

AMERICORPS PLANNING GRANTS

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 



Agenda



- The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)
- AmeriCorps
- AmeriCorps Planning Grants and How to Apply for One
- Developing an AmeriCorps Program: Management Structure and Models
- Planning Grant Application Materials
- Application Content and Selection Criteria
- CNCS Support for Planning Grantees
- Award Process
- Reminders and Resources



What is the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)?

- was created in 1993 through the signing of the National and Community Service Trust Act which expanded opportunities for Americans to serve their communities through national service.
- is the nation's largest grantmaker supporting service and volunteering.
- engages more than 4 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service each year through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America.
- promotes United We Serve, a White House initiative to foster a culture of citizenship, service, responsibility, and to help all Americans answer the President's Call to Service – www.Serve.gov
- For more info on CNCS please review our strategic plan: http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/11_0203_cnsc_strategic_plan.pdf



What is AmeriCorps?

- AmeriCorps is a network of local, state, and national service programs that annually engages more than 85,000 Americans in intensive service to meet critical community needs.
- AmeriCorps grants provide funds to organizations to operate AmeriCorps programs in local communities to meet needs in education, health, the environment, economic opportunity, veterans services, disaster services, and other critical areas.
- AmeriCorps provides opportunities for individuals – AmeriCorps members – to serve communities across the country.
- Since 1994, more than 706,000 men and women have provided service as AmeriCorps members.



What are AmeriCorps members?

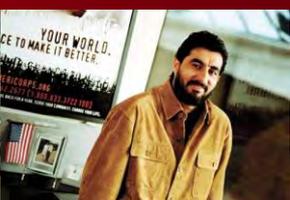
- Individuals enrolled for a specific term of service with an AmeriCorps program. The term of service is between 300 to 1700 hours per year.
- AmeriCorps members must be individuals who are U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States; and are at least 17 years of age at the commencement of their term of service.
- With a planning grant, an organization will develop a program that utilizes AmeriCorps members. **AmeriCorps members are not included in planning grants.**



What are AmeriCorps members?

Cont.

- AmeriCorps members are eligible for a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award upon successful completion of their term of service.
- AmeriCorps members age 55 or older have the option of transferring their education award to a child, foster child, or grandchild.
- Members may also be eligible for other benefits including a living allowance, health care and child care.



AmeriCorps members versus volunteers

- Members are engaged in intensive service for a specific period of time and are eligible for a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award upon successful completion of the service. A community volunteer is an individual who donates his or her service to an organization(s) but who is not an AmeriCorps member and is not eligible for an education award.
- Planning grant applicants cannot plan to replace current volunteer positions with AmeriCorps member positions to do exactly the same type of service they are currently doing.



Staff versus AmeriCorps members

- Staff members are paid employees of the organization. AmeriCorps members are not employees and should not be treated as such. They should not perform administration functions.
- A planning grant **cannot** intend for AmeriCorps members to replace staff. AmeriCorps members must serve a unique role in an organization and must be focused on meeting a critical unmet community need.
- **Nondisplacement of employees and volunteers** – In general, CNCS refers to the above concepts as displacement. Programs are not allowed to replace an existing employee or volunteer position with an AmeriCorps member position.



What is an AmeriCorps grant?

- Provides funding to support AmeriCorps programs.
- AmeriCorps programs are designed by the applicant organization to address community needs through the assistance of full-time or part-time AmeriCorps member positions.
- Funds are directly tied to a specific number of AmeriCorps members and are solely for program expenses.
- AmeriCorps grants partially cover the expense of operating an AmeriCorps program and do not cover general organizational expenses.
- Grant recipients must contribute match funding to support the project. Match can be cash and in-kind.
- The organizations that receive grants are responsible for recruiting, selecting, and supervising AmeriCorps members to serve in their programs.



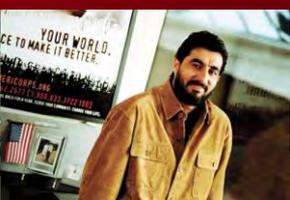
What is an AmeriCorps Planning Grant ?

- A one time \$50,000 grant to support the development of AmeriCorps programs
- Grants are awarded for 12 months and cannot be used to support AmeriCorps members.
- Applicants must provide 24% of the total project cost in match. Match may be cash or in-kind.
- Eligible applicants may not have previously received, as the official fiscal agent or legal applicant, an AmeriCorps State grant.



What are the benefits of an AmeriCorps Planning Grant?

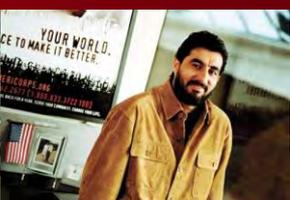
- The purpose of planning grants is to support the development of AmeriCorps programs that will engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based interventions to solve community problems.
- Planning grant recipients are expected to be better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following competitive cycle.



What are the 2012 AmeriCorps planning grant funding priorities?

2012 Funding Priorities:

- **Indian Tribes**
- AmeriCorps State and National applicants proposing programming in the Focus Area of **Veterans and Military Families**.
- CNCS will give priority in the following order:
 - ***Tier 1:** Applicants proposing to address outcomes identified in the Veterans and Military Families Priority Measures.*
 - ***Tier 2:** Applicants proposing to develop a program which will address outcomes identified in the Pilot Measures.*
 - ***Tier 3:** Applicants proposing to address other outcomes in the Veterans and Military Families Focus Area.*



Who Can Apply for a Planning Grant for FY 2012?



- Nonprofits, faith & secular community-based organizations, public agencies, Indian tribes, and institutions of higher education.
- Federally recognized Indian Tribes, bands, nations, or other organized groups or communities, including any Native village, Regional Corporation, or Village Corporation, as defined under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. § 1602), that the United States Government determines is eligible for special programs and services provided under federal law to Indians because of their status as Indians. Indian Tribes also include tribal organizations controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by one of the entities described above.
- **Encore Programs:**
Congress set a goal that 10 percent of AmeriCorps funding should support encore service programs. CNCS seeks to meet that 10 percent target in this competition and encourages programs that plan to engage a significant number of participants age 55 or older to apply.



Where is the Application Submitted?

Planning Grant applicants have two options for submitting the application:

- Indian Tribes or organizations planning activities that will take place in two or more states submit the application directly to the Corporation for National and Community Service via eGrants. Note: Indian Tribes' programs may operate in a single state OR in or more than one state.
- If AmeriCorps activities are planned for a single state program, applications are submitted through a State Service Commission – these entities provide AmeriCorps funding to single state AmeriCorps programs through annual grant competitions.

Singe-State - contact state commission about the planning grant requirements in their state

Multi-State and Tribes - submit applications directly to the Corporation



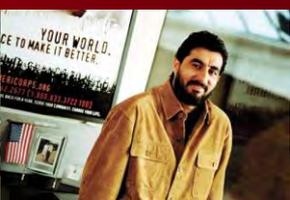
What is a State Service Commission?

- These are boards of 15-25 individuals nominated and appointed by a state's governor. This appointed board oversees the implementation of national and community service and volunteer initiatives in their particular state.
- To complete their activities, most commissions employ a small, professional staff to manage granting, monitoring and evaluating single state AmeriCorps grants.
- State Service Commissions provide Corporation funding to single state AmeriCorps programs through annual grant competitions.



AmeriCorps Planning Grantee Responsibilities

- Planning grantee organization has overall legal, administrative, and fiscal responsibility for the entire scope of the program, even if the funds are subgranted.
- As a planning grantee, you will also be responsible for developing or creating the systems that will support your full AmeriCorps implementation grant, these include:
 - developing strong fiscal and program management systems; monitoring financial management, program performance and member activities at operating sites and service locations;
 - training and providing technical assistance to staff at parent organization and at sites;
 - ensuring the recruitment, orientation and training of members; tracking, and ensuring the accuracy of, member hours and activities, and progress toward meeting approved performance measures;
 - acting as liaison between CNCS and the sites.
- As a planning grantee, you will have an opportunity to create or develop all of these components during your planning period.



Program Management Structures

During the planning period you will determine your program management structure.

There are various options depending on the capacity of your Tribe or organization, the capacity of your partners, and the design of your program.



Program Management Structures

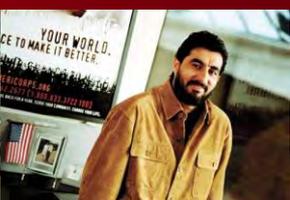
- **Centralized**: The grantee/parent organization manages all administrative functions and does not sub-grant funds.
- **Decentralized**: The grantee/parent organization sub-grants the funds, and gives the sub-grantee responsibility for administrative functions. (Grantee is still ultimately responsible to the Corporation for all funds and activities).
- **Affiliate Model**: Sites are affiliates or chapters of an umbrella organization;
- **Intermediaries**: Parent or operating site sub-grants funds and provides members to local community-based organizations.
- Various program structures exist and these are just some ways the programs might choose to manage their grant and design their program. Organizations decide what makes the most sense for themselves.



Program Models



- AmeriCorps members are placed at, and supervised by, the **operating site** (sub-grantee).
- The operating site acts as an **intermediary**, placing the AmeriCorps members at other local organizations, or **service sites**.
- Members' service is **team based**.
- Members are placed **individually** or in **small groups** to work on various projects.





Planning Grant Application Materials, Content and Selection Criteria



Planning Grant Application Materials – Part 1



- **Regulations:** these are the rules governing AmeriCorps applicants, programs, and members. They also include topics such as grant application selection criteria and priorities, matching requirements, and program management requirements.
- To find the AmeriCorps **regulations**, go to www.americorps.gov. Click on Manage Current Grants and Projects (under heading For Organizations), then click on AmeriCorps Regulations.



Planning Grant Application Materials – Part 2

- **2012 NOFOs or Notices of Funding Opportunities:** The **NOFOs** outline information pertaining to the year's competitions, including: (1) available grant opportunities, (2) eligibility requirements, and (3) the maximum allowable grant costs. Here's a link to a list of the current NOFOs: http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa.asp
- The priorities for 2012 AmeriCorps planning grants are Indian Tribes and AmeriCorps State and National applicants proposing programming in the Focus Area of Veterans and Military Families.



Planning Grant Application Materials – Part 3



AmeriCorps Indian Tribes Planning Grants FY2012 :

- http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa_detail.asp?tbl_nofa_id=93
- For Indian Tribes only: CNCS seeks to target its AmeriCorps grantmaking in the Education, Disaster Services and Veterans and Military Families Focus Areas.

AmeriCorps State and National Planning Grants FY2012 :

- http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa_detail.asp?tbl_nofa_id=92
- CNCS expects to invest the available funding to applicants proposing programming in the Focus Area of Veterans and Military Families.



Planning Grant Application Materials – Part 4

- **Planning Grant Application Instructions**: The **instructions** describe the information to be included in the application submission and also provides suggestions questions to consider when responding to the selection criteria
- The **instructions** can be found in the following link, http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/2012_planning_grants_application_instructions.pdf



Planning Grant Application Materials – Part 5



AmeriCorps Provisions:

- These provisions are the special conditions attached to all 2011 AmeriCorps grants and are updated annually.
- http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/ac_provisions_june_2011_final.pdf

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

- <http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/americangrantsfaq2012.pdf>
- These are frequently asked questions (and answers) regarding 2012 funding opportunities.

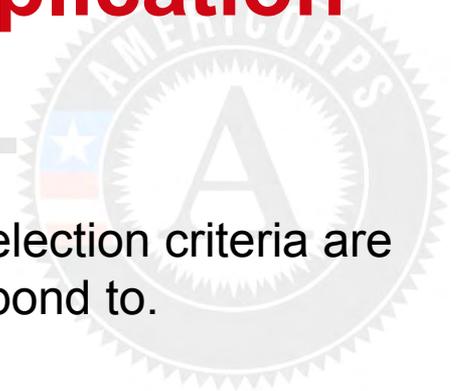


Selection Criteria and Application Content

We will now review the selection criteria. The selection criteria are what you as an applicant are required to respond to.

The selection criteria are as follows:

- **Executive Summary**
- **Rationale and Approach/Program Design**
- **Organizational Capability**
- **Cost Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy**



Selection Criteria and Application Content

Executive Summary:

- For this section, please provide a one-paragraph summary of your proposed program. This paragraph must be one-half page or less.

The summary should include who, what, where, and why:

- Who will be serving? Who will be served?
 - What will the AmeriCorps members do?
 - Where will the activity take place?
 - What is the expected outcome(s) of the project?
-
- CNCS will post these summaries on www.nationalservice.gov in the interest of transparency and Open Government



Selection Criteria and Application Content

Executive Summary:

You may fill in the blanks in the following template to complete your executive summary:

This planning grant will be utilized to develop an AmeriCorps program which will engage AmeriCorps members (members) to [*AmeriCorps member activities*] in [*geographic locations where member activities will take place*]. Members will address the needs of [*beneficiaries to be served*] resulting in [*anticipated outcome of project*]. Program activities will primarily be in the areas of [*identify the relevant CNCS focus areas*].



Planning Grant – Application Content and Selection Criteria

- Program Design (50%)
- Organizational Capability (25%)
- Cost Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy (25%)



Planning Grant – Application Content and Selection Criteria

Program Design (50%) - Rationale and approach.

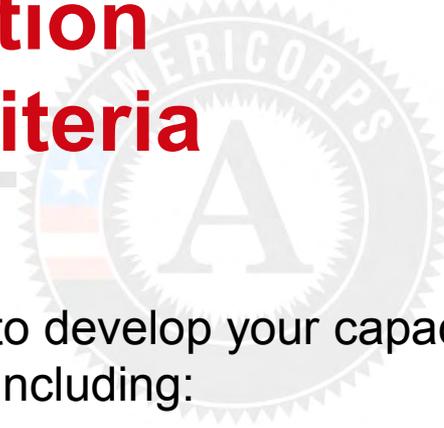
- Describe why you are applying for a planning grant and what you hope to achieve during the one year planning period. Include the problem you plan to solve with your AmeriCorps program and documentation of the need. Describe what AmeriCorps members will be doing to meet the need, and the target communities you will serve. Provide a detailed description of your planning process and a timeline for planning activities.



Planning Grant – Application Content and Selection Criteria

Program Design – CONT.

- Describe how you will use the planning period to develop your capacity to effectively manage an AmeriCorps program including:
- Determining the most appropriate AmeriCorps member activities to address the identified community need.
- Determining the desired characteristics of AmeriCorps members and designing a recruitment strategy.
- Developing a performance measurement system to ensure that reliable data is gathered to demonstrate impact on the communities to be served.



Planning Grant – Application Content and Selection Criteria

Program Design – CONT.

- Creating a process for selecting operating and service sites (if applicable) that will ensure the most appropriate and capable organizations are selected.
- Planning orientation and training for operating and service sites (if applicable).
- Planning orientation and training for AmeriCorps members.
- Ensuring you have the ability to provide or secure effective technical assistance (if applicable).



Planning Grant – Application Content and Selection Criteria

Organizational Capability (25%)

- Provide a brief history of your organization including the year it was established and your funding history with the Corporation, if applicable. Describe your ability to successfully plan an AmeriCorps program.
- Describe your record of accomplishment. Discuss your prior experience in the proposed area of programming and other examples of your organization's leadership in the community. Describe your organization's management and staff structure and the role the board of directors, administrators, and staff members will play in the planning process.
- Explain how you will establish systems and processes for sound programmatic and fiscal oversight.



Planning Grant – Application Content and Selection Criteria

Organizational Capability Cont. (25%)

Special Circumstances: In applying these criteria to each proposal, reviewers may also take into account the following circumstances of individual Tribes or organizations:

- The age of your organization and its rate of growth; and
- Whether your Tribe or organization serves a resource-poor community, such as a rural or remote community, a community with a high poverty rate, or a community with a scarcity of philanthropic and corporate resources.

If you feel that any of these circumstances have an impact on your organizational capability that has not already been discussed, please describe it.



Planning Grant – Application Content and Selection Criteria

Organizational Capability Cont. (25%)

For Tribes, provide your funding history with the Corporation, if applicable. Describe your ability to successfully plan an AmeriCorps program and describe the leadership structure of your Tribe and the department and personnel who will play a role in the planning process.



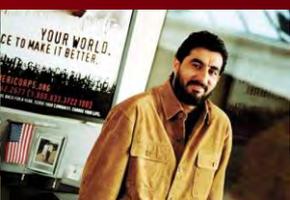
Planning Grant – Application Content and Selection Criteria

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25%)

- Describe your plans to develop a cost-effective program including how you will develop diverse non-federal resources that will support your program implementation and sustainability.
- Discuss the adequacy of your budget to support the planning process including your match. Describe how you will secure any additional commitments you need for the planning grant.

Additional information about the budget:

- Match must be at least 24% of the total budget. Match may be cash or in kind.
- Planning grant applicants will only complete two sections of the budget: the Program Operating Costs and Administrative/Indirect cost sections. Planning grant applicants do not complete the member cost section of the budget, since they do not have members.



Things to consider when finalizing your AmeriCorps application

- Is there a logical connection between the need you identified and your proposed member activities?
- Can someone unfamiliar with your community get a clear picture in their mind from reading your application and clearly understand the need?
- Is your planning timeline clear and logical and have you identified who is responsible for completing the various tasks.
- Are you making assumptions?
- Are all of the activities proposed included in the budget? Are all things presented in the budget addressed in the narrative?



CNCS Support for Planning Grantees

Successful Applicants for Multi-state and Indian Tribes planning grants receive the following support from CNCS:

- **Program Officers (POs):** Your program officer is your primary point of contact with the Corporation. He/she will support you in the implementation of your program, and assist in resolving issues that arise concerning your grant.
- **Grants Officers:** Grants Officers work in the Office of Grants Management (OGM) and are responsible for fiscal issues concerning your grant.
- **Webinars** and other program development resources



Award Process

Planning Grants

Submitted to CNCS or State Commission.

Compliance check

Initial Screening

Full Staff review

Clarification

Award Notification – April 2012

- Corporation program officers may call applicants to seek clarification, resolve questions and issues, and request revised budgets as part of the pre-award review process. Failure to respond to requests for information in a timely fashion may result in the removal of applications from consideration. Successful planning grant applicants will be notified by mid-April, 2012.
- Planning Grants budgets are for a one year period. Planning Grant recipients are expected to apply for a full operational grant the following year.



How to apply



- National and Tribal applications are submitted using eGrants, the Corporation's integrated, secure, web-based system for applications. <http://www.americorps.gov/egrants/index.asp>
- Make sure to take a look at page 9 for instructions on how to submit the required Performance Measure for planning grant applicants. Also take a look at Attachment D on pages 22 and 23; use Attachment D worksheet as an example when completing the Performance Measures Section in eGrants.
- Single state planning grant applicants should contact their state commission about the planning grant requirements in their state. <http://www.americorps.gov/about/contact/statecommission.asp>



Reminders and Resources

- **Grant application deadline – January 18, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. (ET)**
- Call 202.606.7508 or email americorpsgrants@cns.gov to sign up for Technical Assistance Calls for applicant support.
- Send your letter of intent to apply as soon as possible to: americorpsgrants@cns.gov
- Refer to CNCS website for FAQs (scroll to bottom of page):
http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa_detail.asp?tbl_nofa_id=92#FAQ
- Refer to “Building a High Quality AmeriCorps Program.”
<http://www.nationalservicerresources.org/ac-startup>
- Connect with us on Twitter at GROW_AmeriCorps
http://twitter.com/GROW_AmeriCorps
- 2012 call schedule:
http://www.americorps.gov/pdf/12_1003_applicant_call_schedule_fy_2012.pdf

