

# AMERICORPS GUIDELINES

The Missouri Community Service Commission (MCSC) has developed guidelines and requirements to ensure that all AmeriCorps programs are of highest quality and benefit to their communities, adhere to statutory provisions necessary to receive federal funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service, and meet National Service goals. This application contains information that is vital to understanding the fundamentals of AmeriCorps programs. The Corporation's requirements for AmeriCorps are set forth in these guidelines, the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), and the regulations. The requirements apply to all programs that submit applications to States for funding.

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## **OVERVIEW OF AMERICORPS**

### ***The Granting Agencies***

The Missouri Community Service Commission (MCSC) was created by the Missouri Legislature in 1994 in response to the National and Community Service Act passed by Congress the previous year. The mission of the MCSC is to connect Missourians of all ages and backgrounds in an effort to improve unmet community needs through direct and tangible service. The MCSC serves as the administrator for AmeriCorps State funding in Missouri by awarding monetary grants and providing technical assistance and support.

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), a federal agency, was established in 1993 to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in results-driven, community-based service. It supports a range of national and community service programs, providing opportunities for participants to serve full-time and part-time, with or without a stipend, as individuals or as a part of a team. AmeriCorps engages thousands of young Americans on a full or part-time basis to help communities address their toughest challenges while earning support for college, graduate school or job training.

### ***The AmeriCorps Programs***

AmeriCorps, “the domestic Peace Corps”, is a National Service program that engages Americans of all ages and backgrounds in team-based, results-driven service in education, healthy futures, clean energy/environment, veterans, and economic opportunity. Programs serving children and youth are a priority that cuts across all National Service programs and activities. AmeriCorps programs provide full- and part-time opportunities for participants, called Members, to provide service to their communities through community organizations and agencies. In exchange for their service, AmeriCorps Members receive a living allowance and an education award for post-secondary education expenses upon completion of their term of service. AmeriCorps joins a long tradition of programs encouraging and rewarding service – programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Montgomery GI Bill and the Peace Corps. The commitment to service builds on our nation’s long and honorable commitment to assisting individuals, families, and communities who either have not fully shared in America’s prosperity or have short-term needs created by changes in life circumstances. Paired with a process of civic reflection, service also reconnects those who serve with basic American ideals such as freedom, liberty, and respect for diversity; helps to bridge ethnic, racial, religious, and economic divides; and strengthens our understanding of the responsibilities of American citizenship.

Over 500,000 people nationwide have served in AmeriCorps since the program was founded. Each program has engaged Members in a wide range of services and activities in their communities, but they all have shared a specific mission of meeting identified community needs through direct service, strengthening communities, and developing the AmeriCorps Members who serve in the many programs throughout the state and nation.

### ***Application Submission and Selection Process***

ONLY PAPER APPLICATIONS will be accepted by the Commission to satisfy application deadlines for evaluation by the review committee. All applications selected or recommended for funding will be required to enter their approved application in an electronic system (eGrants). Details on date, time, and facility to enter the application will accompany award notifications.

All applicants must comply with deadlines, format limitations and applicable narrative and budget instructions to be considered for funding. Specific character limits are clearly stated in the application instructions. The application must comply with the following requirements:

- You must submit one, single-sided, un-bound **original and ten (10) copies** of the complete application. You must also submit the narrative in word format via e-mail to [mjsc@ded.mo.gov](mailto:mjsc@ded.mo.gov) (Facsimiles or email versions of your application will not be accepted.)
- Type and **double-space** the application in Times New Roman, 12-point font size with one-inch margins. (For easy comparison, this document was prepared using the specified font and margins.)
- Number the narrative pages.
- Organize the application in the sequence outlined in the applicable instructions.
- Submit financial statements or audits, and a recent evaluation of your program, if you have one. (These documents should be submitted with the original application to the Missouri Community Service Commission)
- Adhere to the character limits listed in the Narrative Section below and number the pages.

### ***Eligible Applicants***

Eligible applicants include Missouri educational institutions, 501(c)3 non-profit organizations registered with the Missouri Secretary of State's office, and state and local government agencies. Organizations requesting to operate a project in more than one state should apply directly to the Corporation for National and Community Service as an AmeriCorps\*National program. For more information, visit the Corporation's website at [www.nationalservice.org](http://www.nationalservice.org).

### ***2010 Focus Areas***

The Missouri Community Service Commission has identified the following *Missouri Funding Priorities* for 2010:

- **Regional** - While the Program Committee will review proposals from all areas of the state, preference for new programs will be given to areas of the state that are currently un-served or underserved including:
  - **BOOTHEEL REGION**- including counties of Carter, Ripley, Wayne, Stoddard, Scott, Butler, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, and Dunklin

- SOUTH CENTRAL REGION- including counties of Wright, Texas, Shannon, Douglas, Ozark, Howell, and Oregon
- ALL COUNTIES NORTH OF THE MISSOURI RIVER

**Faith Based** – Today, more Americans volunteer through religious organizations than through any other type of organization. Accordingly, the Program Committee is dedicated to ensuring that faith-based organizations have the proper tools and resources they need to make Missouri’s communities flourish by giving preference to faith-based organizations.

In addition, preference will be given to areas whose school districts have or who are in danger of losing their accreditation.

In 2010, the Corporation’s national service priorities for AmeriCorps\*State are applicants that address:

**Education**

Unmet educational needs within communities especially those that help children and achieve success in school and prevent them from dropping out before high school graduation.

**Healthy Futures**

Unmet health needs within communities including access to health care, disease prevention and health promotion initiatives, and health literacy.

**Clean Energy/Environment**

Unmet energy-efficiency and environmental needs within communities.

**Veterans**

Unmet needs of veterans, members of the Armed Forces who are on active duty, and family members of deployed military personnel and engages veterans in service.

**Opportunity**

Unmet needs relating to economic opportunity for economically disadvantaged individuals within communities including financial literacy, housing assistance, housing assistance, job training, and nutritional assistance.

For applicants that have received AmeriCorps funding in the past, the Commission will also consider past performance and compliance record.

***APPLICATION WORKSHOP***

This workshop will come after potential applicants have received feedback on their concept and will go over in great detail, line by line, the application. Although not mandatory, it is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED AND STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** that *new* applicants attend this workshop.

Date/Time: January 13, 2010, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: Harry S. Truman Building, Conference Room 510  
301 West High Street  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

### ***DEADLINES***

**AmeriCorps\*State Formula Concept Papers** must be submitted on paper and received in the office of the Missouri Community Service Commission no later than 3:00 p.m., Friday, December 11, 2010. Feedback from the Commission's review committee will be provided on or around January 8, 2010.

**AmeriCorps\*State Formula Rough Drafts** applications (in whole or part) that wish to be reviewed by staff for feedback before grant submission must be in the office of the Missouri Community Service Commission no later than **3:00 p.m., Friday, February 5, 2010**. Feedback from the Commission's staff will be provided on or around February 26, 2010.

**AmeriCorps\*State Formula Applications** must be submitted on paper and received in the office of the Missouri Community Service Commission no later than **3:00 p.m., Monday, March 22, 2010**. The Commission expects to announce final funding decisions no later than May 6, 2010.

***Paper applications, audits and/or financial statements, and evaluations, if applicable must be submitted to the Missouri Community Service Commission at:***

***If submitted via regular mail:***

MO Community Service Commission  
P.O. Box 118  
301 West High Street, Room 770  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

***If submitted via hand, express or overnight delivery***

MO Community Service Commission  
301 West High Street, Room 770  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

All applications submitted to the Missouri Community Service Commission undergo a staff review and risk assessment before being forwarded to the Commission's Program Committee for review, scoring and recommendations. New applicants are encouraged to participate in our Concept Paper process and/ or have Commission staff review the full application before submitting an official application. Commission staff will review all applications received by February 6th and provide feedback by February 27th.

## **THE AMERICORPS GOALS**

The MCSC funds and supports quality AmeriCorps programs that develop an ethic of civic responsibility in those who participate, strengthen communities, and help meet identified community needs through direct services in the areas of education, healthy futures, clean energy/environment, veterans, and opportunity. Programs should provide opportunities for the community to define and solve its problems. Successful applicants are able to demonstrate that their program or the service offered builds the capacity of nonprofit organizations to meet community needs and provides a benefit that the community values.

AmeriCorps provides a variety of specific and identifiable services to communities. For example, a program may use AmeriCorps Members to organize volunteers to renovate low-income housing or build a playground in a vacant lot, or a program may engage Members in human service projects such as tutoring or mentoring and recruit local volunteers to do so. Members may clean up streams or restore urban parks along side community residents. AmeriCorps Members may help recruit, support, and manage community volunteers who support homeland security. Members may perform a limited amount of activities to enhance the capacity of the nonprofit organization in which they serve to meet community needs, including raising funds for approved projects, conducting research to maximize the impact of the organization, and providing support to staff in carrying out critical functions. Successful applicants are able to demonstrate the relationship of the proposed activity with AmeriCorps Members to the objectives the program hopes to accomplish.

### ***Developing AmeriCorps Members***

AmeriCorps expands opportunities, helping those who help America. Because of their AmeriCorps service, Members develop additional skills, gain valuable experience and receive education awards that can be used for post-secondary education or to repay student loans. To help ensure that Members are prepared for and benefit from their service, applicants are required to include plans for Member recruitment and training in their applications. Applicants should address elements such as civics training, skills training related to performing service activities, leadership opportunities, and other training necessary for a program to have a positive impact on Members. Much of the training is typically achieved through use of service-learning principles. Further, training should reflect the unique nature of the program and be appropriate for the age(s), skill level(s), and other differences in the backgrounds of Members. By the end of the term of service, every AmeriCorps Member should:

- understand and be able to participate effectively in American democracy;
- discuss and explore their community and the people, processes, and institutions most effective in improving community conditions;
- help plan effective service projects that respond to real community needs and emergencies;
- foster within themselves and others positive attitudes regarding the value

- of lifelong citizenship and service for the common good;
- have new or increased existing life and/or employment skills; and
- gain a greater appreciation and understanding of what it means to be an American, including an appreciation and understanding of those of different backgrounds.

Successful applicants are responsible for recruiting Members. The Corporation for National and Community Service has developed an on-line recruitment system to assist grantees. All grantees are required to be listed on and to supplement their recruitment efforts by using this nationwide on-line recruitment system so as to maximize opportunities for Americans who want to participate in national and community service.

The following elaborates on key elements of Member development:

**Citizenship:** The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, have as one of its basic purposes to “renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community throughout the United States.” By serving their communities in AmeriCorps, individual Members are demonstrating a critical component of citizenship recognized by President Bush in remarks proclaiming September 17 as Citizenship Day: “Citizenship not only involves a commitment to our Nation but also to our neighbors and those in need.”

Programs must provide training and use the service experience to help Members acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be active citizens of communities – local, state, and national. This primarily means enhancing Members’ understanding of how American democracy works and the value of playing an active role in it. Specifically, programs should adopt citizenship goals for their Members that include:

- Fostering within themselves and among their team Members positive attitudes regarding the value of lifelong citizenship and service for the common good;
- Discussing and exploring their community and the people, processes, and institutions that are most effective in improving community conditions;
- Enhancing their ability to plan effective service projects that respond to real community needs; and
- Developing the social, cultural, and analytical skills necessary to effectively participate in American democracy.

The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act further stresses that AmeriCorps provides “the opportunity to develop citizenship values and skills through service to their community and the United States.”

**Training Related to your Service Activities:** Programs must provide Members with the supervision, training, skills, and knowledge necessary to perform the tasks required in their respective projects. Successful applicants will ensure training is provided for the activities that Members will conduct. For example, recruiting and managing volunteers

requires certain skills that need to be developed. Whether your activities involve tutoring children in reading, housing provision and improvement, or neighborhood community enhancement, Members need to learn the basic skills and technical information associated with good practice before they perform service.

**Leadership Opportunities:** Programs are encouraged to build Member leadership capacity by providing opportunities for Members to coordinate activities, recruit volunteers, and serve in team leader capacities in their programs. Please note, however, that Members may not be assigned as the supervisors of other National Service participants. The Corporation for National and Community Service also provides materials and support to help you structure such leadership opportunities. You may address leadership opportunities in either the program design section or in your Member development objectives in your application.

**Supervision, Training, and Education:** The experiences of local programs across the country verify that successful Member development depends upon proper supervision, training, and education. Successful applicants will be those that provide Members with the supervision, training, skills, and knowledge they need to perform their tasks. Successful applicants will also give Members the background information they need on the community in which they are serving and help them understand the community's need for a specific service or project. You may also provide specific training in a particular field to your Members if appropriate. This includes training and education that allows Members to explore career possibilities in areas such as child development, teaching, public health, or public safety. Where appropriate, we encourage you to train Members in conflict resolution and communication skills. Your program is required to have a qualified supervisor to provide Members with regular and adequate oversight.

**Support Services:** The National and Community Service legislation requires that programs support Members who are school dropouts in earning the equivalent of a high school diploma. Programs must provide support services that help AmeriCorps Members: (1) who are completing a term of service to make the transition to other education and career opportunities, and (2) who have not completed their secondary education to earn the equivalent of a high school diploma.

**Diversity:** Your program builds strong communities when it engages Members and staff from different backgrounds in common service. You should actively seek to include Members and staff from the communities where your project operates, as well as men and women of various faiths, races, ethnicities, education levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, and physical and mental abilities. In assessing whether your program meets this criterion, we will take into account that your program objectives might require you to recruit Members and staff who share a specific characteristic or background. Please note, however, that your program cannot violate the non-discrimination, non-duplication, and non-displacement rules that govern Member and staff selection.

**Ethic of Service:** Service builds civic responsibility and enables participants to practice responsible citizenship. It helps youth make the transition into adulthood. Through

service, AmeriCorps enables Members to see themselves as problem-solvers, not problems; to become leaders, not just followers; and to take personal responsibility. Programs should incorporate structured opportunities for Members to reflect on their service experiences and may employ service-learning or other education methods in order to develop Members' lifelong ethic of service. Because voting is an important component of both citizenship and a service ethic, every program should encourage, in a non-partisan manner, each Member who is eligible to vote to register to vote.

### ***Strengthening Communities***

AmeriCorps strengthens communities by involving citizens directly in serving community needs. AmeriCorps Members help bring individuals and groups from different backgrounds together to cooperate in achieving constructing change and to solve critical community problems.

**Recruitment and Management of Volunteers:** A fundamental purpose of AmeriCorps is to help recruit, support, and manage the vast networks of volunteers that meet community needs. By creating volunteer opportunities and helping organizations to effectively engage volunteers, AmeriCorps programs multiply their impact, build organizational capacity, and support the development of sustainable programs. Volunteering also provides an ideal opportunity to bring together people of many racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds around a common goal and to foster the active citizenship upon which the health of our democratic system depends. Accordingly, applicants must address how their AmeriCorps program will effectively engage and support volunteers in meeting community needs. Programs can deploy AmeriCorps Members in a wide variety of ways to support volunteer recruitment and management. AmeriCorps Members may be responsible for enlisting, training, or coordinating volunteers. They may help an organization to develop effective volunteer management systems that include clear position descriptions, screening techniques, or volunteer policy and procedure manuals. AmeriCorps Members may promote retention of volunteers by planning recognition events or providing ongoing support and follow up to ensure that volunteers have a high quality experience. Members may assist an organization in reaching out to individuals and communities of different backgrounds when encouraging volunteerism to ensure a breadth of experiences and expertise is represented in service activities. Recruitment and management of volunteers' activities must be documented on semi-annual basis.

When considering how your AmeriCorps program can promote the effective involvement of volunteers, you have flexibility to determine the best approach. The core expectation is that volunteers will be engaged in ways that support the mission of the organization being served and that the involvement of volunteers will enhance or build upon any direct service goals of the program or organization of which the AmeriCorps Members are a part. For example, you may decide that a few Members in a program should be devoted entirely to some aspect of volunteer recruitment and management. Or, you may determine that all Members will spend a portion of their time supporting volunteers. Members may also create opportunities for the beneficiaries of their service to volunteer.

The following examples are illustrative only and are not an exhaustive list:

- AmeriCorps Members in a mentoring program engage youth in service learning projects that provide students with volunteer experience;
- an AmeriCorps program designates a small number of Members as volunteer managers who focus their efforts on recruiting and supporting volunteers whose activities complement the direct service of the rest of the corps;
- AmeriCorps Members tutoring in an after-school program recruit volunteers to read with students once a week so that the program can serve additional students;
- an entire corps of AmeriCorps Members is dedicated to serving as volunteer coordinators at various local host sites to assist these organizations in recruiting, training, and managing volunteers.

This increased emphasis on volunteer recruitment and management is not intended to replace direct service activities which continue to be an integral part of AmeriCorps programs. However, AmeriCorps programs have much to offer their communities by building the capacity of organizations to meet community needs. Some component of your program must involve recruiting or supporting volunteers. A minimum of 5 volunteers must be recruited for every MSY that a program has, and there must be an **average** of 10 hours served per volunteer. Therefore, a program with the minimum 5 MSY would need to recruit a total of 25 volunteers who would serve a total of 250 volunteer hours. If an applicant is unable to meet this requirement they must request a waiver in the Narrative and Executive Summary of the Application. This waiver request must state specific reasons why this requirement would require a fundamental alteration of the program structure.

#### **Supplementation, Non-Duplication and Non-Displacement:**

**Supplementation** – Grant funds may not be used to replace state or local public funds that have been used to support programs or projects of the type eligible to receive Corporation grant funds. For any given program, this condition will be satisfied if the aggregate non-federal public expenditure for that program or project in the fiscal year that support is to be provided is not less than the previous fiscal year.

**Non-Duplication** – Grant funds may not be used to duplicate services that are available in the locality of a program or project. The grantee may not conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities provided by a state or local government agency in which the grantee entity resides.

**Non-Displacement** – The grantee may not displace an employee or position. The grantee may not displace an existing volunteer by using a Member in a program or project. The grantee may not create a community service opportunity that will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual. A Member in a program may not perform any services or duties, or engage in

activities that would otherwise be performed by an employee, as part of the assigned duties of such employee. A Member in a program or project may not perform any services or duties, or engage in activities, that: will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or are services, duties, or activities with respect to which an individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures.

**Other Prohibitions** – A Member in a program or project may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any: currently employed worker, employee who recently resigned or was discharged, employee who is subject to a reduction in force, employee who is on leave, or employee who is on strike or is being locked out.

**Support for Community Organizations (Secular and Faith-Based):** Across the country, community organizations, both secular and faith-based, are on the front lines working to improve lives in some of the most vulnerable communities across America. The religious commitment and identification with the local community found in many of these groups sustains their service, often over long periods of time. The programs and activities supported through the AmeriCorps funding to date already give vital help to these front-line workers and their community-based efforts. But more can be done. The Corporation for National and Community Service supports work with secular and community-based programs across all of our programs. In 1993, the National Service legislation included community organizations as a category for support and defined them as private nonprofit organizations that represent a community or a significant segment of a community and that are engaged in meeting human, educational, environmental, and public safety community needs. The legislation specifically included churches and other faith-based organizations in this definition, recognizing the importance of such groups in dealing directly with the most difficult problems facing individuals in our communities. Most recently, the Corporation has undertaken a number of efforts to assist state commissions and grantees in supporting community organizations. These efforts include the creation of the Center for Faith-Based & Community Initiative (CFBCI). The mission of the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (CFBCI) is to create an environment that welcomes the participation of faith-based and community-based organizations as valued and essential partners assisting Americans in need. The CFBCI's mission is part of a focus on improving human services for our country's neediest citizens. This Center leads efforts to better utilize faith-based and community-based organizations in providing effective human services.

For the purpose of providing a common language to applicants, we consider a faith-based organization to include:

- a religious congregation (church, mosque, synagogue, or temple);
- an organization, program, or project sponsored/hosted by a religious congregation (may be incorporated or not incorporated);
- a nonprofit organization founded by a religious congregation or

religiously-motivated incorporators and board Members that clearly states in its name, incorporation, or mission statement that it is a religiously-motivated institution; or

- a collaboration of organizations that clearly and explicitly includes organizations from the previously described categories.

Defining a community organization is particularly challenging, and there is no universally acceptable definition. Most individuals refer to community organizations as those that involve Members of the community in the governing structure. Some even use the zip codes of a Board of Directors to determine if an organization is community-based. The Corporation does not intend to impose a single definition of faith- or community-based organization, but encourages states and local programs to employ a definition that accounts for an organization's ability to represent the interests of the community in which it serves, including those organizations and groups that have not received funds from federal or state human service programs.

For 2010, National Service goals in this area are to increase the number of community, faith-based, and grassroots organizations to access AmeriCorps resources and to encourage larger nonprofit organizations to seek partnerships with community organizations (both secular and faith-based). Applicants are encouraged to support the efforts of civic, community, education, and faith-based organizations to solve local programs. Successful new applicants and continuing programs will be those that demonstrate partnerships (sub-grantees, host sites, or volunteer recruitment partnerships) with community organizations (secular and faith-based). This includes nonprofit organizations, schools, and neighborhood groups, as well as the faith-based organizations identified above.

There is not any particular approach for meeting this goal of providing support to community organizations (secular and faith-based). As noted above, in some instances, community or faith-based organizations may be direct applicants for grant funding. In other cases, AmeriCorps-funded programs might partner with such organizations to meet their objectives. In still other cases, AmeriCorps grantees may serve as intermediaries.

#### Intermediary Organizations

Intermediary organizations provide the mechanism by which a number of community or faith-based organizations or grassroots groups may access AmeriCorps and other Corporation for National and Community Service resources. Intermediaries are defined as national, regional, state, or local organizations that agree to provide the technical and financial support to assist community or faith-based organizations that do not have the capacity to perform these functions. Intermediaries serve as the legal applicant for a Corporation grant, thereby ensuring that the systems to manage a federal grant are in place. Intermediaries may place individual Members at the site of many neighborhood, community or faith-based organizations and assume responsibility for monitoring the progress of the sites. Alternatively, they may subgrant funds to community or faith-based organizations that select AmeriCorps Members and oversee their service activities. We encourage organizations that have the capacity to assist community or faith-based

organizations in utilizing AmeriCorps Members in their service activities to consider applying as an intermediary.

Examples of programs providing support to community organizations include:

- A statewide community partnership of volunteer teams from businesses, civic groups, and churches is helping families along the path toward self-sufficiency. The program utilizes a team approach with AmeriCorps Members organizing the skills, experiences, and resources of many people to help families receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) to overcome barriers to getting and keeping a good job.
- Catholic Network of Volunteer Service (CNVS), an AmeriCorps Education Awards Program, is a membership organization of 220 faith-based volunteer programs. CNVS serves as an intermediary that performs the grantee responsibilities and links these local programs to federal resources. These programs operate in 15 counties around the state, and CNVS Member programs work with local community social service agencies, faith-based organizations, and other non-profits to identify community needs that may be met through service primarily in the areas of education and human needs.
- An urban interfaith council has decided to place AmeriCorps Members at each one of its Member organizations to assist in their separate community service activities including housing counseling, after school programs, pre-school, adult literacy and English as a Second Language. The interfaith council selects the Member organization with the greatest capacity to manage a federal grant as the organization that will apply.

**Capacity Building and Sustainability:** Effective capacity building is a process that enhances the mission, strategy, skills, and culture, as well as systems, infrastructure, and human resources of an organization. Often organizations view capacity building as only “technical assistance,” such as improving systems, infrastructure, and/or human resources functions. However, it also refers to an organization’s relationship with other organizations, people, and institutions that can provide critical information and resources that lead to the sustainability of the organization and its programs.

Capacity building is important as it is a process that helps an organization gain greater independence and sustainability. The Corporation views AmeriCorps programs as investments expected to yield a set of self-sustaining activities over time. An organization is achieving its sustainability goals if the activities supported enhance the capacity of the organization to meet community needs absent federal funding. Achieving sustainability enables programs to continue national and community service activities beyond the life of a Corporation grant. Some examples of sustainability include:

- Earned Income:** Organizations that diversify revenue structures for national and community service programs by generating revenue through fees or other

kinds of earnings, consistent with OMB rules on project income, and use the revenue to meet match requirements and/or program expenses can lead to more sustainable programs;

- Other Public (state and local) and Private Funding: Organizations that diversify revenue structures for national and community service programs by building relationships with other public and private funding organizations, as well as businesses, can lead to more sustainable programs, including receipt of support (in-cash and in-kind) from local and state government, community foundations, national foundations, and businesses;
- Program Quality and Efficiencies: Organizations that demonstrate an increased level of productivity with flat or declining levels of federal support demonstrate effective models of sustainability. While these programs may not be totally independent of federal sources of revenue, the reduction of overhead costs and increased efficiencies in the means by which services are delivered can help make the program's efforts sustainable in a community in the long term;
- Volunteer Recruitment and Management: Organizations that recruit large numbers of volunteers as part of their AmeriCorps program can use the volunteers to conduct a wider range of community service activities;
- Sustained Activities: In communities where AmeriCorps programs have collaborated with a number of partners, the partners can agree to divide the national and community service activities among themselves such that the actual service continues without a grant from the Corporation;
- Corporate Organizations' Role: AmeriCorps Members work to establish community service programs for which corporations can commit their employees as volunteers on an ongoing basis for an extended period of time; and
- Diversification of Revenue Sources: Multiple sources of funds to support and operate national and community service programs are a good measure of whether or not a program is sustainable. In contrast, organizations that depend on a single source of funds (including Corporation funds) to support and operate national and community service programs are inherently less sustainable.

The Corporation sees sustainability as vital to meeting the needs of communities across the country. In order to ensure that Corporation programs are sustainable, applications should include specific information that demonstrates how an organization intends to improve capacity and move towards sustainability, ensuring that its' national and community service program can continue in the absence of Corporation funding. We will use plans and progress towards achieving sustainability as a criterion in making new and continuation grant awards.

As a means of achieving sustainability and assisting organizations in meeting community needs, AmeriCorps Members may assist grantee organizations in capacity building activities. Previously, the Corporation had advised that only AmeriCorps\*VISTA Members may conduct certain capacity-building activities. We now encourage

AmeriCorps Members to engage in certain capacity building activities as well. For example, AmeriCorps Members may recruit and manage other volunteers. AmeriCorps Members may assist in raising funds and securing resources to support their service activities. Members may not raise funds for activities outside of their program or raise funds for other partners or organizations. They can write training materials that will be used to instruct the public about disaster preparedness. They may conduct outreach to expand the number of individuals served by the nonprofit organization. AmeriCorps Members may develop community partnerships that are intended to strengthen communities. Applicants must outline plans for ensuring that the impact of the program in the community is sustainable beyond the presence of federal support.

**Community Involvement and Consultation:** Local engagement in service efforts is vital to the development of high-quality service programs that sustain and build communities. Successful programs will be those that use extensive, broad-based local input to design, implement, and evaluate their projects. This includes consultation with:

- representatives from the communities you serve;
- Members (or potential Members) in your program; and
- appropriate community agencies (secular and faith-based), businesses, foundations, local labor organizations representing employees of service sponsors, and local government.

Bringing various organizations and people together to accomplish a common goal mobilizes community resources. Partnerships provide opportunities for programs to collaborate, share technical expertise and contribute resources. The full range of American associations -- civic, education, religious, social service, labor, and business -- should use National Service as an opportunity to join together in the common work of service.

## **AMERICORPS GRANT REQUIREMENTS**

The following pages outline the requirements of administering an AmeriCorps program, including Grant Period, Grant Sizes, Restrictions and Limitations, Match Requirements, Performance Measures and Accountability, Evaluation, Monitoring and Management, Program Models and Strategies, Student Service, National Service Collaborative Efforts, and Federal Financial Management and Grant Administration Requirements. All applicants need to understand that the requirements outlined in this section are conditions of AmeriCorps funding.

### ***Grant Period***

Organizations selected through this funding round are generally granted a three-year project period. Applications should include proposed activities and a detailed budget for the proposed year of operation and program objectives for a one year period. Funding for remaining years of an approved program is contingent upon satisfactory progress in relation to the approved objectives, submission of proposed changes in activities or

objectives and a detailed budget and budget narrative for the applicable program year, the availability of funds, and any other criteria established in the award agreement.

### ***Grant Sizes, Restrictions and Limitations***

Each state commission is allocated funds using a population-based formula to fund AmeriCorps projects in their state. Applications under this application process compete for funding against projects, both existing and new, across Missouri. The Missouri Community Service Commission selects programs for funding based on the scores and recommendations of the Commission's review committee. **There is a minimum (as set by the Commission) of 5 Member Service Years (MSYs) for all programs and a maximum of 10 MSYs for new programs.** The maximum of 10 MSYs is just for the first year of the 3 year cycle. The maximum amount that a new program may request is **\$130,000. The Maximum amount that any program may request is \$300,000.**

### ***Match Requirements***

Programs must provide and account for matching funds. All programs are required to raise some funds from the private sector, e.g., corporations, foundations, individuals, local businesses, and non-profit organizations. The match for Member support costs (excluding health insurance) must be in non-federal cash. Programs may provide matching funds for operating costs in cash or in-kind, and may use non-Corporation for National and Community Service federal funds as match if permitted by the rules governing those federal funds.

Programs in very rural or extremely disadvantaged areas may request an alternative match rate, which will only be considered if the sponsoring agency is located within, and the majority of services are provided within the disadvantaged area. Programs accepted for the alternative rate will remain at the 24% match levels until year 7 when their match will increase to 29% in year 7, 31% in year 8, 33% in year 9, and 35% in year 10. Further detail is provided in the application section of this guidance.

### ***Budget Instructions***

Follow the Budget Instructions and Budget Worksheet appendices E & F provided in the appropriate Application Instructions. The following additional requirements apply to Missouri AmeriCorps\*State Formula applicants:

- **Administrative Costs:** (Section III) Applicants **MUST** choose to include an additional 1% of the overall federal share as a separate Administrative Cost line item for state commission share. This state commission 1% fixed amount option is used in administering the commission's subgrantees. **Cost Per Member and Match Requirements:** Calculated by dividing the total federal funds requested by the number of Member Service Year (MSY) AmeriCorps Members proposed. Applicants proposing to include halftime, quarter-time or minimum time Members who will not receive a living allowance should request less than the allowable \$12,600 per Member. Applicants proposing programs including Members who will receive

federal work-study funds for all or any portion of their service hours must include all federal work-study funds in the cost per-Member calculation (See page 26 for details). Contact Commission staff for further information on how this requirement may affect your budget request.

- Statewide Meetings and Training Events: All AmeriCorps\*State projects should include in their budget any funds necessary to provide transportation for Members and/or staff to statewide meetings and events. Lodging, meals and other training costs associated with these events will be provided by the Commission.
- National Program Director's Conference and/or other National Conferences: A minimum of \$1,000 per staff person who will attend this event should be budgeted.

### ***Performance Measures and Accountability***

Successful applicants for funding will be those that address the specifics set forth below related to accountability and performance measurement. Furthermore, please note that:

- if your organization is selected for funding, we will negotiate with you to include specific performance measures in the grant, and
- we will take into account a program's record of meeting such performance measures in determining future funding.

The following describes the application requirements related to accountability and performance measurement:

- Programs will likely have many performance measures. In the application process for the Commission, programs are required to submit one set of aligned performance measurements (grant outcomes): one set on primary service delivery and one set related to Member training and support. Aligned performance measures include: 1) one Output (quantitative count of service provided), 2) one Intermediate outcome (semi-annual accomplishment), and 3) one End outcome (year end and/or three year cumulative impact) all related to the same goal/accomplishment. For example, 1) Output: Number of students participating in a tutoring program; 2) Intermediate Outcome: Percent of students reading more books; and 3) End Outcome: Average increase in reading level or test scores.
- Your program should develop a system that allows you to evaluate and monitor your program activities (outputs) and measure your program's outcomes (intermediate and end). You should include the information on performance measures in progress and final reports.

**Reminder:** Two additional performance measures will be written by the Commission regarding volunteer recruitment and training objectives. Programs must engage in volunteer recruitment and management. A minimum of 5 volunteers must be recruited for every MSY that a program has, and there must be an **average** of 10 hours served per volunteer. Therefore, a program with the minimum 5 MSY would need to recruit a total of 25 volunteers who would serve a total of 250 volunteer hours cumulative. Programs are also required to provide

First Aid, CPR and Citizenship training to 100% of its Members, and Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Response training to at least 75%. The program is encouraged to involve a significant number of participants age 55 or older in the program and that takes advantage of the skills and experience that such participants offer in the design and implementation of the program.

- After the review and selection of programs, the Commission will work with selected grantees to hone the performance measurements.

Given the importance of strengthening the effectiveness of National Service generally, programs are encouraged to take extra care in developing performance measures. The Corporation fully recognizes that these performance measures will reflect individual program goals and circumstances, and it is expected that there will be a wide spectrum of different performance measures across all grantees. For example, a program that places individual Members in separate nonprofit organizations (sites) to perform activities for those organizations will have measures that differ substantially from a program that uses AmeriCorps Members to recruit volunteers to tutor in a single school. In certain programs, outcome measures may reflect the activities of a subset of Members, not necessarily all Members. We recognize that performance measures alone do not reflect the full scope and impact of AmeriCorps programs. Therefore, these measures are not the only items we will consider when evaluating an application.

As part of a broader effort to collect uniform and aggregate data across all AmeriCorps programs, in order to better understand the effectiveness of National Service, the Corporation will also develop a few performance measures that will apply to all AmeriCorps programs, following consultation with grantees on the type and number of uniform measures to be required, and in developing them take into account the diversity of programs and needs those programs serve. As in the past, these measures will include tracking Member enrollment and attrition data, which will be considered in future funding decisions.

If your application is funded, you will have to:

- collect and report data to demonstrate progress toward achieving your performance measures, and describe how review of these indicators will be used to manage operational changes and program improvements;
- document performance data (on paper or electronic file) and make available for review; and
- report on operational changes and program improvements that resulted from information learned from the performance data.

In planning for data tracking beyond the measurable results outlined above, programs are expected to track the following:

- overall numbers served
- hours served in each service activity
- demographics of those served

- process and outcome data (including outputs, intermediate outcomes, and end outcomes)
- qualitative and quantitative data
- training provided to those serving
- number of volunteers generated

The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act requires that the Corporation design and use national performance measures to collect meaningful data on the critical impact of AmeriCorps across the country. These national measures are optional in the 2010 application. The development of national measures will allow for aggregated reporting of impact across the portfolio and contribute to the growth of AmeriCorps envisioned in the Serve America Act.

### ***Evaluations***

All existing grantees are required to perform internal evaluations that are ongoing efforts to assess performance and improve quality and submit them with their re-compete application. Evaluations are an in-depth, rigorous effort to measure the impact of programs. Evaluations use scientifically-based research methods to assess the effectiveness of programs by comparing the observed program outcomes with what would have happened in the absence of the program. Evaluations estimate the impact of programs by comparing the outcomes for individuals receiving a service or participating in a program to the outcomes for similar individuals not receiving a service or not participating in a program. For example, an evaluation of a literacy program may compare the reading ability of students in a program over time to a similar group of students not participating in a program.

The Missouri Community Service Commission will consider the evaluation you submit with your application as follows:

- (a) If you do not include the evaluation with your application for AmeriCorps funding, the Commission reserves the right not to consider your application.
- (b) If you do submit an evaluation with your application, the Commission will consider the results of your evaluation in assessing the quality and outcomes of your program.

Evaluation material to assist you in developing an evaluation plan and monitoring your evaluation for meaningful results can be found at:

<http://www.nationalservicerresources.org/star/ac-evaluation>

### ***Monitoring and Management Responsibilities***

Organizations face many challenges in administering AmeriCorps programs. Certain program models may make monitoring and program management a particular challenge for organizations. These include individual placements, programs that are spread out geographically, and programs that attempt to address many issue areas at once. If your program design includes one of these challenges, you should address it specifically in

your application and provide specific strategies for monitoring and management. Strategies may include: recruiting and enrolling Members who can serve independently; providing appropriate orientation, ongoing training, and a means of regular communication; selecting strong host sites and ensuring strong support from direct-line supervision of Members; and narrowing the range of tasks Members perform to make monitoring easier.

If you are approved for an AmeriCorps grant, you are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the grant and sub-grant-supported activities to assure you are in compliance with applicable federal requirements and you achieve your performance goals. Monitoring needs to cover each program, function, or activity. You are responsible for ensuring program quality and that your program has an impact on the problems facing the communities in which it operates. This includes monitoring the service of Members. You are responsible for the timely and accurate documentation of Member eligibility and service hours. Each program should develop systems that closely track and monitor these requirements. A number of factors make monitoring a challenge for programs.

Most federal reporting for AmeriCorps programs is done through a web-based reporting system. All AmeriCorps programs should have adequate computer equipment to do the required reporting.

### ***Program Models and Strategies***

**Flexibility in Program Design:** Applicants have a great deal of flexibility to design programs that will best achieve the types of impacts sought by the Corporation: developing the citizenship and skills of Members, strengthening nonprofit organizations, and addressing community needs. Programs may assign Members to individual project sites, or organize them in teams. Similarly, programs may determine whether a full-time or part-time schedule is more appropriate to the program's goals. The regulations provide a list of program types that illustrate the range of existing National Service programs (see 45 C.F.R., Chapter XXV, Section 2522). Applicants may find that their program fits more than one type because program characteristics overlap in some areas. In addition, the internet resources included in this application offer a wide array of program examples.

Following are examples of program models:

- Programs that recruit, train, and support several hundred college volunteers to serve elementary school students in after-school tutoring programs;
- Formal mentoring programs that utilize AmeriCorps Members to provide mentoring to at-risk youth, or that recruit and train volunteers to mentor at-risk youth.
- School-based and community-based service programs, including youth corps that provide tutoring and mentoring for younger children and opportunities to participate in service projects after school, on weekends, and during school vacations.

- College-based programs in which student AmeriCorps Members, including Federal Work Study students, perform substantial service (or serve as service-learning coordinators) in local schools or other community settings).
- Programs where Members respond to disasters, recruit and train disaster responders, and teach health and safety classes.
- Faith-based programs that provide literacy and English as a Second Language training for low-income adults, reading improvement for homeless elementary school-age children, or teach and model social skills to children.
- Summer programs in which AmeriCorps Members organize service and other positive activities for children and youth.
- Programs in which current welfare recipients carry out important community service activities as part of a welfare-to-work transition.
- Programs that recruit Members with disabilities to serve local community needs, or those that recruit Members to assist local disability organizations in meeting their critical needs.
- Environmental service programs, such as youth corps, that provide team based service projects in restoring lands destroyed by wildfire or other natural disasters, or that provide parks rehabilitation and accessibility.
- Programs that provide pre-natal and early health intervention services, including immunization and education to parents.
- Programs that use AmeriCorps Members of all ages to educate seniors to utilize technology, or provide other services to seniors in community-based settings.

To learn about a number of programs focusing on different issue areas, please visit the AmeriCorps website at [www.americorps.gov](http://www.americorps.gov). Programs are encouraged to focus on education or public safety or the environment or homeland security or other human needs, instead of trying to address all issue areas. Experience shows that it is difficult for a program to demonstrate its community impact when it tries to meet too many needs at once. However, certain programs such as volunteer generator models, youth service corps, or programs that operate in rural areas may operate more effectively by developing activities in more than one issue area. All programs should delineate strategies to be used to demonstrate outcomes in the issue area(s).

***Federal Financial Management and Grant Administration Requirements***

As with all federal grant programs, it is the responsibility of each AmeriCorps program to ensure appropriate stewardship of federal funds entrusted to them. Under the Corporation’s regulations, all programs must maintain financial management systems that provide accurate, complete, and current disclosure of the financial results of the AmeriCorps program. To meet this requirement, programs must have adequate accounting practices and procedures, internal controls, audit trails, and cost allocation procedures. Recent revisions to the Single Audit Act and OMB Circular A-133 require all organizations to have financial audits if they annually expend \$500,000 or more under federal awards. This requirement applies to the organization’s total expenditures each fiscal year under all of its federal awards, not just an AmeriCorps grant.

As with all federal grant programs, all activities must be conducted, and facilities operated, in compliance with the applicable civil rights statutes and their implementing regulations. For civil rights purposes, all programs funded or receiving service Members under the National and Community Service Act, as amended, are programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

By federal statute and regulation, a person, including Members, service recipients, or program staff, may not, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, political affiliation, disabilities (for otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities), or in most cases religion, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination, directly or through contractual arrangements, under any program or activities receiving federal financial assistance. By Corporation for National and Community Service policy, participation in the Corporation’s programs and projects will be based on merit and equal opportunity for all, without regard to factors such as sexual orientation, marital or parental status, military service, or religious, community, or social affiliations, in addition to the statutory grounds.

Sustainability Plan

All AmeriCorps\*State programs will be required to develop and submit a sustainability plan as part of the application. Please submit with your application a separate one-page narrative on how your program will meet the match requirements. Also, provide with your application a list of sources of funding and specify whether they are financial or in-kind. Financial match of the sustainability plan will be tracked on monthly reimbursement requests sent to the MCSC. Failure to meet required match will result in the withholding of reimbursement until the program has rectified the issue.

What is Sustainability?

“The Corporation agrees that sustainability includes many elements beyond cost, and has modified rule language in several places to bring greater emphasis on multiple and diverse measures of sustainability.”

Programs must provide and account for matching funds. We encourage all programs to raise some funds from the private sector; e.g., corporations, foundations, individuals, local businesses, and nonprofit organizations. The match for Member support costs (excluding health insurance) must be in non-federal cash. You may provide your share of operating costs in cash or in-kind match, and may use non-Corporation federal funds as match, if permitted by the rules governing those federal funds.

Programs applying for AmeriCorps funding for the first time are subject to the statutory matching requirement of 24%. This will be the match rate for the first three years of the program.

<b>If you previously were a</b>	<b>And then, within 5 years, apply as a</b>	<b>Your status for purposes of match will be</b>
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National parent, Professional Corps, State competitive, or State formula program.	National parent, Professional Corps, State competitive or State formula program.	Existing grantee (match at the level you would have matched the year following your last grant year).
National sub-grantee or site, State competitive sub-grantee or site, or State formula sub-grantee or site.	National parent, Professional Corps, State competitive or State formula program.	New grantee (begin match at year 1).
Any other Corporation grantee....	National parent, Professional Corps, State competitive or State formula program.	New grantee (begin match at year 1).

**Programs must match a minimum of:**

- ★ *In years 4 -10, match increases incrementally to 50%*
- ★ *With waiver - alternative match increases to 35%*

	<i>Year</i> <b>4</b>	<i>Year</i> <b>5</b>	<i>Year</i> <b>6</b>	<i>Year</i> <b>7</b>	<i>Year</i> <b>8</b>	<i>Year</i> <b>9</b>	<i>Year</i> <b>10</b>
<b><i>Min Overall Share</i></b>	26%	30%	34%	38%	42%	46%	50%
<b><i>Min Overall Share (Alternative)</i></b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	29%	31%	33%	35%

If a program is not able to meet the match requirements for a given program year, that program may request a waiver.

Waivers of Match Requirements

The Corporation will consider 2 types of waivers:

1. Waiver of the Regulatory Match requirements (maximum 50% match) to use the Alternative Match table (maximum 35% match) (§ 2521.60)
2. Waiver of any matching requirement in whole or in part (§ 2521.70), also sometimes called a “Statutory waiver”

**Waiver of the Regulatory Match Requirements (maximum 50% match) to use the Alternative Match table (maximum 35% match)**

- Only existing programs, only for a new 3 year grant period

- Request must be made with third year continuation request for following year's new grant period (i.e. one year in advance)
- Must be unable to meet primary match requirements
- Rural or severely economically distressed community
- Describe history of fundraising and current plans
- If Rural, see US Dept of Agriculture Beale Codes, if severely economically distressed community see economic data. Information on both is in Appendix L of 2006 AmeriCorps Application Instructions

## **Planning Grants**

The purpose of planning grants is to support the development of AmeriCorps programs so applicants are better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle. Planning grants may not be used to support AmeriCorps members.

AmeriCorps State and National Planning Grant applicants must not have previously received an AmeriCorps State or National grant. Applicants may apply for up to a maximum of \$50,000. Applicants must provide 24% of the total project cost in match. Match may be cash or in-kind. The project period for these grants is up to one year.

## **AMERICORPS MEMBER INFORMATION**

The following pages outline program requirements regarding AmeriCorps Members, including AmeriCorps Member Eligibility, Terms of Service, Recruitment and Selection, AmeriCorps Member Benefits, AmeriCorps Member Release, Grievance Procedures, and Prohibited Service Activities. This section should help potential applicants understand who an AmeriCorps Member can be, what they can do, and responsibilities of the programs in managing Members.

### ***Member Eligibility***

An eligible Member is an individual: who is a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States; who is at least 17 years of age at the commencement of service (unless the Member is out of school and enrolled in (a) a full-time, year-round youth corps program or full-time summer program as defined in the Act (42 U.S.C. §12572 (a) (2)), in which case he or she must be between the ages of 16 and 25, inclusive, or (b) in a program for economically disadvantaged youth as defined in the Act (42 U.S.C. §12572 (a) (9)), in which case he or she must be between the ages of 16 and 24, inclusive, or has a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate or agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent before using an education award and who has not dropped out of elementary or secondary school in order to enroll as an AmeriCorps Member (unless enrolled in an institution of higher education on an ability to benefit basis and is considered eligible for funds under section 484 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. §1091), or who has been determined through an independent assessment conducted by the program to be incapable of obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent, provided that the Corporation for National and Community Service has waived the education attainment requirement for the individual).

***Terms of Service***

Programs may engage Members on a full-time or part-time basis. Full-time Members must serve at least 1700 hours during a period of not less than nine months and not more than one year. Half-time Members must serve at least 900 hours during a period of one or two years as indicated in the approved budget. No Member can serve less than 300 hours during a one-year period. Programs may propose at least 300 hours for minimum-time, at least 450 hours for quarter-time, and at least 675 hours for reduced half-time Members based on program design. However, within a program, it is generally required that all reduced half-time, quarter-time, and minimum-time Members serve the same number of hours. If any less than full-time program has a need for greater flexibility, the Corporation and the Commission will consider proposals for three different sets of hours within the same program.

<b>Term Type</b>	<b># of Hours</b>
Full-time	At least 1700 hours
One Year Half-Time	At least 900 hours
Two Year Half-Time	At least 900 hours
Reduced Half-Time	At least 675 hours
Quarter-Time	At least 450 hours
Minimum-Time	At least 300 hours

Eligibility for Additional Terms: An individual may receive an education award only for the first and second terms of service in an approved AmeriCorps position. (Please note that an unsuccessful or incomplete term counts as a term of service for these purposes.) In addition, there are very strict limits on the use of federal funds to support an individual serving in a third, or subsequent, term. While Members may, in some cases, serve more than one term, mere eligibility for an additional term of service does not, however, guarantee selection or placement. A Member's eligibility for a subsequent term of service must be based on at least a mid-term and end-of term evaluation of the Member's performance, that demonstrates but is not limited to: (1) completion of required number of hours; (2) satisfactory completion of assignments, tasks or projects; and (3) satisfactory performance criteria that were clearly communicated to the Member both orally and in writing at the beginning of the term of service.

***Recruitment and Selection***

National Service Members will be recruited and selected by the programs (not the Commission or the Corporation). Selection criteria will vary among different programs. However, programs must select Members in a non-partisan, non-political, non-discriminatory manner. Programs are strongly encouraged to recruit Members with disabilities to serve in their programs. Programs can establish minimum qualifications for Members related to the service they will provide (such as education level or area

expertise and interest). Programs must ensure that they do not displace any existing paid employees.

The Corporation has an on-line system to support grantees' efforts called the My AmeriCorps Portal. The posting information for applicants using My AmeriCorps will be entered through the programs eGrants account. The Portal supplements local recruitment efforts with (1) individuals from different backgrounds and regions of the nation, (2) individuals that have special skills or training, and (3) individuals who desire to serve but live in areas where there are few or no National Service programs. The system also allows AmeriCorps programs to create and update service opportunity descriptions (recruitment postings), submit documentation for citizenship, view applications and references and select applicants. As part of the web-based recruitment system, prospective Members may apply directly to participating AmeriCorps programs electronically, as well as search for programs based on their interests, eligibility, and geographic preference.

***AmeriCorps Member Benefits***

**Living Allowances:**

Generally, all AmeriCorps programs must provide a living allowance as specified below. The living allowance is considered taxable for FICA and income tax. The allowance is between \$11,800 and \$23,600 per year for full-time Members. The amount of the living allowance that may be paid using Corporation and other federal funds, however, may not exceed 85% of the minimum living allowance, which equates to approximately \$9,690.

Programs are not required to provide a living allowance to half-time, reduced half-time, quarter-time, and minimum-time Members. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance for half-time, reduced half-time, quarter-time, and minimum-time Members, please use the following chart to help determine the allowance. As with the living allowance for full-time Members, the amount that may be paid using Corporation funds may not exceed 85% of the prorated share of the minimum living allowance.

Term	Minimum # of Hours	MSY	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Living Allowance
Full-Time	1700	1.000	\$ 11,800	\$ 23,600
Half-Time	900	0.500	N/A	\$ 12,500
Reduced Half-Time	675	0.375	N/A	\$ 9,370
Quarter-Time	450	0.250	N/A	\$ 6,250
Minimum Time	300	0.200	N/A	\$ 4,160

**Child Care:**

AmeriCorps Operating Grant Programs must make child care available to any full-time eligible Member who is eligible for and needs such assistance to participate. The Corporation will fund child care directly and will pay 100% of the allowance as defined by payment rates of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). The Corporation for National and Community Service will provide technical assistance to programs in determining Member eligibility, provider eligibility and child care allowance. The Corporation for National and Community Service will also make payments to the child care providers directly. The grantee must provide an estimate of the number of Members and the number of their children needing child care, and the Corporation for National and Community Service will arrange for direct payment to qualified child care providers.

Member eligibility for child care is based on need. The Corporation for National and Community Service defines need to be consistent with the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, as follows: total family income of the Member must be less than 75% of the State median income, or as defined by the State under CCDBG guidelines; and the Member must reside with and be the parent or guardian of a child under the age of 13.

If Members are accepted into a program and are receiving and continue to receive child care assistance from other sources such as a parent or guardian, they are ineligible for child care from the program. On the other hand, if Members become ineligible for assistance because of their enrollment in the program, or the Member certifies that he or she needs child care to participate in the program, child care must be provided.

**Health Care for Full-Time Members:**

AmeriCorps Operating Grant Programs must provide full-time Members with a basic health insurance plan at the time of the Members' acceptance into the program if the Member is not otherwise covered by a health insurance policy that provides the minimum benefits below. If, as a result of participation, or if, during the term of service, a Member loses coverage through no deliberate act of his or her own, such as parental or spousal job loss, the program must provide the Member with a basic health insurance plan that meets the minimum benefits below. (Health care benefits are for AmeriCorps Members only (spousal or dependent benefits cannot be covered using Corporation funds).

Programs may obtain health insurance for Members through any provider, as long as the policy provides the minimum benefits and is not excessive in cost. The Corporation share of the budget allows for 85% of the cost of a policy that meets the requirements outlined below as long as the policy cost is not excessive. The Corporation will not pay any share of the cost of a policy that does not include the minimum benefits. In general, health benefits for part-time Members are not an allowable cost for the Corporation share of the budget unless those Members serve full-time for a sustained period of time. For example, Members may receive benefits when they serve in a summer program for thirty-five hours per week with other Members who receive health benefits.

The following minimum benefits must be provided for:

- Covered Services: Physician services for illness or injury, hospital room and board, emergency room, x-ray and laboratory, prescription drugs.
- Limited Coverage: Mental/nervous disorders, substance abuse.
- Annual Limits: Deductible: Not more than \$250 per individual.
- Member pays 20% co-pay or a comparable fixed fee.
- Exception: Mental and substance abuse may require a 50% co-payment.
- Out-of-pocket: Not more than \$1,000 per individual.
- Maximum Benefit: At least \$50,000 per occurrence or cause.

Programs electing to use current health plans that meet the minimum benefit requirements will be required at time of selection to provide specific information on the benefits and policy.

Below is a list of plans commonly offered to AmeriCorps programs nationwide. Contact the health care plan directly with any questions. The Missouri Community Service Commission does not specifically endorse any plan.

- AmeriCorps Benefits Health Plans, 1-800-359-7475, [www.americorpsbenefits.com](http://www.americorpsbenefits.com)
- National Association of Service and Conservation Corps Health Insurance Plan, 1-800-456-1415, [www.nascc.org](http://www.nascc.org)
- Strategic Resource Company (SRC), an Aetna Company, 1-800-800-8121, [www.src-web.com](http://www.src-web.com)

**AmeriCorps Education Awards:**

Most AmeriCorps Members who successfully complete a term of service will receive education awards for each of up to two terms of service. The following chart shows the relationship between number of hours an AmeriCorps Member serves and the education award the Member received based upon successful completion of the term of service.

Term Type	# of Hours	Education Award
Full-time	At least 1700 hours	\$5,350
One Year Half-Time	At least 900 hours	\$2,675
Reduced Half-Time	At least 675 hours	\$2,038
Quarter-Time	At least 450 hours	\$1,415
Minimum-Time	At least 300 hours	\$1,132

The education award may be used up to seven years from completion of service to pay for any combination of: (1) the costs of attendance at a qualified institution of higher education; (2) the costs of approved school-to-work programs; or (3) the costs of repaying qualified student loans. The education award is considered taxable income for the year in which it is used. Members who do not successfully complete their term of service are not eligible to receive an education award.

Members who have outstanding qualified student loans may be eligible to receive forbearance on their payments while they serve, but they need to contact their loan holders to receive this benefit and submit the required forms to the National Service Trust. The Corporation for National and Community Service will make payments for interest that accrues during the period of forbearance upon successful completion of a Member's term of service. Full-time Members may receive full interest accrual payment to the loan holder and half-time Members may receive a pro-rated interest accrual payment to the loan holder. The interest payments by the Corporation for National and Community Service are considered taxable income for the year in which the payments are made.

**Reasonable Accommodation for Disabilities:**

Increasing the participation of people with disabilities in national and community service programs is a key interest of the Corporation. We encourage all AmeriCorps programs to actively reach out to and include people with disabilities. Programs and activities must be accessible to persons with disabilities, and programs must provide reasonable accommodation, including auxiliary aids and services, to known mental or physical disabilities of otherwise qualified Members, service recipients, applicants, and program staff. All selection and project assignments must be made without regard to the need to provide reasonable accommodation. See the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12111(9)) for information on accommodation and definition of a qualified individual with a disability (42 U.S.C. 12111 (8)). By far, the vast majority of accommodations are inexpensive. In most cases, programs are responsible for costs of accommodation. Only under extenuating circumstances can programs apply to the Missouri Community Service Commission for limited additional funds to provide reasonable accommodations for Members serving in an AmeriCorps program.

***AmeriCorps Member Release***

Programs may release Members for two reasons: (1) for compelling personal circumstances beyond the individual Member's control, as determined by the program (with strict adherence to national guidance); or (2) for cause, as defined in the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended (42 U.S.C., 12593(c)) and in the Corporations regulations (45 C.F.R. Chapter XXV, Section 2522.230) and by following the terms outlined in the individual program's Member Contract. Programs must establish written guidelines, to be incorporated into the Member Contract, that explain the circumstances under which Members will be released for cause. In addition to the circumstances mandated by law, programs may include in the guidelines their own reasons for releasing Members for cause.

***Grievance Procedure***

Programs must establish a grievance procedure for Members who believe that they have been wrongly released for cause, and for other grievances expressed by Members or other interested parties. The procedures must include an opportunity for hearing and binding arbitration within the statutory deadlines. Additionally, programs are encouraged to establish an alternative dispute resolution procedure, such as mediation. A model

grievance procedure designed by the Corporation is available for program use for successful applicants.

***Prohibited Service Activities***

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise engaged in activities associated with the AmeriCorps program or the Corporation for National and Community Service, staff and Members may not engage in the following activities:

- Any effort to influence legislation;
- Organizing or participating in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
- Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities which are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation or elected officials;
- Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious education or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
- Providing a direct benefit to (1) a business organized for profit, (2) a labor union, (3) a partisan political organization, (4) an organization engaged in the religious activities described above, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities, (5) a non profit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in §501 ( c ) 3 of Title 26;
- Other activities as the Corporation determines will be prohibited, upon notice to the Grantee.

**\*\*Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the above activities on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-Corporation funds. The AmeriCorps logo should not be worn while doing so.**

***Fundraising:***

Members and staff can assist their AmeriCorps projects with fundraising efforts on a limited basis. Members may receive direct service credit hours for activities related to fundraising if those activities satisfy all six of the following: 1) Provides immediate and direct support to a specific, direct-service activity; 2) Falls within the program’s approved direct service objectives; 3) Is not the primary activity of the program; 4) Does not involve, does not raise funds to pay for Member stipend/costs, financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequest, or similar activities designed for the sole purpose of raising capital or obtaining financial contributions for the organization; 5)

Does not involve writing a grant to the Corporation for National and Community Service or any other federal funding source; and 6) Does not involve more than 10% of time for any Member. Time spent on fundraising must be tracked and reported separately, as part of the overall 80% of direct service hours.