2014-2015 NEBRASKA FORMULA AMERICORPS REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Questions & Responses Presented in Order Asked
Updated March 27, 2014

1. *Is there a listing of current Nebraska AmeriCorps programs?*

   Yes, the listing and details on each program can be accessed here: http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/americorps/americorps_nebraska.htm

2. *The minimum program size is 5 MSY (Member Service Years), how many MSY are in each of the possible slot sizes?*

Slot Size	MSY	AmeriCorps Member Hours Required to Earn an Educational Award
Full Time	1.0	1700
Half Time	0.5	900
Reduced Half Time	0.38095240	675
Quarter Time	0.26455027	450
Minimum Time	0.21164022	300

3. *Our organization is interested in AmeriCorps, but does not need (or have the capacity) for 5 MSY (Member Service Year) AmeriCorps positions. Is there anything we can do?*

   ServeNebraska recognizes that there may be situations where an interested organization might not require or be able to support the efforts of 5 MSY. In those cases we encourage collaborative multi-organization partnerships. These partnerships may be based upon multiple factors including the need addressed and/or geographical proximity.

4. *An organizational chart is required. How do we reflect the AmeriCorps program and possible external host or service sites?*

   Place the AmeriCorps program within the organizational chart for the applicant organization in the appropriate space in terms of program focus and/or staffing. External partner organizations should be indicated by a dotted line from the AmeriCorps program.

5. *Is a labor union concurrence required if the projected role of the AmeriCorps is not at all similar to the duties of unionized employees?*

   No. From *Section X.B. (Page 28)* of the Request for AmeriCorps*State Applications:

   Labor Union Concurrence. If a program applicant

   a) proposes to serve as the placement site for AmeriCorps members and has employees engaged in the same or substantially similar work as that proposed to be carried out by AmeriCorps members and those employees are represented by a local labor organization, then the application must include the written concurrence of the local labor organization representing those employees. Written concurrence can be in the form of a letter or e-mail from the local union leadership.
   b) proposes to place AmeriCorps members at sites where they will be engaged in the same or substantially similar work as employees represented by a local labor organization, then the applicant must submit a written description of how it will ensure that AmeriCorps members won't be placed in positions that were recently occupied by paid staff. No AmeriCorps member will be placed into a position for which a recently resigned or discharged employee has recall rights as a result of a collective bargaining agreement, from which a recently resigned or discharged employee was removed as a result of a reduction in force, or from which a recently resigned/discharged employee is on leave or strike.

6. *The minimum living allowance for full time members is $12,100. What is the minimum living allowance for other slot sizes?*

There is no required living allowance for less-than-full-time slot size; therefore there is no minimum living allowance for these slot sizes.

Some programs have budgeted living allowances proportionally for half time, reduced half time, quarter time and minimum time slots. That is, they have calculated an hourly amount for the full-time slots ($12100/1700 hours = $7.12) and then multiplied this amount by the number of hours required to earn an educational award in the desired less-than-full-time slot size to determine an appropriate living allowance amount. Remember, in implementing an AmeriCorps program, the living allowance cannot be paid on an hourly basis but must instead be paid in equal installments over the course of the member's term – regardless of the number of hours served in a pay period.

7. *The Request for Applications states that the minimum program size is 5 MSY (Member Service Years). We have a 2013-2014 AmeriCorps program with fewer MSY. Why?*

For 2014-2015 AmeriCorps programming, ServeNebraska increased the minimum program size from 3 MSY to 5 MSY in order to increase the concept of teamwork in AmeriCorps programs, intensify the impact of programs, and reduce the staff burden it might experience in coordinating a number of smaller programs.

8. *Are there other types of AmeriCorps opportunities available for Nebraska organizations?*

Yes. AmeriCorps*VISTA can help organizations and communities increase their capacity to combat poverty. Additional details are available here:
http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/about/about_national_service.htm

AmeriCorps*NCCC allows organizations and communities to address community needs through a sustained 6-8 week burst of service from AmeriCorps members. Details can found at:
http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/americorps/americorps_nccc_information.htm

9. *Are only full-time members are eligible for daycare and health insurance benefits paid by grant funds?*

Yes

10. *Is it true that AmeriCorps members can only serve four terms regardless of the slot size in which they serve?*

Yes

11. *Should we use the narrative section titles and subtitles from the Request for Applications to divide and bring clarity to our application components?*

Yes. Remember that eGrants does not allow bold, color, or italics, so the use of all capital letters is one of the few ways to differentiate headings.

12. *Should letters of support be from organizations we work with or from the clients served?*

Organizations

13. *For the 15 page limit what is the font? font size? Line spacing?*

The font and spacing specifications are those in eGrants. ServeNebraska recommends entering/copying text into the narrative fields in eGrants from a word processing program and printing the Draft to determine pages created.

14. *Our project is planning similar service in two different settings. Should we submit a separate proposal for each setting?*

You may decide whether to submit a single proposal or multiple ones, however it would likely be simpler to submit a single proposal with multiple host or service sites.

15. *In eGrants, I am trying to figure out which grant to apply for, specifically which 'NOFA' to select. Every option seems to have a due date of 1/22/2014 except for the 'AmeriCorps VISTA State FY 2014' and it has a due date of 8/23/2014.*

New applicants should select New under Creating an Application on the eGrants homepage and then AmeriCorps under Select a Program Area. From the resulting list of NOFAs, for cost reimbursement grants select:

Commission AmeriCorps State FY 2014 (New and Continuation)
Due Date: 01/22/2014
Summary: These grant funds support community service programs under AmeriCorps and operate through state service commissions.

Disregard the January due date. It applies to a prior funding opportunity and a new federal NOFA has not been issued since. Applicants for other forms of grants should contact Greg Donovan at greg.donovan@nebraska.gov before proceeding.

16. Do we have to use grant funds (as opposed to matching resources) for any specific line items?

No. The applicant has complete discretion which fund sources to use to meet any and all budgeted line items.

17. *I know full-time AmeriCorps members must be offered health insurance. When searching for health care, where do we get healthcare for AmeriCorps members? Do we need to find it ourselves, or is there somewhere we can get it through the government? What I am asking, do we need to use our current carrier or is there another avenue?*

With implementation of the Affordable Care Act, the approach to identifying and securing health insurance for AmeriCorps members is currently in flux. The program is responsible for identifying a carrier. However all current carriers are re-evaluating their plans. Members can also purchase health insurance on the exchange, but the cost may slightly then from member to member. Programs can reimburse members for these premiums. ServeNebraska recognizes that this situation creates challenges in accurately budgeting for health insurance premiums and will update this response as/if more is known.

18. *I am also working on creating our proposal. The Request for Applications specifies that the minimum program size must be 5 MSY (member service years.) Projecting using a variety of slot sizes, our preliminary total is 4.9 MSY. Is this close enough?*

No. In order to assure fairness and equity for all applicants, the program must plan to utilize at least 5.0 MSY.