



Frequently Asked Question

AmeriCorps State 2020-2021

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Q. What is an AmeriCorps member?

- A. An AmeriCorps member is an individual enrolled in and serving with an AmeriCorps program who commits to engage in a service for an intensive period of time. Some AmeriCorps members receive a living allowance to support them during their term of service, and upon successful completion of their service they receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award.

Q. What is the difference between an AmeriCorps member and a volunteer?

- A. An AmeriCorps member is an individual serving in an approved national service position with an AmeriCorps program. An AmeriCorps member serves for a pre-determined term of service and is eligible to receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award upon successful completion of service. AmeriCorps members are supervised by program staff and often receive a living allowance. Volunteers are not eligible for an AmeriCorps Education Award, usually do not receive compensation and might not be required to provide consistent, sustained service. Volunteers and AmeriCorps members might serve side-by-side. In answering questions for the application, do not confuse “volunteers” with “AmeriCorps members”.

Q. Can AmeriCorps members take the place of current staff or volunteers at my organization?

- A. No. AmeriCorps members may not displace staff or volunteers at your organization, nor may they perform any services or duties that would supplant the hiring of employed workers. Also note that AmeriCorps members “serve”, they do not “work” and they are “enrolled” in the program, they are not “hired”.

Q. What are the living allowance (stipend) requirements for AmeriCorps members?

- A. The living allowance (stipend) requirements for AmeriCorps members vary by grant type. Detailed information on the living allowance requirements can be found in the AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity. Also note that AmeriCorps members receive a “stipend”, they do not “earn a wage”.

Q. Does the OneStar Foundation or the Corporation recruit and train the AmeriCorps members?

- A. No. While the Corporation has an online recruitment and placement system that AmeriCorps programs are strongly encouraged to use, each program is responsible for recruiting its own AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps programs are entirely responsible for providing training to AmeriCorps members. In your proposal you must describe how you will recruit, orient and train the AmeriCorps members you are requesting.

Q. Must an AmeriCorps member serve for a certain amount of time?

- A. Yes. An AmeriCorps member may serve either a full-time term of service, which requires 1700 hours; or a part-time term, which can range from 300 hours to 1200 hours. The AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity (*Notice*), provides additional detail. In your application, you must specify the terms of service you are proposing for your AmeriCorps members.

Q. What is “cost per MSY”?

- A. Cost per MSY stands for Cost per Member Service Year and represents the cost of your AmeriCorps program. One MSY is the equivalent of one full-time term of service (1700 member service hours). You calculate your cost per MSY by dividing the total amount of CNCS funds requested by the total number of MSYs requested. For example, if your application requests \$10,000 in CNCS share and 10 MSYs, then your cost per MSY is \$1,000. The cost per MSY does not include child care or the cost of the Education Award a member may earn.

Q. Is there a maximum cost per MSY?

- A. Yes. The maximum cost per MSY varies by grant program. Specific information about the maximum cost per MSY for each grant program can be found in the AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity. Additional information can also be found in the AmeriCorps Application Instructions.

Q. What is an Education Award Program?

- A. An Education Award Program (EAP) is an AmeriCorps program that receives minimal financial support from the Corporation for National and Community Service and has fewer fiscal reporting requirements. Because of the minimal financial support, EAP grants are best suited for pre-existing service programs or for organizations with other sources of funding, for whom becoming part of AmeriCorps will add value to their program. For instance, the association with AmeriCorps might allow a program to recruit more service participants, to recruit a higher caliber of service participants, or serve more beneficiaries. Additional information can also be found in the AmeriCorps Application Instructions.

Q. What is the difference between the Education Award Program and other AmeriCorps grants?

- A. The primary difference is that an Education Award Program grantee receives a small administrative grant – up to \$800 per Member Service Year – but uses its own or other resources to cover AmeriCorps members' living allowance, if applicable, and other program costs.

Q. Is there a limit on the amount of grant funds I may request?

- A. Yes, the maximum is \$800 per MSY. For example, if you propose a program with 50 full-time members, the maximum amount of funds you may request is \$40,000 (50 MSY multiplied by \$800).

Q. Will I have to contribute match funds?

- A. There is no mandated match requirement percentage, but you may only request up to \$800 per Member Service Year. The grantee must secure all other resources needed to support the program.

Q. What is a Full-Cost Fixed-Amount Program?

- A. Full-Cost Fixed-Amount grants allow programs to apply for a fixed dollar amount per member (see the *Notice* for current rates). Applicants apply for a fixed amount per MSY and use their own or other resources for the remaining costs of the program. There is no match required for fixed-amount grants, but organizations must still raise the additional funds needed to run the program. Additional information can also be found in the AmeriCorps Application Instructions.

Full-Cost Fixed-Amount grants are only available to re-competing applicants. Second- and third-year continuation applications must submit a re-compete application if they are interested in a Full-Cost Fixed-Amount grant.

Q. What is the difference between the Full-Cost Fixed-Amount Program and other AmeriCorps grants?

- A. There are several differences between Full-cost Fixed-Amount grants and cost-reimbursement grants. Full-cost Fixed-Amount grants do not have an itemized budget, and instead the grant award is solely based on the number of members enrolled and retained. This eases the fiscal reporting requirements and reduces administrative efforts for the grant.

Full-Cost Fixed-Amount programs are also reimbursed based on the retention of their members. For example, if you have a cost per MSY of \$10,000 and lose a full-time member after they have only served $\frac{3}{4}$ of their AmeriCorps hours (1,275 hours) then you will only receive $\frac{3}{4}$ of the cost per MSY for that member position (\$7,500). A program will not be reimbursed additional funds if a member serves more than required hours.

Programmatic and member management requirements for Full-Cost Fixed-Amount Programs are the same as cost-reimbursement.

Q. Is there a limit on the amount of grant funds I may request?

- A. Yes, limits on the amount of grant funds that may be requested correspond to the number of MSYs being requested and the Maximum Cost per MSY. See *Notice* for current rates.

Q. Will I have to contribute match funds?

- A. There is no mandated match requirement percentage, but you may only request federal funds per MSY that amount to significantly less than the true cost of managing an AmeriCorps program. The grantee must secure all other resources needed to support the program.

Q. Do I need to include costs for the Education Award in my budget?

- A. No, the Education Award is paid directly by the National Service Trust to the member's loan holder or institution of higher education upon the successful completion of their term of service. You will not include the cost of the Education Award in the budget you submit.

Q. Do I need to include costs for Health Care for members in my budget?

- A. If you are requesting Full-Time members, then you are required to provide them with Health Care. Please see the Application Instructions and also § 2522.250.b of the AmeriCorps Regulations for additional information on the minimum requirements for Health Care.

Q. May I provide health care for my members who are serving less-than-full-time?

- A. You may choose to provide health care benefits to less-than-full-time members from other sources (i.e. non-federal) but the costs cannot be included in the budget as either CNCS or Grantee Share. Less-than-full-time members who are serving in a full-time capacity for a sustained period of time (such as full-time summer project) are eligible for health care benefits.

OTHER QUESTIONS

Q. What is the proper way to spell “AmeriCorps” and how is it pronounced?

- A. Always spell AmeriCorps with a capitalized “C” and no space between the “i” and the “C”. When speaking about the AmeriCorps program, the “p” and the “s” are silent.

Q. What is an operating site?

- A. An operating site is the organization that manages the AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps members may be placed at the operating site, or an operating site may place AmeriCorps members at multiple member service sites.

Q. What is a member service site?

- A. A member service site is the location at which an AmeriCorps member is placed to provide his/her service to the community.

Q. I have additional questions regarding AmeriCorps funding opportunities that have not been answered, who should I contact?

- A. All questions should be directed to Taylor Wolter, he can be reached at taylor@onestarfoundation.org.

Q. What is the AmeriCorps VISTA program and how can I apply for VISTA?

- A. The AmeriCorps VISTA program utilizes VISTA members to address issues related to alleviating poverty in communities. Unlike the AmeriCorps State program, the VISTA program is noncompetitive, does not require a match and accepts concept papers at any time.

To learn more about the VISTA program and what members do, click [here](#).

If you would like to apply for the VISTA program, click [here](#) to learn more about what that would mean for your organization and how you can apply.

- The application process occurs in two steps, the first step is the submission of a concept paper. If the concept paper is approved then you will be invited to submit a project application. The project application is provided directly to programs once the concept paper is approved.
- If you decide that VISTA may work for your organization, you can download the concept paper instructions [here](#).

To learn more about the AmeriCorps VISTA program, you can contact the VISTA office at 512-391-2900 or tx@cns.gov.

OneStar currently administers an AmeriCorps VISTA Intermediary project. To learn about this project, please review the [OneStar VISTA Host Site Application and Proposed VISTA Assignment Description](#). All questions should be directed to Glenn Goodrich, Program Specialist, AmeriCorps VISTA. Glenn can be reached at glenn@onestarfoundation.org or 512-287-2015.