FY22 AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH AMERICORPS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Last updated 11/5/2021

1. What does "in service to a public health agency" mean?

   Answer: Members can serve at public health agencies or in service to public health departments at a community partner or similar. Member service activities should be aligned with the mission and goals of the public health agency/ies that serve the local community/ies. AmeriCorps encourages applicants to design programs and create or enhance local partnerships that will meet the public health needs of their communities.

2. What is the required program period for this NOFO?

   Answer: Notification will take place in March, 2022. AmeriCorps expects to have national training for both Public Health AmeriCorps grantees and members. The dates have not yet been set but are likely to guide when the national initiative and, thus, the programs will begin.

3. Should I apply to the FY22 AmeriCorps State and National NOFO or the FY22 Public Health AmeriCorps program?

   Answer: That is a decision that your organization needs to make. Each program has its own focus and requirements.

4. Are applicants required to apply for a minimum number of Member Service Years (MSYs)?

   Answer: There is not a minimum MSY requirement, however AmeriCorps recommends that members serve in at least teams of two.

5. Can you please clarify the difference between a Public Health AmeriCorps member and a PHAP associate?

   Answer: Public Health AmeriCorps and Public Health Associate Program (PHAP) are two separate programs.

   Public Health AmeriCorps (PHA) is a partnership between AmeriCorps and the CDC and the Public Health Associate Program is hosted by the CDC. Public Health AmeriCorps applicants have the opportunity to design an AmeriCorps program based on the needs of the communities. Members can serve in full-time, three-quarter time, half-time, and reduced half-time terms. Most AmeriCorps members have up to 12 months to complete their term of service. The actual term may be shorter and is rarely longer than 12 months.

   The PHAP program is the Public Health Associate Program (PHAP) is a competitive, two-year, paid training program with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More information can be found at CDC.gov website.

6. Can you please clarify the page limit of 10 pages for the narrative printed out from the "review and submit" button from eGrants?

   Answer: Applications must not exceed 10 double-spaced pages for the Narratives or 12 pages for Multi-State applications with more than five operating sites (as according to the pages printed out from eGrants). Multi-state applicants that list five or fewer operating sites cannot exceed 10 pages for the Narrative. AmeriCorps will use the number of locations in the "multi-state operating sites" field in AmeriCorps' eGrants to determine whether a multi-state application has more than five operating sites. The "multi-state operating sites" field can be found by clicking on the "operating sites" link in eGrants. The application sections that count toward the page limit are the:
   - *SF-424 Face Sheet*
   - *Executive Summary*
   - *Program Design, Organizational Capability*
   - *Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy*

7. What is the minimum/maximum number of members that applicants can apply for?

   Answer: AmeriCorps encourages members serve in teams of at least two members. There is no maximum number of members an organization can apply for.

8. Can you please clarify if AmeriCorps is recruiting the members/volunteers?

   Answer: Applicants will be responsible for recruiting their members for Public Health AmeriCorps.

9. Are professional corps programs eligible to apply for Public Health AmeriCorps?

   Answer: AmeriCorps wants to ensure that it does not unintentionally or incorrectly discourage a potential applicant. Since Professional Corps has a very specific meaning at AmeriCorps that may be different from how the term is used in other contexts, AmeriCorps suggests that potential applicants have a conversation with a member of the regional team (contact information is available at: https://americorps.gov/funding-opportunity/fy-2022-americorps-state-national-public-health-americorps#assistance-info) to understand the nuance of Professional Corps in the AmeriCorps context. Current AmeriCorps grantees administering Professional Corps programs are unlikely to be able to employ the same model and be eligible for Public Health AmeriCorps as there is no fixed price option.

10. Can a current competitive or formula grantee apply for Public Health AmeriCorps funds to take advantage of the benefits (i.e., no match, higher cost per member, etc.), and then withdraw from formula or competitive processes?

    Answer: This is a State Commission and/or State Commission subgrantee decision.

11. What are the eligibility requirements to serve in Public Health AmeriCorps?

   Answer: AmeriCorps members must be U.S. citizens, nationals, or lawful permanent resident aliens, be at least 17 years of age, have a high school diploma or its equivalent, and satisfy AmeriCorps' National Service Criminal History Check eligibility requirements.

12. Can AmeriCorps participants be DACA students or those who are non U.S. citizens or permanent residents?

   Answer: No. AmeriCorps members must be U.S. citizens, nationals, or lawful permanent resident aliens.

13. Is there a match requirement?

   Answer: Public Health AmeriCorps does not have a match requirement. This means that no Public Health AmeriCorps grant recipient will be required to raise additional funds to support the project. Recipients may raise additional funds to support the project beyond the Federal award, but this is not a requirement.

14. If a single-state applicant applies and is funded, how will they work with their State Commission?

   Answer: The State Service Commission (Commission) will be consulted during the grant making process related to single state applicants from their states. Funded single-state applicants will become part of their Commission's portfolio and will receive technical assistance and monitoring from the Commission.

15. Are Public Health AmeriCorps grants fixed amount or cost reimbursement?

   Answer: All Public Health AmeriCorps funds will be disbursed through cost reimbursement grants. Fixed amount grants are not offered for Public Health AmeriCorps.

16. What is a cost reimbursement grant?

   Answer: A cost reimbursement grant is a financial assistance award type that provides funds for program operating costs and member support costs. The recipient draws down awarded funds incrementally from the Federal award within 3 days of incurring costs that are allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the awarded project. Cost reimbursement grants require the submission of a budget and financial reports. To learn more about best practices in budget development for Public Health AmeriCorps, register for the October 14th webinar on the Public Health AmeriCorps NOFO page (available at: https://americorps.gov/funding-opportunity/fy-2022-americorps-state-national-public-health-americorps#assistance-info).

17. My organization is a current AmeriCorps grantee, should I be creating a new project for my Public Health AmeriCorps application in eGrants?

Answer: The only grantees that need to submit a new project request for PHA, are applicants who have an existing AmeriCorps State and National project in eGrants with the NATL corporate code (i.e. National Direct cost-reimbursement grant), as NATL is the same corporate code for PHA. Organizations that have AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps Seniors, or current AmeriCorps State and National projects with other corporate codes (EAP, EAS, STATE, TERR, TRIBES) <u>do not</u> need to submit a new project request for PHA because their existing corporate code is different from PHA (NATL). These organizations will be able to create a new project themselves in eGrants. If they run into technical difficulty, they should contact the AmeriCorps Hotline.

If any organization has an existing project under the NATL corporate code, they should contact their Portfolio Manager to request a new project.

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18. Are letters of support or any sort of documented commitment from collaborating public health departments required as part of the proposal?

    Answer: Please see the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#), page 13, for information on the additional documents required in application submission.

19. As a program that currently receives AmeriCorps funds are we required to include an Evaluation Plan in this application or is that not required since this will be a new project for our organization?

    Answer: Please see the information on the Evaluation Plan requirement from pp. 21-22 of the PHA Notice of Funding Opportunity:

    E.1.e. Evaluation Plan (0 percent)
    If the applicant has previously received three or more years of competitive funding for the same project being proposed (see the Mandatory Supplemental Information for the AmeriCorps definition of "same project"), the applicant must submit an evaluation plan as an attachment (see the Submission of Additional Documents section for more information). If the applicant has previously received six or more years of competitive funding for the same project being proposed, the applicant must submit both an evaluation plan and an evaluation report as attachments.

    Applicants should use the evaluation plan template available on the Notice webpage to craft their evaluation plans. The template document provides detailed information about the AmeriCorps evaluation requirements (45 CFR 2522.700-710) and specifies the information that must be provided for the evaluation plan to be approved by AmeriCorps.

    The evaluation plan will not be scored and will not be reviewed until after funding decisions have been made.

All applicants should enter "N/A" in the "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field of the Narrative. Any other text entered in this field will not be reviewed.

20. Could we receive both our current AmeriCorps State and National grant through our State Commission AND this new funding (if approved)?

    Answer: ASN's statute and regulations prohibit AmeriCorps from making more than one grant for a fiscal year to support the same project.

21. Will there be a specific funding set aside for Tribes and Tribal organizations for Public Health AmeriCorps?

    Answer: There is no Tribal set aside for Public Health AmeriCorps – Tribes and Tribal organizations will be competing as any other applicant. Please see our FY 2022 Tribal Grant Opportunity for the Tribal specific grant competition at this link: https://www.americorps.gov/funding-opportunity/fy-2022-americorps-state-national-tribal-grants

22. What is the maximum amount of grant funds that an applicant can request? Are there any guides for determining the maximum amount?

    Answer: Grant award amounts will vary by the scope of the project. There is no minimum or maximum amount that applicants may request, only a maximum cost per MSY, as defined on page 11 of the NOFA. Applicants may propose any amount of grant funds, providing that the costs are necessary, reasonable, allowable, allocable, and consistent with the program narrative.

23. Can you tell me which of these costs are allowable: supervisors for interns and members, laptops, IT costs to support training, and member certifications (e.g. CPR)?

    Answer: The allowability of costs is determined by the details of the Uniform Guidance (Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations, found at https://ecfr.federalregister.gov*), the Notice of Funding Opportunity (also referenced as the NOFO or Notice) and the Application Instructions. Additionally, costs must be necessary and reasonable, properly allocated to the grant, and consistent with the plan proposed in the application narrative.*

24. Can you explain the difference between cost share and match?

    Answer: Cost share and match, identified in eGrants as the grantee share, reference the same thing – the amount of grant funds not covered by AmeriCorps grant funds. The guidance for budgeting and managing matching resources is outlined in 2 CFR § 200.306. This can include both cash and in-kind resources. Please be aware that one of the requirements of managing match is to treat the resources consistently with AmeriCorps grant funds, including consistent documentation.

25. The Notice of Funding Opportunity states that no match is required for this competition, but the Best Practices in Budget Development webinar spoke to the process for entering match

and the source of funds supporting the match. Is match required or not?

Answer: There is not a cost sharing or match requirement per the Interagency Agreement with the CDC. Some applicants may want to include match, to show the full value of the program. This is allowable. When applicants include match in the Public Health AmeriCorps budget, they must also include the details of the Source of Funds supporting the match, as outlined in the Application Instructions. Applicants should be aware that the total included in the Source of Funds must equal the amount of budgeted match exactly.

26. How do I accurately enter content in the Source of Funds section?

Answer: Please follow the instructions in the Application Instructions making sure to enter each match source separately (e.g. one line for XYZ Foundation and one line for state health department) and, for each source, indicate if the match source is secured or proposed, the dollar amount of cash match or the dollar value of in-kind resources, the match classification (e.g. cash or in-kind), and the source type (private, state/local, or federal) for your entire match. Please make sure the total of all resources entered in this section equals the total amount of budgeted Grantee Share.

27. Are living allowances allowable costs?

Answer: Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time terms of service, however if the program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time member it must comply with the maximum limits included in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

28. Could you clarify the three methods (A, B, or C) outlined in the Application Instructions used to calculate administrative/indirect costs?

Answer: The Application Instructions are consistent for all AmeriCorps State and National application types. Page 4 of the instructions directs applicants to the appropriate Notice of Funding Opportunity for information that is specific to the grant competition, including the treatment of indirect costs. The Public Health AmeriCorps NOFO states that applicants may use a Federally approved indirect cost rate, a 10 percent de minimis rate of modified total direct costs, or claim certain costs directly, as outlined in 2 CFR 200.413. The CNCS-Fixed Percentage Method (option A) is not applicable for Public Health AmeriCorps applicants. Details for calculating the maximum allowable budgeted indirect costs is on pages 22-23 of the Application Instructions. Applicants should be aware that, regardless of which calculation method is used, the amount of indirect costs included as AmeriCorps funds (referenced as the CNCS share in eGrants) is 5% of the total CNCS share of direct costs.

29. How are expenses allocated between the AmeriCorps share and Grantee share of costs (match)?

Answer: There is not a cost sharing or match requirement per the Interagency Agreement with the CDC. If applicants choose to include matching resources (cash and/or in-kind), they should do so based on the resources required to implement the proposed program activities

while keeping costs within the maximum cost per MSY of $28,800.

30. Under the staff travel section of the budget, what is required? Do all the site supervisors have to travel to DC? Or should only the project staff be included?

    Answer: The Staff travel costs should align with all proposed travel in the application narrative, including that related to monitoring, training, and other project management activities. There are no required travel costs other than what is noted on page 19 of the Application Instructions, "We expect all State Commissions and National Direct applicants to include funds in this line item for travel for staff and site staff to attend AmeriCorps-sponsored technical assistance meetings. There are two to three such opportunities per year. Travel funds should be budgeted for at least one staff member, especially new staff, to attend the annual AmeriCorps Symposium as well as Symposium pre-conference events (if applicable)."

31. Will commissions be able to take 2% from the awarded grants? Do applicants need to budget for this?

    Answer: If approved for funding, single state applicants will be added into the applicable State Service Commission's portfolio and rebudget the portion of any budgeted indirect costs required by that commission.

32. Is the maximum cost per MSY $28,800 or $33,004?

    Answer: The maximum cost per MSY for Public Health AmeriCorps applications is $28,800. This is determined by dividing the AmeriCorps share of budgeted grant costs – both direct and indirect costs - by the number of MSYs requested. The maximum amount an applicant may request from AmeriCorps is determined by multiplying the cost per MSY by the number of MSYs included in the application. $33,004 is the maximum living allowance for full-time members.

33. Can I use Public Health AmeriCorps funds to cover the cost of staff travel, computers and other equipment, staff and member training, IT support, CPR certification for members, evaluation consultants, subgrants, and supervisors for the AmeriCorps members?

    Answer: Applicants should only propose budgeted costs that are necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of project or program objectives. Providing that the purpose of these costs is allowable under the 2 CFR, 45 CFR, the Notice, and the Application Instructions and that they are tied to the program objectives stated in the application narrative, these costs could be allowable as part of the Public Health AmeriCorps grant award.

    Applicants should carefully follow the guidance in the Application Instructions, taking care to include costs in the appropriate section (e.g. equipment is for property with a single acquisition cost of $5,000 or more, evaluation and training consultants go in the evaluation and training sections rather than contractual/consultant services, and the value of direct community service performed by volunteers is only included as match if it is for organizational functions). Additionally, the NOFO and

Application Instructions outline costs that must be included (travel to AmeriCorps sponsored grantee trainings, AmeriCorps identity items, National Service Criminal History Checks, member FICA, healthcare for full-time members or less-than-full-time members serving in a full-time capacity, and workers compensation or Occupational, Accidental, Death and Dismemberment coverage for members).

34. How do I budget for staff who are working on this grant at less than 100%?

    Answer: When entering the salary expenses in eGrants, applicants will include the percentage of the full-time equivalent (FTE) devoted to this award.

35. Where on the budget do I enter term details about the AmeriCorps members?

    Answer: Section II.A. includes space for applicants to enter the number of members budgeted, by member term category. This includes both members receiving a living allowance and those who are not receiving a living allowance.

36. Does the Project Personnel Expenses section include the cost of AmeriCorps member salaries?

    Answer: A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage. Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time terms of service. Applicants will enter the cost of any member living allowances in Section II.A. of the budget, following the minimum and maximum limits outlined in the NOFO.

37. Page 13 of the 2021 Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State and National Grants states that the recipient must pay FICA unless they have obtained a ruling from the SSA or IRS that specifically exempts its AmeriCorps members from this requirement, but we are unable to locate information on the criteria to receive such a ruling. Do you have information on whether recipients of this funding would qualify for this type of ruling and, if so, how to make the request to the SSA or IRS?

    Answer: As noted in the AmeriCorps State and National Competitive Application Instructions, member support costs must be consistent with the laws of the states where members serve. The instructions go on to say, "Unless exempted by the IRS, all projects must pay FICA for any member receiving a living allowance, even when AmeriCorps does not supply the living allowance." AmeriCorps does not provide guidance for receiving an exemption for this benefit. It is the responsibility of the potential applicant to determine this, as well as the applicable state's requirements for Worker's Compensation and Unemployment Insurance.

38. Can an applicant use Public Health AmeriCorps funding as a match for their state Medicaid grant or other programs? It is understood that the program is administered by AmeriCorps but is CDC funding. Are there any restrictions that CDC or AmeriCorps have placed related to using the grant as a match for other funding sources?

    Answer: The purpose of grant funds is to support members and their service. Although the source of the funding is the CDC, these grants are managed by the AmeriCorps rules,

regulations, and laws, which do not allow them to be used as match for other federal awards.

39. Regarding Period of Performance and Budget request (Section B.3, pg. 4 of 33). In the NOFO, AmeriCorps stated that it anticipates making three-year grants. However, the agency also stated that it will make an initial award for the first year of the period of performance, based on a one-year budget. Based on this information, should the applicant submit a 3-year work activity and budget, or should we submit a request for a 1-year in the CNCS egrants application?

    Answer: The application and budget should be based on a one-year request.

40. I am applying for the Public Health Grant and it says in many different notices that the deadline for submission is November 8. Yet there is a paragraph where it mentions that submissions on eGrants are due 10 days before the deadline. Is this true? Which one of the deadlines am I supposed to meet?

    Answer: It is recommended that applicants enter their application information in eGrants no later than 10 days before the deadline.

41. Will there be any extensions granted on the application deadline of November 8?

    Answer: Please see the Public Health AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity, Section D.4.c. for information on late applications.

42. I will have key personnel supporting this project whose salaries are covered by other resources. How can I reference them in the budget, without including these resources as match?

    Answer: Applicants frequently add $0 line items to the budget, to provide additional information about the content. This may include references to non-budgeted expenses, including required expenses, that are covered by the host site or other sources; clarification on salary variances among AmeriCorps grants; or confirmation that no staff time is allocated at more than 100% across AmeriCorps grant awards.

43. When should an applicant submit more than one application?

    Answer: Applicants that intend to submit more than one application must ensure that they do not meet the definition of Same Project from the Mandatory Supplemental Information document, which is "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 site." AmeriCorps will consider projects to be the same if AmeriCorps cannot identify a meaningful difference between the two projects based on a comparison of the following characteristics, among others: the objectives and priorities of the projects; the nature of the services provided; the program staff, participants, and volunteers involved; the geographic locations in which the services are provided; the populations served; and the proposed community partnerships. (§ 2522.340).

AmeriCorps will not review or approve more than one application for the same project from an applicant. AmeriCorps encourages applicants proposing multiple member host sites within a state to include those in a single application.

If your organization has created more than one application for the same project, please delete the duplicate application(s). The individual user who created the application is the only user who can delete the application.   Applicants should contact the AmeriCorps Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via eGrants Questions for technical assistance with eGrants. AmeriCorps Hotline hours are posted at https://questions.americorps.gov/app/ask .

44. Please clarify living allowance vs stipend. Are these the same? If not, what may be included in a living allowance?

    Answer: Please see page 11 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the description of the living allowance. Additional information on the living allowance is also provided in several FAQs. AmeriCorps members do not receive stipends. AmeriCorps members receive a living allowance.

    Programs are not required to provide living allowances to members serving in less than full time positions; however, that does not mean that they cannot provide living allowances to members serving in less than full time positions. Programs that provide living allowances to less than full time members must adhere to the minimum and maximum living allowance amounts by member type as appear on page 11 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

45. We have hit some delays with our SAM.gov account. If we submit our application in eGrants before the deadline, but our account registration isn't re-activated until the following week, will our application be disqualified?

    Response: Please see page 9 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity:

    AmeriCorps will not make awards to entities that do not have a valid SAM registration and DUNS or Unique Entity Identifier. If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time AmeriCorps is ready to make a Federal award, AmeriCorps may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

46. Will CDC staff or other people experienced in public health be a part of the grant review process, other than the external reviewers for evidence criteria?

    Response: Please see page 23 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity for information on application review.

47. Are freely associated states eligible to host AmeriCorps members? Are the citizens of freely associated states eligible to be AmeriCorps members?

    Response: Freely associated states are not included in entities eligible for grants per our statute, National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act. Part of the statute and pertinent definitions are copied below.

The Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands are not included in the definition of states or territories in the statute.

Primary documentation of status as a U.S. citizen or national. The following are acceptable forms of certifying status as a U.S. citizen or national:

> *(1) A birth certificate showing that the individual was born in one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, or the Northern Mariana Islands;*
> *(2) A United States passport;*
> *(3) A report of birth abroad of a U.S. Citizen (FS-240) issued by the State Department;*
> *(4) A certificate of birth-foreign service (FS 545) issued by the State Department;*
> *(5) A certification of report of birth (DS-1350) issued by the State Department;*
> *(6) A certificate of naturalization (Form N-550 or N-570) issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service; or*
> *(7) A certificate of citizenship (Form N-560 or N-561) issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service.*

(d) Primary documentation of status as a lawful permanent resident alien of the United States. The following are acceptable forms of certifying status as a lawful permanent resident alien of the United States:

> *(1) Permanent Resident Card, INS Form I-551;*
> *(2) Alien Registration Receipt Card, INS Form I-551;*
> *(3) A passport indicating that the INS has approved it as temporary evidence of lawful admission for permanent residence; or*
> *(4) A Departure Record (INS Form I-94) indicating that the INS has approved it as temporary evidence of lawful admission for permanent residence.*

48. For new/recompete applicants completing the Diversity Questionnaire, should the "# of People Served for the Proposed Project" reflect a one-year estimate or a three-year estimate?

    Answer: One year estimate. The Diversity Questionnaire data reflects one program year for all applicants (new/recompete and continuation).

49. Who should be included in "# of People Served by Organization" in the Diversity Questionnaire? Does that include AmeriCorps members?

    Answer: The number of people served by the project are the beneficiaries of the project's interventions. AmeriCorps members are not included, as they are the implementors of the project's interventions, not the beneficiaries.

50. Is there a specific measure of poverty that should be used in reporting this information in the Diversity Questionnaire?

    Answer: Currently there is not a specific measurement of poverty provided with the questionnaire. Please direct applicants to follow the instructions in the Diversity Questionnaire and provide information according to the column headers.

51. How do we record remote positions for members in the application?

   Answer: Please see section E.1.b Program Design on page 16 of the NOFO for what should be included in your application narrative regarding program design.

52. Will proposing a start timeline after May negatively affect our scoring?

   Answer: No. Program start dates do not affect scores.

Please submit additional questions to AmeriCorpsGrants@cns.gov.