



AMERICORPS FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

for Organizations Serving Veterans and Military Families

AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition FY2015



What We Will Cover

- Overview of AmeriCorps
- The AmeriCorps FY 2015 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and **Veterans and Military Families** (VMF)
 - VMF Priority Area
 - VMF Performance Measures

What is AmeriCorps?

- Federally funded program to provide grants to organizations to run AmeriCorps programs.
- Organizations design AmeriCorps programs that address locally-identified compelling community needs by engaging AmeriCorps members and volunteers in service.
- An AmeriCorps project must enhance what an organization was able to do before the grant and cannot duplicate or supplant pre-existing activities, staff or volunteers.

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AmeriCorps Grants

- Grants provide partial funding to support AmeriCorps projects/programs; funds are not for general organizational expenses
- Grant recipients must contribute match funding to support the project
- Grants include an allotment of AmeriCorps member positions
- Funds are directly tied to a specific number of members and are solely for program expenses, such as member living allowance and benefits, member and staff training, supervision, supplies, and evaluation
- Organizations that receive grants are responsible for recruiting, selecting and supervising AmeriCorps members to serve in their programs

Benefits of an AmeriCorps Grant

- Expands the capacity of organizations to meet self-identified critical community needs
- Provides funds to support program administration, access to training and technical assistance resources, and entrance into a national network of organizations
- Allows organizations to recruit individuals from the community to serve as AmeriCorps members
- Community members who serve as AmeriCorps members gain skills, experience, and an Education Award to be used to further their education or repay student loans

Applying for an AmeriCorps Grant

- Two ways to become an AmeriCorps program:
- Apply directly to CNCS
- Submit an application to a State Service Commission (<http://www.nationalservice.gov/state-commissions>)
- Single state applicants must submit through state commissions and deadlines will be earlier than the CNCS submission deadline

CNCS 2015 Funding Priorities

- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Futures
- Economic Opportunity
- Disaster Services
- **VETERANS & MILITARY FAMILIES**



Veterans and Military Families are a CNCS Priority Area

- Serving those who served us, as well as engaging the talents of our veterans and military families is a strategic priority for CNCS.
- Establishing veterans and military families as a **funding priority** encourages organizations to make a commitment to serving and engaging this community.
- Performance Measures are required for AmeriCorps programs and selecting the appropriate **VMF measures will increase an organization's likelihood of receiving priority** consideration during the review process.

Veterans Programs....

Engage veterans in service and meet the needs of veterans. Activities might include:

- Creating housing units for veterans
- Connecting veterans with educational opportunities
- Helping veterans access their VA benefits and other health services
- Meeting the needs of veterans with disabilities
- Assisting homeless veterans
- Mentoring veterans navigating Veterans Courts
- Veterans mentoring students from disadvantaged circumstances
- Veterans helping to maintain natural resources or respond to natural disasters

Military Family Programs....

Engage military spouses in service and meet the needs of families of veteran and Active Duty Service members.

Activities might include:

- Hosting camps or other social activities for military connected children
- Tutoring and mentoring children of deployed parents
- Teaching life skills and wellness behaviors to military connected children
- Providing educational and career support to military spouses
- Connecting spouses with counseling and mental health services

Expanding Service for and by Veterans and Military Families

- Contact your State and County VA officials to find veterans in your community.
- Partner with VSOs and other organizations in your community that serve and engage veterans.
- Partner with Reserve and Active Duty organizations to engage military personnel before they leave the Service
- Hire staff with a strong veteran or military connection
- Word of mouth – encourage current members and service recipients to help you connect with other veterans and military family members.
- Attend military events and be visible in the community that you serve.

VMF National Performance Measures - Outputs

- Number of veterans that received CNCS-supported assistance.
- Number of veterans' family members that received CNCS-supported assistance.
- Number of family members of active duty military service members that received CNCS-supported assistance.
- Number of active duty military service members that received CNCS-supported assistance.
- Number of veterans engaged in service opportunities as a National Service Participant or volunteer.
- Number of military family members engaged in service opportunities as a National Service Participant or volunteer.

*Programs must create outcome measures that align with selected outputs.

Performance Measurement for VMF Programs

- Theory of Change
- Lessons from the Evidence
- Evidence Basis for Interventions
- High Quality Performance Measures
- Developing Outcome Measures



Theory of Change: Veterans Example



- The problem in the community is identified as the high unemployment rate among young veterans, and is attributed to a lack of marketable skills, as well as education degrees, training credentials and professional experience.
- The intervention provides veterans with assistance to find vocational training or educational program opportunities, sources of financial aid, tutoring support, as well as internship opportunities.
- The outcome - Veterans find or are placed in jobs - directly responds to the identified problem of unemployment. This outcome is closely aligned with the need.

Lessons from the Evidence

For new programs:

- What is the recommended design (specific program activities) and dosage (frequency, intensity, and duration) to achieve an intended outcome?

For existing programs:

- Is there sufficient evidence to support continuing the intervention?
- Are there modifications to the intervention that could increase the impact of intervention?
- Is there an alternative intervention that might be more effective?

Evidence Basis for Interventions

Possible sources of evidence include:

- Your past performance measurement outcome data
- Results from an impact evaluation of your program
- Research that documents the outcomes of similar programs
- Impact evaluations that document outcomes of similar programs



High Quality Performance Measures

Quality outcomes should:

- Be meaningful
- Be ambitious yet realistic
- Match the type of change indicated by your program's theory of change (e.g., attitude, knowledge/skills, behavior, condition)

Strong performance measures are aligned:

- Output measures (e.g., Veterans served) align with intervention
- Outcome (e.g., Veterans obtaining degrees) is likely to result from output
- Output and outcome measure the same intervention and beneficiaries

Developing Outcome Measures: Veteran Example

- **NEED:** 35% of young veterans (18-24 year olds) are unemployed (Department of Veteran Affairs, 2011). Economists cite a lack of marketable civilian skills and the need for education degrees, vocational certifications...
- **INTERVENTION:** National service participants support veterans in completing training programs by assisting in locating appropriate programs, securing financial aid, and by providing tutoring resources and internship placements.

Which type of outcome?

- Veterans report increased confidence about finding employment. (attitude)
- Veterans demonstrate new technical skills. (knowledge/skills)
- Veterans are placed in jobs. (condition)

Performance Measures and Evaluation Guidance

- National Performance Measures Instructions (Veterans and Military Families Focus Area)
http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/nofa/13_1031_2013_NOFO_PM_Instructions_VETERANS_AND_MILITARY_FAMILIES.pdf
- Performance Measurement Core Curriculum:
<https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/npm/training-resources>
- Evaluation Core Curriculum:
<https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/evaluation-ameriCorps>

Important Dates for FY15 Applicants

Notice of Intent to Apply (Required)

- Due by December 10, 2014 by 5:00 pm ET
- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CNCSIntentToApply2015AmeriCorps>

Application Deadline

- Due by January 21, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. ET
- Submit through [eGrants](#)

Applicant notification

- May 8, 2015

Resources to Assist Programs with the Application Process www.americorps.gov

AmeriCorps State and National FY15 Competition Overview:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities/2015/amerikorps-state-and-national-grants-fy-2015>

The NOFO text:

http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2015_AmeriCorps_Notice_NOFO_final.pdf

Application Instructions:

http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2015_AmeriCorps_State_and_National_NOFO_Application_Instructions_FINAL.pdf

FAQs:

http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/2015%20FAQs_11-12-14final.pdf

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