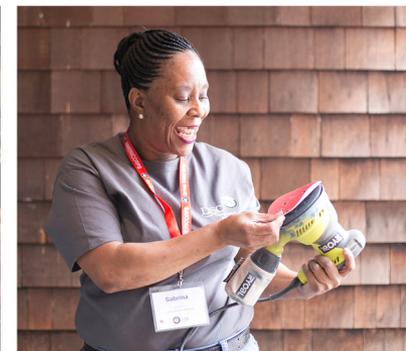




Developing and
Managing Planning
Grants

America's Service Commissions



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Agenda

- Welcome
- Who is in the Room
- Defining Planning Grants
- Hear from your Peers
- Closing table Discussion
- Questions

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Who is in the Room?



Zero



A Little



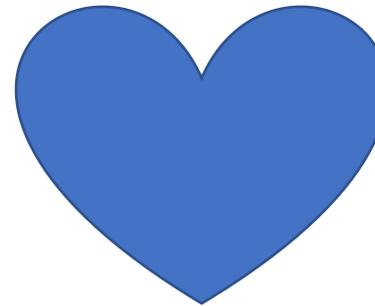
A Lot



Dislike



Like



Love

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AmeriCorps Planning Grants

- What is a Planning Grant?
 - AmeriCorps planning grants are awarded for the purpose of allowing an organization to plan and prepare for applying for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle.
 - Funding up to \$75,000 (must match at 24%)
 - Length is up to 12-months (can not be extended)
 - Do not support AmeriCorps Members



Did you Know...

- Planning Grants can be used for new organizations to explore the development of an AmeriCorps program.
- Planning Grants can be used with existing organizations if the purpose of the Planning Grant meets CNCS's definition of "new program", this can include expansion opportunities.
- Since there are no MSYs tied to Planning Grants, you can add a planning grant into your portfolio mid-year as long as you have funds available.
- If a future operating grant is funded, the Planning Grant year DOES NOT count as Year 1 on the match schedule.



Meet your Panelists

- Maureen K. Eccleston
 - Executive Director, PennSERVE
 - 717-772-4428, meccleston@pa.gov

- Robyn Harris
 - Senior Program Officer, Serve Washington
 - 360-902-0663, robyn.harris@ofm.wa.gov

- Carrie Lewis
 - Senior Program Officer, California Volunteers
 - 916-322-2425, Carrie.Lewis@californiavolunteers.CA.GOV

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Hear from your Peer

Maureen Eccleston
Executive Director
PennSERVE

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PennSERVE Planning Grants

- 2016 - 2018
 - 9 planning grant applications
 - 5 planning grants funded
 - 4 awarded program grants the following year (3 Formula, 1 Competitive)
- Formula Funding
 - 3 through the Formula allocation
 - 1 with unexpended funds
 - 1 with Formula supplemental
- Funding Amounts
 - PennSERVE set ceilings of \$25,000 - \$50,000
 - 24% match met or exceeded



Supporting Planning Grantees

PennSERVE Request For Applications

- Program Concept
- Planning Process and Timeline
- Organizational Staffing and Background – at least .5 FTE required
- Compliance and Accountability
- Budget
- No Performance Measures



Supporting Planning Grantees

PennSERVE Training and Technical Assistance

- Offering varied per year and need and included:
 - New Program/New Staff Training
 - PennSERVE's Starting Strong Training for all Subgrantees
 - Planning Grantee Training Session
 - ASC AmeriCorps Start-up Bootcamp
 - National Service Regional Training Conferences
 - Consultants – in person and virtual, program and fiscal
 - Weekly/bi-weekly calls with PennSERVE staff



Supporting Planning Grantees

PennSERVE Deliverables

- Theory of Change & Logic Model
- Performance Measure & Data Collection Instruments
- Recruitment, Screening, & Selection
 - NSCHC P&P, inclusive of criminal history policy
 - Recruitment plan and materials
 - AmeriCorps member application
 - Position description
 - Interview questions
 - Reference checks
 - Acceptance letter with next steps
- AmeriCorps Member Enrollment
 - Member Service Agreement
 - Member Timesheet P&P
- Orientation and Training
 - Pre-Service and Ongoing
 - Agendas
 - Curriculum
 - Facilitators and guest speakers

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Supporting Planning Grantees

PennSERVE Deliverables

- Supervision Plan
- Service Site Selection
 - Recruitment/outreach materials
 - Cash match policy
 - MOU
- Site Orientation & Training
 - Before service year
 - Ongoing training calendar and topics
- Compliance & Accountability
 - Proof of liability insurance
 - Program procurement policy
 - Grievance P&P
 - Staff timesheets and grant allocation plan
- Financial Systems
 - Sample in-kind form
 - Tracking by CNCS and Grantee
 - Tracking by grant year
 - Back-up documentation
 - Verification of member service before payment



PennSERVE's Best Practices

- Be Prescriptive
 - Separate application criteria
 - Required deliverables
- Require Participation with Programs
 - AmeriLanguage Immersion
 - Build accurate expectations
 - Peer networking and learning from experience



PennSERVE's Best Practices

- Consider Planning Grant Period in Funding Decisions
 - Receptive to commission feedback
 - Ability to meet deadlines
 - Communication
- Recognize Commission Capacity
 - Staff time to support planning grantees
 - Future funding projections
 - Portfolio and ability to support program growth



Hear from your Peer

Robyn Harris
Senior Program Officer
Serve Washington

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Why Planning Grants?



- \$\$\$ increase in unexpended funds
- \$\$\$ increase in Formula allocation
- Long standing programs – no “wait” list for new programs
- New programs had previously been developed via targeted outreach – no statewide outreach plan
- Current legal applicants wanting to develop new programs



Funding Opportunity



- Commission(ers) voted to use surplus Formula funds
- Opened a separate RFGA
- Released May 18, Due June 1 (*not recommended*)
- Max \$75k, posted typical \$35-50k
- Full Year project period Aug 2018-July 2019
- NO performance measures in eGrants, expected benchmarks via Serve WA TTA
- NO logic model
- Short Narratives...

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Funding Opportunity



- Short Narratives (2)...Program Design
 - Need. Describe the community need(s) the organization is hoping to address. Provide information about the scope/significance/cause of the problem in the community(ies) where your organization will focus its efforts. Use reputable/current/local data.
 - AmeriCorps Members as an Effective Tool. Describe why your organization believes that AmeriCorps Members could potentially be an effective tool for addressing the community need that is described in section 1. Additionally, please describe what activities you see AmeriCorps Members engaging in and how such interventions may lead to positive outcomes.

Funding Opportunity



- Short Narratives (2)...Organizational Capability
 - Organizational Background and Staffing. Describe how the organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure necessary to plan and implement the proposed project.
 - Resource Development. Describe the organization's experience in securing outside cash and in-kind contributions. Additionally, describe the resources that could potentially be utilized/secured to assist the organization in supporting a full AmeriCorps program.

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Funding Opportunity



- Suggested applicants take Serve WA readiness assessment (operational based)
- Suggested applicants review Serve WA decision tree (types of national service opportunities)
- Required submission of single audit or audited financial statements
- Stated selected applicants would complete pre-award requirements
 - Full financial management survey
 - NSCHC training, certification, and staff checks

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Funding Opportunity



- Bidder's Meeting (web-based)
 - AmeriCorps 101
 - Purpose of Operational Grants
 - Purpose of Planning Grants
 - Timeline for RFGA
 - Timeline for Project Period
 - In-person Orientation
 - Monthly Webinars
 - Regional Conference
 - eGrants Tips and Tricks
 - Q&A

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Awards



- 6 Planning Grant Applications
- Review Committee – Commission Executive Committee
 - 2 Denied
 - 1 obvious via narrative (signs of staff duplication, no plan to match award, etc.)
 - 1 merged (same legal applicant submitted two applications)
 - 4 Awarded
 - 1 brand new organization
 - 1 intermediary host site (looking for direct grant/growth)
 - 2 current operational/legal applicants (proposing new programs)



Curriculum



- In-Person Orientation
 - Very similar to operational grant orientation
- Monthly Webinars
 - Various training topics
- Quarterly Benchmarks/Deliverables
 - Q1 – Theory of Change & Logic Model
 - Q2 – Performance Measures & Data Collection Plan, Member Orientation/Training/Supervision Plan
 - Q3 – Member Position Description & MSA, Time Tracking Tools
 - Q4 – Any Unfinished Deliverables
- Regional Conference
- Serve WA Subgrantee Meeting (full portfolio)

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Quarter 1 - Example



Quarter 1 – August-October

August

- Orientation – General Overview of AmeriCorps in WA
- Begin Locating/Reviewing/Reading AmeriCorps Guidance
 - [National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended by the Serve America Act](#) (42 U.S.C. § 12501 et seq.)
 - [CNCS Code of Federal Regulations](#) (45 C.F.R. § 2500.1 et seq.)
 - [OMB Code of Federal Regulations](#) (2 C.F.R. § 200 et seq.)
 - [CNCS Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants](#)
 - [CNCS General Grant Terms and Conditions](#)
 - [AmeriCorps State and National Policy FAQs](#)
 - [Serve Washington Special Terms/Conditions & Planning Terms/Conditions](#)
 - [Serve Washington Program Handbook](#)
 - [National Service Knowledge Network](#)
 - [Compiled Search Document](#) (inclusive of CNCS documents only)
- Webinar – Theory of Change/Logic Models/Evidence

September

- Begin Developing a Theory of Change and Logic Model
- Identify Evidence to support the Theory of Change Framework
- Webinar – Introduction to NOFO and Host Sites/Partners

October

- Continue Unfinished Objectives
- Read NOFO and Supplemental Materials
- Identify Host Sites or process for (if applicable)
- Identify Strategic Partners (if applicable)
- Begin Budget Framework
- Webinar – Performance Measures/Data Collection/Evaluation

Quarter 1 – Deliverables

Submit the following for feedback either during the quarter or by the end of the quarter.

- Theory of Change Framework and Logic Model

Quarter 1 – Questions to Consider

Is there alignment between the need, intervention, and intended outcome?

What level of evidence supports this alignment?

How many AmeriCorps members will be needed? Are the member activities allowable?

What are the characteristics and qualifications of desired AmeriCorps members?

How many staff members and what roles will be supporting the program and members?

Will you have host sites? What other partners are necessary to be successful?

How will you obtain the cash match necessary to operate the program?

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Operational Awards?



- Serve WA message:
 - Apply IF/WHEN it makes sense
 - 1:1 Coaching
 - Allowed to apply during project period for Formula
 - Allowed to complete project period and apply during Competitive
 - ...allow to apply anytime!



Operational Awards!



- 4 Planning Grants
 - Awarded 1 Formula (spring, during PG project period)
 - Sending 1 to Competitive (this fall)
 - 1 Undecided
 - 1 Decided NOT to Apply

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Lessons Learned



- Combine with Formula Comp or extend grant-making timeline (plan ahead)
- Revisit narratives RFGA
- Require deliverables in contract or special terms
- Build upon curriculum (outside trainers, operational program voice, more interactive)
- Underestimated fiscal support, increase upfront and ongoing fiscal training (theory and fundamental)
- Success even if not funded
- Overall positive feedback from PGs

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Resources



Serve WA Planning Grant Meeting Materials:

<https://servewashington.wa.gov/programs/amerikorps/subgrantee-resources/planning-grantees-meeting-materials>

Robyn Harris, Serve Washington
Senior Program Officer

robyn.harris@ofm.wa.gov



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Hear from your Peer

Carrie Lewis
Senior Program Officer
California Volunteers

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Planning Grants

Building an AmeriCorps Program is Overwhelming!

Planning grants provide resources to support organizations

- ✓ Program Development
- ✓ Operational Readiness (*new focus*)

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Planning Grants (Prior Years)

- “Program Design Only” Focus
- Low Success Rate

| | 2016-17 | 2013-14 |
|--|---------|---------|
| # of Planning Grants Awarded | 17 | 10 |
| Planning Grant Funds Awarded (Unexpended and New Formula Dollars) | \$1.3m | \$750k |
| # of Operating Grants Awarded* | 5 | 4 |
| Success Rate | 29% | 40% |

**Grantees who made it past one year of operation*





Lessons Learned

1. Organizations discovered post award **that they did not have the capacity** to take on an AmeriCorps program
2. **Partnerships and match commitment dissolved** between planning and operating
3. Organizations discovered their **partnership was not prepared for program implementation**
4. Programs were not ready to launch due to **lack of funds between the planning and operating phases**





New Approach

1. Conduct **targeted outreach**
2. Determine **organizational capacity** prior to funding
3. Invest in organizations with **operational capability**
4. Provide robust **training and technical assistance**
5. Offer **operational readiness** planning grants to new programs





Planning Grant Process

| PAST PROCESS (competitive) | CURRENT PROCESS (non-competitive) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| RFA Released | Introductory Call/AMC 101 Meeting |
| Applications Submitted | Capacity Assessment Review |
| Application Review | Invitation to Apply |
| Clarification and Feedback | Application Review |
| Staff Recommendation | Clarification/Consultation Interview |
| Program Committee Approve | Staff award (non-competitive) |





Materials Developed for Each Phase

1. Community Outreach

- Created CV Staff Position: Associate Director of Outreach & Program Development

2. Introductory Calls/Meetings

- *How Ready Are You for AmeriCorps?*
- *AmeriCorps 101 Slide Deck*

3. Organizational Capacity Assessment

- AmeriCorps Readiness Self-Assessment Form

4. Invitation to Apply

- *Planning Grant RFA*
- *Planning Grant Timeline & Deliverables*

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Training and Technical Assistance

- Program Design Workshop
- Grants Webinars
- Operational Readiness Webinars
- Readiness Boot Camp
- Monthly TTA Calls

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Planning Grants (*Current*)

Two options:

- Design and Operational Readiness
- Operational Readiness Only (*for new programs*)

| | 2019-20 | 2018-19 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| # of Planning Grants Awarded | 10 | 6 |
| - Design & Readiness | 7 | 4 |
| - Readiness Only | 3 | 2 |
| Planning Grant Funds Awarded | \$750k | \$450k |
| # of Operating Grants Awarded | 3 so far... | 6 |
| Success Rate | TBD | 100% |



Table Discussions

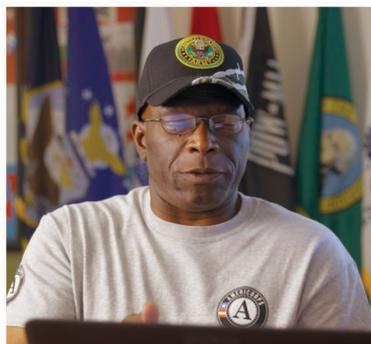
- Please take a few moments to reflect on what you heard from these three presenters.
- Share at your table:
 - Something new that you learned, or
 - Something you'll explore further when you return home.





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