Key AmeriCorps Grant Terminology and Concepts

A presentation for AmeriCorps grant applicants

Webinar #2 of 5

Welcome to the Key AmeriCorps Terminology and Concepts presentation. This is the second in a series of webinars to familiarize you with important information that you need to know prior to completing your application for an AmeriCorps Grant.

Overview

- ★ Briefly Review AmeriCorps Grants
- ★ Explain Basic AmeriCorps Grant Concepts & Terminology
- ★ Review Additional Resources
- ★ Session Evaluation

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During this session we will briefly review what an AmeriCorps grant is. We will explain basic AmeriCorps grant terms and concepts, and we will review a few additional resources.

The session will conclude with a brief evaluation.

AmeriCorps State and National Grants

- ★ Provide funding to high-quality programs
- ★ Programs are developed by applicants who design a set of activities that demonstrate an evidence-based or evidence-informed approach to strengthening communities
- ★ Provided to organizations that want to solve community problems by engaging individuals in service as AmeriCorps members.

AmeriCorps State and National is a network of local, state, and national service programs that connects thousands of Americans each year in intensive service to meet our country's critical needs in education, health, the environment, economic opportunity, veterans, disaster services, as well as other unmet needs.

AmeriCorps Grants provide funding to high-quality programs that are developed by an applicant who designs a set of activities that demonstrate an evidence-based or evidence-informed approach to strengthening communities and solving community problems by engaging individuals in service as AmeriCorps members.

These programs provide Americans, young and old, with opportunities to serve as AmeriCorps members in communities across the country.

Since 1994, more than **900,000** men and women have provided service as AmeriCorps members.

AmeriCorps Terms and Concepts

Evidence Basis: This refers to a program's demonstration of why it is proposing a particular intervention to address the identified community problem.

Evidence for the intervention (member service activities) could be supported by one or more of the following:

- Results from impact evaluations
- Research studies
- Past performance measurement outcome data

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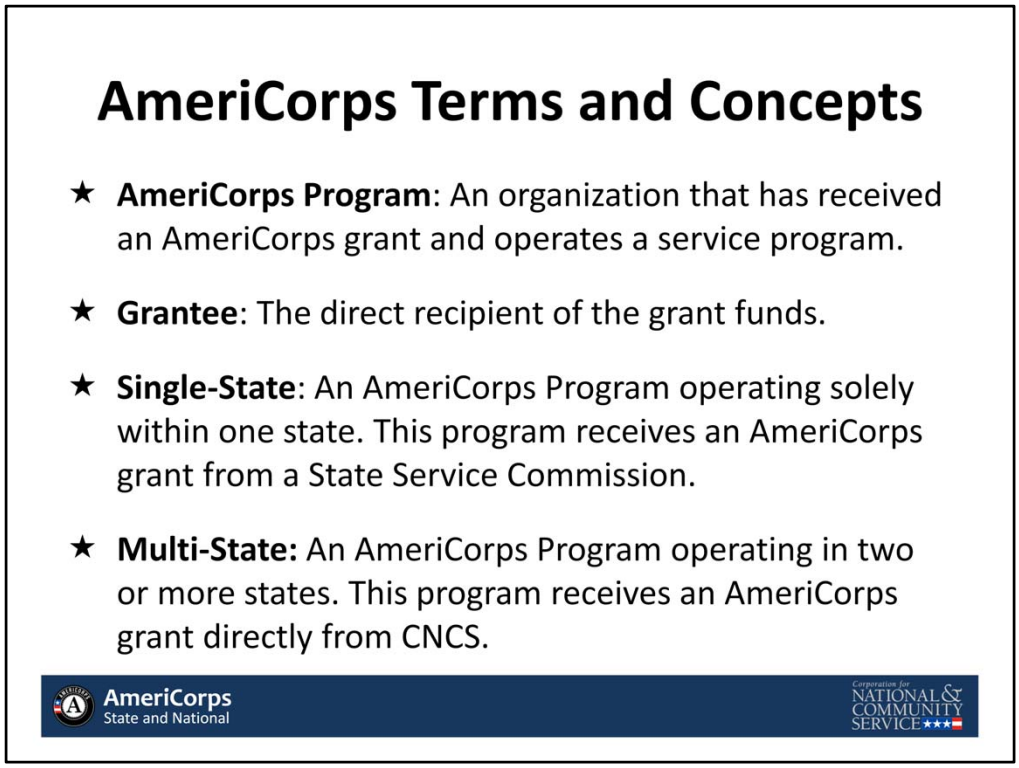
Now we are going to review some basic terms and concepts that are important for you to know as you think about how your organization might use AmeriCorps to address problems in your community.

We described AmeriCorps Grants as providing funding to high-quality programs that are developed by an applicant who designs a set of activities that demonstrate an evidence-based or evidence-informed approach to strengthening communities and solving community problems.

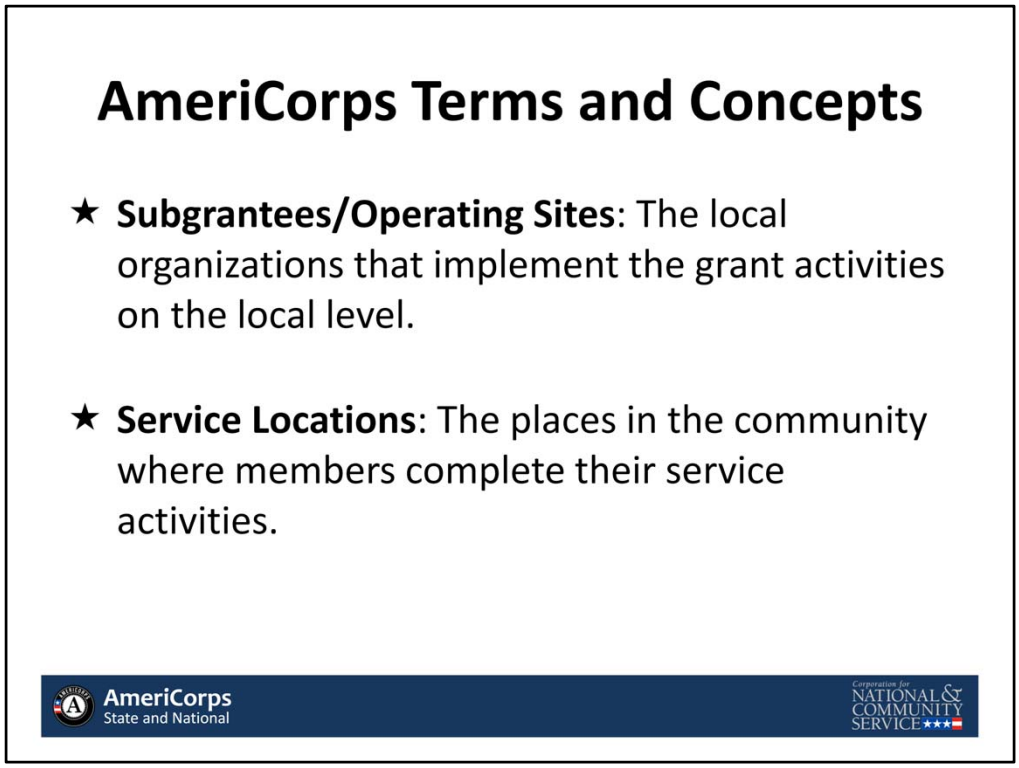
When we say evidence-based approach or evidence basis, this refers to a program's demonstration of why it is proposing a particular intervention to address the identified community problem. Evidence for the intervention, or member service activities, could be supported by one or more of the following: impact evaluations of the program or of similar programs; research studies supporting the chosen intervention; or past performance measurement outcome data from the program.

The evidence basis is how you *demonstrate* that the member activity you have chosen is likely to effectively address the identified problem. You should not simply say that the intervention is likely to be successful, you should *demonstrate* why you think this is the case.



Now we will explain additional terms that you will hear or see as you learn more about AmeriCorps.

- An **AmeriCorps Program** is an organization that has received an AmeriCorps grant and operates a service program.
- **The Grantee** is the direct recipient of the grant funds.
- **Single-State** refers to an AmeriCorps Program operating solely within one state. This program receives an AmeriCorps grant from a State Service Commission.
- **Multi-State** refers to an AmeriCorps Program operating in two or more states. This program receives an AmeriCorps grant directly from CNCS.



Subgrantees are the local organizations which implement the grant activities on the local level. May also be called operating sites depending on the structure of an AmeriCorps program.

Operating site means the organization that manages the AmeriCorps program and places members into service locations.
State subgrantees (programs) are operating sites. National grantees must identify at least one operating site to which they can assign service locations in the state where they are placing members.

Service Location means the organization where a member actually provides his or her service in the community. Typical service locations are schools, food banks, health clinics, community parks, etc. The service location may be the same as the operating site, but only if the member actually serves at the operating site organization. A member may serve at multiple service locations although the program must select only one for the member's primary assignment.

State Service Commissions

- ★ Provide CNCS funding to single-state AmeriCorps programs.
- ★ Provide feedback to CNCS on programs operating within their state
- ★ Multi-state AmeriCorps programs must consult with commissions in the states where they place or plan to place AmeriCorps members.

http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions

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State Service Commissions are an important part of the State and National family.

State Service Commissions provide CNCS funding to single-state AmeriCorps programs operating within their states. Commissions make AmeriCorps awards through a competitive process at the national level or through a state-based formula grant competition.

During the grant application review process, State Service Commissions provide feedback to CNCS on the single-state AND the multi-state programs operating or proposing to operate in their state. AmeriCorps programs proposing to serve in multiple states must consult with the commissions in every state where they intend to place AmeriCorps members.

The link on this slide provides you with the contact information for each state service commission

Performance Measures

Performance Measures: required for programs, tracked and reported on a bi-annual basis. Focus on the primary service activity and describe impact on the beneficiaries of the service.

- AmeriCorps performance measures consist of **outputs** (amount of people served, products created, or programs developed) and **outcomes** (changes or benefits experienced by service recipients).
- Applicants must select from CNCS created National Performance Measures if their program design aligns with the outcomes or they may create their own performances measures.

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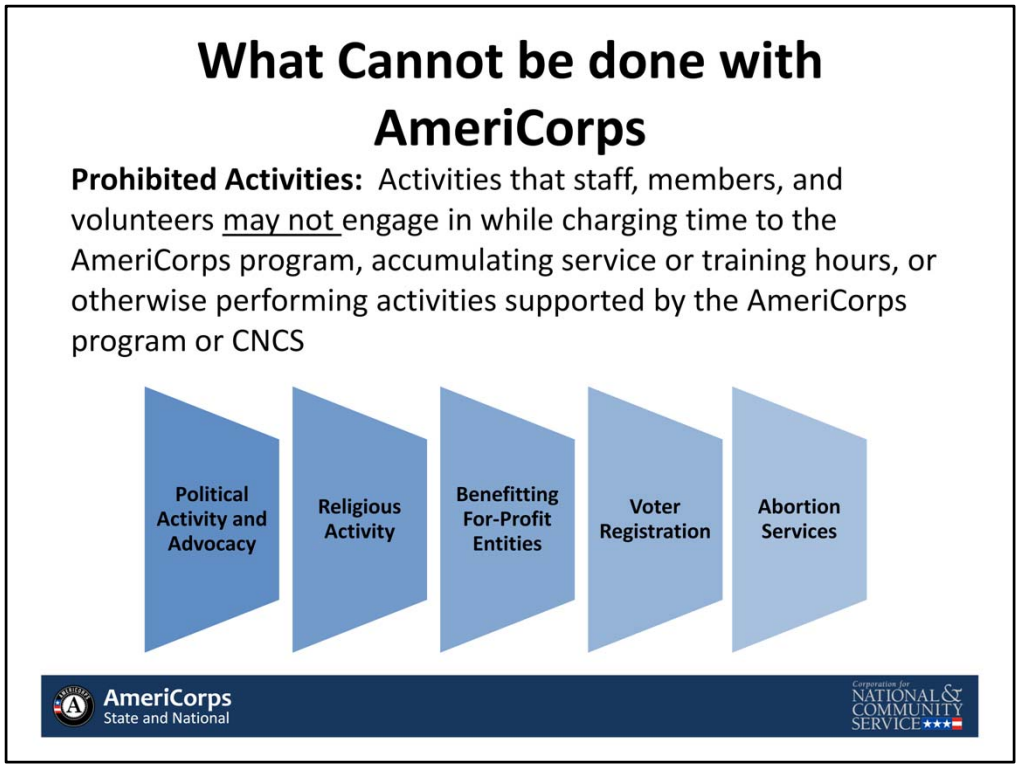
AmeriCorps programs are required to create performance measures to be tracked and reported on a bi-annual basis in the Grantee Progress Report. Measures should focus on tracking the primary service activity of the AmeriCorps program, allowing the program to describe its impact on the beneficiaries of the service.

AmeriCorps performance measures consist of outputs (amount of service beneficiaries reached, projects completed or services delivered by a program) and outcomes (changes or benefits experienced by service beneficiaries, including changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition).

Applicants must select from CNCS created National Performance Measures if their program design aligns with the outcomes; alternatively, they may create their own performances measures.



As you think about how your organization might use AmeriCorps members, it is important to know what members cannot do. What they cannot do is engage in prohibited activities or recruit others to do so. The prohibited activities fall into broad categories that include:

Political activity

Advocacy

Religious activity

Benefiting for-profit entities

Voter registration and abortion services

AC Members cannot participate in these activities directly nor can they recruit community volunteers to do these activities.

Please review the Introduction to AmeriCorps Member presentation as it provides much more information about the prohibited activities.

AmeriCorps Member Terminology

- ★ **AmeriCorps Member:** An individual enrolled for a specific term of service with an approved AmeriCorps program. *There is a specific webinar that provides much more detail about AmeriCorps members.*
- ★ **Member Service Year (MSY):** One MSY is equivalent to one full-time AmeriCorps member. AmeriCorps funds are contingent on the number of MSYs requested by the program.
- ★ **AmeriCorps member term/slot type**: There are five types of AmeriCorps member terms or slots: full time, half time, reduced half time, quarter time, and minimum time. The total MSYs a program requests depends on the number and type of slots/AmeriCorps member positions included in a particular program design.

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An AmeriCorps Member is an individual enrolled for a specific term of service with an approved AmeriCorps program. *There is a specific webinar that provides much more detail about AmeriCorps members.*

One Member Service Year (MSY) is equivalent to one full-time AmeriCorps member. AmeriCorps funds are contingent on the number of MSYs requested by the program.

There are five types of AmeriCorps member terms or slots: full time, half time, reduced half time, quarter time, and minimum time. The total MSYs a program requests depends on the number and type of slots/AmeriCorps member positions included in a particular program design.

Cost per MSY

$$\text{Cost per MSY} = \frac{\text{Total \$ requested from AmeriCorps}}{\text{Total MSY requested}}$$

- ★ Maximum amount is published annually in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- ★ Varies depending on the type of AmeriCorps grant
- ★ Cost/MSY is a competitive factor in the grant review process.

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The final key concept that AmeriCorps grant applicants must understand is Cost per MSY. The cost per MSY is a calculation that CNCS uses to determine the overall cost of your program.

The funding amount of an AmeriCorps grant is directly related to the number of Member Service Years (MSY) an applicant requests.

Cost/MSY is calculated by dividing the total funds being requested from AmeriCorps by the total MSY requested by the program.

The maximum cost per MSY varies depending on the specific type of AmeriCorps grant for which an organization applies.

Cost per MSY is considered as a competitive factor during the grant application review process. Meaning all else being equal, an applicant proposing a lower cost per MSY may have a competitive advantage.

Cost per MSY

For Example:

- ★ $266,000/20 full-time (FT) members = $13,300 is the cost per MSY (20 FT members = 20 MSY)
- ★ $266,000 /40 half-time (HT) members = $13,300 is the cost per MSY because 40 HT = 20 MSY (1 HT = 0.5 MSY)
- ★ PLEASE NOTE: Cost per MSY is not the same thing as the member living allowance. The member living allowance is an individual program budget expense. **Cost per MSY is an overall program price calculation.**

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To illustrate how to calculate Cost/MSY let's talk through an example. If the NOFO states that the maximum cost per MSY is $13,300, this slide demonstrates how two programs can be at the maximum cost per MSY but have a different number of members serving a community.

If you intend to request $266,000 and 20 full-time (FT) AmeriCorps members for your AmeriCorps program, then the cost per MSY = $13,300, this is because 20 FT members = 20 MSY.

If you use 40 half-time (HT) members and request $266,000 for the program, your cost per MSY would also = $13,300. This is because 40 HT = 20 MSY.

Some people initially confuse cost per MSY with member living allowance. They are not the same. The member living allowance is an individual program budget expense. Cost per MSY is an overall program price calculation. You can learn more about the member living allowance in the AmeriCorps Members presentation.

Additional Resources

Webinar Series:
Introduction to AmeriCorps State and National
Key AmeriCorps Grant Terminology and Concepts
Introduction to AmeriCorps Members
Categories of AmeriCorps Grants
AmeriCorps Program Management and Design

Current AmeriCorps Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) and other applicant resources are available at: http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities

Live Topical Calls: AmeriCorps State & National hosts Q&A calls with potential applicants. You can find the call schedule by following the link above and clicking on the current NOFO.

Sign up for Email Updates! Visit www.nationalservice.gov and click on the "Email" icon in the blue bar near the top right-hand corner of the page.

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This concludes the Key AmeriCorps Terms and Concepts presentation. This is the second of five webinars to assist grant applicants in understanding how to apply for AmeriCorps funding. In addition to these webinars, please review the Notice of Funding Opportunity and other materials posted on our website to help you prepare to apply for an AmeriCorps grant.

In addition to the various online resources, the AmeriCorps Outreach team will host calls in the fall to assist applicants as you complete the application process. You can also sign up for periodic email updates by clicking on the "Email" icon on the blue bar near the top right-hand corner of the CNCS website.

Session Evaluation

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ACwebinarEval

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Thank you for your participation, please complete the session evaluation.

If you have questions please contact CNCS via internet or phone at these addresses.