



AmeriCorps
Seniors

FY 2021 AmeriCorps Seniors Foster
Grandparent and Senior Companion
Expansion Competition Frequently
Asked Questions
AmeriCorps Seniors
October 1, 2020



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Award Information

1.1 Is a separate application needed for each available area listed in Appendix A?

No. Applicants may apply to as many opportunities as they wish in one application, provided that they are able to demonstrate sufficient local knowledge, presence, and administrative capacity to successfully sponsor each opportunity. Applicants interested in applying for opportunities in both programs would need to submit a separate application for each program.

1.2 How does my organization determine how much federal funding we should apply for?

As stated in the NOFO, AmeriCorps Seniors expects to make awards for a minimum of \$260,000 which is equivalent to 40 Volunteer Service Years (VSYs) per application. Applicants are encouraged to propose the funding amount that will best allow them to meet the needs of the respective service location(s). Regardless of the funding request, all applicants are required to follow the calculation of 1 VSY for every \$6,500 in funding requested (For example; 40 VSYs x \$6,500.00 = \$260,000).

1.3 How will my application be scored if my organization applies for three service opportunities and another organization apply for four service opportunities but in our applications, we propose to serve two of the same counties?

All applications will be scored based Section E Application Review Information in the NOFO. The proposed service area will be considered in the overall scoring of the application. Final funding decision will be made based on the amount of federal funding available and the quality of the applications.

Eligible Organizations

2.1 Can two or more organizations jointly apply for one grant?

No. One organization must be identified as the sponsor organization. Other organizations can become volunteer stations but would not be considered the grantee. AmeriCorps Seniors does not allow sub-awards.

2.2. We are in the process of becoming a new non-profit and do not yet have an EIN, IRS non-profit status document, or a 990. Can we still apply?

No. The applicant organization must be an established non-profit at the time the application is submitted. If the organization does not yet have a 501(c) non-profit designation the organization is not eligible to apply. Written proof that an organization has a 501(c) non-profit designation by the Secretary of State (or similar governmental organization in your state) would be sufficient documentation for the documentation requirement #14 in the Grant Application Instructions.

2.3. If the geographic area I wish to serve is not listed in Appendix A, can I apply for that service area?

No.

2.4. My organization would like to apply for an opportunity listed in Appendix A, but we are located outside of the geographic service area. Can we still apply?

Yes. However, if awarded, the project must serve, and have sufficient local presence, in the geographic service area exactly as it is described in Appendix A. Additional counties that are not listed in Appendix A cannot be added.

2.5. Does a legal applicant need to have an address in the county?

No. The legal applicant must have sufficient local presence to directly manage the proposed AmeriCorps Seniors grant. The operation of an AmeriCorps Seniors grant cannot be delegated to another organization, even if the other organization is an affiliate of the legal applicant.

2.6. Are labor organizations eligible to apply?

No.

Selection Criteria and Review

3.1. How will applications be selected for funding?

Applications will be selected for funding based on the strength of the applications responses to the questions outlined in the NOFO. As stated in the NOFO each application will be reviewed by a panel of AmeriCorps staff members. Amongst other factors, as detailed in the NOFO, the

results of those reviews will be provided to the AmeriCorps Seniors Director to inform funding decisions.

3.2. How is the DUNS number used during the review?

The DUNS number is one of the items considered during the financial review. A DUNS number directly ties to an organization's credit profile and should be obtained as soon as possible. An organization must have a DUNS number prior to submitting an application.

eGrants

4.1. How do I enter my Authorized Representative name in my application?

The Authorized Representative for your organization must login to eGrants with their own user account, click on the assurances and conditions, and submit the grant application. This will allow their name to show up as the authorized representative for the grant application.

4.2. I cannot complete the validate function for the performance measures. When I go to validate, it says that you have to have a performance measure for all objectives. What am I doing wrong?

It is likely that you have checked an objective on the first Performance Measure screen and have not entered a work plan for that objective. Contact the National Service Hotline at 1-800-942-2677 or via webform if further assistance is needed.

4.3. What should be entered in the "Other" narrative section?

Please enter 'N/A.'

4.4. We intend to hire someone new for the project director position if the grant was awarded. Who should we enter as the project director in eGrants if that person is not yet hired?

You may enter another person who is currently at your organization, such as the person who would be the project director's supervisor. The project director name can be updated later in eGrants if the grant is awarded.

4.5. Our organization headquarters is located separately from where the FGP/SCP project office would be located. Which address should be listed as the project location address in eGrants?

When creating the organization, enter the organization headquarters address (see the Grant Application Instructions). When entering the project location (see the Grant Application Instructions), enter the project location address.

4.6. Are footnotes or endnotes allowed in the application narrative?

No. eGrants does not support the use of footnotes or endnotes.

4.7. Is there a specific font or font size that should be used for the narrative?

eGrants will format all font entered to a specific size. Font size cannot be altered in eGrants.

4.8. In order to estimate the length of my narratives, I am trying to set up my Microsoft Word document to correspond exactly with the spacing and font size that eGrants uses for the printable version of an application. What spacing and font does the eGrants system use?

The eGrants system uses Georgia font, 11 point. The line spacing is 1.8, multiple. The header is 0.81" from the top, the footer is 0.24" from the bottom, the left indentation is 0.08", and the right indentation is 0.12".

4.9. When I view the printable version of my application in eGrants, part of the service activity description is cut off by a page break and is not included on the following page. Will reviewers be able to see the full description?

Yes. We will ensure that during the review there is a process for reviewers to view the entire description.

4.10. I have been emailing my required document(s) to AdditionalDocuments@cns.gov, but the documents section of my application in eGrants still shows 'not sent' next to each document. Why is this?

You must manually update the document section of eGrants to indicate whether you have sent each document. It does not update automatically based on documents emailed.

4.11. When I view the pdf of my application narratives, I see upside down question marks instead of the apostrophes and other special characters that I entered. How can I fix this?

eGrants does not support the use of special characters. There is not a solution for this issue other than to type your narratives without special characters. Reviewers will be aware of this issue.

4.12. Are tables allowed in the narratives section? If so, can the text within the tables be single- spaced?

Tables are not permitted in the narrative section. eGrants only supports text.

Budget

5.1. There are two sections to enter the Source of Matching Funds, one in Budget Section I and another in Budget Section II. Do I have to complete both?

It depends on which sections contain your non-federal funds. If you include non-federal funds (grantee share) in the budget for both Budget Section I and Budget Section II, then you would complete the Source of Matching Funds in both Budget Section I and Budget Section II. If you only have non-federal funds in one of the budget sections, then you would only complete the Source of Matching Funds for the particular section where you budget your grantee share.

5.2. In the indirect cost budget section, if we enter our indirect costs in the grantee share column rather than the CNCS share column, do we have to submit our indirect cost rate agreement?

No. Your indirect cost rate agreement does not need to be submitted regardless of whether the indirect costs are in the CNCS share or the grantee share.

5.3. How do I know what volunteer insurance to include in the budget?

For information about required volunteer insurance and other reimbursable expenses for AmeriCorps Seniors' Senior Companion Program (SCP) grants, please review the cost reimbursement section of the Federal Regulations at 45 CFR §2553.46; for information about required volunteer insurance and other reimbursable expenses for AmeriCorps Seniors' Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) grants, please review the cost reimbursement section of the Federal Regulations at 45 CFR §2552.46. A link to the Federal Regulations is found on page 4 of the Notice. Volunteer insurance could be obtained through an organization such as CIMA: <http://www.cimaworld.com/nonprofits/protecting-volunteers/> or another volunteer insurance provider.

5.4. Please clarify how the “Excess Amount” category is to be used in calculating the budget.

The Excess column of the budget may be used to reflect the amount of non-federal cash and in-kind contributions generated by a sponsor in excess of the required percentage. An applicant is not required to utilize the excess column but may do so if they choose. For instance, if project staff spend time on fundraising, the applicant may choose to reflect the amount of time spent on fundraising in the excess column as time spent on these activities cannot be paid for through AmeriCorps Seniors funds or through non-federal funds that are part of the required non-federal share.

5.5. We do not yet have an approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, but we hope to have one in the next few months. How should we handle this?

At the time the application is submitted, if an indirect cost rate agreement is not yet approved, the costs would have to be budgeted as direct costs. If the application is awarded and the indirect cost rate agreement is approved, an amendment could be done at a later time to adjust the budget for the new indirect cost rate agreement.

5.6. Can federal funds from other sources be used towards the non-federal match?

Federal funds from other federal agencies, in most cases, are not allowed to be used as match on AmeriCorps Seniors grant awards. However, some federal agencies may specifically

designate that their federal funding is allowed to be used as match on another federal award, such as an AmeriCorps Seniors grant award. The applicant is responsible for determining whether a federal agency may allow their funding to be used as match on an AmeriCorps Seniors award. All AmeriCorps Seniors grants must operate in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audits Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), which can be found on page 14 of the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP NOFO and page 15 on the AmeriCorps Seniors SCP NOFO.

5.7. What is the length of time for the fiscal year or budget year for FGP/SCP?

All AmeriCorps Seniors grants have a 12-month fiscal year.

5.8. Should the source of Excess Funds be included in the budget section titled “Source of Funds”?

No. The Source of Funds section is for the grantee share or non-federal share of the budget.

5.9. Where can I find a definition of allowable in-kind funding?

As stated in the Uniform Guidance, 2 CFR Part 200, third-party in-kind contributions means the value of non-cash contributions (i.e. property or services) that – (a) benefit a federally assisted project or program; and (b) are contributed by non-federal third parties, without charge, to a non-federal entity under a federal award.

Volunteers and Volunteer Stations

6.1. Is more than one volunteer station required?

There is no required number of volunteer stations. All AmeriCorps Seniors projects are required to have least one operating volunteer station. However, most AmeriCorps Seniors projects have many more than one station.

6.2. Can a volunteer station be included in more than one work plan if there is more than one service activity occurring at the station?

Yes. Each work plan is developed based on the service activities selected for an output/outcome pair, not based on one particular volunteer station. One volunteer station may have many service activities occurring there and so may appear in more than one work plan.

6.3. Where can I find a list of station types for the station roster?

The station roster is not a required document for new applicants. If your application is selected for funding, the station roster will be submitted at a later time determined by your Portfolio Manager. Your application should be submitted in eGrants without the station roster section completed.

Appendix A

7.1. If my application is selected for funding, can I later add other service areas to my project that are not currently served by another AmeriCorps Seniors FGP or SCP?

No. Currently there is not a process for approving additional service areas or expanding into new geographic areas. Only those areas listed in Appendix A are currently available for funding.

7.2. Will an open service area be awarded to just one organization, or can it be split between multiple awards?

This depends. Each application will be evaluated, and opportunities will be awarded based on the strength of the application and the populous of the proposed service area. There could be a situation where a service area that includes tribal land could be awarded to one applicant and the remainder of the service area could be awarded to another applicant. AmeriCorps Seniors will notify awarded applicants of accepted service locations at the conclusion of the competition.

7.3. Why don't I see my area in Appendix A?

This year's competition is specifically to expand AmeriCorps Seniors' FGP and SCP programming in states that have recently closed programs. To keep resources within the effected states, AmeriCorps Seniors is offering funding to any county within the identified states that do not currently have active programs.

Performance Measures

8.1. What is a work plan?

A work plan is a part of the grant application used to show how the sponsoring organization's volunteers will serve in their communities and achieve specific results.

8.2. How frequently will I report on performance measures? How much time per month does it involve?

You will be required to submit a full progress report annually on your progress toward your targets. Additionally, you will report on outputs semi-annually. As stated in the Notice, recipients are required to provide bi-annual progress reports and bi-annual financial and narrative progress reports through eGrants. The time varies per grantee based on their internal recordkeeping. On average, AmeriCorps Seniors expects a burden of about 4 hours per report.

Other

9.1. Is there a contact person that I can send questions to about this competition?

All questions for this competition must be sent to 2021FGPSCP@cns.gov. Although there is not a contact person for one on one technical assistance, questions submitted to this inbox will receive responses through this FAQ document.

9.2. If an organization submits an application for this competition, is it obligated to remain in the competition until its completion, or can it withdraw its application at any time during the competition?

The organization can withdraw the application. If the organization does need to withdraw, please send an email as soon as possible to 2021FGPSCP@cns.gov at any time after grant application submission.

9.3. I would like to request information about the proposal in Spanish.

We do not currently have the grant application or supporting materials translated into languages other than English.