

FY 2012 AmeriCorps Concept Paper Instructions

What Is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps, the domestic Peace Corps, has engaged citizens of all ages and backgrounds in helping organizations initiate, improve, or expand services to meet pressing local needs for more than a decade. AmeriCorps programs provide grants for organizations to host AmeriCorps Members in direct service and capacity-building to address unmet needs in the areas of disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, veterans and military families. Local programs design service activities for a team of Members serving full or part-time. AmeriCorps Members also mobilize community volunteers and strengthen the capacity of the organizations where they serve.

Examples of service include:

- Tutoring and mentoring disadvantaged youth
- Fighting illiteracy
- Improving health services
- Building affordable housing
- Teaching computer skills
- Cleaning parks and streams
- Managing or operating after-school programs

Who Can Apply?

- Public or private nonprofit organizations
- Community and faith-based organizations
- State and local education institutions
- Indian tribes
- State and local governments

Applicant Expectations

AmeriCorps has been described as “a mission, not a program.” Organizations must be extremely committed to service and willing to dedicate staff towards program administration. AmeriCorps challenges its Members to stretch themselves and grow as human beings. It also challenges its sponsoring organizations to move beyond status quo and find new ways of effectively serving their communities. Additional information and resources can be found on the web at www.americorps.org.

The AmeriCorps*State program provides Federal funds equaling up to approximately \$13,300 per Member Service Year for living allowances and program administration. Sponsoring organizations are required to produce a non-federal 24% match of the total program operating costs, and should have sufficient capacity to operate personnel and accounting systems, comply with Federal grant provisions, and respond to Federal reporting requirements. Federal funds can be used to hire additional staff, but sponsors should nonetheless be prepared to absorb some program responsibilities into its own systems.

What Do Members Receive?

AmeriCorps Members serve for one year, full time (1,700 hours) or part time (900, 675, 450 or 300 hours). At the successful completion of their service commitment they receive an education award that is in line with the Pell Grant (less for part time service). The amount for the 2012-2013 Program year is \$5,550 for a full-time Member. The education award may be redeemed at a Title IV university, college, or trade school. Most AmeriCorps Members receive a living allowance while serving, although it varies with the type of program. In 2012-13, a full time living allowance will equal a minimum of \$12,100. The living allowance is optional for part-time Members.

Funding Priorities

AmeriCorps programs may fall into one of six issue areas:

- Disaster Services
- Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Futures
- Veterans and Military Families

Programs are not limited to these issue areas, but these are the primary focus areas of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

In addition, the Missouri Community Service Commission has identified the following Missouri AmeriCorps Funding Priorities for 2012:

- 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. These are areas north of the Missouri River, the Bootheel and South Central Missouri.
- 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 lost or will lose their accreditation.

How to Apply

The Missouri AmeriCorps application process begins with the concept paper. The concept paper very succinctly and very precisely identifies the proposed project, the needs it addresses, the activities Members will be engaged in and the number of Members requested. Applicants also describe their organizational capacity for administering an AmeriCorps program, and identify the source(s) of necessary program support, including non-federal match when required.

Concept papers must be received by 3 p.m., Monday, December 19, 2011

at:

Missouri Community Service Commission

P.O. Box 118

301 W. High Street, Room 770

Jefferson City, MO 65102

All concept papers received by the stated deadline will be reviewed by MCSC commissioners and staff and feedback will be provided based on the following criteria:

- The extent to which the proposed program meets an identifiable community need;
- The capacity of the proposed program to show successful impact in the community;
- The identifiable capacity of the applicant to effectively administer an AmeriCorps program, including adherence to programmatic and fiscal requirements;
- Strength of the proposal’s recruitment and support plan for Members;
- The identifiable sustainability of an AmeriCorps program.

The concept paper process is not designed as a “qualifying” round, but rather a method of developing strong AmeriCorps proposals and programs. Applicants should work with Commission staff to address issues raised by concept paper feedback for the final AmeriCorps proposal.

Full proposals with detailed narrative requirements will be due on February 27, 2012. If selected for funding, AmeriCorps programs may begin as early as August 1, 2012.

Where to Find Technical Assistance

AmeriCorps is a rewarding, though complex program that requires close attention to detail. Fortunately, there are a number of ways for a potential sponsor to receive technical assistance and advice as they work to design their program and submit their concept paper for review.

The staff of the Missouri Community Service Commission strongly encourages everyone considering an AmeriCorps initiative to contact them for assistance in development of a proposal. Commission staff can help you determine which issue area best fits your organization's mission, whether your program design is most appropriate for full or part time Members, and how to create performance measures that demonstrate impact on the community.

Contact information for the Missouri Community Service Commission:

Phone: (573) 751-7488 Fax: (573) 526-0463

Toll-free 877-210-7611

Website: www.movolunteers.org

Additional information and resources for AmeriCorps programs nationwide can be found on the Corporation's web site at www.americorps.org.

Missouri Community Service Commission 2012 Missouri AmeriCorps Concept Paper Title Page

Sponsoring Organization (if different from applicant): _____

Organization Name (applicant): _____

Contact Person: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: (____)____-____ Fax: (____)____-____

E-mail address: (note – all AmeriCorps programs must have access to the Internet at the time of the program’s start date): _____

Federal Employer Identification No (FEIN): _____

Check one of the following:

- ____ Educational Institution
- ____ Local Government
- ____ State Agency
- ____ 501(c)3 Faith-Based Organization
- ____ 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization
- ____ 501(c)3 Community-Based Organization
- ____ Other _____

Concept paper written by: _____ Title: _____

Which issue area will this program address?

- Disaster Services
- Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Futures
- Veterans and Military Families

How many Members will be recruited under the proposed program? Write the number of members above each category that apply.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Full Time(1700 hrs)	Half Time(900 hrs)	Reduced Half Time (675 hrs)	Quarter Time(450 hrs)	Minimum Time(300 hrs)

Minimum Member Request: 5 Member Service Year*
 Maximum Member Request: 10 Member Service Year*
 Maximum Program Allocation: \$133,300
 Member Service Year (MSY) = full-time equivalent of a minimum of 1700 hours

Missouri Community Service Commission 2012 Missouri AmeriCorps Concept Paper Narrative Instructions

Concept Paper Deadlines and Submission Requirements:

- You must submit one, single-sided original and ten (10) copies of the Concept Paper Title Page, Concept Paper Narrative (not to exceed 3 pages). Please also submit the Concept Paper Narrative in e-mail to Linda.Thompson@ded.mo.gov
- (Facsimiles versions of the concept paper will not be accepted).
- Type and **double-space** the narrative in Times New Roman, 12-point font size with one-inch margins.
- Number the narrative pages.
- Organize the narrative in the sequence outlined in the narrative instructions.

**Concept papers must be received by 3 p.m.,
Friday, December 19, 2011
in the office of the:**

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

The Missouri AmeriCorps Concept Paper is intended to provide a brief but precise description of the proposed project. **Narrative length must not exceed three pages.** Please use the following outline to describe the proposed program:

- Who will be serving? Who will be served?
- What will the AmeriCorps Members do? Describe activities.
- Where will the activity(ies) take place? (i.e. City, neighborhood, site address)
- When does the project begin and end? (Specific dates)
- What is the expected outcome(s) of the project? i.e. What do you hope to accomplish? How will this positively impact the community? What negative consequences or behaviors will you change?
- How will you measure these changes?