

AMERICORPS STATE & NATIONAL FY 2012 GRANT COMPETITIONS UPDATE



The information contained in this update is intended to address questions that we have received from applicants since the re-release of the 2012 application materials in October 2011.

Evaluation Requirement

Section VI D of the Notice of Funding Opportunity seems to imply that fixed-amount grantees are not required to submit an internal or external evaluation report to CNCS. Is this the case?

No, this is not the case. The evaluation requirements have not changed. According to the Regulations § 2522:

- If you are a State competitive or direct Corporation AmeriCorps grantee (other than an Education Award Program grantee), and your average annual Corporation program grant is \$500,000 or more, you must arrange for an independent evaluation of your program, and you must submit the evaluation with any application to the Corporation for competitive funds as required in §2522.730 of this subpart.
- If you are a State competitive or direct Corporation AmeriCorps grantee whose average annual Corporation program grant is less than \$500,000, or an Education Award Program grantee, you must conduct an internal evaluation of your program, and you must submit the evaluation with any application to the Corporation for competitive funds as required in §2522.730 of this subpart.

eGrants

How do I determine whether to select “Continuation/Renewal” or “New” when starting an application?

- If you are re-competing (in year three of a competitive three-year funding cycle and applying for a new three-year grant), select **Continuation/Renewal**
- If you are not a current grantee, but have received a competitive AmeriCorps grant in the past five years, select **Continuation/Renewal**
- If you are applying for the first time, have only received formula funding in the past, or are a former grantee (non-formula) whose last AmeriCorps grant was received more than five years ago, select **New**
- If you are a current planning grantee applying for a three-year implementation grant, select **New**

Is the new list of populations on the Performance Measures screen beneficiary populations or populations to be recruited as AmeriCorps Members?

In the re-release, we erroneously indicated that applicants were to identify the populations they would serve. Instead, most of the items in the list refer to traditionally underrepresented populations that a program intends to intentionally recruit as AmeriCorps members (as outlined in the Strategic Plan), and the screen text has been updated to make this clear. If you check any of these boxes, your application narrative should reflect your intention to recruit the selected population(s). Attachment M of the application instructions is labeled incorrectly.

At the time that the AmeriCorps Member populations were added to eGrants, my commission’s sub-applicants had already begun their applications. Will they be at a disadvantage if they don’t complete this section?

No, they will not be at a disadvantage. The consideration of whether a program will recruit and engage traditionally underrepresented populations in service won’t be a component of the application review and selection process until the latter stages. If this information isn’t complete in applications selected for clarification, it will be requested at that stage of the process.

I find the terminology in the Performance Measures section of eGrants to be confusing. How do I translate eGrants language to the terms used elsewhere?

Following is a guide to some of the common terms you will see in eGrants followed by language that is consistent with the NOFO and training materials:

- Strategy = Intervention (The strategy/intervention will be the same for all components of the measure—output, intermediate outcome, end outcome—because all of these should result from the same intervention.)
- Result = Output, Intermediate Outcome, or End Outcome
- Indicator = For outputs, a description of the number of beneficiaries to be counted. For outcomes, a description of the measurable change that will occur.
- Target Statement = The indicator plus the expected number (100 beneficiaries will...)
- Target = The number in the target statement (100)
- Instrument = The specific tool that will be used to collect data (AIMSweb Letter Sounds and Letter Names pre/post test)
- Data Collection Methodology = How data will be collected (survey, pre/post test, etc.)

Tip: Within each output or outcome, the result statement, indicator, target statement and target number will seem repetitive:

Result Statement: Students will demonstrate improved academic performance...

Indicator: Number of students with improved academic performance

Target Statement: 100 students will demonstrate improved academic performance...

Target: 100

eGrants Tip

Applicants will get an error message and will not be able to submit if:

- The total across all MSY charts does not equal MSYs in budget (+/- 1 to account for rounding)
- A primary service category has not been selected for each focus area selected

National Performance Measures

Why is “economically disadvantaged” defined differently for the Economic Opportunity, Education and Healthy Futures performance measures?

The definition in each Focus Area is aligned with the relevant predominant government programs. For instance, AmeriCorps members working in the healthy futures focus area are likely serving populations that are eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP.

If I select a National Performance Measures that includes a specific definition for the beneficiary population, will I be required to prove that my program is serving that population?

Your application narrative should include a depiction of the need your program will tackle, including the beneficiary population, and documentation that the need exists for this population. The National Performance Measures you select should align with what you propose in your application narrative. For instance, if you select an Education performance measure that defines the target population as students eligible for free or reduced lunch, then your application narrative might provide data to show that your AmeriCorps members will be serving at a school for which the majority of the population is eligible for free or reduced lunch. In this example, you would not be expected to collect and maintain eligibility data for each individual student served.

Through your application narrative and the implementation of your program, you are expected to provide reasonable assurance that you are serving the intended population.

In 2011, ED5 included on-time course completion, but in 2012 this measure excludes on-time course completion. What should a continuation grantee who is measuring on-time course completion under ED5 do in 2012?

The grantee should continue to measure on-time course completion under ED5 for the duration of their current three-year grant. If a grantee is able to measure improved academic performance with a pre/post test, they may also choose to revise their performance measure for 2012, but this is not required.

How will CNCS attribute an applicant's performance measure to be Tier 1 if a few outputs that they also intend to use cross over into different tiers? See example below.

ED20 (Tier 3) Number of children who start in a CNCS-sponsored early childhood education program

ED21 (Tier 1) Number of children that complete participation in CNCS-supported early childhood education programs

ED22 (Tier 3) Number of children who access high quality early learning childhood education programs

Only grantees who count children that complete the program can opt into Tier 1 outcomes. Grantees that only count enrollment (or access in the case of ED22) will need to report in Tier 3.

Can Teacher Corps programs opt into non-Teacher Corps outcomes, such as ED5 or ED27?

Yes, provided that their theory of change is consistent with the non-Teacher Corps measure.

Will applicants be able to select more than one Focus Area and, within the Focus Areas, more than one service activity?

Yes, they will be able to select more than one Focus Area and more than one service activity within a Focus Area.

Will applicants who select more than one service activity be required to identify a primary activity and secondary activity as in prior years?

Applicants must select one primary service activity for each focus area selected. They are not required to select a secondary activity, but they have the option.

How do planning grant applicants complete the MSY chart?

Because eGrants will not allow an applicant to submit with this section blank, Planning Grant applicants should enter 1 MT at 3% to get a .01% MSY.

Can summer programs select the ED27 performance measure?

Summer programs may opt into this measure. "Over the school year" would be interpreted as "over the course of the summer program" for these grantees.

Can summer programs select the H5 performance measure?

This output could apply to summer programming, provided the programming meets the criterion of being in addition to regular activities that would have been provided by the school or camp during the summer term. We will address the interpretation in the same way as ED27 above.

Can summer programs select the H12 performance measure?

This outcome measure is specifically about long-term food security, so it would not apply to summer programs that are filling a summer gap. Filling a summer gap would not translate to increased food security a few months out.

Is H12 limited only to education activities?

H12 is not limited to activities that are educational in nature.

GRANT COMPETITION RESOURCES

As a reminder, the documents that are required in order to apply for an AmeriCorps grant can be accessed from this link: http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp

Performance Measurement resources can be found on the National Service Resource Center at this link: <http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/npm/home>

The schedule of technical assistance calls has been updated to include two December calls focused on Performance Measures. The schedule can be found here: http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp

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