

FY 2025 RSVP



Competition

AmeriCorps Seniors

Budget Development Q&A

September 2024



Agenda

- Important Reminders
- Review of Budget Development Best Practices
- Common Budget Development Questions
- Question and Answer





Pre-Event Poll Questions

How confident do you feel in your current knowledge of **budget development**?

- 5 - Very Confident
- 4 - Confident
- 3 - Somewhat Confident
- 2 - Not Very Confident
- 1 - Not Confident at All

Have you utilized the training and technical assistance materials on americorps.gov?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure



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Important Reminders

Things to Remember



AmeriCorps
Seniors



Funding Opportunity Page

- Notice of Funding Opportunity and Appendices
- Grant Application Instructions
- Training and Technical Assistance Webinars
- FAQs and Other Resources for Applicants

For more information, visit the [Funding Opportunity Page](#).

Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Opportunity

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About RSVP

Established in 1971 and now one of the largest senior volunteer programs in the nation, AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP engages people ages 55 and older in a diverse range of volunteer activities. AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers tutor children, help prepare simple taxes, assist victims of natural disasters, provide nutrition/food support, facilitate opioid and substance abuse education workshops, and serve in their communities in many other ways. AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers choose how, where, and how often they want to serve, with commitments ranging from a few hours to a maximum of 40 hours per week. While serving, AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers improve their own lives by staying active and civically engaged. To read the statute that regulates the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP program, view the [Uniform Guidance § CFR 800](#) and [RSVP Federal Regulations](#).

Application Deadline

Applications are due by 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, September 18, 2024. Successful applicants will be issued awards by end of March 2025.

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Important Dates



Applications are due no later than **Wednesday, September 25, 2024, by 5:00 PM ET**

Successful applicants will be issued awards by **March 2025**



Successful applicants will be notified by **January 2025**

** See Section D.4.c for the Late Application process*



Key Contacts

Who to Contact and When

Question/Issue	Send an email to...
To receive a printed copy of the Notice, Grant Application Instructions, and Appendix B	RSVPCompetition@americorps.gov
Late application request	LateApplications@americorps.gov
Request a federally negotiated indirect cost rate from AmeriCorps	IndirectCostRate@americorps.gov
Submit the Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS)	Submit online ; forms submitted by email will not be accepted
Submit Tribal organization eligibility documentation	AdditionalDocuments@americorps.gov
General questions about the competition or AmeriCorps Seniors	RSVPCompetition@americorps.gov

Please note: Incumbent grantees **should not** contact their portfolio manager for questions about the RSVP Competition.



Issues with eGrants

Call the AmeriCorps Hotline at 800-942-2677

- Make note of your ticket number
- If assistance is needed on an application within 10 days of the submission deadline, choose option #3

Submit a question to the support team via the [web form](#)

Hotline hours:

- Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time
- Closed on federal holidays



Estimated Award Amounts

- Award amounts will vary by project
- Federal share of the budget cannot exceed \$75,000 plus \$350 per unduplicated volunteer for a one-year period of performance
 - All unduplicated volunteers count when calculating the funding, including those in Other Community Priorities work plans
 - No minimum amount that must be requested
 - Applicants do not have to request the maximum funding



Suggested Resource:

- [Appendix E](#)
- For questions about the funding formula, email RSVPCompetition@americorps.gov



Using the Funding Formula

Start with how many unduplicated volunteers you can achieve

Example: You can achieve 100 unduplicated volunteers.

$$\$75,000 + (100 * \$350) = ?$$

$$\$75,000 + \$35,000 = \$110,000$$

Federal share: \$110,000 (maximum)

At least 100 unduplicated volunteers

Start with the amount you need to manage the program

Example: You need \$160,000 in federal funding for the program.

$$(\$160,000 - \$75,000) / 350 = ?$$

$$\$85,000 / 350 = 242.9$$

Federal share: \$160,000 (maximum)

At least 243 unduplicated volunteers

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Review of Budget Development Best Practices



Budget Functions

An approved budget is part of the grantee's legal obligation and:

- ◆ A financial guide
- ◆ Helpful to ensure compliance
- ◆ A tool for measuring progress and funds management



Budget Basics

- ◆ Realistic
- ◆ Consistent
- ◆ Flexible
- ◆ Realistic scope
- ◆ Appropriate detail
- ◆ Competitive proposal
- ◆ Compliance
- ◆ Effective delivery



Budget Narrative Development

- ◆ Follow instructions in Notice of Funding Opportunity
- ◆ Include allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable costs, as defined by 2 CFR 200

<https://ecfr.federalregister.gov>

- ◆ Estimate resources needed to achieve program goals
- ◆ Organize narrative to fit budget categories
- ◆ Provide adequate descriptions
- ◆ Check your math



Unallowable Costs - Examples

- ◆ Lobbying
- ◆ Entertainment and alcohol
- ◆ Expenses not tied to program objectives
- ◆ Costs that constitute waste, fraud, and abuse
- ◆ Unreasonable from “prudent person” perspective
- ◆ Costs with no logical basis



Minimum Match Requirement (Grantee Share)



10% of total project costs

Example			
	AmeriCorps	Grantee	Total Budget
Total project costs	\$90,000	\$10,000	\$100,000



Matching Resources

- ◆ Necessary
- ◆ Reasonable
- ◆ Allowable
- ◆ Allocable
- ◆ Authorized by Federal statute
- ◆ Compliant
- ◆ Documented

<https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/manage-your-grant>



Budget Structure

** Note that eGrants identifies the AmeriCorps share as "CNCS Share"*

Separated by major categories and divided into AmeriCorps* and Grantee shares

I. Volunteer Support Expenses

Examples:

- ◆ Project staff personnel expenses and fringe benefits
- ◆ Project staff travel
- ◆ Equipment and supplies
- ◆ Contractual and consultant services
- ◆ Project staff Criminal History Checks
- ◆ Indirect costs

II. Volunteer Expenses

Examples:

- ◆ Volunteer meals
- ◆ Volunteer uniforms
- ◆ Volunteer insurance
- ◆ Volunteer recognition
- ◆ Volunteer travel



Budgeting Tips

- ◆ Meet RSVP budget regulations
 - Required expenses (e.g., AmeriCorps Seniors annual convening, Criminal History Checks)
 - Detailed Source of Funds equal to budgeted match
 - Adequate and accurate calculations and explanations
 - Allowable costs only
- ◆ Align with stated program goals

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Common Budget Development Questions



Questions from the *Best Practices in Budget Development* webinar

Did you say that Equipment is \$10,000 or more per unit?

That is correct. AmeriCorps defines equipment as tangible, non-expendable personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$10,000 or more *per unit*. Regardless of how your organization defines equipment, if the proposed expense doesn't meet these criteria, it is consumable supplies and materials and goes in the Supplies category. The \$10,000 threshold is an increase from what used to be a \$5,000 threshold. This change is a result of the recent Uniform Guidance changes.



Questions from the *Best Practices in Budget Development* webinar

Would bank fees be listed under contractual services?

Contractual and Consultant Services includes any service documented by a contract. If your organization has a contract with your bank, you *could* budget those fees here, taking care that they are properly allocated to reflect the level of effort devoted to the grant and allowable according to the Cost Principles, found in the Uniform Guidance. You may also consider budgeting them in Category I. I. Other Volunteer Support Costs. Bank fees may also be included in your organization's indirect costs. Please check to make sure you are not budgeting these or any other costs as both direct and indirect costs.



Questions from the *Best Practices in Budget Development* webinar

Did you say criminal background check for staff will go under Other Volunteer Support Costs?

Applicants will budget the cost of National Service Criminal History Checks for employees or other individuals who receive a salary or similar payment from the grant in **Category I.I. Other Volunteer Support Costs**. eGrants includes a prepopulated “Criminal Background Check” line item that you cannot edit. I recommend that applicants make this a \$0 line item and add another line for the National Service Criminal History Checks that you can edit to provide the appropriate detail. If you do not budget Criminal History Check costs, you should provide an explanation in the budget narrative for how these costs will be covered.



Questions from the *Best Practices in Budget Development* webinar

Why would an RSVP grantee need a line item for volunteer criminal history check?

National Service Criminal History Checks are required for employees or other individuals who receive a salary or similar payment from the grant. This question specifically asks about *volunteer* criminal history checks, which are not required by AmeriCorps, since RSVP volunteers will not receive a salary or similar payment. That said, your organization may require background checks for volunteers serving. If that is a requirement of service, you can charge those costs to the budget.



Questions from the *Best Practices in Budget Development* webinar

Can you use a direct cost rate if your organization has one?

Direct cost rates are more commonly referenced as cost allocation plans. As stated in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, application budgets may include indirect costs and based on qualifying factors, applicants may use a Federally approved indirect cost rate or a 15% de minimis rate of modified total direct costs. They may also claim certain costs directly, as outlined in 2 CFR 200.413. States, local governments, and Indian Tribes may use previously approved indirect cost allocation plans. It's important to remember that all these methods must be applied consistently across all Federal awards.



Questions from the *Best Practices in Budget Development* webinar

Please clarify the level of match required for new applicant programs versus previously awarded programs.

RSVP requires a single, 10% match regardless of the year. Again, this is a change, as reflected in the final rule published to the Federal Register on August 30th. Although the rule is effective October 1, 2024, AmeriCorps amended the Notice of Funding Opportunity to reflect the change so applicants can modify their budget and program narratives prior to application submission. The amended Notice is on the funding opportunity page.



Questions from the *Best Practices in Budget Development* webinar

When listing salaries, should we use exact numbers or estimates to give room for increase?

The Grant Application Instructions include detailed budget instructions that help you populate the eGrants budget categories. An approved budget should be realistic, consistent, and flexible. Your budget should include the information you need to provide the required detail for salaries and all other costs, knowing that you have the flexibility to modify the budget when required, according to the award terms and conditions.



Presubmitted Questions

If our workplan requires us to train our volunteers, can we pay subject matter experts to speak at the training?

Applicants need to demonstrate through the application and budget narratives that the costs in budgeted line items are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and necessary as reflected in the Cost Principles ([2 CFR 200, Subpart E](#)), the Notice of Funding Opportunity, and the Grant Application Instructions. Applicants must also convey that the costs are necessary for program implementation and aligned to the content of the application narrative. Allowable costs may be covered with AmeriCorps funds or through matching cash or in-kind resources.



Presubmitted Questions

Can you explain the de minimis indirect cost rate? I am unfamiliar with this term.

As stated in the competition documents, application budgets may include indirect costs. RSVP applicants may budget those costs using one of two methods.

1. The **federally approved indirect cost rate**. If your organization has a federally approved indirect cost rate, you *must* use that rate and you must enter the details of the rate in eGrants, following the guidance linked from the Grant Application Instructions. The Grant Application Instructions also provide specific details for budgeting indirect costs using this method.
2. The **de minimis rate**. Organizations who do not currently have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate (except for those non-federal entities described in Appendix VII to Part 200—States and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, paragraph (d)(1)(B)) and who receive less than 35 million dollars in direct federal funding may indefinitely use a de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct costs. The Grant Application Instructions provides guidance for determining the maximum allowable indirect costs and entering the line-item details using this method.

Whichever method you are eligible to use, please remember that you must consistently apply that method across all Federal awards.



Presubmitted Questions

Are budgeted indirect costs in addition to the \$75,000 plus \$350 per volunteer or does that total include both direct and indirect costs?

The \$75,000 plus \$350 per volunteer is the total amount of AmeriCorps funding you may request. That total may include both direct and indirect costs. That said, if you include indirect costs in your budget, you do not have to include the indirect costs in the AmeriCorps share of your budget. You may choose to budget those costs solely in the Grantee Share of the budget.



Presubmitted Questions

Can we budget match with in-kind resources only or is there a required percentage that must be cash?

There is no requirement that you provide a certain percentage of match as cash resources, versus in-kind resources. We rely on you, the RSVP applicant, to determine the funds you need to support your program and meet the requirements set forth in the application competition documents and the federal regulations. Then you must determine if you will cover those costs with AmeriCorps funds or your grantee match. You must also identify the sources of your match. Only you know if they will come from cash or in-kind resources.



Presubmitted Questions

Do we need to match the Direct Costs or the Total Costs (direct plus indirect)?

The required match contribution is applied to the total allowable costs. That includes both direct and indirect costs.



Presubmitted Questions

Must we meet match incrementally or can we meet the requirement by the end of each year?

The short answer to this question is, “neither” since the end of each year is still an incremental basis. Grantees have the entire period of performance, which is usually three years, to meet the match requirement. In the way that you don’t need to identify all sources of match before submitting your application, you don’t need to have all match secured when your grant is issued or specific percentages of the match secured by stated touchpoints, such as quarterly or when you submit your semi-annual Federal Financial Report. AmeriCorps will monitor your match contributions throughout the period of performance, as you submit your Federal Financial Reports, to make sure you’re on track to meet the requirement and to ensure that you have resources needed to meet your program goals. You must meet your match requirement by the end of the period of performance, before AmeriCorps will close your grant. If you are struggling to meet your match at any point in your AmeriCorps grant, you can apply for an individual match waiver. Guidance for this is on the [Manage Your Grant](#) webpage of AmeriCorps.gov.



Presubmitted Questions

Can you provide examples of match sources and explain how grantees increase the match percentage?

AmeriCorps cannot provide specific examples of the source of matching resources. The sources will vary, depending on your program needs and the resources available in your community to support them. We recommend you review the [Sample Budget Narrative](#), found on the Fiscal Year 2025 RSVP Funding Opportunity page, for a generic source of funds example.

As to the question about how to increase the match throughout the period of performance, we suggest you work through your networks and learn what other organizations have done to increase their match resources. AmeriCorps cannot provide guidance to applicants.



Additional Questions?

Please enter your questions into the Q&A box.



Post-Event Poll Questions

How confident do you feel in applying the skills and knowledge gained from the **Budget Development Q&A** training?

- 5- Very Confident
- 4- Confident
- 3- Somewhat Confident
- 2- Not Very Confident
- 1- Not Confident at All

Do you intend to apply for an AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP grant?

- Yes, this year (FY2025)
- Yes, but in the future
- Possibly
- Probably not
- No, definitely not



AmeriCorps Seniors

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RSVPCompetition@americorps.gov

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