



# AmeriCorps Iowa

## 2022-2023 Iowa AmeriCorps State Request for Applications- FORMULA

**Issuing Agency Name:** Volunteer Iowa (Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service)

**Funding Opportunity:** 2022-2023 Iowa AmeriCorps State Grants

**Announcement Type:** Initial release, posted January 7, 2022

**Assistance Listing Number:** 94.006

**Due Dates:** February 3 or March 3, 2022 for new pre-applications and March 15, 2022 (returning programs) or April 5, 2022 (new) for final competitive applications

**Link to Application Materials:** <https://www.volunteeriowa.org/ameri-corps-state>

This Request for Applications (RFA) and appendices complement the Volunteer Iowa Pre-Application Instructions, the Volunteer Iowa Final Application Instructions, the AMERICORPS Mandatory Supplemental Information and the AMERICORPS Performance Measure Instructions. Applications will be accepted only from organizations seeking funding to operate a program wholly within the state of Iowa (multi-state applicants apply directly to the Corporation for National and Community Service). Multi-state AmeriCorps National Direct applicants that intend to place members in Iowa must consult with Volunteer Iowa regarding these intended placements using the process and link provided in the Application and Submission Information section.

Disclosure: Publication of this RFA does not obligate Volunteer Iowa or the AMERICORPS federal agency to award any specific number of grants or to obligate any particular amount of funding. The actual level, timing, and process of grant funding will be subject to the availability of annual federal appropriations.

This RFA is undergoing final review & approval; any updated versions will be posted to the Volunteer Iowa website.

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### **About the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service (Volunteer Iowa)**

The mission of Volunteer Iowa is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. Our staff members provide technical assistance, support services and capacity-building resources to help organizations effectively utilize the time and talent of volunteers and national service members. If you determine the attached opportunity is not a good fit for your organization, we encourage you to consult with our staff about how you may be able to receive resources and support from Volunteer Iowa or other national service programs.

**Other Programs, Services, and Initiatives Offered by Volunteer Iowa and Our Partners**



**AmeriCorps NCCC:** Organizations may apply to host a team of AmeriCorps NCCC members to provide intensive, short term service on projects in the areas of disaster services, environment, infrastructure improvement, energy conservation and urban and rural development. Projects are normally six to eight weeks in duration but will vary depending on the requirements of the project. Organizations must be capable of utilizing at least one full team of eight to twelve members effectively.



**AmeriCorps VISTA:** Organizations can also apply to become a host site in an existing AmeriCorps VISTA project or they can directly sponsor their own VISTA project. [Volunteer Iowa has its own intermediary AmeriCorps VISTA program](#) and accepts applications for host sites on a rolling basis. In general, AmeriCorps VISTA focuses on anti-poverty, community empowerment, and sustainable solutions by having members provide capacity building services at their host organizations. AmeriCorps VISTA project sponsors generally must be able to support three or more full-time AmeriCorps VISTA members serving for one-year on an anti-poverty project.

**Other AmeriCorps State & National opportunities:** Organizations wishing to place AmeriCorps members in multiple states should apply directly to the Corporation for National and Community Service for an AmeriCorps National grant. Some AmeriCorps State and National grantees act as intermediary organizations and accept applications from organizations wishing to serve as host sites for one or more AmeriCorps member positions. Volunteer Iowa can help agencies connect with existing intermediary programs.



**Iowa Mentoring Partnership (IMP):** IMP certifies local youth mentoring programs and provides these high-quality programs with training opportunities, recognition awards, advocacy initiatives, and statewide marketing and media campaigns. Volunteer Iowa also coordinates the Future Ready Iowa virtual mentoring program.



**RSVP (formerly Retired and Senior Volunteer Program):** RSVP collaborates with organizations in addressing identified priority community needs, through the mobilization and management of adult volunteers aged 55 and over. RSVP volunteers provide support that enhances the organization. Host organizations must have positions that match program priorities and must be able to provide supervision of the volunteers.

**Service Enterprise Initiative:** By achieving the Service Enterprise certification and level of excellence, organizations are uniquely positioned to leverage the time and skills of volunteers and expand program operations and revenues, which also allows the nonprofit or government agency to realize greater programmatic impact and operational effectiveness. Volunteer Iowa facilitates the process for additional organizations to become certified and gives funding preference to those certified.



**Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF):** Volunteer Iowa provides VGF grants to organizations in Iowa to develop or expand the state's volunteer infrastructure, including development and enhancement of Iowa's network of volunteer centers, in order to mobilize volunteers in areas consistent with our state service plan. The program is designed to increase the number of people who serve in meaningful roles as volunteers dedicated to addressing important needs in communities across America.

**VolunteerIowa.org:** The Volunteer Iowa website provides an online system, Get Connected, for volunteers and organizations across Iowa to use to connect with one another. Organizations can post volunteer opportunities and quickly reach out and recruit people who are interested in helping them.

**Volunteer Recognition:** The commission coordinates Iowa's two most prestigious volunteer recognition programs, the Governor's Volunteer Awards, an easy and low-cost way for Iowa organizations to honor their volunteers and the Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame, the highest state-level honor volunteers can receive. Nominations are accepted on an annual cycle. In conjunction with the Iowa Nonprofit Summit, the commission helps coordinate the selection of the Iowa Nonprofit Award winners. The Employer Volunteer initiative recognizes employer support for volunteerism, and various social media recognition opportunities are open to participation by the field.



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**For More Information**

Contact the [AmeriCorps NCCC North Central Region](#) campus for more information about AmeriCorps NCCC  
Tel: 319-472-9664  
E-mail: [NCCNorthCentral@cns.gov](mailto:NCCNorthCentral@cns.gov)

Contact the [Corporation for National & Community Service Regional Office](#) for information about becoming an AmeriCorps VISTA project sponsor  
Cell Phone: 202-489-8585  
Email: [ia@cns.gov](mailto:ia@cns.gov)

Contact [Volunteer Iowa](#) for more information about all other opportunities  
Ph: 1.800.308.5987  
Email: [info@volunteeriowa.org](mailto:info@volunteeriowa.org)

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**IMPORTANT DATES**

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**Volunteer Iowa Notice of Intent:** There is no Notice of Intent to Apply for this competition, but potential applicants can sign up [here](#) to receive updated information about the competition.

**Competitive or Formula Funding Consideration:** All returning applicants were required to submit a pre-application under the Competitive process in order to be considered for that funding stream. Those returning programs that were not selected to apply for competitive funding will submit a final application for formula funding according to this RFA. All new applicants should apply for formula funding under this RFA.

**Unspecified Dates, Time Zone Details:** For some steps in the application process, anticipated date ranges are provided in this RFA but not exact dates. For those steps (such as technical assistance periods, clarification periods, and negotiation periods), specific dates and deadlines related to those steps will be communicated to applicants as they are scheduled, and applicants will be expected to comply with those more specific deadlines. All times noted are Central time.

**Anticipated Key Dates**

Please note that these are anticipated dates and may be updated throughout the grant application and review period. Check the [AmeriCorps State Grants page on the Volunteer Iowa website](#) and sign up for the [mailing list](#) to be informed of changes to this timeline.

<b>FORMULA</b>	<b>Returning Programs</b>	<b>New Programs</b>
<b>Initial Application Materials release date</b>	<b>September 20, 2021</b>	<b>January 7, 2022</b>
<b>Pre-Applications due to Volunteer Iowa</b>	<b>October 4, 2021 (all current programs)</b>	<b>February 3 or March 3, 2022</b>
<b>Notification to Applicants of Competitive or Formula Final Application Status</b>	<b>October 14, 2021 (all current programs) *</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Application Technical Assistance Period</b>	<b>January-March 2022</b>	<b>January-March 2022</b>
<b>Final Applications &amp; Supporting Documents due to Volunteer Iowa</b>	<b>March 15, 2022</b>	<b>April 5, 2022</b>
<b>Volunteer Iowa Clarification Period</b>	<b>mid March-early April 2022</b>	<b>Mid March-early April 2022</b>
<b>AmeriCorps Agency Clarification Period</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Applicants Appear Before Volunteer Iowa Grant Review Committee Meeting</b>	<b>May 10, 2022 (anticipated)</b>	<b>May 10, 2022 (anticipated)</b>
<b>Funding Decisions Shared with Applicants</b>	<b>Following May 17, 2022 commission meeting</b>	<b>Following May 17, 2022 commission meeting</b>
<b>Applicant Resolution Period</b>	<b>After notification of funding decisions</b>	<b>After notification of funding decisions</b>
<b>Earliest grant start date</b>	<b>August 1, 2022</b>	<b>August 1, 2022</b>
<b>Earliest member start date</b>	<b>August 10, 2022</b>	<b>August 10, 2022</b>

**A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

**A.1. Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding**

AmeriCorps brings people together to tackle some of the country's most pressing challenges through national service and volunteering. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities. AmeriCorps helps make service a cornerstone of our national culture. The goals of the AmeriCorps program are: (1). *Getting Things Done*- by providing service to address community problems; (2). *Strengthening Communities*- by uniting individuals and institutions in a common effort; (3). *Encouraging Responsibility*- throughout members' service experience and throughout their lives; and (4). *Expanding Opportunity*- by enhancing members' educational opportunities, job experience, and life skills. There are three branches of AmeriCorps programs—AmeriCorps State & National, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps NCCC. AmeriCorps State & National is the largest branch of AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations (see ***Eligible Applicants*** section) proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions/practices to strengthen communities. The organizations that receive grants are responsible for recruiting, selecting, and supervising AmeriCorps members to serve in their programs. Programs design service activities for a team of members serving full- or part-time over the course of up to one year, or during the summer or another portion of the year. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. AmeriCorps members also mobilize community volunteers and strengthen the capacity of the organizations they serve. Members typically receive a living allowance and other benefits from the sponsor organization while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that they can apply to qualified student loans or use to pay for higher education expenses.

## **A.2. AMERICORPS Focus Areas & Funding Priorities**

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. In order to carry out Congress' intent and to maximize the impact of investment in national service, AMERICORPS has the following focus areas:

### Disaster Services.

Grants will support increased and improved disaster services for individuals and communities to prepare and adapt to disasters, including but not limited to climate change events. Activities will provide support to increase preparedness for disasters, improve readiness to respond to disasters, support recovery efforts from disasters, and/or assist in the implementation of pre-disaster mitigation and adaptation measures. Grants will support communities and individuals in planning for disasters, in particular engaging disadvantaged communities in the planning process.

### Economic Opportunity.

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people; help economically disadvantaged people, to have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy; transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing; and/or have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed.

### Education.

Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children; improved school readiness for economically disadvantaged young children; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or support economically disadvantaged students' preparation for success in post-secondary educational institutions.

Environmental Stewardship.

Grants will support responsible stewardship of the environment, while preparing communities for challenging climate and environmental circumstances and helping Americans respond to and recover from disruptive events: programs that conserve natural habitats; protect clean air and water; maintain public lands; support wildland fire mitigation and sustainable forest management; cultivate individual and community resilience; and provide reforestation services after floods or fires, such as nature based solutions.

Healthy Futures. Grants will provide support for activities that will address the opioid crisis; increase seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible; and/or increase physical activity and improve nutrition with the purpose of reducing obesity.

Veterans and Military Families. Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength; increase the number of veterans, wounded warriors, military service members, and their families served by AMERICORPS-supported programs; and/or increase the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through AMERICORPS programs.

AMERICORPS Funding Priorities (See AMERICORPS Mandatory Supplemental Information for further information about some of the priorities)

AMERICORPS seeks to prioritize the investment of national service resources in the following areas:

- Efforts to help local communities respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants may propose programming to aid communities in their efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, including outcomes of COVID-19 on student subgroups described in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
- Educational opportunity and economic mobility for communities experiencing persistent unemployment or underemployment, and students experiencing homelessness or those in foster care.
- Programs that prioritize civic engagement and social cohesion.
- Evidence-based interventions on the AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange that are assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence. Please note that many of these interventions have demonstrated effectiveness in improving outcomes for individuals living in underserved communities and that the agency has committed resources to supporting grantees seeking to replicate and evaluate these interventions in similar communities.<sup>1</sup>
- Veterans and Military Families, Caregivers, and Survivors – a program model that improves the quality of life of veterans and improves the well-being of military families, caregivers, and survivors.
- Rural intermediaries - organizations that demonstrate measurable impact and primarily serve rural communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure.
- Environmental stewardship and climate change including renewable energy and energy efficiency, building community resilience, sustainable food systems and agriculture, and conservation and habitat preservation.
- Faith-based organizations.
- Economic Mobility Corps

To receive priority consideration, applicants must show that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes. Proposing programs that receive priority consideration does not guarantee funding.

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<sup>1</sup> AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange: <https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange>

### **A.3. Volunteer Iowa Program Development Priorities**

Volunteer Iowa program development priorities, outlined below, add to or complement the AMERICORPS priorities.

#### ***Priorities Based on the Volunteer Iowa State Service Plan***

Every three years Volunteer Iowa drafts this blueprint for maximizing civic engagement and service in Iowa. This plan identifies priority areas for new program development, summarized below. The full plan is posted at <https://www.volunteeriowa.org/publications>.

Programs that are part of or utilize a comprehensive community strategy. In particular, Volunteer Iowa will seek to fund programs that use the principles of collective impact to work together with other stakeholders to address a common problem.

Programs or strategies that engage underrepresented populations and those that provide a high return on investment. Volunteer Iowa seeks to increase equity and inclusion across our portfolio of programs and services, so it is of particular interest to the commission that AmeriCorps State programs recruit members from their own communities and representative of the communities being served. Volunteer Iowa seeks national service programs that are diversified and better connected with those who are underrepresented as volunteers or whose service provides maximum value including: Iowans age 55+, disconnected youth (those at-risk for or currently out of school or unemployed), students, Iowans with disabilities, veterans, and minority and rural populations. Programs that recruit opportunity youth (as defined in the Mandatory Supplemental Information) as AmeriCorps members are also eligible for a higher level of funding from AMERICORPS. Programs that engage minority populations as AmeriCorps members and are funded at the formula level may qualify for a cost per MSY waiver to provide a higher amount of federal funding per AmeriCorps member (see Volunteer Iowa Waivers in the pre-application).

Programs in geographic areas that are underserved or have the highest need. Volunteer Iowa will prioritize programs that aim to make members available to unserved/underserved areas, particularly through multi-focus intermediary models.

Programs that address disparities in rural communities or with minorities. As Volunteer Iowa pursues better equity and inclusion in our program, that includes prioritizing programming that addresses inequities in Iowa communities. Volunteer Iowa seeks to fund programs that address disparities in wellbeing for minority communities, such as in the areas of school discipline, foster care, juvenile justice, corrections, and similar systems. Volunteer Iowa also seeks programming that serves rural communities, especially those with a demonstrated lack of access to resources. Programs addressing Volunteer Iowa diversity, equity, and inclusion goals and funded at the formula level may qualify for a cost per MSY waiver to provide a higher amount of federal funding per AmeriCorps member (see Volunteer Iowa Waivers in the pre-application).

Governor's priority areas. Volunteer Iowa will prioritize programs that support Governor-identified priorities such as Future Ready Iowa, Iowa's energy plan, childcare and enrichment, digital literacy, and education.

Participation in the Iowa AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team (Iowa A-DRT). Volunteer Iowa plays a lead role in coordinating unaffiliated volunteers in times of disaster and is the only state service commission holding a cooperative agreement with FEMA for the deployment of AmeriCorps members to federally declared disaster areas. Priority is placed on funding programs that sign up for the Iowa AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team, to allow their members to be activated for special service assignments involving disaster service, even if this is not

a primary program focus. Disaster deployments can range from sandbagging and levee patrol to volunteer management and victim case management.

Certification as a Service Enterprise. Volunteer Iowa is a leader in certifying organizations as Service Enterprises for their comprehensive integration of volunteers into their work. Priority is placed on funding organizations that are certified as a Service Enterprise.

Certification through the Iowa Mentoring Partnership. Volunteer Iowa houses the Iowa Mentoring Partnership, which provides training and support to certified programs that follow research-based effective practices that are likely to lead to positive outcomes for youth in the program. Iowa AmeriCorps State programs that engage in youth mentoring activities will be expected to pursue certification through the Iowa Mentoring Partnership, as appropriate.

### ***Priorities Based on Iowa Code***

The Iowa Legislature has defined several areas of service activity as state priorities that have been incorporated into Iowa law. In some years, state funding is available for applicants whose AmeriCorps program meets the requirements of established state service corps; the state funds can be used as match to the AMERICORPS federal funds. Applicants wishing to certify or register under a state priority area should complete and submit the relevant sections of Appendix 2 State Priority Certification with their final application.

Green Corps. A program that involves youth, or AmeriCorps members of any age, in major transformative projects emphasizing energy efficiency, historic preservation, neighborhood development, and storm water reduction and management. Program details are outlined in the Iowa Administrative Code 817, Chapter 10. Use the following link to view the related Code:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/law/administrativeRules/chapters?agency=817>.

Summer Youth Corps. A program that involves disadvantaged youth (ages 16-25) in meaningful service opportunities that enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and fulfill unmet community needs. Program details are outlined in the Iowa Administrative Code 817, Chapter 9. Use the following link to view the related Code: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/law/administrativeRules/chapters?agency=817>.

Reading Corps: A program that engages members in data-based, problem-solving models of literacy instruction to use in tutoring students from prekindergarten to third grade who are not proficient in reading or who are at risk of becoming not proficient in reading. Program details are outlined in the Iowa Administrative Code 817, Chapter 11. Use the following link to view the related Code:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/law/administrativeRules/chapters?agency=817>.

Refugee Rebuild, Integrate, Serve, Empower (Refugee RISE) AmeriCorps program: A program to increase community integration and engagement for diverse refugee communities in urban and rural areas across the state. Program details are outlined in the Iowa Administrative Code 817, Chapter 12. Use the following link to view the related Code: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/law/administrativeRules/chapters?agency=817>.

Iowa National Service Corps: All programs awarded under this competition will be considered Iowa National Service Corps programs according to Iowa Code 15H.9. Details about the Iowa National service Corps are outlined in the Iowa Administrative Code 817, Chapter 14, which is posted at:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/law/administrativeRules/chapters?agency=817>. As allowed by AMERICORPS,



Volunteer Iowa may also use funds designated for Iowa AmeriCorps State positions to award Iowa National Service Corps positions outside of this grant competition (such as commission fellowships).

#### **A.4. Performance Goals or Expected Outcomes- Performance Measures**

All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output and outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. This may be a National Performance Measure or an applicant-determined measure. Volunteer Iowa and AMERICORPS value the quality of performance measures over the quantity of performance measures; accordingly Volunteer Iowa may limit the number of measures to be included in the final application. See the Performance Measure Instructions for details about performance measure requirements and selection rules.<sup>2</sup>

#### **A.5. Program Authority**

Awards under this Notice are authorized by the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, (NCSA) (42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.)

### **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

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#### **B.1. Estimated Available Funds**

Volunteer Iowa and AMERICORPS expect a highly competitive AmeriCorps grant competition. Both Volunteer Iowa and AMERICORPS reserve the right to prioritize providing funding to existing awards over making new awards. The actual level of funding is subject to the availability of annual appropriations, with \$425 million in total funding awarded for AmeriCorps State & National grants in FY2019. Competitive programs are funded out of a portion of the funds reserved for the national competition; formula programs are awarded out of funds made available to Volunteer Iowa for single-state programming.

AmeriCorps State Competitive programs are those funded at the national level after a successful state and federal review process in which they compete against other single-state programs as well as multi-state National Direct programs. Iowa competitive applicants become part of a competitive portfolio that Volunteer Iowa submits to the federal competition. After the federal-level review generally some programs from Iowa are awarded this type of funding each year. Competitive AmeriCorps State programs are funded on a three-year basis in terms of program goals and objectives, but they develop one-year budgets and must re-apply every year for continued funding. Applicants not selected for competitive funding from AMERICORPS are automatically considered for funding at the state formula level.

AmeriCorps State Formula programs are funded from federal resources allocated to Volunteer Iowa according to a formula based on state population. Applicants whose activities match Volunteer Iowa priorities but not AMERICORPS priorities, applicants whose proposals need more work, and those with limited experience managing federal grants or large programs are likely to be considered for formula funding, only. The formula competition also includes applicants that were included in the Volunteer Iowa competitive portfolio but not selected for funding at the national competitive level. Each year, AMERICORPS notifies Volunteer Iowa of the amount of formula funding available; in recent years this was approximately \$1.6 million. In many years, Volunteer Iowa does not have adequate funding to cover all requests. Formula programs are expected to be

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<sup>2</sup> Performance Measure Instructions: <https://www.americorps.gov/funding-opportunity/fy-2021-ameri-corps-state-national-grants#performance-measure>

funded with a two-year project period and a one-year budget period basis and Volunteer Iowa has the discretion to approve programs for a third continuation year.

State of Iowa Community Programs funds may be available to applicants meeting criteria established in the Iowa Code. State funding awarded to AmeriCorps State applicants may be used as match towards the federal share of their AmeriCorps grant.

### **B.2. Estimated Award Amount**

Grant awards have two components: operating funds and AmeriCorps member positions, resulting in a cost per member service year (MSY). Grant award amounts vary – both in the level of operating funds and in the type and number of AmeriCorps member positions – as determined by the scope of the projects. However, awards must fit into the cost per MSY limits established in this RFA. On average, Iowa competitive programs receive a higher award amount and higher MSY than Iowa formula programs, given the limited amount of formula funds available.

### **B.3. Period of Performance**

Volunteer Iowa anticipates making new two-year formula grants. The commission generally makes an initial award for the first year of the period of performance, based on a one-year budget. Continuation awards for subsequent years are not guaranteed; they depend upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance.. Volunteer Iowa makes every effort to award continued funding to programs that demonstrate satisfactory performance, compliance, and management capacity.

Volunteer Iowa offers either a fall (August 1 or September 1, 2021) start date or a calendar year (January 1, 2022) grant start date, with an earliest possible member start date of August 10, 2021 (unless a waiver is approved to start members earlier). Member start dates must fall within the member enrollment period, but the member start date need not align exactly with the grant start date. During the program year, programs may request extensions as necessary, to conclude their programs past the original end date (typically no more than 90 days extension).

The project start date may not occur prior to the date AMERICORPS awards the grant. AmeriCorps applicants may not enroll prior to the start date of the award. AmeriCorps applicants may not begin service prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period as designated in the grant award. A program may not certify any hours an applicant performs prior to the applicant becoming a member in the system of record and the beginning of the member enrollment period, execution of a grant agreement with Volunteer Iowa, and signature of a member service agreement between the member and the program. AmeriCorps members are limited to serving a 12 month or shorter term within the program year.

### **B.4. Type of Award**

a. AmeriCorps Operating Grants: AMERICORPS may award a Cost Reimbursement or a Fixed Amount grant to any successful applicant, but the availability of a Full-Cost Fixed Amount grant is limited to certain applicants. Professional Corps are ineligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement grants. See the *Eligible Applicants* section and the Mandatory Supplemental Information for more information. AMERICORPS will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year.

b. AmeriCorps Planning Grants: AmeriCorps State planning grants of up to \$75,000 are awarded on a competitive basis to allow organizations to begin developing their plans to manage an AmeriCorps program. Planning grant activities may involve work to establish a new program in Iowa or to replicate a successful existing program model in unserved or underserved areas of the state. Organizations typically use planning grants to become better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the subsequent grant cycle.

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Grant recipients also receive training and technical assistance from Volunteer Iowa to strengthen their AmeriCorps program design and to create implementation plans and systems for managing a compliant AmeriCorps program. Activities that may take place under the grant include creating partnerships, developing position descriptions, developing member training, supervision and monitoring policies and procedures, and developing budgets. Planning grants may not be used to support AmeriCorps members and costs associated with writing an AmeriCorps application may not be charged as direct costs to the grant.

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement	Fixed Amount				Planning
		Full-Cost: Traditional & Micro-Grants	Education Award Program (EAP)	Professional Corps See Sec. D.6.a.3 for further requirements	No Cost Slots	
Available Subtypes	Traditional	Full-Cost: Traditional & Micro-Grants	Education Award Program (EAP)	Professional Corps See Sec. D.6.a.3 for further requirements	No Cost Slots	Start-up or Traditional
Maximum Cost/MSY	\$21,600(competitive) or \$25,200* (formula), with some exceptions	\$21,600 (competitive) or \$25,200* (formula), with some exceptions	\$800 or \$1,000**	\$1,000**	\$0	No MSY but maximum of \$25,000 for Start-up or \$75,000
Type of Slots in the National Service Trust	FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT	Traditional: FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT Micro-grants: FT, TQT, HT	FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT	FT only	FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT	No slots
Detailed Budget Submission Required	Yes	No		Yes, if requesting operating funds	No	Yes
Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSYs	No	Yes			No	No

Special Requirements	N/A	N/A	Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries and benefits must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in budget.	N/A	Must be for a new project and planning grant period cannot exceed one year.
Available to New Applicants	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

\*New formula applicants and those granted a DEI waiver may be allowed a higher cost per MSY

\*\* Per 42 U.S.C. § 12581a, the Corporation may provide the operational support under this section for a program in an amount that is not more than \$800 per individual enrolled in an approved national service position, or not more than \$1,000 per such individual if at least 50 percent of the persons enrolled in the program are disadvantaged youth.

FT = Full time, TQT = Three Quarter Time, HT= Half Time, RHT = Reduced Half Time, QT = Quarter Time, MT = Minimum Time, AT = Abbreviated Time

**C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

**C.1. Eligible Applicants**

The Formula process is open to both new and returning eligible applicants. The following Non-Federal entities (all of which are defined in 2 CFR §200.1) are eligible to apply:

- Indian Tribes
- Institutions of higher education
- Local governments
- Nonprofit organizations
- States

Applicants must have a valid SAM registration and [DUNS and/or Unique Entity Identifier] to receive an award. See Section on Unique entity identifier Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) for more information.

**a. Types of Applicants -Service Area Types**

Single-State Applicants

Organizations that propose to operate only in Iowa<sup>3</sup> must apply through the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service (Volunteer Iowa). Each state service commission administers its own selection process and submits the applicants it selects for funding directly to AmeriCorps. A Single-State application from Iowa that is submitted directly to AMERICORPS by the applicant rather than to Volunteer Iowa will be considered noncompliant and will not be reviewed. See the Mandatory Supplemental Information for descriptions of National Direct and Single-State applicants.

#### **National Direct Applicants<sup>4</sup>**

- *Multi-State:* Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one State or Territory apply directly to AMERICORPS. However, AmeriCorps National Direct sponsor organizations may be eligible to apply for an AmeriCorps State grant for the Iowa-only portion of their program (should their overall program or expansion request not be competitively funded by AMERICORPS). Such applicants may be required to submit proof of application to AMERICORPS for a national direct grant in order to participate in a formula-only competition through Volunteer Iowa.
- *States and Territories without Commissions:* Applicants in South Dakota, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands apply directly to AMERICORPS because this State and these Territories do not have an established Commission.
- *Federally-Recognized Indian Tribes:* Applicants that are Indian Tribes apply directly to AMERICORPS. In addition to Indian Tribes as defined in 2 CFR 200.1, tribal organizations that are controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by Federally recognized Indian Tribes are also eligible to apply. If an entity applies for an award as a tribal organization that is controlled or chartered by one or more Indian Tribes, the organization must provide copies of, or links to, documentation which demonstrates that the organization is controlled or chartered by a Federally recognized Indian tribe. Tribe. If an entity applies as an organization sanctioned by a Federally recognized Tribe, or multiple specific Federally recognized Tribes, it must submit a sanctioning resolution, adopted by the Tribal Council (or comparable tribal governing body) of each Indian Tribe. The resolution(s) must identify the entity applying for an AMERICORPS award by name as a Tribal organization that is sanctioned by the Indian Tribe(s) for the purpose of applying for AMERICORPS funding (or Federal grant funds generally).

In addition to being eligible to apply under this RFA, Federally recognized Indian Tribes will also be eligible to apply for operating or planning grants under a separate Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity for Indian Tribes to be released later in the fall with an application deadline in the spring. AMERICORPS may request applicants apply under the Tribal competition, rather than under this RFA.

#### **a. Types of Applicants -Experience Level Types**

**New Applicants.** New applicants are those that have not previously received an AmeriCorps State or National operational grant, are not currently managing an AmeriCorps State or National program, are a current AmeriCorps planning grantee requesting the first year of operational funding or are submitting an application for a program design or funding type for which they have not previously received AmeriCorps funding. Volunteer Iowa and AMERICORPS encourage organizations that have not received prior funding to apply.

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<sup>3</sup> Volunteer Iowa has signed memorandums of understanding with the neighboring states of Illinois, Missouri, and Nebraska allowing members of Iowa programs to be placed or to provide service at sites in these states that are within 40 miles of the Iowa border. This agreement allows Iowa programs to effectively serve community or regional needs that span state borders.

<sup>4</sup> Although National Direct applicants do not have to apply to Commissions, there are substantial requirements to coordinate with the Commissions for states in which national service programs will operate. See the *Coordination among State Commission & National Direct Applicants* section of the CNCS NOFO for information on these important requirements.

New applicants are eligible to apply for formula Cost Reimbursement, Education Award Program (EAP), and Full-Cost Fixed Amount grants but may be required to undergo additional financial screening before being awarded a Fixed Amount grant. Volunteer Iowa may award formula Full-Cost Fixed Amount funding to new applicants who demonstrate strong experience with grant management and solid financial management systems.

Returning Applicants include both recompeting and continuation applicants.

- *Recompeting Applicants.* Current competitively funded grantees entering the final year of their three-year grant period and current formula grantees not deemed eligible for continuation funding must submit a new full application in a process known as recompetition. In addition to the basic application information, recompeting programs may be asked to describe program impact and accomplishments for the previous years of AmeriCorps funding received, including reporting on performance measures. Recompeting applicants may be asked to provide data regarding AmeriCorps member enrollment and retention rates for the same period. Finally, recompeting applicants may be required to submit an evaluation plan and/or summary report. Such applicants are advised that previous site visit reports, performance records, program progress reports, financial reports and eGrants member documentation, as well as member enrollment and retention rates, will be reviewed as part of the selection process.
- *Continuation Applicants.* Current competitive AmeriCorps State grantees that are in years one or two of their three-year competitive grant are considered continuation applicants (current formula programs will also be considered for continuation funding based upon their responses in the required pre-application and will be notified if they are invited to submit a final application for formula continuation funding). Continuation applicants submit an abbreviated application in order to be considered for continued funding of their grant. Continuation funding is not guaranteed and may be limited to a certain amount. Continuation applicants do not re-enter all of the application information; rather their original application is carried over within the eGrants system and they provide updates on program performance and explanations of any program modifications in a special field. Continuation applicants should make special note of which application requirements in this RFA do and do not apply to them, and they should refer to the section for continuation applicants within the Final Application Instructions.

Previous Applicants. Previous applicants include those who were funded at one time and are seeking AmeriCorps funding once again. Depending upon the length of time elapsed since the previous funding and whether the proposed program is determined to be the same project as previously funded, previous applicants may be required to provide information regarding their previous year(s) of AmeriCorps program funding in the current application. Previous applicants may also be required to submit an evaluation summary and/or plan. Previous applicants are likely required to submit a “New” application but should confirm this with the Volunteer Iowa program development officer.

## **C.2. Threshold Issues**

Applications should reflect that they meet the following threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying.

- Volunteer Iowa generally expects programs to engage a minimum of 8 full-time AmeriCorps members or the equivalent number of MSYs, (such as 16 half-time, or 5 full-time and 12 quarter time). Applicants should see the Volunteer Iowa FAQs for more information about the program size threshold. However, Volunteer Iowa has a waiver form to request an exception to its 8 MSY minimum. MSY minimum does not apply to planning grants, as they do not engage any members and therefore have no MSY.
- Volunteer Iowa is offering a full-cost fixed amount micro grant as part of the current formula competition. Under this program model, applicants would only need to meet a 3MSY minimum but some additional

limitations and program management requirements may be put in place to make such a small grant feasible, both for the applicant and for Volunteer Iowa. Micro-grantees are limited to FT, TQT, HT slots only and may be required to use Volunteer-Iowa identified vendors for member payroll, timekeeping, NSCHC, and other program management tasks and may be required to use Volunteer Iowa-developed templates for member service agreements, member enrollment plans, and other required grant forms. Specific requirements/restrictions for micro-grantees will be outlined in the award letter and grant agreement.

- Professional Corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a Professional Corps by AMERICORPS must demonstrate that the community in which they will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.
- If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring programs: 45 CFR §2522.910-.940), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.
- All applicants must propose program designs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. Applicants assessed as lower than the Preliminary evidence tier (i.e., Pre-Preliminary) must provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality review criteria in order to be considered for funding
- New applicant organizations must submit a copy of the most recent agency audit or financial review with their final application submission.

**C.3. Cost Sharing or Matching**

***Fixed Amount Grants***

There is no specific match requirement for Fixed Amount grants. AMERICORPS does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program; therefore, organizations should raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.

New applicants are eligible to apply for Full Cost Fixed Amount competitive grants but additional screening may be required.

***Cost Reimbursement Grants***

Applicants are required to match funds based on the chart below. The applicant’s match can be non-AMERICORPS cash and/or in-kind contributions. Applicants must indicate whether the match is proposed or secured. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet the match requirement at the time of application submission. See the Funding Restrictions Section. for more information.

A first-time successful applicant is required to match at 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in 45 CFR §2521.60 and below.

AmeriCorps Funding Year	1, 2, 3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Grantee Share Requirements	24%	26%	30%	34%	38%	42%	46%	50%

Law requires that grantees that use other Federal funds as matching funds for an AmeriCorps grant to report those amounts and sources to AMERICORPS on a Federal Financial Report.<sup>5</sup> Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout.

<sup>5</sup> Section 121(e)(5) of NCSA (42 U.S.C. §12571(e)).

***Alternative Match***

Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in the regulations.<sup>6</sup> To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Pre-Application Instructions. Applicants who plan to request an alternative match schedule must submit a request to Volunteer Iowa at the time the pre-application is submitted, following instructions in the Pre-Application Waiver Worksheets. Volunteer Iowa will then submit the request to AMERICORPS on the applicant’s behalf.

***Match Waiver***

AMERICORPS may waive, in whole or in part, the requirements of §§ [2521.45](#) and [2521.60](#) if AMERICORPS determines that a waiver would be equitable because of a lack of available financial resources at the local level. In recent years AMERICORPS granted a blanket match waiver related to COVID-19. However, AMERICORPS has not issued a blanket match waiver for FY2022-2023 at this time and has instead issued guidance for requesting individual match waivers. Applicants wishing to submit a match waiver specific to their program should follow the instructions in the Pre-Application Waiver Worksheets. Such requests must be approved by Volunteer Iowa before they will be submitted to AMERICORPS for consideration.

**C.4. Other Eligibility Requirements**

Under section 132A(b) of the NCSA of 1990, as amended, organizations that have been convicted of a Federal crime may not receive assistance described in this RFA. Applications that propose to engage in activities that are prohibited under AMERICORPS’s statutes, regulations, or the terms and conditions of its awards are not eligible to receive AMERICORPS funding.

Note that under appropriations provisions annually enacted by Congress, if AMERICORPS is aware that any corporation has any unpaid Federal tax liability—

- that has been assessed,
- for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and
- that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability—

then that corporation is not eligible for an award under this RFA. However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a Federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has determined that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the Federal government.

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(4) that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for AMERICORPS funding.

**D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

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This RFA should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520–2550, the Mandatory Supplemental Information, Volunteer Iowa Pre-Application and Final Application Instructions, and the AMERICORPS Performance Measure Instructions which are incorporated by reference. These documents can be found at on the [AmeriCorps State Grants page of the Volunteer Iowa website](#). The full Regulations are available online at [www.ecfr.gov](http://www.ecfr.gov).

Please note that single-state applicants that apply to Volunteer Iowa through this RFA have different deadlines, additional required documents, and different instructions than applicants to AMERICORPS. Please ensure that if

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<sup>6</sup> 45 Code of Federal Regulations CFR 2521.60(b)



you are an Iowa-only applicant, you use this RFA to complete your proposal to Volunteer Iowa and not the Notice of Funding Opportunity from AMERICORPS.

### **D.1. Application Materials**

Applicants should refer to the [AmeriCorps State Grants page of the Volunteer Iowa website](#) to obtain the necessary information to apply. Upon request, this material will be made available in alternate formats for people with disabilities. All such requests should be directed to the Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps program staff, at [americorps@volunteeriowa.org](mailto:americorps@volunteeriowa.org) or 1-800-308-5987.

### **D.2. Content and Form of Application Submission**

In order to be considered for selection, applicants must submit a complete application in response to this RFA; an application consists of both a pre-application and a final application. The eGrants system is the official application system for AMERICORPS and SurveyMonkey and IowaGrants are the official application systems for Volunteer Iowa.

Applicants who previously applied and received feedback from Volunteer Iowa and/or from AMERICORPS in the competitive review process should review the feedback to ensure that the noted issues have been addressed. While the application instructions have changed, comments that are reflective of inadequate elements of the application may still apply.

#### **a. Application Content**

The pre-application and final application stage each have specific required content and additional documents. Applications lacking key information or that are substantially incomplete will be rejected by Volunteer Iowa. Applicants should carefully review the Pre-Application Instructions, and for Final Applications should review the Application Submission Checklists, to ensure that all required items are submitted for each round. Consider submitting the application in advance of the deadline, to allow additional time to submit any documentation determined to be missing. Volunteer Iowa may provide additional technical assistance at the final application phase to ensure applicants successfully submit in the eGrants and IowaGrants systems.

#### **Pre-Applications**

Formula pre-applications must include the following elements submitted via email:

- Cover page
- Readiness & eligibility assessment
- Logic model & program design narrative
- Organizational chart & organizational capacity narrative
- Budget
- Waiver & certification requests

#### **Final Applications**

Complete final applications must include the following elements submitted in eGrants:

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: This is automatically generated when applicants complete the data elements in the eGrants system.
- Narrative Sections:
  - Executive Summary: This is a brief description of the proposed program.
  - Program Design
  - Organizational Capability
  - Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy
  - Evaluation Summary/Plan

- Logic Model
- Performance Measures
- Standard Form 424A Budget
- Continuation Changes
- Clarification
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications <sup>7</sup>

Final applications also include the following elements submitted in IowaGrants:

- Copy of eGrants application submission as noted above.
- Required supporting documents

#### **b. Page Limits**

There are page limits for the Narratives and Logic Model for Final Formula Applications.

##### Narratives

Final applications must not exceed 12 double-spaced pages for the Narratives or 14 pages for Rural Intermediaries as printed in pdf format from the eGrants application system. The application sections that count towards the narrative page limit are the:

- SF 424 Facesheet
- Executive Summary
- Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy narratives.

The application narrative page limit does NOT include the Budget, Performance Measures, or any required additional documents.

##### Logic Model

The Logic Model may not exceed three pages when printed with the application from the “Review” tab in eGrants, AMERICORPS’ web-based management system.

Please note that the length of the application as a word processing document may differ from the length of the document printed out from eGrants and the character limits in eGrants do not align with the page limits set here. **AMERICORPS strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the “Review and Submit” tab in eGrants prior to submission in order to confirm that the application does not exceed the page limit.**

AMERICORPS will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods when determining if an application complies with the page limit. Reviewers will also not consider material that is over the page limit, even if eGrants allows applicants to enter and submit additional text.

#### **D.3. Unique Entity Identifier & System for Award Management (SAM)**

All applicants **must** register with the System for Award Management ([SAM](#)) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete and, if a grant is awarded, throughout the life of the award. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees at:

[https://sam.gov/SAM/transcript/Quick\\_Guide\\_for\\_Grants\\_Registrations.pdf](https://sam.gov/SAM/transcript/Quick_Guide_for_Grants_Registrations.pdf)

SAM registration must be renewed annually. Volunteer Iowa is responsible for ensuring Iowa applicants have compliant registrations. AMERICORPS suggests that applicants finalize a new registration or renew an existing

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<sup>7</sup> <https://egrants.cns.gov/cnsmisc/ECERTS.HTM> and <https://egrants.cns.gov/cnsmisc/EASSUR.HTM>

one at least three weeks before the application deadline to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise. Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and address on all grant applications to AMERICORPS.

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.

Applications must include an Employer Identification Number.

Applications must include a DUNS number. Applicants can obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online at the [DUNS Request Service](#). AmeriCorps recommends registering at least 30 days before the application due date.

The Federal government is implementing Unique Entity Identifiers (UEI) as part of the SAM registration process to eventually replace DUNS numbers. AmeriCorps may ask applicants to add the UEI to their application as part of the clarification or pre-award process. AmeriCorps is adding a field to capture the UEI in eGrants. If you already have a UEI and the UEI field is available in eGrants, you can enter it at the time you submit your application.

#### **D.4. Submission Dates and Times**

##### **a. Notification of Intent to Apply**

There is no notification of intent to apply for this competition.

##### **b. Application Submission Deadlines**

Formula Pre-Applications are due February 3, 2022 or March 3, 2022 by 10:59 p.m. Central Time. Formula Final Applications are due March 15, 2022 for returning programs or April 5, 2022 for new programs, by 10:59 p.m. Central Time.

Please see the Important Dates section at the beginning of this RFA for all important dates and deadlines. Volunteer Iowa has different deadlines, additional required documents, and different instructions than AMERICORPS, so Iowa applicants must refer to Volunteer Iowa application materials. Volunteer Iowa reserves the right to extend the submission deadline and any notice of such extended deadline will be posted to the [AmeriCorps State Grants page of the Volunteer Iowa website](#)

##### **c. Additional Documents Deadlines**

Any required additional documents are due on the corresponding pre-application or final application deadline. See *Submission of Additional Documents* section for guidance regarding which additional documents are due at which round of the process.

##### **d. Late Applications**

Applications received after the submission deadline published in the RFA may be presumed to be non-compliant. In order to overcome this presumption, the applicant must respond to Volunteer Iowa's requests for explanation of the delay, such as the following:

- submit a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that caused the delay, including:

- the timing and specific cause(s) of the delay
- documentation of any requests for technical assistance that were sent to IowaGrants or the AMERICORPS grants management system hotline and the responses received
- any other documentation or evidence that supports the justification;
- ensure that Volunteer Iowa receives the justification and any other evidence that substantiates the claimed extenuating circumstance(s) via email to [americorps@volunteeriowa.org](mailto:americorps@volunteeriowa.org) or in another format and by any deadline established by Volunteer Iowa staff.

Communication with Volunteer Iowa and/or AMERICORPS staff, including an applicant’s portfolio manager, is not a substitute for providing the requested response, such as a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance that caused the delay as outlined above. Applicants are required to continue working in the application systems to submit the application. Volunteer Iowa will determine whether or not to accept a late application on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the chair of the Grant Review Committee. Applicants that do not meet the application submission deadline, and do not submit a written explanation or justification or any other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the requested timeframe, will not be reviewed or selected for award.

**Please note:** Volunteer Iowa and AMERICORPS will *not typically* consider an advance request to submit a late application. Please carefully review and follow the guidance in this section and submit your application as soon as possible.

**D.5. Intergovernmental Review**

This RFA is not subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

**D.6. Funding Restrictions- Award Funding Requirements**

**a. Member Living Allowance**

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. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time member, it must comply with the maximum limits in the table below. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either AMERICORPS or grantee share. Exceptions are noted below.

While Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to submit detailed budgets, they are still required to provide a living allowance to members that complies with the minimum and maximum requirements. Exceptions are noted below. Fixed Amount grant applicants should indicate that amount in the application.

**Table: Service Terms with Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance**

Service Term	Member Service Year (MSY) Equivalent	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1.0	1,700	\$16,502	\$33,004
Three Quarter-time	0.7	1,200	n/a	\$23,103
Half-time	0.5	900	n/a	\$16,502
Reduced Half-time	0.3809524	675	n/a	\$12,542
Quarter-time	0.26455027	450	n/a	\$8,581

Minimum-time	0.21164022	300	n/a	\$6,931
Abbreviated-time	0.05627705	100	n/a	\$1,980

***Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements:***

- Programs existing prior to September 21, 1993 are not required to offer a living allowance. If an applicant chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement, but not the maximum requirement.
- EAP Grantees are not required to provide a living allowance, but if a living allowance is provided, it must comply with the maximum requirements set forth in the Living Allowance Table above.
- Professional Corps Grantees must provide members a living allowance or salary, which must meet the minimum, but may exceed the maximum living allowance set in the Living Allowance Table above. Professional Corps member salaries and benefits including childcare are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve and are not included in the budget request to AMERICORPS (Federal share).

**b. Maximum Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)**

The AMERICORPS cost per MSY is determined by dividing the AMERICORPS share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested. It does not include childcare or the value of the education award a member may earn. The maximum amount an applicant may request from AMERICORPS per MSY is determined on an annual basis. New and re-competing Commission subgrantees/applicants will be held to the maximum cost per MSY for their grant type. Cost per MSY limits do not apply to planning grants, since they do not engage members; instead planning grants may request no more than \$75,000 in federal funding.

**Table: Maximum Cost per MSY**

<b>Grant Program</b>	<b>Maximum Award</b>
Returning Cost Reimbursement or Full-Cost Fixed Amount Program (formula)	\$25,200*
New or DEI Waiver-approved Cost Reimbursement or Full-Cost Fixed Amount Program (formula)	\$28,800
Professional Corps Fixed Amount	\$1,000**
Education Award Program Fixed Amount	\$800 or \$1000***

\*Volunteer Iowa reserves the right to consider a higher cost per MSY for individual applicants due to special circumstances, such as disaster, or according to the DEI cost/MSY waiver or because they are new programs. The maximum that can be awarded for any individual formula program is \$28,800 per MSY

\*\*AmeriCorps requires **Professional Corps** programs to cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non AmeriCorps resources. AmeriCorps will only consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate significant organizational financial need. AmeriCorps reserves the right to 1) treat an applicant that meets the statutory requirements of a Professional Corps as such, whether or not they submitted their application as a professional corps program; and 2) determine whether an applicant has demonstrated inability to effectively operate in the absence of AmeriCorps operating funds.

\*\*\* Per 42 U.S.C. 12581a, the Corporation may provide the operational support under this section for a program in an amount that is not more than \$800 per individual enrolled in an approved national service position, or not more than \$1,000 per such individual if at least 50 percent of the persons enrolled in the program are disadvantaged youth.

**c. Segal AmeriCorps Education Award**

AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service will be eligible for an Education Award from the National Service Trust. The amount of the Education Award is linked to the value of the Pell Grant. A member has up to seven years after his or her term of service to use the Education Award. AMERICORPS will provide the updated Education Award amounts at the time of grant award.

**d. Indirect Costs**

Application budgets may include indirect costs. Based on qualifying factors, applicants may either use a Federally-approved indirect cost rate, a 10 percent *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs, or may 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. All methods must be applied consistently across all Federal awards. Applicants that have a Federal negotiated indirect cost rate or that will be using the 10 percent *de minimis* rate must enter that information in the Organization section in eGrants. However, under section 121(d) of the NCSA and AMERICORPS's regulations at 45 CFR 2521.95 and 2540.110, no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps State and National grants.

The instructions for how to enter the organization's indirect cost rate are located here: [eGrants Indirect Cost Rate User Instructions](#). Applicants should not submit documentation addressing the indirect cost rate agreement via email. Please note: To request a Federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, when AMERICORPS is the applicable cognizant agency for an organization's indirect costs, the applicant must submit a request to [IndirectCostRate@cns.gov](mailto:IndirectCostRate@cns.gov). The applicant may also obtain instructions and additional information by contacting the email address above.

**e. Pre-Award Costs**

Pre-award costs, where authorized, are allowed after receiving written approval from Volunteer Iowa (the commission gets such approval through AMERICORPS).

**D.7. Other Submission Requirements**

AMERICORPS will assess an applicant's strategic considerations. Applicants must check the relevant boxes in the Program Information tab in AMERICORPS's web-based management system in order to be considered for AMERICORPS's assessment of the strategic considerations (see *Selection for Funding* section.) Applicants should only check the boxes if the strategic consideration is a significant and intentional part of their program design and implementation strategies are described in the application.

**a. Electronic Application Submission**

Pre-applications will be submitted to Volunteer Iowa within the online SurveyMonkey system. Final applications must be submitted to Volunteer Iowa electronically via eGrants, AMERICORPS's web-based application system, AND IowaGrants, Volunteer Iowa's application system. Proposals that do not meet the established deadlines or application requirements will be declined through the online system and may not be considered.

IowaGrants: This web-based system is used by the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service for the submission and review of grant applications and for the management of awarded AmeriCorps grants. IowaGrants is used for submission of the final application, including the supporting documents. All applicants must create an IowaGrants account, if they do not already have one, selecting the "AmeriCorps" program area. State of Iowa employees or individuals who may have registered for an IowaGrants or Iowa AnA account for other purposes should contact Volunteer Iowa for technical assistance with registration. More information about registering with IowaGrants is available at <https://www.iowagrants.gov>.

eGrants: AMERICORPS' web-based system is used by the Corporation for National and Community Service for the submission and tracking of grant applications. All applicants must create an account for submission of their final application. AMERICORPS recommends that applicants create an account and begin the application at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word processing document, then copy and paste the text into the appropriate field no later than ten days before the deadline.

The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the final application in the AMERICORPS eGrants system. The authorized representative must use his or her own eGrants account in order to electronically sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Applicants should contact the AmeriCorps at (800) 942-2677 or via eGrants [Questions](#) if a problem arises when creating an account or preparing or submitting the application in the AMERICORPS system. AmeriCorps Hotline hours are posted at <https://questions.americorps.gov/app/ask>. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the competition to which the organization is applying. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the AmeriCorps Hotline to submit their application via eGrants.

#### **b. Submission of Additional Documents**

Applicants are required to submit the additional documents below by the application submission deadline.

##### All applicants

1. Diversity Questionnaire
2. List of Proposed Project Sites. Include as much of the information as possible about the sites where AmeriCorps members would be placed including host site name, the host organization's relationship to the sponsor organization (a member of a coalition sponsored by the applicant, etc.), the address or geographic location of the host site, and the number of members to be placed at that site. If host sites are not yet determined, or if the applicant will serve as an intermediary and subgrant to sites, please explain what types of sites would be potential project sites and describe the process that will be used to select sites.
3. Contact information for applicant representative before the Grant Review Committee: Provide the name, title, email address, and phone number of one individual from the applicant agency who will represent the applicant before the Volunteer Iowa Grant Review Committee, as needed. Further details on the timing and process for such appearances will be sent to the representative in advance of the Grant Review Committee meeting.

##### New & re-competing applicants, as applicable

4. Evaluation briefs, reports, studies to support the Evidence Base (see narrative criteria for applicability).
5. State Priority Certification (if applicable). In order to receive designation as a state priority program under the categories noted, applicants must complete and submit the relevant sections of the State Priority Certification Application. Volunteer Iowa staff will review the application as indicated in the Certification Application and notify programs of their designation. Applicants who do not apply for certification but who are identified as meeting state priority requirements during grant review may be invited to apply for certification at a later date.
6. Waiver Forms (if applicable). Applicants who obtained an approved waiver as part of the pre-application process must upload a copy of the approved waiver information here



7. DUNS renewal date documentation (for applicants whose page is private): a screenshot or copy of the page confirming the renewal date.
8. Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate supporting documentation (if applicable): Applicants who will be using a federally approved indirect cost rate in their budget calculations must submit the approved indirect cost rate agreement letter to Volunteer Iowa, in addition to entering the information into the eGrants system.

Rural Intermediaries (New and recompeting)

9. Letters of support from the consortium members

Entities applying on behalf of a Federally Recognized Tribe (New and recompeting)

10. Tribal organization eligibility documentation. (See *Section C.1. Eligible Applicants* section.)

Applicants proposing to place AmeriCorps members at sites where they will be engaged in the same or substantially similar work as employees represented by a local labor organization

11. Labor union concurrence (See final application instructions)

New applicants only

12. Organizational Chart (submitted at pre-application phase): Provide a chart outlining the agency structure, showing where the proposed AmeriCorps program would fit. Include whether the intention would be to assign the project management to a current staff member or hire new staff.
13. Copy of Most Recent Agency Audit or Financial Review: For agencies whose audit is posted online (such as the State of Iowa), a copy of the link to the audit is acceptable. For smaller agencies that do not have an audit, a financial review that shows the following is acceptable in lieu of an audit: documentation that grant funds are tracked/segregated from other funds; documentation that grant funds are tracked/segregated by grant year/award; appropriate documentation of expenditures is kept (receipts, timesheets, etc.).

Additional documents must be uploaded to IowaGrants following the naming conventions outlined below (unless another submission format is specified for an individual document).

- Individually saved files that are clearly labeled with the legal applicant name, document name, and the AMERICORPS grant management system ID number (i.e. 22ACXXXXXX).
- If possible, each file should also include a header or title within the body of each additional document to include the legal applicant name, document name, and AMERICORPS application ID number.
- To ensure that all required additional documents are considered, please provide each document as a separate single file, labeled appropriately. Please do not send multiple documents in one combined file, and do not send a single document in multiple files.

Do not submit other items not requested in this RFA or Application Instructions. Volunteer Iowa and AMERICORPS will not review or return them.

Failure to submit the required additional documents by the deadline will have a negative effect on the assessment of your application and/or on the determination of the application's eligibility to advance for review. Applicants may also consult the Application Submission Checklists posted to the [AmeriCorps State Grants page of the Volunteer Iowa website](#) to confirm the additional documents to be submitted by their final application submission deadline. Please do not submit any items that are not requested in this Notice and Guidance. AMERICORPS will not review or return them.



Coordination among State Commissions and National Direct Applicants

AMERICORPS expects Commissions and National Direct applicants to consult and coordinate activities at the local level, as specified in Section 131 of the NCSA (42 U.S.C. § 12583). This consultation is designed to ensure the most effective use of national service resources and lead to enhanced coordination. Volunteer Iowa participates in the national direct consultation process coordinated by the America's Service Commissions and found at <https://www.statecommissions.org/national-direct-consultation>.

**D.8. Application Preparation & Certifications**

All applications, including supporting materials, become the property of Volunteer Iowa and shall not be returned to the applicant. All applications shall be placed in the public domain and are available upon request for inspection by interested parties at the conclusion of the selection process. No payments shall be made to cover costs incurred by any applicant in preparation for the submission of this Request for Grant Applications (RFA) or any other associated costs. Current grantees should note that AMERICORPS funds may not be used to cover expenses incurred in preparation of a response to this RFA.

Applications shall be electronically signed by an authorized representative of the applicant organization. The authorized representative is an individual, named by the applicant organization, who is authorized to act for the applicant and to assume the obligations imposed by the Federal laws, regulations, requirements, and conditions that apply to grant applications or grant awards. AMERICORPS preference is that the final application in eGrants be submitted by someone other than the AmeriCorps program director. By submission of an application, 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 an application 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.

Such certifications should not discourage collaboration among organizations in designing AmeriCorps programs.

***Acceptance of Application Terms and Conditions***

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

**E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

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**E.1. Pre-Application Review Criteria**

**a. New Applicants:** Volunteer Iowa staff will review the Pre-Applications. New applicants who demonstrate a clear and reasonable plan for using AmeriCorps to address a community need and the potential to host a strong AmeriCorps program will be formally invited to submit a Final Application (see full review criteria in the Pre-Application Instructions).

**b. Returning Applicants:** Volunteer Iowa staff have previously reviewed each Returning Project Pre-Application and notified the applicant of the outcome of the review via email. Those applicants invited to submit a full grant application according to the formula Final Application Instructions will follow the criteria in this RFA.

**E.2. Final Application Review Criteria for Formula Program Grants**

Each applicant must describe a project that will deploy AmeriCorps members effectively to solve a significant community problem. Volunteer Iowa and AMERICORPS urge applicants to submit high quality applications that

carefully follow the guidance in this *RFA* and in the Application Instructions. The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization will receive funding.

See the relevant application review criteria worksheets for guidance. Certain criteria for selection are differentiated by applicant type, so applicants should refer to their final application submission recommendation to determine which criteria to address in their application. Contact the Volunteer Iowa Program Development Officer regarding any questions as to which criteria pertain to you.

### **E.3. Criteria for Continuation Grants**

See the continuation criteria worksheet.

### **E.4. Review and Selection Process**

AMERICORPS will engage External and Staff Reviewers, and Volunteer Iowa will engage External, Commissioner, and Staff Reviewers; with relevant knowledge and expertise to assess and provide input on the eligible applications. The review and selection process is intended to produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and strategic considerations described in this RFA. The determinations made by reviewers may be different than what the applicant self-determined upon submission of its application. The stages of the review and selection process follow:

#### **a. Compliance and Eligibility Review**

Volunteer Iowa and AMERICORPS will conduct an initial Compliance and Eligibility Review to determine if an application meets the eligibility requirements published in this RFA and advances to the next stage of the review process.

An application is compliant if the applicant:

- is an eligible organization
- is eligible to submit to Volunteer Iowa
- submitted an application by the submission deadline & meeting requirements listed in this RFA

Reviewing for compliance and eligibility is intended to ensure that only those applications that are eligible for award are further reviewed. However, a determination of eligibility can take place at any point during the application review and selection process. Applicants that are determined to be non-compliant and/or ineligible will not receive an award.

*New, returning, or re-competing applicants.*

Pre-applications and final applications for funding must be submitted as instructed by Volunteer Iowa staff. Staff will review pre-applications and final applications for adequacy and completeness, including submission of any required attachments or supporting documents, as well as compliance with Federal and/or state requirements. For competitions with a competitive national funding option, staff will also review for quality and suitability for being submitted to the national competition.

Final applications meeting requirements and received by the deadline are eligible for review and consideration by the Grant Review Committee. In advance of the Grant Review Committee meeting, staff may work with applicants to provide feedback and to allow time for applicants to make changes before the final application is submitted to the Grant Review Committee. Staff may share feedback from the grant review process and any federal or state-level grant review with the applicants as part of the continuous improvement process.

Staff is ultimately responsible for submitting any required prime grant applications, encompassing individual sub-applications, to the Corporation for National and Community Service (AMERICORPS), based on Commission recommendations and in accordance with AMERICORPS application materials.

*Continuation applicants*

These applicants will undergo a thorough staff review but will not be included in the Grant Review Committee process. Based on staff review, comments and suggestions for improvement will be provided to the applicants and they will have an opportunity to make changes to their grant applications. Staff will discuss the continuation applicants with the Programs & Development Committee during its grant application consideration and recommendation cycle. If staff deems that any significant member, financial or program management issues exist, a discussion related to the program and its application status will occur at the Programs Committee level.

If a continuation applicant includes an expansion request in their continuation request, this expansion may be considered for the Volunteer Iowa state formula competition (if not eligible for/awarded at the federal level). The applicant must follow instructions for submitting a full formula funding request, as needed.

**b. Application Criteria Review**

*Volunteer Iowa Review of New & Re-competing Formula Applicants:*

• **Grant Review Committee Role**

The Grant Review Committee, and staff or outside experts as needed, will read applications and, based on the criteria provided, score the applications and provide comments and feedback. Typically, Grant Review Committee reviewers do not score all components of the application; instead they score only certain components in a way that mirrors the national competition or fits with their training and expertise. In addition, the Grant Review Committee may invite applicants to provide presentations or respond to questions from the committee. The Grant Review Committee will determine a consensus rank order for the applications based on the information received during the grant review process. The rank order will be provided to the Programs Committee of the Commission.

• **Programs & Development Committee Role**

The Programs & Development Committee will consider the information from the Grant Review Committee, as well as staff feedback and recommendations. Staff will provide feedback to the Programs & Development Committee pertaining to the grant application in technical areas such as budget, evidence-based performance measures and overall program development. For existing grantees, staff will share prior program performance information obtained through site visits; program, financial and member monitoring; and other factors related to quality program management and outcomes. In addition, staff will review financial reports and organizational capability from new applicants and provide feedback to the committee on their capacity to effectively manage the proposed grant.

The Programs & Development Committee will also consider other factors as appropriate for funding depending on the grant program, such as state and federal funding priorities, program distribution across the state, diversity of program models, diversity of issue areas, planning grant opportunities, cost effectiveness and cost per Member Service Year (MSY). In addition, funding recommendations of the Programs & Development Committee will consider the amount of funding available, sustainability for existing programs, potential supplemental funding opportunities, and other relevant data.

The Programs & Development Committee will use the information from the Grant Review Committee, applicant presentations, considerations noted above, and staff feedback to make a recommendation on funding of

applications to the Commission. The timing of the Programs Committee recommendation may be impacted by national-level competitive funding decisions from AMERICORPS or other funders.

*AMERICORPS Review of New & Re-competing Competitive Applicants:*

• **External Review**

External Reviewers will review and assess the evidence criteria in the RFA. AMERICORPS will recruit and select reviewers on the basis of demonstrated expertise. All External Reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

• **Internal Review**

AMERICORPS staff will evaluate the applications using the application review criteria and assess the priorities and strategic considerations detailed in the RFA. Reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

AmeriCorps will review and assess the input from the Commission about National Direct applications.

**c. Applicant Clarification**

Volunteer Iowa and/or AMERICORPS may ask an applicant for clarifying information. AMERICORPS staff and Volunteer Iowa commissioners will use this information to make funding recommendations. Not all applications receive clarifications. A request for clarification does not guarantee an award. Applicants may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked for clarifying information. An applicant's failure to respond to a request for clarification adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of its application from consideration.

**d. Pre-Award Risk Assessment**

Volunteer Iowa and AMERICORPS staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant by assessing an applicant's ability to manage Federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to assessments of the applicant's eligibility for funding and the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If Volunteer Iowa or AMERICORPS determines that an award will be made to an applicant with assessed risks, special conditions that correspond to the degree of assessed risk may be applied to the award. Additionally, if Volunteer Iowa and/or AMERICORPS concludes that the reasons for applicants having a poor risk assessment are not likely to be mitigated, those applications may not be selected for funding.

In evaluating risks, Volunteer Iowa or AMERICORPS may consider the following criteria:

Due Diligence:

- Federal debt delinquency
- Suspension and debarment
- Information available through OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as:
  - Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)
  - U.S. Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services
  - System for Award Management (SAM)
  - "Do Not Pay"
- Reports and findings from single audits performed under Uniform Administrative Guidance and findings of any other available audits or investigations
- IRS Tax Form 990

- Oversight.gov
- Public Litigation Records

**Operational and Financial Management:**

- Financial stability
- Operational and Financial Management Survey <sup>8</sup>

**Past Performance:**

- Applicant's record in managing previous AmeriCorps awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
  - timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements
  - conformance to the terms and conditions of previous Federal awards
  - applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on award recipients
  - meeting matching requirements
  - the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
  - national service criminal history check compliance.
- Grant Progress reports- attainment of Performance Measures
- Enrollment and retention
- Monitoring findings- AMERICORPS and/or OIG (if applicable) and Volunteer Iowa

**Other Programmatic Risks:**

- Publicly available information; including information from the applicant organization's website

**Fiscal Preassessment:** Applicants who submit a response to this RFA may be subject to a fiscal pre-assessment review by Volunteer Iowa. This includes a review of the financial systems and capabilities of the organization to adequately account for management of federal funds. Volunteer Iowa will 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 Volunteer Iowa.

Volunteer Iowa staff will assess re-competing subgrantees' past performance using the criteria above and submit those assessments of competitive applicants to AMERICORPS. This assessment is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding or the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this assessment will inform funding decisions.

**e. Consideration of Integrity and Performance System Information**

Prior to making any award that exceeds \$250,000, AMERICORPS is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM and FAPIIS (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). Additionally, AMERICORPS may expand upon these requirements and use its discretion to review and consider information about any applicant receiving an award, including those under \$250,000.

Any applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through FAPIIS and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management/financial-and-grants-management>

previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through FAPIIS.

AMERICORPS may consider any comments by any applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing its review of risk posed by the applicant under the Risk Assessment Evaluation section of this RFA.

#### **f. Selection for Funding**

*Competitive Applicants:* The review and selection process is designed to:

- identify how well eligible applications are aligned with the application review criteria
- build a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:
  - AMERICORPS Funding Priorities (See *Section A.2. AMERICORPS Focus Areas & Funding Priorities*)
  - meaningful representation of
    - rural communities
    - innovative community strategies

Based on the evaluation of these strategic considerations, applications may be selected for funding over applications with a greater degree of alignment with the review criteria. In selecting applicants to receive awards under their Notice, the AMERICORPS Chief Executive Officer will endeavor to include a diverse portfolio of applications based on staff recommendations and strategic considerations.

AmeriCorps will assess an applicant's strategic considerations. Applicants must check the relevant boxes in the Program Information tab in AmeriCorps' web-based management system in order to be considered for AmeriCorps' assessment of the strategic considerations (see *Selection for Funding* section.) Applicants should only check the boxes if the strategic consideration is a significant and intentional part of their program design and if implementation strategies are described in the application.

*Volunteer Iowa rights:* Volunteer Iowa reserves the right to accept or reject any exception taken by an applicant to the terms and conditions of this RFA. Should the successful applicant take exception to the terms and conditions required by Volunteer Iowa, the successful applicant's exceptions may be rejected, and Volunteer Iowa may elect to terminate negotiations with that applicant. However, Volunteer Iowa may elect to negotiate with the successful applicant regarding grant agreement terms that do not materially alter the substantive requirements of the RFA or the contents of the applicant's submission. Volunteer Iowa staff reserves the right to negotiate, or refuse to negotiate, any and all aspects of the grant application, including performance measures, funding amounts, program components, and training requirements, at any time prior to issuance of the grant agreement, including during the grant submission, review, and negotiation periods.

Volunteer Iowa and AMERICORPS reserve the right to prioritize funding existing awards over making new awards. Volunteer Iowa and AMERICORPS reserve the right to award applications in an amount other than at the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so.

***Volunteer Iowa and AMERICORPS reserve the right to adjust or make changes to the review process, in the event that unforeseen challenges or exigent circumstances make it impossible, impractical or inefficient to conduct the review process as planned. Any such adjustments or changes will not affect the selection criteria that will be used to assess applications.***

#### **E.5. Feedback to Applicants**

Following grant awards, each applicant will receive feedback pertaining to their compliant application. Feedback will be based on the review of the original application and may not reflect information provided during the clarification.

### **E.6. Transparency in Grant-making**

AMERICORPS is committed to transparency in grant-making. The following information for new and re-competing competitive applications will be published on <http://www.americorps.gov/partner/funding-opportunities/funded-grants> within 90 business days after all grants are awarded:

- a list of all approved applications
- executive summaries of all approved applications
- data extracted from the SF-424 Face Sheet
- a blank template of the external review worksheet
- a list of all external reviewers who completed the review process

Information about funded grants and subgrants is also available in USASpending.gov. Submitted program narratives and a summary of external reviewer comments for successful applications will be available upon request via email to [OGAGarp@cns.gov](mailto:OGAGarp@cns.gov).

## **F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

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### **F.1. Federal Award Notices**

Volunteer Iowa and AMERICORPS will make awards following the grant selection announcement. Please see the Important Dates section at the beginning of this RFA for the funding notification dates, contingent on the availability and timeliness of congressional appropriations. Formula awards are anticipated to be announced by late May 2022. All applicants, successful or not, will be notified of funding decisions via email.

Notification of an award is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The Volunteer Iowa grant agreement signed by Volunteer Iowa and the grantee organization is the only document authorizing awardees to commence grant activities. An awardee may not expend federal funds until the start of the Project Period identified in the grant agreement, unless it has received a written pre-award cost approval from Volunteer Iowa.

Notification of an award is not an authorization to begin activities. The Volunteer Iowa grant agreement is the authorizing document. An awardee may not expend Federal funds until the start of the Period of Performance identified in the Volunteer Iowa grant agreement unless it has received a written pre-award cost approval from AmeriCorps.

### **F.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

#### **a. Uniform Guidance**

All awards under this RFA are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), in [2 CFR Parts 200](#) and [2205](#).

#### **b. Requests for Improper Payment Information**

AMERICORPS may request documentation from recipients in order to monitor the award or to comply with other legal requirements, such as the [Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019](#). Failure to make timely responses to these requests may result in award funds being placed on manual hold, reimbursement only status, or other remedies as appropriate.

#### **c. AMERICORPS Terms and Conditions**

All awards made under this RFA will be subject to the FY 2022 General Terms and Conditions, and the FY 2022 AmeriCorps Program Specific Terms and Conditions for the particular program (when applicable.) These Terms and Conditions contain detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the AMERICORPS General and Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available at <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/directs-territories-tribes>.

**d. Governing Documents**

The AmeriCorps regulations and the Terms and Conditions are incorporated into the Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps grant agreement. The grant agreement also incorporates the approved application and budget. Other documents incorporated by reference into the grant agreement include audit requirements, this Volunteer Iowa RFA and the Application Instructions, and the Volunteer Iowa AmeriCorps Program Director Manual (copies of recent Program Director Manuals are posted at <https://volunteeriowa.org/amicorps/current-amicorps-grantee-resources>). A copy of the most recent grant agreement template is available upon request.

**e. National Service Criminal History Check Requirements**

The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a specific screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service.

- In general, award recipients and subrecipients must conduct an NSCHC for AmeriCorps members, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, and staff funded under, or whose salary is reflected as match on, the award.
- AmeriCorps strongly encourages applicants to review the regulations and additional guidance to fully understand how to comply with the requirements.<sup>9</sup>
- AmeriCorps also strongly encourages funded applicants to utilize the two AmeriCorps-approved vendors to conduct the required NSCHCs.<sup>10</sup>
- Failure to conduct a compliant NSCHC may result in significant disallowed costs.
- The cost of conducting NSCHC is an allowable expense under the award and the individual subject to the NSCHC may not be required to cover the cost without being reimbursed.

A NSCHC consists of a check of the:

1. National Sex Offender Public website through NSOPW.gov (nationwide check);
2. State criminal history record repository or agency-designated alternative for the individual's State of residence *and* State of service; and
3. Fingerprint-based check of the FBI criminal history record database through the State criminal history record repository or agency-approved vendor.

All checks must be conducted, reviewed, and an eligibility determination made before the individual begins work or service.

An individual is not eligible to serve or work in a position subject to the NSCHC requirements if:

- the individual refuses to consent to a criminal history check;
- makes a false statement in connection with a criminal history check;
- is registered, or is required to be registered, on a state sex offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry; or
- has been convicted of murder.

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<sup>9</sup> NSCHC regulations and guidance: <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check>

<sup>10</sup> Two pre-approved NSCHC vendors: <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/history-check>.



See [45 CFR 2540.200– 2540.207](#) and [National Service Criminal History Check Resources](#) for complete information and FAQs.

Volunteer Iowa requires most new grantees to utilize the two vendors AMERICORPS has engaged to conduct the required NSCHCs.

#### **f. Official Guidance**

All AMERICORPS active Guidance is available on the agency's Guidance webpage:

<https://www.americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/official-guidance>. The contents of these documents do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way unless incorporated into a contract or grant agreement. These documents are intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

#### **F.3. Use of Material**

To ensure that materials generated with AMERICORPS funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, AMERICORPS reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so ([2 CFR §200.315](#)).

#### **F.4. Reporting**

Recipients are required to submit a variety of reports which are due at specific times during the life cycle of an award. All reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time. Volunteer Iowa uses the IowaGrants system to collect most program reports. A full list of required reports will be included in the grant agreement issued by Volunteer Iowa (draft agreements are available upon request).

Cost reimbursement grantees are required to provide start forms; initial, mid-year, end of year, and final progress reports; semi-annual financial reports; and an internal or external evaluation report as required by the AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR §§2522.500-2522.540 and §§2522.700-2522.740 and the Volunteer Iowa grant agreement and program manual. Additional final financial and progress reports are due after the end of the agreement.

Fixed Amount grantees are also required to provide start forms; initial, mid-year, end of year, and final progress reports; semi-annual financial reports; and an internal or external evaluation report.

All grantees will be required to submit periodic expense and financial status reports, closeouts, and other requested reports as described in the Iowa AmeriCorps State grant agreement and Program Director Manual. Grantees must report at <https://FSRS.gov> on all subawards over \$30,000 and may be required to report on executive compensation for their organization and for their subgrantees. Recipients and subrecipients must have the necessary systems in place to collect and report this information. See [2 CFR Part 170](#) for more information and to determine how these requirements apply.

Once the grant is awarded, recipients will be expected to have data collection and data management policies, processes, and practices that provide assurance that they are reporting high quality performance measure data. At a minimum, grantees should have policies, processes, and practices which address the following five aspects of data quality:

- The data measures what it intends to measure;
- The data reported is complete;

- The grantee collects data in a consistent manner;
- The grantee takes steps to correct data errors;
- The grantee actively reviews data for accuracy prior to submission.

Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the recipient's ability to secure future AMERICORPS funding.

#### **F.5. Continuation Funding Information and Requirements**

Organizations notified of their eligibility for formula continuation funding must submit a continuation application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. Please see the continuation application criteria for additional detail. Requests by existing continuation applicants for increases in the level of funding or number of positions will be assessed using the review criteria published in this RFA. The review will also be based on progress reports, the federal financial report, evaluation plans, and Volunteer Iowa and AMERICORPS staff's knowledge of the grant program. To be approved for continuation funding, recipients must demonstrate satisfactory performance with respect to key program goals and requirements, as well as compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant. AMERICORPS and Volunteer Iowa reserve the right to award applications in an amount less than the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so.

### **G. AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)**

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#### **G.1. Volunteer Iowa**

The Volunteer Iowa RFA and supporting materials are available on the [AmeriCorps State Grants page of the Volunteer Iowa website](#). Questions can be submitted using the Ask a Question feature on this page.

Jamie Orozco Nagel, Senior Policy & Development Officer

Email: [jamie.nagel@volunteeriowa.org](mailto:jamie.nagel@volunteeriowa.org)

Phone: 515.348.6233

Availability: Monday-Friday, 8:00am-3:00pm Central

#### **G.2. AMERICORPS**

Questions regarding multi-state or Indian Tribe applications must be submitted directly to AMERICORPS: The AMERICORPS Notice is available at <http://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/funding-opportunities>.

For more information, call (202) 606-7508 or email [americorpsgrants@cns.gov](mailto:americorpsgrants@cns.gov). AmeriCorps also offers live text chat at [www.americorps.gov/contact](http://www.americorps.gov/contact).

For technical questions and problems with the eGrants system, call the AmeriCorps Hotline at (800) 942-2677. AmeriCorps Hotline hours are posted at <https://questions.americorps.gov/app/ask>. Potential applicants can also use this link: [eGrants Questions](#). Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the name of the Notice to which the organization is applying.

Questions about other single state applications should be addressed to the respective Commission. A list of all Commissions can be found on the [AmeriCorps State Service Commissions webpage](#).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> AmeriCorps State Service Commission webpage: <https://americorps.gov/contact/state-service-commissions>

## **H. OTHER INFORMATION**

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### **H.1. Technical Assistance (TA)**

In addition to consulting the Application Instructions, Mandatory Supplemental Information, Performance Measure Instructions, and AmeriCorps regulations as directed in this RFA, applicants are encouraged also to consult the [AmeriCorps State Grants page of the Volunteer Iowa website](#) for a schedule of technical assistance webinars. Also from this page, applicants may use the “Ask a Question” feature to submit written questions to Volunteer Iowa staff, who will periodically review and post responses for all potential applicants to see. This feature is available once logged into IowaGrants. The Volunteer Iowa FAQs document posted in IowaGrants is a repository of questions from previous Volunteer Iowa grant competitions.

Volunteer Iowa recognizes that many applicants have existing relationships with commission staff and that application-related questions may arise through other staff interactions, but all applicants are strongly encouraged to use the Ask a Question feature or contact the Volunteer Iowa Program Development Officer in writing with formal questions about the application process, as Volunteer will not be held responsible for oral responses to applicants. Every attempt will be made to provide timely answers, provided that they are submitted within a reasonable time before relevant due dates.

New applicants, or current grantees considering new projects, are encouraged to contact the Volunteer Iowa Program Development Officer (see Awarding Agency Contacts section) as early as possible in the competition to set up a phone consultation meeting to discuss their ideas. Volunteer Iowa prioritizes working with all applicants to craft quality proposals. The earlier applicants communicate and/or submit applications, the more opportunities for TA.

AMERICORPS will host technical assistance calls to answer questions about the funding opportunity and eGrants. AMERICORPS strongly encourages all applicants to participate in these sessions. The schedule and call-in information for the technical assistance calls is on AMERICORPS’s website: <https://americorps.gov/funding-opportunity/fy-2022-ameri-corps-state-national-grants>.

### **H.2. Re-focusing of Funding**

Volunteer Iowa and AMERICORPS reserve the right to re-focus program dollars under this RFA in the event of disaster or other compelling need for service.

## **I. IMPORTANT NOTICES**

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**Public Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for collection of information under this RFA is estimated to average six hours per submission, including reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing the application and reporting forms. AMERICORPS informs people who may respond to this RFA that they are not required to respond unless the OMB control number and expiration date are current and valid. (See [5 C.F.R. 1320.5\(b\)\(2\)\(i\)](#).) This collection is approved under OMB Control #: 3045-0047, Application Instructions, State and National Competitive, New and Continuation, Expiration Date: September 30, 2023.

**Privacy Act Statement:** The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C § 552a) requires that we notify you that the information requested under this RFA is collected pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 12592 and 12615 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended, and 42 U.S.C. 4953 of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 as amended. Purposes and Uses - The information requested is collected for the purposes of reviewing grant applications and granting funding requests. Routine uses may include disclosure of the information to Federal, state, or local agencies pursuant to lawfully authorized requests. In some programs, the information may also be provided to Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to determine the existence of any prior criminal convictions.

The information may also be provided to appropriate Federal agencies and contractors that have a need to know the information for the purpose of assisting the government to respond to a suspected or confirmed breach of the security or confidentiality or information maintained in this system of records, and the information disclosed is relevant and unnecessary for the assistance. Effects of Nondisclosure - The information requested is voluntary; however, to be a recipient of this grant program, disclosure of personal or sensitive information is required to receive Federal benefits.