

Responses to Questions for AmeriCorps Formula RFP#2018-15

Q1	<p>I'm writing with regards to page #2, Applicant Type, of RFP# 2018-15.</p> <p>Our organization is currently a formula grantee in its 3rd year of an AmeriCorps contract with NYS. We responded to the competitive November 2017 RFP, and we're currently in the resolution period.</p> <p><i>Must we also apply for formula funding as a new program?</i> The Applicant Type chart indicates 'yes,' but I would like to confirm.</p>
A1	<p>Yes, however, until resolution is made on your November 2017 AmeriCorps competitive application, the Commission will be unable to transfer your application.</p>
Q2	<p>The Formula Pool application states that first time applicants must provide 24% matching. Are the matching funds a portion of the total project cost?</p> <p>For example, if a project requested the minimum MSYs (10) then the maximum cost is \$147,000. Would the applicant need to provide \$35,280 in addition to the \$147,000?</p>
A2	<p>No. For Cost Reimbursement (including Professional Corps) grants, the overall grantee share of total program costs for the first 3 years is 24%. Matching funds are a portion of the total project cost incurred to operate the program and accomplish its objectives.</p> <p>For example, if the total project cost included in the proposed budget is \$193,421.25 and the project requested the minimum MSYs (10), the maximum federal funding request would be \$147,000. The applicant would have to provide a 24% match of the total proposed budget (both federal and grantee match) of \$46,421.05 (\$193,421.25 x 24%=\$46,421.05). Note: the match will be calculated automatically in the e-grants budget.</p>
Q3	<p>We are submitting a grant application for a program that is currently under the CNCS Partnership Challenge grant, which has been discontinued. Do we submit an application as a 'New' application or as a 'Recompete'?</p>
A3	<p>If an applicant is applying for a different program model (a new project), they should apply as New, unless they already have an existing State subgrant, in which case they would have had to request approval for the creation of a new project by the deadline in Section 1.2 (Calendar of Events); and have been granted permission by the Corporation to do so.</p>
Q4	<p>Page 23 of the AmeriCorps State RFP: Under the 'Economic Opportunity and/or Healthy Futures and/or Education' Commission Funding Priority, what does 'public safety' mean in the following context: "Programs which propose to utilize AmeriCorps in interventions that promote public safety, including interventions focused on youth development, anti-gang efforts, safer schools, blight removal, strengthening of neighborhoods, etc." Please expand on this and/or provide examples of interventions that 'promote public safety.'</p>
A4	<p>The Corporation's website, www.cns.gov, has examples of programs that use interventions that promote public safety. Applicants are not limited to those examples, but should demonstrate, in the logic model and in the narrative, that the proposed intervention would promote public safety in order to earn the priority points.</p>
Q5	<p>Page 23 of the AmeriCorps State RFP, Section 5: Under the 'Economic Opportunity and/or Healthy Futures and/or Education' Commission Funding Priority, what does 'strengthening</p>

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	neighborhoods’ mean in the following context: “Programs which propose to utilize AmeriCorps in interventions that promote public safety, including interventions focused on youth development, anti-gang efforts, safer schools, blight removal, strengthening of neighborhoods, etc.” Please expand on this as it reads too broadly and/or provide examples of interventions that ‘strengthen neighborhoods’.
A5	The Corporation’s website, www.cns.gov, has examples of programs that use interventions that strengthen neighborhoods. Applicants are not limited to those examples, but should demonstrate, in the logic model and in the narrative, that the proposed intervention would strengthen neighborhoods in order to earn the priority points.
Q6	In order to earn the Commission Funding Priority points, must <i>all</i> members deliver interventions that fall under one or more of the priority areas?
A6	Within the statutorily designated national Focus Areas, all members must deliver interventions that fall under one or more of the “priority funding” issue areas for 2018-19, listed in the RFP under section 4.1, paragraph G. Commission Funding Priorities for the three-point New York State Commission Funding Priority.
Q7	For Ed Awards-only applicants, is program funding required?
A7	For Education Award Grants (EAP) Fixed amount grants, applicants request a small fixed amount per MSY, can enroll less than full-time members, and use their own resources to cover all other costs. There is currently no minimum amount of program funding you must request for EAP fixed-amount grants. Programs can access funds under the grant based on enrolling the full complement of members supported under the grant. As with full-time fixed amount grants, there are no specific match or financial reporting requirements for EAP fixed amount grants. See p. 7 of 2018 AmeriCorps State & National Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, link provided in RFP Section 5.3 Key Concepts, https://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/2017/2018-ameri-corps-state-national-mandatory-supplemental-guidance.
Q8	If an applicant submits an Ed Awards-Only request for a certain number of members, is it possible that the Commission would award the applicant fewer Ed Awards than what was requested in the application?
A8	Yes, the Commission will determine, within its discretion, the number of proposals it will recommend to the Corporation, the amount of funding requested in total and for any one proposal it recommends, and any technical or other minor changes it determines are necessary before a proposal is recommended to the Corporation.
Q9	Page 9 of the AmeriCorps State RFP, Section 2.4: This section states that all contracts, with the exception of fall educational programs, will have a contract start date of “no earlier than November 1, 2018, and will end no later than February 28, 2021.” Is there flexibility with the start date?
A9	No, there is no flexibility with the start date.
Q10	Can an employee of the applicant enroll as an AmeriCorps member if the AmeriCorps duties are separate and distinct from their duties as an employee, and the AmeriCorps position does not duplicate or supplant an existing employee?
A10	The Corporation for National and Community Service has a long-standing practice of advising against an AmeriCorps participant being simultaneously employed by the organization with which the participant is serving. AmeriCorps members are, by definition, not employees of the organizations with which they serve. To allow a

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	<p>member, even in the member’s free time, to perform paid work begins to chip away at the wall between “employment” and “service.” The program would be presented with a challenge in distinguishing between time that the individual is a participant, and time that the individual is an employee.</p> <p>Although it may be possible to structure a relationship in which an individual, during non-AmeriCorps service hours, performs paid work for the same organization, in which the individual’s duties as a participant are entirely distinct from the individual’s duties as an employee, the Corporation’s general stance is that the risk for confusion is insurmountable. The Commission has adopted the Corporation’s policy guidance.</p>
Q11	Is it allowable to use grant funds to support expenses related to a Project Director?
A11	Yes. When crafting the budget for cost reimbursement grants, under “Position/Title Description,” list each staff position separately and provide salary and percentage of effort as percentage of FTE devoted to this award. Each staff person’s role listed in the budget must be described in the application narrative and each staff person mentioned in the narrative must be listed in the budget as either CNCS or Grantee share.
Q12	Can the Project Director be an AmeriCorps Member?
A12	No, staff supported by the grant cannot be AmeriCorps members.
Q13	Can a Director divide their time between AmeriCorps and another project if the other project is funded by other Federal dollars?
A13	Yes. The staff position must be listed separately along with salary and percentage of effort as percentage of FTE devoted to this award.
Q14	Can funds be used to purchase disaster readiness supplies that will be distributed throughout the community?
A14	Yes, however, distributing disaster readiness supplies would have to be part of your program design service activities. Note: all grant costs must be allowable, reasonable, allocable or consistently applied.
Q15	We run an afternoon respite program for youth and adults with disabilities. The program ends at 5 pm. Is it allowable for AmeriCorps members to offer extended respite hours from 5 - 7 pm? Or would this run contrary to your regulations?
A15	No, this is not necessarily contrary to the regulations. Program hours may vary, it depends on the type of program that is being proposed. The hours need to be justified and within an approved program design. For example: hours can range from serving three weeks straight for 12 to 14 hours a day (such as disaster relief work or fire-fighting, where the need is great) to serving hours that resemble more of a regular work week (Monday to Friday or Tuesday to Saturday, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM).
Q16	Is a planning grant for a new initiative considered multiple projects if we are currently operating an AmeriCorps program?
A16	Yes. If an organization already has an existing State subgrant, it must have requested approval to apply for an additional grant by the Deadline for Multiple Projects Request in Section 1.2 Calendar of Events; and have been granted permission to do so by the Corporation.
Q17	Will egrants allow us to apply for a planning grant while currently operating an existing AmeriCorps program? (We DID submit a multiple program request YESTERDAY, but realize today that a planning grant would be the best route) Do we need to wait for permission?

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A17	No, if an organization currently has an existing State subgrant, it must have requested approval to submit an additional application prior to the deadline for Multiple Projects Request in Section 1.2 Calendar of Events; and have been granted approval by the Corporation to do so.
Q18	When will we hear back on the request to apply for multiple programs?
A18	Responses to multiple project requests were emailed to applicants no later than May 30, 2018.
Q19	What is the correct NOFO for the planning grant? We only see one for Indian Tribes and cannot see what is required in the application.
A19	<p>The correct NOFO is the one that is listed as:</p> <p>NOFA: FY 2018 AmeriCorps State and Territory Commission (New and Continuations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant Application ID #: 18AC205751 • Grant ID #: 16AFHNY001 • Due Date: 01/17/2018 <p>Note: The Due Date on the website does not apply to this funding opportunity, please see Section 1.2 (Calendar of Events) for the correct due date.</p>
Q20	Is a planning grant submitted via formula funding tied to a formula funded program in the future, or can a program apply competitively? b. Can a program apply for competitive AmeriCorps funds WHILE operating a formula funded planning grant?
A20	No, a planning grant is for a one-year period. b. Yes, a formula funded planning grant recipient for 2018-2019 may apply for a Competitive grant if they meet the Competitive grant requirements.
Q21	Are we able to modify our Performance Measures in a continuation cycle?
A21	Yes, in some cases, performance measure changes would only be approved if they are for the purpose of improving the quality of the performance measures. State Commissions have discretion when allowing formula subgrantees to adjust their performance measures. CNCS Program Officers will review formula performance measure alignment prior to certification.
Q22	What is the MSY for the 1200 hour slot?
A22	The 1200 hour slot is approximately .7 and is calculated automatically in eGrants.
Q23	When are proposals due?
A23	June 11, 2018 by 6:59 p.m. Eastern Time as noted in Section 1.2 (Calendar of Events)
Q24	How much funding is available for applicants?
A24	See section 2.3 Purpose and Funding Availability which states: “For 2018-2019 New York State has allocated approximately \$4.89 million to fund current formula programs continuing into their second or third year of operation. \$850,000 has been dedicated by the New York State Commission to fund the environmental initiative, Excelsior Conservation Corps, through the auspices of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The remainder of New York’s AmeriCorps formula allocation, at least \$1.32 million, will be used to select additional AmeriCorps programs through this RFP process.”
Q25	Is the Vendor Responsibility prequalification requirement separate from the Grants Gateway prequalification?
A25	Yes, the Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire is a separate process from the Grants Gateway prequalification.

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Q26	When must an applicant complete the VendRep System Questionnaire?
A26	Please see Section 3.3 Vendor Responsibility Requirements which states: “Confirmation of completion of the vendor responsibility process must be submitted with your proposal.”
Q27	Are matching funds a percentage of the total project cost?
A27	Yes, matching funds are a portion of the total project cost incurred to operate the program and accomplish its objectives.
Q28	Can I submit more than one application?
A28	Yes, if you had submitted a written request to RFP@ocfs.ny.gov outlining how the grants are substantially different from one another by the date specified in section 1.2.
Q29	How do I determine if I’m proposing a new project?
A29	See Section 2.3 Purpose of Funding Availability-Multiple Projects which states: Two projects will be considered the same if they: address the same issue areas, address the same priorities, address the same objectives, serve the same target communities and population, or utilize the same sites.
Q30	Can an applicant apply for an education award only without asking for money?
A30	Yes, applicants may apply for education award only program.
Q32	Can Reduced Full-Time member slots be converted?
A32	Yes, member slots may be converted after the award is granted.
Q33	How much time are Reduced Full-Time members allotted to serve?
A33	Reduced full-time AmeriCorps members must serve at least 1200 hours within a twelve-month period.
Q34	How do I determine my required minimum match amount?
A34	See Section 4.1 Desired Outcomes and Program Requirements – Cost Reimbursement Grants table.
Q35	How do I access the formula application in eGrants?
A35	Applicants responding to the 2018 State AmeriCorps Formula RFP may apply to one of two Notices of Funding Available (NOFA) in the eGrants system. See section 5.3 of RFP for a link to the application instructions and Answer 37 below.
Q36	Can you elaborate on the funding source for education awards; how is it different from the source of operating funds?
A36	<p>The Segal AmeriCorps Education Award is a benefit VISTA, AmeriCorps, and NCCC members receive upon successful completion of their term of service. The award can be used to go to specific schools or repay qualifying student loans. There are general terms that guide the use of the award and a process to follow to access your funds. The award is subject to taxes.</p> <p>The National Service Trust is a fund established by the National and Community Service Act of 1993 to pay for all Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards and to cover any interest that accrues on qualified student loans while an individual is serving in AmeriCorps. The money is kept in an account at the U.S. Treasury and is invested in Treasury securities.</p> <p>On March 23, 2018, President Trump signed H.R.1625, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, which provides funding for federal agencies and programs through September 30, 2018.</p>

	<p>Operating funds through this legislation provides \$1,063,958,000 for the Corporation for National and Community Service to support Senior Corps, AmeriCorps VISTA, Evaluation, the National Service Trust, and the Office of the Inspector General at current levels.</p> <p>For more information please go to the Corporations website at www.cns.gov .</p>
Q37	<p>Could you elaborate on the requirements for performance measures?</p>
A37	<p>All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output paired with outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. Detailed Performance Measure instructions are found at https://www.nationalservice.gov/documents/2017/2018-ameriacorps-state-and-national-performance-measures-instructions Online resources https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/performance-measurement/ameriacorps</p>
Q38	<p>Which Notice of Funding Available (NOFA) do I apply to in the eGrants system?</p>
A38	<p>Applicants responding to the 2018 State AmeriCorps Formula RFP may only apply to one of two Notices of Funding Available (NOFA) in the eGrants system.</p> <p>Review the description associated with each of the two NOFA/NOFOs below and select the appropriate NOFA to respond to when completing your AmeriCorps application in eGrants. Applicants should note that while there are other NOFA/NOFOs open in eGrants, only the following are eligible for funding through the 2018 New York State Formula AmeriCorps RFP the 1/17/2018 due date refers to the NOFO/NOFO NOT the deadline date for your application. Please see the table in Section 1.0 General Information/Calendar of Events outlining the Action Allowed/Required in Response to this Formula AmeriCorps RFP.</p> <p>Note the Calendar of Events (Section 1.2) gives specific deadline date/times for actions needed to be completed to be eligible for AmeriCorps Formula funding.</p> <p>NOFA: FY 2018 AmeriCorps State and Terr Comm Fixed Amount, EAP (New and Continuation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant Application ID #: 18ES205752 • Due Date: 01/17/2018 <p>NOFA: FY 2018 AmeriCorps State and Territory Commission (New and Continuations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant Application ID #: 18AC205751 • Grant ID #: 16AFHNY001 • Due Date: 01/17/2018