional resources.

CONTINUATION GRANTS: Applicants to Continuation Grants are currently operating their first or second year of their AmeriCorps program. Separate instructions will be sent to these grantees and their application due date is April 4, 2023.

A. Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members can receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that members can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans. The Education Award can be used for a period of up to seven (7) years following successful completion of a term of service. Members over the age of 55 at the start of service may do a one-time transfer of an Education Award to a child, grandchild, step-child, or foster child which is held in trust for up to ten years.

Single state applicants from New Jersey will submit directly to the NJ Commission on National and Community Service on eGrants. Applications must score above 75 points in order to be considered for funding.

Applicants must read the following corresponding sections to the type of program they are submitting:

NOFO Sections	Planning Grants	OPERATING GRANTS Cost Reimbursement or Formula Fixed
Section I: NJ Commission Grant Information & Timeline	X	X
Section II: Planning Grant Applications	X	
Section III: Operating Grant Applications		X
Section IV: 2023 Mandatory Supplemental Information	X	X
Section V: 2023 AmeriCorps State and National Application Instructions	X	X
Section VI: 2023 AmeriCorps State and National Performance Measures		X
Section VII: Applicant Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS)	X	X

B. Timeline:

DATES*	23.24 ACNJ FORMULA GRANT ACTIVITIES
February 9	Dissemination of NOFO flyer announcing the 2023/24 AmeriCorps Formula competition. NOFO goes live on the NJ Department of State (NJ DOS) website
February 17	NOFO Technical Assistance Session via ZOOM. Live at **10:00 am**. Click title to register and receive link to attend both TA sessions. Recording of session will be posted on NJ DOS website. Mandatory for applicants.
February 22	Technical Assistance Session: Theory of Change, Evidence, Logic Models and Performance Measures via ZOOM. **11:00 am**. Click title to register and receive link to attend both TA sessions. Recording of session will be posted on NJ DOS website. Mandatory for applicants.
March 16	Notice of Intent to Apply due to Commission by 6PM. Click title to submit form (NEW and RECOMPETING applicants only). *For information only/not binding.*
March 28	Formula applications due to Commission on eGrants by 4:00 pm. (NEW and RECOMPETING Applicants only).
March 29	Staff review of applications and budgets are begun (NEW & RECOMPETING ONLY)
March 31	Technical Assistance session for readers via ZOOM. Independent reader review begins (NEW and RECOMPETING only)
April 4	Formula applications due to Commission on eGrants by 4:00 pm. (Continuation Applicants only).
April 5	Staff review of applications and budgets are begun (CONTINUATIONS ONLY)
April 17, 18 or 19 TBD	Reader Arena Session via ZOOM. Arena scores and final rankings. Notification of applicants selected begun pending final Commission Board vote.
April 28	Revisions requested by staff due back from applicants
May 3	Commission board vote on selected applicants and continuations
May 10	NJ Commission target date for submission of Formula package to AmeriCorps.
May 17	Final due date set by AmeriCorps

NOTE: *Attendance at one of the NOFO Technical Assistance Sessions is required in order to submit an application. Please e-mail Americorps.NJ@sos.nj.gov to register for a zoom link to the technical assistance sessions.*

AWARD INFORMATION

B.1. Estimated Available Funds
AmeriCorps expects a highly competitive AmeriCorps grant competition. AmeriCorps reserves the right to prioritize providing funding to existing awards over making new awards. The actual level of funding is subject to the availability of annual appropriations. Funding amounts for Cost Reimbursement Grants are based on a yearly formula called a Maximum Cost Per Member Service Year (MSY). The Maximum Cost Per MSY is multiplied by the number of full-time equivalent AmeriCorps members to obtain the maximum amount of funding for which an organization can apply. For example: a program that is applying for 10 MSY's would multiply 10 x $27,000 Maximum Cost Per MSY = $270,000. Planning Grants can apply for up to a certain level of funding.

B.2. Estimated Award/Slot Amounts, MSY's and Period of Performance

	Planning Grants	**Cost Reimbursement or Formula Fixed Grants**
Minimum MSY's	0	8 MSY's
Maximum MSY's	0	15 MSY's
Maximum Funding	Up to $85,000	$405,000
Period of Performance	One year – 9/1/23-8/31/24	Three years – 9/1/23 – 8/31/26 *

*AmeriCorps anticipates making three-year grants for Cost Reimbursement and Formula Fixed Grants. The agency generally makes an initial award for the first year of the period of performance, based on a one-year budget. Continuation awards for subsequent years are not guaranteed; they depend upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance.

The project start date may not occur prior to the date AmeriCorps awards the grant. AmeriCorps applicants may not enroll AmeriCorps members prior to the start date of the award. AmeriCorps applicants may not begin service prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period as designated in the grant award. A program may not certify any hours an applicant performs prior to the applicant becoming a member in the system of record and the beginning of the member enrollment period.

ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY

Eligibility is open to public or private non-profit organizations, including community organizations and faith-based organizations; Local Education Agencies (LEAs) including charter schools; institutions of higher education; government entities within the state (e.g., cities/municipalities, counties, state departments); labor organizations; and partnerships or consortia consisting of the aforementioned. Organizations that have been convicted of a Federal crime are disqualified from receiving the assistance described in this NOFO. Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Section 501 ©(4), that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)
Applicants must have a valid SAM registration and DUNS and/or Unique Entity Identifier to receive an award. All applicants must register with the *System for Award Management*

(SAM) at https://www.sam.gov/SAM/ and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If an applicant is awarded a grant, it must maintain an active SAM registration throughout the life of the award.

Please check your entity's SAM.gov registration and compare the name and physical address with your entity's name and address in eGrants. If there is misalignment, please make changes in eGrants before your organization submits its application to AmeriCorps.

SAM registration must be renewed annually. AmeriCorps suggests that applicants finalize a new registration or renew an existing one at least three weeks before the application deadline, to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise. Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and address on all grant applications to AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps will not make awards to entities that do not have a valid SAM registration and Unique Entity Identifier. If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time AmeriCorps is ready to make a Federal award, AmeriCorps may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Threshold Issues
Applications should reflect that they meet the following threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying.

- Professional Corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a Professional Corps by the agency, AmeriCorps, must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.

- If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: 45 CFR 2522.910-.940), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.

- All Operating Grant applicants must propose program designs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. Applicants assessed as lower than the Preliminary evidence tier (i.e., Pre-Preliminary) must provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality review criteria in order to be considered for funding.

Other Eligibility Requirements
Under Section 132A(b) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, organizations that have been convicted of a Federal crime may not receive assistance described in this Notice.

Applications that propose to engage in activities that are prohibited under AmeriCorps' statutes, regulations, or the terms and conditions of its awards are not eligible to receive AmeriCorps funding.

Note that under appropriations provisions annually enacted by Congress, if AmeriCorps is aware that any corporation has any unpaid Federal tax liability—
- that has been assessed
- for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed
- that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability—

that corporation is not eligible for an award under this Notice. However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a Federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has determined that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the Federal government.

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501 (c)(4) that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for AmeriCorps funding.

STATUTORY/REGULATORY SOURCE AND FUNDING
The applicant's project must be designed and implemented in conformance with all applicable state and federal regulations. In addition to the program requirements outlined in this NOFO, applicants should refer to the new AmeriCorps regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520-2550 or AmeriCorps State and National Official Guidance

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
General Technical Assistance Workshops will be held as listed in the Timelines section. There will be one pre-recorded session with a live Q&A portion which will be recorded and posted on the NJ Department of State website under AmeriCorps Funding Opportunities. https://www.nj.gov/state/volunteer-grant-opportunities.shtml

Only applications submitted by agencies that participate in the virtual General Technical Assistance and Theory of Change sessions listed in the Timeline section will be accepted.

Click to register to attend: ACNJ 23.24 Formula NOFO Technical Assistance Sessions.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

1. Content and Form of Application Submission

1.a. Electronic Application Submission in eGrants
Applicants must submit applications electronically via eGrants, AmeriCorps' web-based application system. AmeriCorps recommends that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a Word document, then copy and paste the text into the appropriate eGrants field no later than 10 days before the deadline.

The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must use their own eGrants account to sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.
Applicants should contact the AmeriCorps eGrants Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via eGrants Questions if they have a problem when they create an account, prepare, or submit the application. AmeriCorps support hours vary by time of year, please check the site.

Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the competition to which the organization is applying. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the AmeriCorps Hotline to submit via eGrants.

1.b. Application Content
Complete applications must include the following elements:
- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: This is automatically generated when applicants complete the data elements in the eGrants system.
- Narrative Sections:
  - o Executive Summary: This is a brief description of the proposed program.
  - o Program Design
  - o Organizational Capability
  - o Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy
- Logic Model (except for Planning Grants)
- Performance Measures
- Standard Form 424A Budget
- Continuation Changes – enter N/A in this field
- Clarification – enter N/A in this field
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications

1.c. Page Limits
There are page limits for the Narratives and Logic Model:
- Narratives
  Applications must not exceed 10 double-spaced pages for the Narratives.

The application sections that count towards the page limit are the:
- SF-424 Face Sheet
- Executive Summary
- Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy narratives.

The application page limit *does not* include the Budget, Performance Measures, or any required additional documents.

- Logic Model (only for Operating Grants, not Planning Grants)
  The Logic Model may not exceed three pages when printed with the application from the "Review" tab in AmeriCorps' web-based management system.

Please note that the length of the application as a word processing document may differ from the length of the document printed out from eGrants. The character limits in eGrants do not align with page limits set in the Notice. AmeriCorps strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the "Review and Submit" tab in eGrants prior to submission in order to confirm that the application does not exceed the page limit.

AmeriCorps will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods when determining if an application complies with the page limit. Reviewers will also not consider material that is over the page limit, even if eGrants allows applicants to enter and submit additional text.

2. Notice of Intent to Apply

Submission of a Notice of Intent to Apply is requested and is due **Thursday, March 16, 2023.** Please complete the online form: [Notice of Intent to Apply for 23/24 AmeriCorps NJ Formula Funding](#)

You will need to answer the following questions
- Address
- Contact Name
- E-mail address
- Phone Number
- Focus area your organization plans to address

Applying as New, Recompeting or Continuation and Regular Cost Reimbursement or Fixed Amount

The New Jersey Commission on National and Community Service, Department of State operates this grant program in strict conformance with procedures designed to ensure accountability and integrity in the use of public funds and, therefore, *will not accept late applications*. The responsibility for a timely submission resides with the applicant.

Applications must be submitted electronically on eGrants
NO LATER THAN 4:00 PM ON Tuesday, March 28, 2023.

Applications must be submitted to the corresponding NJ Commission Prime application on eGrants.

Submission of Additional Documents:

Applicants are required to submit the additional documents below by the application submission deadline.

All applicants except planning grants:
1. Evaluation briefs, reports, studies. Please refer to the Evidence Base section and [Mandatory Supplemental Information](#) for detailed instructions by evidence tier. If multiple evaluation briefs/reports/studies are submitted by the applicant, the most recent (as measured by the date of completion or publication) will be reviewed first, and any documents submitted beyond the allowable number will not be reviewed.
2. Labor union concurrence (if applicable)
3. Rural Intermediaries (New & Recompeting)
4. Letters of support from the consortium members   (New & Recompeting)

All applicants including planning grants:
5. All new and recompeting applicants regardless of funding level are required to submit an Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS). Please submit the OFMS as a Word document. Forms submitted as a PDF or any other document format may not be accepted.

Additional documents must be emailed to AmeriCorps.NJ@sos.nj.gov with the following subject line: "*Legal Applicant Name*" – "*Application ID Number*." Emails should include:

- the legal applicant name and its point of contact information
- the application ID number
- a list of documents that are attached to the email by file name, labeling each document type according to the above numbered list
- individually attached files that are clearly labeled, and that include the legal applicant name and application ID number within the file name and heading of each document. To ensure that all required additional documents are considered, provide each document as a separate single file, labeled appropriately. *Please do not send multiple documents in one combined file, and do not send a single document in multiple files*.
- If the size of an applicant's files requires multiple emails, please also include an ordering system in the subject line, such as "(1 of 3)."

Failure to submit the required additional documents, following the email instructions in this section, by the deadline and in the format requested above may have a negative effect on the assessment of your application and/or on the determination of the application's eligibility to advance for review.

Please do not submit any items that are not requested in this Notice and Guidance. AmeriCorps will not review or return them.

Late Applications
All applications received after the submission deadline published in this Notice are presumed to be non-compliant. To overcome this presumption, the applicant must:

- submit a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that caused the delay, including:
- the timing and specific cause(s) of the delay,
- the ticket number if a request for assistance was submitted to the AmeriCorps Hotline, if available,
- any information provided to the applicant by the AmeriCorps Hotline,
- any other documentation or evidence that supports the justification,
- to ensure that AmeriCorps receives the written explanation or justification and any other evidence that substantiates the claimed extenuating circumstance(s), via email to AmeriCorps.NJ@sos.nj.gov no later than 24 hours after the application deadline stated in the Notice.

Communication with AmeriCorps staff, including a recompeting applicant's program officer, is not a substitute for a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance that caused the delay as outlined above. Applicants are required to continue working in eGrants, AmeriCorps' web-based application system and with the AmeriCorps Hotline to submit the application. AmeriCorps will determine whether or not to accept a late application on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants that do not meet the application submission deadline and do not submit a written explanation or justification or any other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the published timeframe will be deemed noncompliant. If AmeriCorps sustains a noncompliant determination, the application will not be reviewed or selected for award.

Please note: AmeriCorps will not consider an advance request to submit a late application. Please carefully review and follow the guidance in this section and submit your application as soon as possible.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS OR BENEFITS

The NJ Commission would like to highlight the following additional requirements and benefits of AmeriCorps.

Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities
Increasing the participation of individuals with disabilities in national and community service programs is a key interest of AmeriCorps State and National (ASN). All AmeriCorps programs are required to actively reach out to people with disabilities for inclusion in AmeriCorps service as AmeriCorps members. To this end, ASN offers Disability Accommodation Off Set funding which is available on a first-come, first-serve basis via AmeriCorps Member Disability Accommodation Off Set Grant Request Form deadline to apply: Aug 15, 2023

Participation in National Days of Service
As part of the National Service Network, there are a number of opportunities for grantees to take part in national service days. ASN and the NJ Commission expect all national service programs, including AmeriCorps programs, to participate in one or more days of service, including the 9/11 Commemorative, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday and AmeriCorps Week. In addition, ASN and the NJ Commission expect programs with AmeriCorps members to participate in other national service activities such as common opening ceremonies (including the administration of an oath at Launch), orientations, and training.

STATE COMMISSION TRAINING AND EVENTS

Attendance by **all** programs at NJ Commission events is a condition of funding.

Program Director Trainings and Meetings
All program directors must attend a three-day orientation known as Starting Strong held in or around the last week of July, 2023, and any other training (e.g. Site Supervisor training) developed for program directors during the contract period. Program Directors are also required to participate in all monthly conference calls or meetings.

The America's Service Commissions (ASC) also sponsors a yearly Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference. Programs are required to send at least one AmeriCorps staff person to this conference as part of their contract commitment.

In constructing the budget, figure in the cost for transportation, meals, and possible overnight accommodations related to all AmeriCorps State and National or NJ Commission training sessions.

Statewide AmeriCorps Member Trainings and Events
All Americorps members and program directors are required to attend the
following trainings/events:
- AmeriCorps Launch – Fall 2023

- End-of-the-Year Event – Spring 2024
- Other statewide training such as Career Day or Disaster Preparedness.

In constructing the budget, figure in the cost of transportation to all of the training sessions even though some or all may be conducted virtually.

EVALUATION OF NEW AND RECOMPETING APPLICATIONS

State-level Review Process

All applications for AmeriCorps Formula grants will be reviewed and scored by a panel of three readers. The evaluation panel typically consists of one reader from the originating office or Commission Board, one from another office within the NJ Department of State, and one reader external to the NJ Department of State who is knowledgeable in the content area. Readers of grant applications for the NJ Department of State certify that no conflict of interest exists that would create an undue advantage or disadvantage for any applicant in the application evaluation and scoring process.

Applications are evaluated on the basis of quality, comprehensiveness, completeness, accuracy and appropriateness of response to the guidelines and requirements of the governing NOFO. Applicants may request information about their evaluation scores by writing to the NJ Commission on National and Community Service via AmeriCorps.NJ@sos.nj.gov . The Commission reserves the right to withdraw from consideration any application that does not include each and every component to be evaluated and scored in the evaluation process.

Applications must receive a score of at least 75 points out of 100 and include all required components to be eligible for funding. Eligible applications are ranked and funded in descending order, from highest to lowest score. In the event of a tied score at or above the NJ Department of State's cutoff score of 75, the NJ Department of State will select the applicant with the highest combined score for the Program Design section.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Uniform Guidance
All awards made under this Notice will be subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), in 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 2205.

Requests for Monitoring or Payment Integrity Information
AmeriCorps may request documentation from recipients in order to monitor the award or to comply with other legal requirements, such as the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019. Failure to make timely responses to these requests may result in award funds being placed on manual hold, reimbursement only status, or other remedies may be applied as appropriate.

AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions
All awards made under this Notice will be subject to the FY 2023 AmeriCorps General Terms and Conditions, and the FY 2023 Program-Specific Terms and Conditions for the particular program (when applicable). These Terms and Conditions contain detailed,

mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the AmeriCorps General and Program-Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available at [ASN Resources for Direct grantees](#).

National Service Criminal History Check Requirements
The [National Service Criminal History Check](#) (NSCHC) is a specific screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. We encourage grantees to minimize barriers to service without putting their program beneficiaries at genuine risk.

- In general, award recipients and subrecipients must conduct an NSCHC for AmeriCorps members, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, and staff funded under, or whose salary is reflected as match on, the award.
- AmeriCorps requires applicants to review the regulations and additional guidance to fully understand how to comply with the requirements.
- Failure to conduct a compliant NSCHC may result in significant disallowed costs.
- The cost of conducting NSCHC is an allowable expense under the award and the individual subject to the NSCHC may not be required to cover the cost without being reimbursed.

A NSCHC consists of a check of the:

1.   National Sex Offender Public website through [Truescreen](#) (nationwide check);
2.   State criminal history record repository or agency-designated alternative for the individual's State of residence and State of service; and
3.   Fingerprint-based check of the FBI criminal history record database through [Field Print](#).

All checks must be conducted, reviewed, and an eligibility determination made before the individual begins work or service. All members must be cleared by the NJ Commission prior to their enrollment in eGrants and prior to their first day of service.

An individual is not eligible to serve or work in a position subject to the NSCHC requirements if:

- the individual refuses to consent to a criminal history check;
- makes a false statement in connection with a criminal history check;
- is registered, or is required to be registered, on a state sex offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry; or
- has been convicted of murder.

See [45 CFR 2540.200– 2540.207](#) and [National Service Criminal History Check Resources](#) for complete information and FAQs.

Official Guidance
All AmeriCorps active Guidance is available on the agency's webpage: [Resources for Direct Grantees](#)—use dropdown menu to select *View governing authorities and guidance.* The contents of these documents do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way unless incorporated into a contract or grant agreement. These documents are intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

Use of Material

To ensure that materials generated with AmeriCorps funding are available to the public and readily accessible to recipients and non-recipients, AmeriCorps reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so (2 CFR §200.315).

Reporting

Recipients are required to submit a variety of reports which are due at specific times during the life cycle of an award. All reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time.

Once the grant is awarded, recipients will be expected to have data collection and data management policies, processes, and practices that provide assurance that they are reporting high quality performance measure data. At a minimum, recipients should have policies, processes, and practices that address the following five aspects of data quality for themselves and for subrecipients (if applicable):

- the data measures what it intends to measure
- the data reported is complete
- the recipient collects data in a consistent manner
- the recipient takes steps to correct data errors
- the recipient actively reviews data for accuracy prior to submission.

Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the recipient's ability to secure future AmeriCorps funding.

Continuation Funding Information and Requirements

Organizations that have current awards that continue beyond FY 2022.23 must submit an application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. The NJ Commission will send out Continuation Instructions separately from this Formula NOFO. Requests by existing continuation applicants for increases in the level of funding or number of positions will be assessed using the review criteria published in this Notice. The review will also be based on progress reports, the federal financial report, evaluation plans, and AMERICORPS staff's knowledge of the grant program. To be approved for continuation funding, recipients must demonstrate satisfactory performance with respect to key program goals and requirements, as well as compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant.

AmeriCorps reserves the right to award applications in an amount less than the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so.

FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

For more information, email AmeriCorps.NJ@sos.nj.gov.

For technical questions and problems with the eGrants system, Applicants should contact the AmeriCorps eGrants Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via eGrants Questions. AmeriCorps support hours vary by time of year, please check the site. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the name of the Notice to which the organization is applying.

OTHER INFORMATION

Technical Assistance
The NJ Commission will host technical assistance virtual sessions to answer questions about the funding opportunity and eGrants. AmeriCorps strongly encourages all applicants to participate in these sessions. There are also various technical assistance resources on AmeriCorps' website: ASN Manage Your Grant resources

Re-Focusing of Funding
AmeriCorps reserves the right to re-focus program dollars under this Notice in the event of disaster or other compelling needs.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Public Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for collection of information under this Notice of Funding is estimated to average six hours per submission, including reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing the application and reporting forms. AmeriCorps informs people who may respond to this Notice of Funding that they are not required to respond unless the OMB control number and expiration date are current valid. (See 5 C.F.R. 1320.5(b)(2)(i).) This collection is approved under OMB Control #: 3045-0047, Application Instructions, State and National Competitive, New and Continuation, Expiration Date: September 30, 2023.

Privacy Act Statement: The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C 552a) requires that we notify you that the information requested under this Notice of Funding is collected pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 12592 and 12615 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended, and 42 U.S.C. 4953 of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 as amended. Purposes and Uses - The information requested is collected for the purposes of reviewing grant applications and granting funding requests. Routine uses may include disclosure of the information to Federal, state, or local agencies pursuant to lawfully authorized requests. In some programs, the information may also be provided to Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to determine the existence of any prior criminal convictions. The information may also be provided to appropriate Federal agencies and contractors that have a need to know the information for the purpose of assisting the government to respond to a suspected or confirmed breach of the security or confidentiality or information maintained in this system of records, and the information disclosed is relevant and unnecessary for the assistance. Effects of Nondisclosure - The information requested is voluntary; however, to be a recipient of this grant program, disclosure of personal or sensitive information is required to receive Federal benefits.

The Planning Grant application in this Formula NOFO seeks to support the development of AmeriCorps programs that will engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based interventions to solve community problems in future years. Planning grant recipients are expected to be better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle (2024/25). Planning grant recipients will engage in a year of planning an infrastructure that would eventually support the operations of an AmeriCorps Operating Grant. Planning Grant funds may not be used to support AmeriCorps members. Planning Grants provide funding that allows organizations to hire/designate a staff person who is responsible for working with the NJ Commission staff and outside consultants to develop a high-quality AmeriCorps program that is designed to meet a community need within the AmeriCorps Focus Areas of Education, Environmental Stewardship, Economic Opportunity, Veterans and Military Families, Disaster Services, and Healthy Futures. (See page 3 for full description of Focus Areas).

A.2. Performance Goals or Expected Outcomes
In order to receive funding, Planning Grant staff/consultants must agree to engage in the following during their year of planning:
- Be committed to developing a high-quality Operating Grant application during the Competitive and Formula NOFO periods in 2023/24.
- Meet virtually with a designated NJ Commission staff member who will act as their program liaison on a regular basis, typically twice a month.
- Attend all NJ Commission events, i.e., Starting Strong, Launch, Career Day, End of Year, Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference and any other NJ Commission-sponsored events during the planning year.
- Participate in all NJ Commission scheduled monthly Program Director calls.
- Participate in all NJ Commission scheduled trainings for Program Directors throughout the planning year.
- Agree to visit a minimum of three existing AmeriCorps programs which will be selected by the NJ Commission staff.
- Agree to meet with staff from the Center for Research and Evaluation in Education and Human Services (CREEHS) located at Montclair State University to develop an evidence informed program design including a Theory of Change, Evidence, Logic Model and Performance Measures that will be used as part of the 2024/25 operating grant application. A minimum of $10,000 needs to be budgeted for this training.
- Provide a minimum match of at least 24% cash and/or in-kind and seek commitments for match in the operating grant application.
- Submit quarterly progress and fiscal reports in the NJ Commission's On Corps system.

In addition to providing funding for a staff position, planning grants may also be utilized to fund some additional operation expenses such as travel, training, and consultation fees. Grantees are required to provide a 24% match to assist with administering the grant, which can be in the form of cash and/or in-kind contributions.

Criminal History Checks:
All staff listed on the grant must agree to a three-part criminal history check per the NJ Commission's requirements and must be cleared by the NJ Commission prior to their first day on the grant. Staff costs for these checks are an allowable cost.

Reporting Requirements:
Selected Planning Grants will be required to submit quarterly progress and fiscal reports. A schedule of due dates will be provided at the beginning of the project period.

Contract Payments:
Upon execution of the contract, the grantee will initially receive 25% of the grant. Subsequent payments will be made on a reimbursement basis each quarter upon satisfactory submission of required quarterly fiscal and progress reports.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Review Criteria

Each applicant must describe a planning grant project that will develop an infrastructure that will lead to submission of an AmeriCorps Operating Program for program year 2023/24. The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization will receive funding. The applicant will address their application design in the "Narratives" portion of eGrants.

Categories/Subcategories	Percentage
Executive Summary	**0**
Program Design	**50**
Problem to Be Addressed	10
Theory of Change Statement	15
Future Use of AmeriCorps Members in an Operating Grant's Intervention	10
Planning Activities Timeline	15
Organizational Capability	**25**
Organizational Background and Staffing	20
Commitment to AmeriCorps Requirements	5
Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	**25**

I. Program Design (50 percent)
Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

I.a. Problem to Be Addressed (10 points)
- Describe the existing problem you would address in an AmeriCorps operating grant. Explain why the problem is prevalent and severe in communities where the program plans to serve.

- Provide cited relevant studies and data supporting the problem.

- Identify causes of the problem including the role current or historical inequities faced by underserved communities may play in contributing to the problem.

I.b. Theory of Change Statement (15 points)
- Identify an initial Theory of Change that includes the Problem, Intervention and Anticipated Outcomes.
- Describe how the proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community problem.
- Describe how the intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the Theory of Change.
- Describe how the expected outcomes articulated in the application narrative represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem you have identified.

I.c. Future Use of AmeriCorps Members in an Operating Grant's Intervention (10 points)
- Describe the role of AmeriCorps members in a future operating grant and (if applicable) of leveraged volunteers.
- Describe the rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention(s).
- Describe how the service role of AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.
- Provide an estimated number of AmeriCorps members who will deliver the intervention.

I.d. Planning Activities Timeline (15 points)
- Identify an estimated initial timeline of activities you would undertake to develop an infrastructure for a future application and operating program. Elements of the timeline should include at a minimum the following elements. These elements do not need to be developed at the time of planning grant submission, just during the planning grant phase:
    - A finalized **Theory of Change and Logic Model**. Include time to be spent flushing out these elements with the Commission's contracted Center for Research and Evaluation in Education and Human Services (CREEHS) at Montclair State University.
    - Evidence-based **core activities** that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
        - The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention)
        - The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
        - The target population for the intervention.
    - Identification of **Performance Measures** as a strategy to measure program impact.
    - A plan for **data collection** to report progress in performance measures.

- Plan for creating an **advisory board or stakeholders** who will provide input on the planning process.
- Plan for identification of potential **community partners and service sites**, or at least the criteria by which they will be selected.
- Plan for **organizational capacity**, site supervisor training, oversight and program evaluation.
- Plan for recruitment, selection, orientation, content training, supervision, support and retention of members.
- Plan for inclusion and diversity in members and beneficiaries including participation in the Commission's Diversity Council or development of a host agency diversity council.
- Plan for career building and leadership development of members.
- Creation of an operating budget and detail.
- Plan for securing in-kind and cash match for 2023/24 planning grant and 2024/25 operating year.
- Plan for development of forms and templates to support program operations (member service agreement, site agreement, AmeriCorps policies and procedures.
- Completion of draft application for the Formula (Winter/Spring of 2024) NOFO.
  - Incorporate the following in the planning timeline:
    - Monthly check-in calls with Commission staff
    - Monthly Program Manager calls with the Commission
    - Commission and ASC trainings and Events as outlined in the NOFO.
  - Timelines for activities are reasonable and feasible.

II. Organizational Capability (25 points)

II.a. Organizational Background and Staffing (20 points)
- Detail the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing the AmeriCorps planning grant as well as providing for its oversight and management.

- Describe your agency's experience and expertise in addressing the focus issue to produce an AmeriCorps Operating Program application.

- Provide a statement about the status of your agency's SAM registrations, Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) numbers, and NJ Charities Registration.

II.b. Commitment to AmeriCorps Requirements (5 points)

- The organization agrees to adhere to all AmeriCorps rules and regulations included in the AmeriCorps Terms and Commitments, Prohibited Activities and Criminal History Check policies.

III. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 points)
- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors.

- Proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award.

- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.

- Budget does not include costs for AmeriCorps members.

- Budget includes costs for all NJ Commission and ASC required meetings and events.

- Budget includes a minimum of $10,000 for cost of training on Theory of Change, Evidence, Logic Models and Performance Measures.

CREATING YOUR APPLICATION IN EGRANTS

Planning Grant Applicants will need to refer to the **SECTION V: 2023 AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS** in order to create the application**.**

Follow the instructions listed in the Table of Contents for NEW applicants with the following exceptions:

Logic Model – Planning Grant applicants will not need to fill out this section. Enter N/A into all of the fields in this link.

Budget – Planning Grants do not require costs for AmeriCorps members. Only fill out Sections I and III. Do not enter costs for Section II which are the member costs.

Performance Measures – Planning Grants do not require Performance Measures. However, applicants will need to enter information into this section or eGrants will not approve submission of the application. Applicants will need to follow the instructions below **"Performance Measures for Planning Grants."**

Performance Measures for Planning Grants

Performance Measures Instructions for Planning Grant Applicants (**eGrants Performance Measures Section) eGrants Performance Measures Module Instructions**

About the Performance Measures Module
In the performance measures module, you will create a performance measure for your planning grant.

Article I.   Home Page
To start the module, click the "Begin" button on the Home Page.

As you proceed through the module, the Home Page will summarize your work and provide links to edit the parts of the module you have completed. You may also navigate sections of the module using the tab feature at the top of each page.

Once you have started the module, clicking "Continue Working" will return you to the tab you were on when you last closed the module.

To edit the interventions, objectives, MSYs, and slot allocations for your application, click the "Edit Objectives/MSYs/Slots" button.

After you have created your performance measure, the Home Page will display a chart summarizing your measure.

To edit a performance measure, click the "Edit" button. To delete a measure, click "Delete." To create a new performance measure, click the "Add New Performance Measure" button.

Article II.   Objectives Tab

An expandable list of AmeriCorps focus areas appears on this tab. When you click on a focus area, a list of objectives from the AmeriCorps strategic plan appears. A list of common interventions appears under each objective.

First click on the "Other Community Priorities" focus area. Then click on the "Other" objective and select the

"Other" intervention.

Choose "Other Community Priorities" as your program's primary focus area in the drop-down list at the bottom of the page. Next, select "other" as your primary intervention.

Click the next button to continue.

MSYs/Slots Tab On this tab, you must enter a numerical value of "1" in all MSY and slot fields in order to submit your application. Then click the next button to continue.

Article III.   Performance Measure Tab

To create your performance measure, begin by selecting "other" from the objective drop-down.

Enter the following title: Planning Grant.

Enter NA in the problem statement text box.

Check the box next to the intervention text box. Enter this text in the intervention text field: Plan an AmeriCorps program.

Click the button next to the output text box. Enter this text in the output text field: Work with grantor staff to design and conduct planning process as outlined in the application. Check the box next to the outcome text box. Enter "NA" in the outcome text field.

Enter a numerical value of "1" in the MSYs and slots fields at the bottom left of the page.

Click "next" to proceed to the data collection tab.

Data Collection Tab On this tab, enter NA in the intervention text box. Then expand each output and outcome. Enter "1" for all numerical values required and enter NA in all text boxes. Select "other" as your data collection method for both the output and the outcome.

After entering data collection information for the output and outcome, click "Mark Complete." You will return to the Performance Measure tab. To continue to the next step of the module, click "Next."

Article IV.   Summary Tab

The summary tab shows all of the information you have entered in the module.

To print a summary of all performance measures, click "Print PDF for all Performance Measures."

To print one performance measure, expand the measure and click "Print This Measure."

Click "Edit Performance Measure" to return to the Performance Measure tab.

Click "Edit Data Collection" to return to the Data Collection tab.

"Click Validate Performance Measures" to validate this module prior to submitting your application .

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A.1. Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions/practices to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award that they can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

AmeriCorps Focus Areas

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. In order to maximize the impact of investment in national service. Applicants will choose among the AmeriCorps Focus Areas to develop their program design. Focus Areas include Education, Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, and, Veterans and Military Families. (See full descriptions of each in Section I on page 3).

PERFORMANCE GOALS OR EXPECTED OUTCOMES
Performance Measures

All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output and outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. This may be a National Performance Measure or an applicant-determined measure. See the Performance Measure Instructions for details about performance measure requirements and selection rules.   See link to this section in the Table of Contents.

Cost Sharing or Matching

Fixed Amount Grants
There is no match requirement for Fixed Amount grants. AmeriCorps does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program, therefore organizations should raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.

Cost Reimbursement Grants

Applicants are required to match funds based on the chart below. The applicant's match can be non-AmeriCorps cash and/or in-kind contributions. Applicants must indicate whether the match is proposed or secured. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet the match requirement at the time of application submission.

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 CFR 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%

Law requires that grantees that use other Federal funds as matching funds for an AmeriCorps grant to report those amounts and sources to AmeriCorps on a Federal Financial Report. Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout.

Match Waivers
Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in the regulations. To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Application Instructions. Applicants who plan to request an alternative match schedule must submit a request at the time the application is submitted. Programs applying through State Service Commissions must submit requests for alternative match to the Commission, who will submit it to AmeriCorps on their behalf. Commissions and National Directs will submit requests to directly to MatchWaivers@cns.gov.

Terms of Service
Programs may engage members full-time or less than full-time. Full-time members must serve at least 1700 hours during a period of not less than nine months and not more than one year. Reduced Full-time members must serve at least 1200 hours. Half-time members must serve at least 900 hours. Programs may propose member terms of at least 675 hours for reduced half-time members; 450 hours for quarter-time members; 300 hours for minimum-time, and; 100 hours for abbreviated terms.

Member Living Allowance

The NJ Commission requires that all AmeriCorps members receive a living allowance regardless of the federal regulation which does not require a living allowance for less than full-time members.

A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage. Programs operating in New Jersey are required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time terms of service. Programs must comply with the maximum limits in the table below. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either AmeriCorps or grantee share. Exceptions are noted below.

While Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to submit detailed budgets, they are still required to provide a living allowance to members that complies with the minimum and maximum requirements. Exceptions are noted below. Fixed Amount grant applicants should indicate that amount in the application.

Full-time members must receive the minimum stipend amount listed in the chart. Recommended levels for less than full-time members are listed below:

Type of Member Position	Min. # of Hours	MSY	Min. Total Living Allowance	Max. Living Allowance
Full-time	1700	1.000	$17,600	$35,200
Three Quarter-time	1200	0.070	$ 12,424	$24,640
Half-time	900	0.500	$ 9,318	$17,600
Reduced HT	675	0.381	$ 6,988	$13,376
Quarter-time	450	0.265	$ 4,659	$ 9,152
Minimum-time	300	0.212	$ 3,106	$ 7,392
Abbreviated-time	100	0.056	$ 1,035	$ 2,112

AmeriCorps members are not considered employees and, therefore, a living allowance is not considered a wage. **In New Jersey, AmeriCorps members are not eligible for unemployment insurance, family leave or disability.**

Child Care Benefit Overview

To qualify for the child care benefit, members must have children under the age of 13 and you must be determined eligible based on certain income guidelines. For more information, visit the National Association of Child Care Resources and Referral Agency (NACCRRA) website.
For more information on how to access the Child Care Benefit go to:
https://my.americorps.gov/trust/help/member_portal/child_care_benefit_overview.htm

Health Insurance

Grantees must provide full-time members with health insurance at the time of acceptance into the program if the member is not otherwise covered by a health insurance policy. If a member who previously had coverage loses it through no deliberate act of his or her own, such as parental or spousal job loss, the grantee must provide the member with basic health insurance that meets AmeriCorps requirements.

In general, AmeriCorps does not pay the costs of health benefits for half-time members unless they serve full-time for a sustained period of time. For example, members may receive benefits when they serve in a summer program for thirty-five hours per week with other members who receive health benefits.

Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements

Professional Corps Grantees must provide members a living allowance or salary, which must meet the minimum, but may exceed the maximum living allowance set in the Living Allowance Table above. Professional Corps member salaries and benefits including childcare are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve; and are not included in the budget request to AmeriCorps (Federal share).

Maximum Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)

The AmeriCorps cost per MSY is determined by dividing the AmeriCorps share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested. It does not include childcare or the value of the education award a member may earn. The maximum amount an applicant may request from AmeriCorps per MSY is determined on an annual basis.

Recompeting Commission subgrantees/applicants will be held to the maximum cost per MSY for their grant type.

Table: Maximum Cost per MSY

Grant Program	Maximum
Cost Reimbursement Grant	$27,000
Professional Corps competitive Fixed Amount Applicants/Grantees	$1,000*
Full-cost Fixed Amount Grant	$27,000

*AmeriCorps requires Professional Corps programs to cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non AmeriCorps resources. AmeriCorps will only consider operating funds of up to $1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate significant organizational financial need.

AmeriCorps reserves the right to 1) treat an applicant that meets the statutory requirements of a Professional Corps as such, whether or not they submitted their application as a professional corps program; and 2) determine whether an applicant has demonstrated inability to effectively operate in the absence of AmeriCorps operating funds.

Segal AmeriCorps Education Award
AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service will be eligible for a Segal Education Award from the National Service Trust. The amount of the Education Award is linked to the value of the Pell Grant. A member has up to seven years after his or her term of service to use the Education Award. AmeriCorps will provide the updated Education Award amounts at the time of grant award.

Indirect Costs
Application budgets may include indirect costs. Based on qualifying factors, applicants may either use a Federally-approved indirect cost rate, a 10 percent de minimis rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly, as outlined in 2 CFR 200.413. States, local governments, and Indian Tribes may use previously-approved indirect cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across all Federal awards. Applicants that have a Federal negotiated indirect cost rate or that will be using the 10 percent de minimis rate must enter that information in the Organization section in eGrants. However, under section 121(d) of the NCSA and AmeriCorps' regulations at 45 CFR 2521.95 and 2540.110, no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps State and National grants.

The instructions for how to enter the organization's indirect cost rate are in Section V AmeriCorps Application Instructions. Applicants should not submit documentation addressing the indirect cost rate agreement via email.

Please note: To request a Federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, when AmeriCorps is the applicable cognizant agency for an organization's indirect costs, the applicant must submit a request to IndirectCostRate@cns.gov. The applicant may also obtain instructions and additional information by contacting the email address above.

Pre-Award Costs
Pre-award costs, where authorized, are allowed after receiving written approval from AmeriCorps.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION FOR OPERATING GRANTS

1. Review Criteria
Each applicant must describe a project that will deploy AmeriCorps members effectively to solve a significant community problem. AmeriCorps urges applicants to submit high quality applications that carefully follow the guidance in this Notice and in the Application Instructions. The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization will receive funding.

Categories/Subcategories	Percentage
Executive Summary	**0**
Program Design	**50**
Theory of Change and Logic Model	20
Evidence Tier	4
Evidence Quality	8
Performance Measures	8
Member Experience	10
Organizational Capability	**25**
Organizational Background and Staffing	9
Compliance and Accountability	8
Culture That Values Learning	4
Member Supervision	4
Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	**25**

1.a. Executive Summary (Required - 0 percent)
Please fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary. Do not deviate from the template below.

The [Name of the organization] proposes to have [Number of] AmeriCorps members who will [service activities the members will be doing] in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will serve]. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing.]

This program will focus on the AmeriCorps focus area(s) of [Focus Area(s)].* The AmeriCorps investment of $[amount of request] will be matched with $[amount of projected match], $[amount of local, state, and Federal funds] in public funding and $[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.

Fixed-Amount grant applicants (EAP, Full-Cost Fixed, No Cost Slots) should list their Other Revenue (see Mandatory Supplemental Information) because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still raise significant additional resources to operate the program.

1.b. Program Design (50 percent)

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value. Please ensure the Theory of Change and Logic Model incorporates the funding priorities listed above, for example supporting communities historically excluded and/or underserved from government services, addressing structural and institutional inequities, or increasing opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities.

2. Theory of Change and Logic Model (20 points)
The Theory of Change shall address:
- The problem is prevalent and severe in communities where the program plans to serve and has been documented with relevant data.
- The proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community problem.
- The applicant's proposed intervention is clearly articulated including the design, dosage, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) leveraged volunteers.
- The applicant's intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's Theory of Change.
- The expected outcomes articulated in the application narrative and logic model represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem identified by the applicant.
- The rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention(s) is reasonable.
- The service role of AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.

The Logic Model shall depict:
- A summary of the community problem, including the role current or historical inequities faced by underserved communities may play in contributing to the problem.
- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:
    o Locations or sites in which members will provide services
    o Number of AmeriCorps members who will deliver the intervention
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
  o The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention)
  o The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
  o The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level)
- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served, types and number of activities conducted, equity gaps closed). If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as output indicators
- Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

Note: The logic model is a visual representation of the applicant's Theory of Change. Programs should include short, medium or long-term outcomes in the logic model. Applicants are not required to measure all components of their Theory of Change. The

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applicant's performance measures should be consistent with the program's Theory of Change and should represent significant program activities.

Applicants should discuss their rationale for setting output and outcome targets for their performance measures.

Rationales and justifications should be informed by the organization's performance data (e.g., program data observed over time that suggests targets are reasonable), relevant research (e.g. targets documented by organizations running similar programs with similar populations), or prior program evaluation findings.

Applicants with multiple interventions should complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each intervention. Logic model content that exceeds three pages will not be reviewed.

3. Evidence Base (12 points)
The assessment of an applicant's evidence base has two parts. First, the applicant will be assigned to an evidence tier (see the [Mandatory Supplemental Information](#).) Second, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the degree to which it supports the proposed program design, including program aligned with the priority areas identified above, will be assessed and scored.

Evidence Tier (4 points):
An evidence tier will be assessed for each applicant for the purpose of understanding the relative strength of each applicant's evidence base and the likelihood that the proposed intervention will lead to outcomes identified in the logic model.

Applicants who have outcome or impact evaluation reports of the same intervention described in the application (see Mandatory Supplemental Intervention for a definition of "same intervention") may submit up to 2 of those reports, plus (if applicable) the evaluation report from their last three-year grant cycle, to qualify for the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tier. In order to qualify for consideration, the intervention evaluated in the submitted report(s) must match the intervention proposed by the applicant in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the Program Design and Logic Model sections of the application:

• Characteristics of the beneficiary population, including evidence of current or historic inequities facing the population;
• Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention;
• Dosage (frequency and duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities;
• The context in which the intervention is delivered; and
• Outcome of the intervention.

Submitted reports that do not sufficiently match the intervention proposed by the applicant in all of these areas will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points. Submission of additional documents that are not consistent with the guidance and requirements described in the Notice (e.g., advocacy pieces, policy briefs, other narratives that are not research studies or program evaluations) will not be reviewed.

In the Evidence Tier section of the application narrative, applicants must (1) summarize the study design and key findings of any outcome or impact evaluation report(s) submitted and (2) describe any other evidence that supports their program, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies that inform their program design. Applicants who submit evaluation reports for consideration must also describe in the Evidence Base section of the application narrative how the intervention described in the submitted reports is the same as the intervention described in the application (see [Mandatory Supplemental Information](#)).

Applicants should provide citations for the studies they describe, if applicable; however, reviewers will not review any documents external to the application other than evaluation report(s) submitted in accordance with the Notice instructions.

Applicants must meet all requirements of an evidence tier in order to be considered for that tier.

If the evaluation reports submitted by the applicant do not meet the definitions in the [Mandatory Supplemental Information](#), the applicant may be considered for a lower evidence tier.

Evidence Quality (8 points)
After the applicant's evidence tier has been assessed, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the extent to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored.

Applicants who are assessed as being in the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tiers, reviewers will score the submitted evaluation reports using the following standards:
- The submitted reports are of satisfactory methodological quality and rigor for the type of evaluation conducted (e.g., adequate sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, appropriate use of control or comparison groups, etc.);
- The submitted reports describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years;
- The submitted reports show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.

Applicants that are assessed as being in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier, reviewers will score the narrative provided in the Evidence Base section of the application using the following standards:
- The applicant uses relevant evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies, to inform their proposed program design;
- The described evidence is relatively recent, preferably from the last six years;
- The evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.

4. Performance Measures (8 points)
- Performance measures identify all components included in the Logic Model (refer to performance measures link and form).
- Performance measures provide for adequate and quality data collection including instruments (refer to performance measures link and form).
- Applicant describes a data collection schedule including collection of baseline data (data collection schedule is described in narrative).

5. Member Experience (10 points)

- Describe the rationale by which you selected the number of members and slot types for your program. Describe how you plan to conduct the onboarding process and orientation on the first day of service to your cadre of members. Include training topics to be included in the orientation, including training on prohibited activities.
- AmeriCorps members as a result of their service will have opportunities to develop as leaders. Please describe leadership training, topics and timeline that will enable members to develop as leaders. Discuss opportunities they will have to take leadership roles through service, service events, project development.
- AmeriCorps members will gain skills as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed. Please describe the type of career exploration for life after AmeriCorps.
- The program has a well-defined plan to recruit AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the programs operate. Please describe your recruitment plan, recruitment sources, criteria for selection and interview process for your AmeriCorps members.
- Describe what a typical day will look like for your members. Discuss how you plan to manage your AmeriCorps members, your site supervisors and how often you will meet with your members individually and as a group to reflect on their service.
- The applicant will foster an inclusive service culture where different backgrounds, talents, and capabilities are welcomed and leveraged for learning and effective service delivery.
- The applicant's organization and/or program has a diversity, equity, and inclusion council that seeks to diversity its staff and board and create a supportive and safe environment as well ensure that its programming is culturally and community appropriate.

6. Organizational Capability (25 percent)

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

6.1. Organizational Background and Staffing (9 points)

- The organization details the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing the AmeriCorps program as well as providing oversight and monitoring for the program. A full-time dedicated program manager is required in most instances.
- The organization has facilitated, partnered, or participated in educational or workforce development programs (i.e., pre-apprenticeship/registered apprenticeship, work experience and job training programs, etc.).
- The organization has a stated commitment and plan to advance diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) throughout its mission, for example by using a DEI council, join the NJ Commission's DEI council or its own strategic plan.

6.2. Compliance and Accountability (8 points)

- The organization has a monitoring and oversight plan to prevent and detect non-compliance and enforce compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities and criminal history checks at the grantee, subgrantee (if applicable), and service site locations.
- The organization has sufficient policies, procedures, and controls in place to prevent, detect, and mitigate the risk of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, such as appropriate segregation of duties, internal oversight activities, measures to prevent timekeeping fraud, etc.

- The organization has an effective mechanism in place to report, without delay, any suspected criminal activity, waste, fraud, and/or abuse to both the AmeriCorps Office of Inspector General and AmeriCorps and a plan for training staff and participants on these reporting protocols.

6.3. Culture that Values Learning (4 points)

- The applicant's board, management, and staff collect and use information, including performance data, for learning and decision making.
- The applicant's board, management, and staff collect and use information to determine its programmatic effectiveness in serving in a community with members that are diverse.

6.4. Member Supervision (4 points)

- AmeriCorps members will receive sufficient guidance and support from their supervisor to provide effective service.
- AmeriCorps supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations. Provide a description of how your site supervisors will be trained.

7. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)

Reviewers will assess the quality of the application's budget to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

These criteria will be assessed based on the budget detail submitted. Do not include narrative in the narrative box except for "See budget".

7.1. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 points)

- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors.
- Proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award.
- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget complies with the budget instructions.
- Match is submitted with adequate information to support the amount written in the budget.
- The budgeted match is equal to or more than the required match for the given program year.
- The cost per MSY is equal to or less than the maximum cost per MSY.

Proposed budgets that contain MSY costs that exceed the maximum cost per MSY and/or less than required match will be considered unresponsive to the application criteria.

Applicants must complete the budget and ensure the following information is in the budget screens:
- Current indirect rate cost rate information if used to claim indirect/administrative costs.
- Identify the non-AmeriCorps funding and resources necessary to support the project, including Fixed Amount applicants.
- Indicate the amount of non-AmeriCorps resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash), the sources of these commitments, and if the commitments are proposed or secured.

8. Amendment Justification (0 percent)
Enter N/A. This field will be used if the applicant is awarded a grant and needs to amend it.

9. Clarification Information (0 percent)
Enter N/A. This field will be used if the applicant is awarded a grant and needs to clarify questions prior to selection.

10. Continuation Changes (0 percent)
Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter changes in the application narratives in continuation requests during program years 2 and 3.