

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL AMERICORPS STATE GRANTS 2008-2009

The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service (ICVS) is pleased to announce the availability of federal funding in the form of **AmeriCorps program grants**. The following entities are encouraged to apply: non-profit organizations, state agencies and local governments, elementary and secondary schools, Indian tribes, colleges and universities, community and faith-based organizations, and an intermediary organization representing a combination of these or similar groups working together.

AmeriCorps grants help organizations to recruit, train, and support AmeriCorps members, who then serve on a full-time or part-time basis to help the organization in serving the community. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to programs that support education, public safety, the environment, homeland security, or other unmet human needs, particularly those affecting children, the elderly and the disabled. **Successful programs deliver service to communities, while also working towards the development and growth of the AmeriCorps members serving their organization.** Programs are required to engage a minimum of ten full-time AmeriCorps members (or the equivalent, such as twenty half-time, etc.).

NAME: Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service

ISSUE DATE: September 6, 2007

INITIAL CONTRACT PERIOD: September 1, 2008, - August 31, 2009

LOCATION: Statewide, Regional, or Local Areas in Iowa

DATES: Proposals must be submitted to the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service via the on-line eGrants application system and hard copies of required documents must be postmarked by November 7, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. CDT. All proposals that do not meet the established deadlines will be declined through the on-line system and not be considered.

Required documents must be sent to:

Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service
Attn: AmeriCorps Grants 2008
200 East Grand Ave
Des Moines, IA 50309

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SESSIONS: The following conference calls have been set up to assist any new or returning applicant with the request for proposal and application instructions. Experienced Commission staff will be on the calls to answer any questions and clarify information contained with the request for proposal and application instructions. Please review all necessary documents before the call and have questions ready. We ask that all participants register for the call(s) of their choice at, www.regonline/ACRFP. We encourage all potential grant seekers to participate in these calls. In the event that there are no registered participants, the call(s) will be cancelled without prior notice.

CALL DATES and TIMES

Tuesday, September 25, 2007 9:00–11:00 am

Wednesday, October 17, 2007 1:00–3:00 pm

EGRANTS: This web-based system is used by the Corporation for National and Community Service for, but not limited to, the submission and tracking of grant applications. All applicants who wish to apply for AmeriCorps State grants FY 2008 must create an eGrants account. For more information and to create an account please visit, <http://www.americorps.gov/egrants/index.asp>

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE FOR THE APPLICATION PROCESS:

Proposals Due to ICVS	November 7, 2007
Applicants Notified by ICVS Regarding Approved Proposals	December 7, 2007
Final proposals due to ICVS	December 21, 2007
Proposals submitted to Corporation for National and Community Service for funding decision	January 8, 2008
First Notification Sent to Applicant (competitive)	June 2, 2008
Second Notification Sent to Applicant (formula)	June 30, 2008
Program Start Date	September 1, 2008

All requests for information should be directed to Julie Struck, Program Officer, at Julie.Struck@IowaLifeChanging.com or 515-242-4866.

**IOWA COMMISSION ON VOLUNTEER SERVICE
AMERICORPS*STATE PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

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SECTION I - PURPOSE

- 1.1 The intent and purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals to establish AmeriCorps programs in Iowa. Proposals must be for organizations seeking funding to operate a program in Iowa.

The period of initial contract shall be for twelve (12 months). If funded, programs may apply for continuation funding for up to two additional years. These applications will be reviewed annually and funded as appropriate and per availability of funding. After three years of funding, a program must submit a new application for AmeriCorps funding in response to the current RFP.

SECTION II – BACKGROUND

- 2.1 AmeriCorps is a national service program funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency established in 1993 to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service. In exchange for their service, AmeriCorps members may receive a living allowance to defray costs while serving and, upon successful completion of their term, an education award to help finance their college education, vocational training, or to repay existing student loans. Other benefits are also available to members, please see the Application Instructions for more information.

The mission of AmeriCorps is:

- ✓ Getting Things Done through direct and demonstrable service
- ✓ Strengthening Communities by uniting individuals and institutions in common efforts
- ✓ Developing Members through service, the teaching of job skills, and rewarding experiences

In Iowa, the AmeriCorps*State program is administered by the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service (ICVS).

- 2.1.1** AmeriCorps grants help organizations to recruit, train, and support AmeriCorps members, who then serve on a full-time or part-time basis to help the organization in meeting community needs. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to programs that support education, public safety, the environment, homeland security, or other unmet human needs, particularly those affecting children, the elderly and the disabled. Successful programs deliver intensive service to communities, while also working towards the development and growth of the AmeriCorps members serving their organization. Programs are required to engage a minimum of ten full-time AmeriCorps members (or the equivalent, such as twenty half-time, etc.). It is highly recommended that applicants design service activities for a team of members serving full- or part-time for up to one year or during the summer to ensure that members are providing intensive service to communities.
- 2.1.2** The purpose of AmeriCorps*State is to engage AmeriCorps members in direct service and capacity-building activities to address unmet community needs. Local programs design service activities for a team of members serving full- or part-time for one year or during the summer. Sample activities include tutoring and mentoring youth, assisting crime victims, building homes, and restoring parks. AmeriCorps members also mobilize community volunteers and strengthen the capacity of the organizations where they serve. The organizations that receive grants are responsible for recruiting, selecting, and supervising AmeriCorps members to serve in their programs.

SECTION III – STATEMENT OF NEEDS

3.1 AMERICORPS PROGRAMS

The mission of the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. This mission, in part, is carried out by the work of AmeriCorps programs in Iowa. To assist the ICVS with meeting its many goals, including State of Iowa priorities, the ICVS may give special consideration for funding for organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in one, or combination thereof, the following focus area(s):

- 1. Mobilizing more volunteers.** Iowa nonprofits rely on volunteers to carry out their missions. The ICVS is committed to strengthening volunteer referral networks and providing support to non-profit organizations to effectively utilize volunteers in Iowa.
- 2. Ensuring a brighter future for all of Iowa's children and youth.** We are committed to increasing the number of adults volunteering with youth in high-quality programs, particularly mentoring programs.
- 3. Engaging students in communities.** In recognizing volunteerism as a life-long experience, we are committed to investing in Iowa future by expanding service learning and volunteer opportunities for Iowa's young people.
- 4. Harnessing Baby Boomers' experience.** With Iowa's boomers nearing retirement, we can utilize their experience and skills in meeting our state's greatest challenges. We are committed to help Iowa nonprofits meet these challenges.
- 5. Disaster Preparedness and Response.** Disaster can happen at any time. We are committed to helping communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. National Service has and will continue to play a vital role in disaster services.
- 6. Unserved or Underserved Areas of the State.** To maximize the capacity building and service activities of members, the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service desires to expand programming into unserved or underserved areas of the state, particularly rural areas and those with significant human service needs.

3.1.1 PLANNING GRANTS support establishment of new AmeriCorps program in Iowa, or to replicate existing AmeriCorps programs in unserved and underserved areas of the state. In order to expand resources to high need areas of the state, the ICVS is placing a priority on providing planning grants to build the capacity of organizations in these areas to develop AmeriCorps programs. On an annual basis, up to \$50,000 of state formula funds will be reserved to support planning grant(s) in high need communities. Programs that applied but were not selected for funding during the AmeriCorps funding cycle will be considered for planning grants.

It is the intention of the commission that all formula funds be awarded on an annual basis and therefore, we reserve the right to distribute these funds through the formula process if: 1) no applicants are from high need areas; 2) any potential recipients decline the offer of planning grants; 3) more resources are available than are needed to fund the planning grant(s).

3.2 WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Non-profit organizations, state and local governments, elementary and secondary schools, Indian tribes, colleges and universities, faith-based organizations, and intermediary organizations representing any combination of these or similar groups working together.

3.3 REPORTING AND EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS

All funded programs must develop a system for collecting and analyzing program data in a consistent and reasonable manner on an ongoing basis. All programs will be required to submit programmatic progress, periodic expense and financial status reports, and final closeouts, and other requested reports as described to the program in the grant agreement and program policy manual. In addition, all programs will be required to submit to an evaluation plan for the proposed program.

SECTION 4 – PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

4.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

4.1.1 RFP RESPONSE: All Iowa non-profit organizations, public and private, are eligible to apply for these funds. In order to be considered for selection, applicants must submit a complete response to this RFP. Each applicant will use the eGrants system to submit their application. Additionally, one original and eight copies of each proposal entered into eGrants must be submitted to the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service. The original proposal must be marked as such. The eGrants system is the official application system, so applications that are not entered in eGrants by the deadline will not be considered.

The deadline for submission of proposals is 5:00 p.m. CDT on November 7, 2007. Hard copy applications and required attachments must be postmarked on or before November 7, 2007.

4.1.2 PROPOSAL PREPARATION:

A. Proposals shall be electronically signed by an authorized representative of the applicant organization. Proposals lacking key information or that are substantially incomplete will be rejected by the ICVS. Applicants should carefully review the **Proposal Checklist (Section 7)** to ensure that all required items are submitted. Applicants should consider submitting their application in advance of the deadline to allow additional time to submit any missing documentation.

- B. Proposals should be prepared concisely, providing a straightforward description of capabilities to satisfy the requirements of the RFP.
- C. All proposals become the property of ICVS and shall not be returned to the applicant unless all proposals are rejected and no award is made.
- D. All proposals shall be placed in the public domain and available upon request for inspection by interested parties at the conclusion of the selection process.
- E. No payments shall be made to cover costs incurred by any applicant in preparation or the submission of this Request for Proposal (RFP) or any other associated costs.
- F. By submission of a proposal, the applicant certifies that:
 - No attempt has been made or will be made by the applicant to induce any other applicant to submit or not to submit a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition;
 - Applicant is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transaction by any federal or state department or agency.

4.1.3 FISCAL PRE-ASSESSMENT: Applicants who submit a proposal in response to this RFP may be subject to a fiscal pre-assessment review by the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service. This includes a review of the financial systems and capabilities of the organization to adequately account for management of federal funds. ICVS will make work with the program after the review and, in advance of the award, to address any financial inadequacies that are uncovered. Applicants who are unable to meet financial management requirements during the pre-assessment and response phase may be declined funding by ICVS.

4.2 SPECIFIC PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

4.2.1 eGrants: All applicants will submit their proposals in the electronic grant system, eGrants as described within the AmeriCorps application instructions. Applicants must create a new account, if none already exists, in eGrants. The ICVS recommends that applicants do this far in advance of the proposal due date to ensure that adequate time is allowed for grant entry and editing.

4.2.2 Eight bound hard copies and one labeled “original” of the proposal should be printed directly from the eGrants system and mailed to the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service, Attn. 2008 AmeriCorps Grant, 200 E. Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50309.

4.2.3 One bound hard copy of the requested supporting documentation (labeled and bound in the order on the checklist) should be submitted with the application to the ICVS at the address noted above.

4.3 PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEW AND RECOMPETING AMERICORPS*STATE PROGRAMS

All new applicants and current formula programs will use the 2008 AmeriCorps Application Instructions for Programs, New and Recompeting Instructions. These instructions are available in PDF format online at, http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa_detail.asp?tbl_nofa_id=42 or

upon request by contacting ICVS by September 8, 2007. Julie.Struck@IowaLifeChanging.com or 515-242-4866.

4.4 PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTINUATION AMERICORPS*STATE PROGRAMS

All competitive applicants in years one or two of their grant cycle will use the 2008 AmeriCorps Application Instructions for Programs, Continuation Requests. These instructions are available in PDF online at, http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/nofa_detail.asp?tbl_nofa_id=42.

4.5 PERFORMANCE MEASURES: All applicants are expected to include clearly defined performance measures based on the description of activities of the proposed program. All applicants will be required to develop performance measures to address how the program design is meeting the community needs.

The ICVS has developed two statewide performance measures: 1) Volunteer Management and Recruitment and 2) Member Participation and Civic Engagement. Each applicant will be required to include these two statewide performance measures in the grant application for funding. It is likely that additional statewide performance measures will be developed in the future. It is the expectation of the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service that all approved grant applicants will be required to use these performance measures in their program design.

New and Recompeting applicants will find performance measures listed throughout the various sections of the application instructions as *Outputs and Outcomes*. Continuation applicants will find performance measures information in Section III of the application instructions.

ICVS required performance measures can be found in **Section 7 – Proposal Checklist**

4.6 COMMISSION ADMINISTRATION: The ICVS will retain a portion of the overall administrative costs of the grant for use in managing the grant. The amount retained will be State Commission 1% Fixed Amount. More information is provided in the budget section of the application instructions.

4.7 TRAINING: Training is an essential tool for the success of any AmeriCorps program. Applicants are required to budget an additional \$500 for training and travel expenses to ICVS-sponsored training events for members and/or program directors.

SECTION 5 – EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

5.1 GRANT REVIEW COMMITTEE: The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service uses a multi-stage review process. A Grant Review Committee will be formed and may consist of members of the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service, ICVS staff and outside parties as outlined in the ICVS Grants Review guidance. The criteria used by the Grant Review Committee are listed in the table below and is based on the criteria that the Corporation for National and Community Service will use for the national review process as detailed in the 2008 AmeriCorps Application Instructions.

CATEGORY	POINTS	SUB-CATEGORIES AND WEIGHTS
Program Design	50	Rationale and Approach – 10 pts.
		Member Outputs and Outcomes – 20 pts.
		Community Outputs and Outcomes – 20 pts.

Organizational Capacity	<u>25</u>	No sub-categories
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	<u>25</u>	Cost-Effectiveness – 15 pts. Budget Adequacy – 10 pts.
Completeness	<u>10</u>	Accuracy, Grammar, Flow, Readability

5.1.2 NOTICE OF AWARD: Notice of the intent to award a contract will be sent by mail to all applicants who submitted a proposal within the specified timeline. The notice will notify all applicants that the proposals are public documents.

5.1.3 APPEAL OF AWARD: Applicants may appeal the award decision by filing a written appeal within ten days of the date on the award notification letter. Appeals shall be submitted in writing, return receipt requested, to: Chairperson, Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service, 200 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA 50309. Appeals must clearly and fully identify all issues being contested and demonstrate what procedures were not followed.

In the event of an appeal, ICVS will continue working with the successful applicants pending the outcome of the appeal.

ICVS will review the appeal and issue a written decision to the applicant. An appeal of that decision can be made to ICVS by filing a written appeal to the Chairperson within 10 days of the date of the Commission’s notice of decision letter. The Chairperson will review the appeal and issue a written decision.

SECTION 6 - ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

6.1 Submission of a proposal will constitute acceptance of terms, conditions, criteria, and requirements set forth in this RFP and operate as a waiver of any and all objections to the contents of the RFP. Results of the review process or changes in federal or state law may require additions or changes to final contract requirements.

ICVS reserves the right to accept or reject any exception taken by an applicant to the terms and conditions of this RFP. Should the successful applicant take exception to the terms and conditions required by ICVS, the successful applicant’s exceptions may be rejected and ICVS may elect to terminate negotiations with that applicant. However, ICVS may elect to negotiate with the successful applicant regarding contract terms that do not materially alter the substantive requirements of the RFP or the contents of the applicant’s proposal.

ICVS staff reserves the right to negotiate any and all aspects of the grant application, including performance measures, funding amounts, program components, and training requirements, during the grant submission, review and negotiation periods.

SECTION 7 – PROPOSAL SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

All items listed below must be submitted as part of the overall proposal.

Iowa AmeriCorps Grant Application

- Application submitted in eGrants. Include in grant:
 - “AmeriCorps” in title of program/project
 - Two statewide performance measures
- Eight (8) hard copies of grant application printed from eGrants and postmarked on or before November 7, 2007. The following sections should be printed and mailed to ICVS, ATTN: AmeriCorps Grant at 200 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA 50309.
 - Application for Federal Assistance
 - Budget
 - \$500 training for ICVS training and events
 - 1% State Commission Fixed Amount
 - Budget Narrative
- List of members of organization’s Board of Directors
- Copy of most recent agency audit or financial review
- Organizational Chart
- Program Director Job Description
- List of Proposed Project Sites
- Three letters of support from community partners (not required for competitive continuation applicants)

SECTION 8 – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

8.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

- **What is the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service?**

ICVS is the administrative agent of Iowa AmeriCorps programs. The vision of the ICVS is to create an Iowa where all citizens are empowered through volunteer service to meet community challenges and make lives better. ICVS works to fulfill this vision through a number of programs, projects and activities focused on service and volunteerism. Currently, ICVS funds fourteen AmeriCorps programs across Iowa fulfilling a variety of needs in their communities.

- **What is AmeriCorps?**

AmeriCorps is a National Service program, similar to a domestic Peace Corps, that involves individuals (members) in “getting things done” in their community. In exchange for their service, members receive a living allowance and an education award to pay for college or repay student loans.

- **What does “MSY” mean?**

MSY stands for “Member Service Year,” and it is comparable to the phrase FTE, meaning “full-time equivalent.” Because the terminology “FTE” is familiar to most organizations when talking about employees, we use the term MSY as a reminder that **AmeriCorps members are NOT employees**. For your understanding, however, FTE and MSY are the same thing in concept.

- **What types of grants are available?**

The ICVS funds Iowa AmeriCorps grants for development and expansion of programs that meet community needs in the areas of education, environment, public safety, homeland security and other human needs, particularly those affecting children, elderly and the disabled. Grant awards will cover a period of one year and may be renewed for additional years, subject to review and the availability of federal appropriations.

Programs must be large enough to achieve a demonstrable impact on the community served. While the actual size of each program will vary depending on the community, the design of the program, and other factors, applicants are required to apply for at least ten (10) full-time equivalent AmeriCorps members. Applicants should evaluate their present infrastructure and capacity when considering program size.

Planning grants are also available to increase capacity for organizations to develop AmeriCorps programs in areas of the state or in meeting community needs that are unserved or underserved by AmeriCorps. Programs that apply for AmeriCorps funding through the application process, but who are not selected for program funding, will be considered for planning grant funding.

- **What is the grant timeframe?**

The grant period is 3-years, however the grant period is composed of three one-year budget periods and an application must be submitted for each budget period.

- **Who is eligible to apply?**

Educational institutions, local government entities, state agencies, and non-profit agencies that have their 501 (c) 3 status and have been in existence for at least three years are eligible to apply for funding.

- **What are the application and funding timelines?**

AmeriCorps*State and Education Award applications are due to ICVS in December of each year. If approved by ICVS and CNCS, the earliest that funding can begin is the following September.

Than

- **Does our project have to serve in one of the Corporation for National and Community Service's areas education, homeland security, public safety, environment or other human needs?**

Yes, however, the area of "other human needs" is broad and is intended to allow programs flexibility to address the community's needs. The programs may also serve in more than one area with their project. In addition, states may add additional factors, such as state priority areas, or need areas to the application process.

- **Where can I get additional information?**

Additional information on specific grant requirements can be found in the AmeriCorps Application Instructions, AmeriCorps Provisions and/or AmeriCorps Regulations. These documents are located on the AmeriCorps website:

http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/manage/index.asp.

8.2 ADMINISTRATION

- **Is there administrative funding available?**

Yes, 5.26% is the maximum federal share that can be requested for administrative expenses.

- **Can we build in other administrative costs, such as supervisor time and office space?**

Yes, supervisory staff, office space, phones, supplies, etc. are allowable costs under the grant. Many programs also use these areas as sources of matching resources for the AmeriCorps grant.

- **How much time is needed to manage the members and the grant reporting?**

It is recommended that most programs utilize a full-time program director (particularly at the on-set of the grant). As the program becomes more internalized and the program director becomes more familiar with the reporting and other aspects of AmeriCorps, it is possible that the program director role could be a portion of his/her position, however, a significant amount of time should be devoted to this position.

- **How much time is required by the site supervisors?**

Site supervisors provide the day-to-day supervision and support for the AmeriCorps members. Depending on the individual member, the time requirement will vary; however, it shouldn't be more burdensome than overseeing another staff member.

8.3 BUDGET

- **Can the 33% program costs match be in-kind?**

Yes, the 33% program costs match can be 100% in-kind. The 15% member support costs match must be non-federal cash.

- **What is the cost of a full-time AmeriCorps member to the agency?**

According to the grant requirements, programs are required to provide a 15% non-federal member benefits. The minimum living allowance for a full-time AmeriCorps member is \$11,400, of which, 15% must be provided locally in non-federal cash.

- **How much funding should our agency anticipate for an AmeriCorps grant in Iowa?**

AmeriCorps grants in Iowa range from \$126,000 for several formula programs to more than \$400,000 for competitive programs. The average amount of program funding in Iowa is:

\$133,649 for formula programs and \$261,013 for formula programs. Programs should be aware that the Iowa Commission receives approximately \$850,000 in formula resources to provide to applicants whose grants are not selected for competitive funding. Therefore, there is a limit to the amount and number of projects that can be funded on an annual basis. In general, programs are not selected for competitive funding the first time they apply.

- **Are there other budgetary restrictions?**

Yes, each year, the Corporation establishes a maximum cost per MSY (Member Service Year, equivalent to FTE, full-time equivalent) over a state's portfolio of AmeriCorps programs. The Corporation's maximum average cost per MSY is \$12,600. Programs should strive to keep their costs close to the established average cost. However, there is some flexibility, particularly in the early years of grant operation to have a cost higher than the average.

- **Does the program provide a portion of the Education Award?**

No, the entire cost of the Education Award is provided by federal funds and no local funds are required to support the Education Awards.

8.4 MEMBERS

- **Is ten MSY the minimum number a program can have?**

Because of the administrative requirements of the program (both on the local sponsor and the commission) and because of the team-building and member development elements of the program, the minimum number of members is 10 MSY in order to balance the administrative burden with the benefits to the members, the community and the program.

Programs are encouraged to think creatively about other community partners with whom they may partner to apply jointly in order to maximize the value and impact of the program. For example, another community program that works with a similar constituency may be interested in utilizing two members, while your agency can utilize 8 members. A program can also choose to have a mixture of full-time and less than full-time members. For example, the 10 MSY requirement can be met by having 6 full-time members, and 8 half-time members, or many other various combinations. Again, these are only minimums; provided that other budget requirements are met, there are no maximums.

- **Who recruits the members?**

Local programs are responsible for recruiting their own members; however, an on-line national recruiting system is also used by programs to enhance recruiting.

- **What types of activities can AmeriCorps members do?**

Traditionally, AmeriCorps members have provided primarily direct service activities, however, recently, the Corporation has expanded the role of AmeriCorps members to include some capacity-building activities, specifically volunteer recruitment and management and grant writing (members are not allowed to write the AmeriCorps grant).

- **How many hours do AmeriCorps members serve?**

Full time members serve a minimum of 1700 hours over a 9-12 month period. Half time members serve at least 900 hours, reduced half-time members serve at least 675, quarter time members serve at least 450 hours and minimum time members serve at least 300 hours. Length of service and numbers of hours are described by programs in the member contracts.

- **How do the Education Awards work?**

Following successful completion of a term of service, members are eligible to receive an education award (\$4725 for one year of full-time service) that can be used to pursue post-secondary education or pay off qualified student loans. Members who serve less than full-time are eligible pro-rated Education Awards. All Education Award funding goes directly to the educational institution or qualified loan holder.

- **Can members use their education awards for training/education other than college?**
Yes, however Education Awards must be used at approved institutions, so check with the National Service Trust before enrolling in a program.
- **Can the Education Awards be “cashed out” or transferred to someone else?**
At this point, Education Awards cannot be cashed or transferred.
- **Is there other education-related information I should know?**
During their terms of service, AmeriCorps members are eligible for loan forbearance and the National Service Trust will pay interest accrued during a members’ service for qualified student loans.
- **What benefits are provided to the AmeriCorps members?**
Full-time AmeriCorps members receive health care benefits. Members who are income-eligible may also receive childcare benefits. Programs are responsible for establishing vacation, sick and holiday policies for AmeriCorps members; however, members do not accrue service hours for vacation, sick or holidays. Other benefits vary from program to program.