



CALIFORNIA AMERICORPS PROGRAM GUIDE

IMPORTANT NOTICE: The California AmeriCorps Program Guide (Guide) serves as a companion to the CaliforniaVolunteers Request for Application (RFA) and should be used in conjunction with the AmeriCorps regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520-2550. The full AmeriCorps regulations are available online at www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr. AmeriCorps programs are required to comply with these regulations, AmeriCorps provisions, and federal and state policies. **The RFA includes deadlines, eligibility requirements, submission requirements, maximum amount of funding per Member Service Year (MSY), and other information that changes year to-to-year, for all California State AmeriCorps grant programs.**

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NATIONAL SERVICE OVERVIEW

Introduction

The decision to consider starting an AmeriCorps program is a huge one. Becoming part of the National Service movement brings opportunities for your organization and the community you serve. It also brings significant additional responsibilities for your organization and partnership as there are many components to the design and operation of a successful AmeriCorps program. This *California AmeriCorps Program Guide* (the Guide) provides a broad overview of AmeriCorps guidance, highlighting many basic components and rules to provide a general understanding of the complexities and intricacies of AmeriCorps programming and requirements. This Guide provides information and clarification on both federal and state policies and requirements that guide CVs' grant application and selection process. In addition, the Guide provides information and tools such as the *California AmeriCorps Program Standards* and the *Pre-Contract Self-Assessment* to help prospective programs gain insights into the types of systems and processes successful AmeriCorps programs must have in place prior to operations. The intent of this Guide is to help deepen prospective or existing programs' understanding of AmeriCorps and move them into creating a strong foundation for their AmeriCorps program.

This Guide serves as a companion piece to the *Request for Application* (RFA) and should be used in conjunction with the AmeriCorps regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520-2550. The full AmeriCorps regulations are available online at www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr. AmeriCorps programs are required to comply with these regulations, AmeriCorps provisions, and federal and state policies. **The RFA includes deadlines, eligibility requirements, submission requirements, maximum amount of funding per Member Service Year (MSY), and other information that changes year to-to-year, for all California State AmeriCorps grant programs.**

This Guide does not supersede any of the requirements established by the terms, conditions, and provisions of an AmeriCorps grant or contract, or the standard federal requirements applicable to all federal grants. Likewise, the information contained in this guide does not include all the legal requirements of an AmeriCorps grant, nor does it constitute the Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) official definitive interpretation of the law, regulations, and policies related to AmeriCorps programs. Rather, it is intended as a resource guide to help prospective AmeriCorps program applicants assess their organization's capacity to start or continue an AmeriCorps program. Existing AmeriCorps programs can use the Guide to review, refine, and strengthen their program design and related systems and operations.



National Service Background

From American philosopher William James' original vision of non-military national service in the early twentieth century, national service has grown to address the needs of our communities and represent the ideals of our country. When faced with challenges such as illiteracy, poverty, crime, and environmental problems, our nation has always relied on the dedication and action of individuals to identify solutions to our pressing problems. National service has provided opportunities for community members to make sustained commitments to service that have benefited individuals and communities alike. Through these intensive commitments, individuals build upon long-standing American traditions – neighbors helping neighbors, a commitment to the greater good, innovation, and collective problem solving.

Further, national service has a positive impact on those who serve. Service helps bridge ethnic, racial, religious, and economic divides. It builds civic responsibility and enables participants to practice responsible citizenship. It helps youth make the transition into adulthood. It enables seniors to leave a legacy. It demonstrates that people with disabilities are an important part of the answer to neighborhood and community problems. Through service, members of a community become more fully engaged in the civic life of the nation. In addition, through service, individuals develop skills and gain valuable experience critical to their future success. These principles were first incorporated into a practical modern-day national service program by President Johnson in the early 1960s. By signing the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Johnson created Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) and enlisted ordinary Americans in his “war on poverty.” Those who answered his call began serving at migrant camps in California, poor regions of the Appalachians and low-income neighborhoods throughout the country.

National Service Today

Today, national service participants continue to build upon the legacies established by programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, Peace Corps, VISTA, and others.

National service continues to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds to real needs in their communities and promote a culture of service. Through AmeriCorps, program participants – known as members – are not only performing direct service, but are also mobilizing members of local communities. This year, AmeriCorps members throughout the country are serving alongside 800,000 community volunteers that they have recruited. Together, members and volunteers are tutoring children, mentoring youth, building affordable housing, responding to natural disasters and preserving natural resources.

The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act (**SAA**) signed into law by President Barack Obama on April 21, 2009, reauthorizes and expands national service programs administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) by amending the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (NCSA) and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (DVSA). The SAA is landmark legislation that charges the Corporation and its partners to dramatically expand opportunities for Americans to serve, to focus on critical national issues, to be a catalyst for social innovation, and to support the nonprofit sector. The law both expands existing national service programs and creates new initiatives to increase service opportunities. For example, the SAA sets AmeriCorps on a path from 75,000 positions annually to 250,000 by 2017, beginning with 88,000 positions in 2010.



AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is a national service program that was created under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. The legislation drew on the principles of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the GI Bill and the Peace Corps, encouraging Americans to serve and rewarding those who do. AmeriCorps awards member positions and program operating funds to organizations to further the goals of AmeriCorps and to provide service to address local unmet needs. Grants support organizations that use volunteer service as a strategy for addressing national and community needs while fostering an ethic of civic responsibility. In return for their service, AmeriCorps participants, known as members, may receive a modest living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members receive an education award that can be used toward existing college loans or to pay continuing education costs. AmeriCorps programs recruit, select, train and manage their own AmeriCorps members, design and operate their program and are responsible for providing funds and other resources to match the federal funds they receive through their AmeriCorps grant.

In the short time since AmeriCorps' inception in 1994, its members have achieved impressive results. More than 500,000 individuals are alumni of the program, and now take their place as the next generation of community leaders, educators, health professionals, and the like. In 2008, more than 70,000 AmeriCorps members served in communities throughout the country. Goals of AmeriCorps include:

- **Getting Things Done.** AmeriCorps helps communities meet needs in the areas of education, public safety, the environment, and other human needs through direct and demonstrable service.
- **Strengthening Communities.** AmeriCorps builds the capacity of community organizations and other institutions to more effectively engage community volunteers to improve our communities.
- **Encouraging Responsibility.** Through service and civic education, AmeriCorps members become agents of community solutions and develop an ethic of lifelong service.
- **Expanding Opportunity.** AmeriCorps helps those who help America. Members develop professional skills, gain invaluable experience and receive education awards for education or job training.

The AmeriCorps national service network includes AmeriCorps*State and National programs, Indian Tribe and U.S. Territories programs, Education Awards Program, VISTA, and AmeriCorps*NCCC. For more information about these various AmeriCorps programs, please visit www.americorps.org.



The Corporation for National and Community Service

The Corporation for National and Community Service was formed to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service to meet community needs. Each year, more than 1.5 million individuals help meet local needs through a wide array of service opportunities. These include projects in education, the environment, public safety, homeland security, and other critical areas through the Corporation's programs.

[AmeriCorps](#): Through its programs, AmeriCorps provides opportunities for Americans to make an ongoing, intensive commitment to service.

- [AmeriCorps State and National](#): AmeriCorps*State and National offers grants that support a broad range of local service programs that engage thousands of Americans in intensive service to meet critical community needs. AmeriCorps*State and National also administers grants for Indian tribes and U.S. territories, who are eligible for funding that is set aside to address critical needs within their communities.
- [AmeriCorps VISTA](#): AmeriCorps*VISTA provides full-time members to community organizations and public agencies to create and expand programs that build capacity and ultimately bring low-income individuals and communities out of poverty.
- [AmeriCorps NCCC](#): The AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps is a full-time residential program for men and women aged 18-24 that strengthens communities while developing leaders through direct, team-based national and community service.

[Learn and Serve America](#): Learn and Serve America provides grants to schools, higher education institutions and community-based organizations that engage students, their teachers and others in service to meet community needs.

[Senior Corps](#): Senior Corps offers a network of programs that tap the rich experience, skills and talents of older citizens to meet community challenges.

[Nonprofit Capacity Building Program](#): The Nonprofit Capacity Building Program (NCBP), a program authorized by the Serve America Act, will increase the capacity of a small number of intermediary grantees to work with small and midsize nonprofits in communities facing resource hardship challenges to develop and implement performance management systems.

[Social Innovation Fund](#): The Social Innovation Fund (SIF), an initiative enacted under the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, is a new way of doing business for the federal government that stands to yield greater impact on urgent national challenges. The Social Innovation Fund targets millions in public-private funds to expand effective solutions across three issue areas: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development and school support. This work will directly impact thousands of low-income families and create a catalog of proven approaches that can be replicated in communities across the country.

[Volunteer Generation Fund](#): The Volunteer Generation Fund, a new program authorized by the Serve America Act (**SAA**), is designed to increase the number of people who serve in meaningful roles as volunteers dedicated to addressing important needs in communities across America.

In accordance with SSA, the Corporation seeks to:

- Direct the power of national service to solve a common set of national challenges.
- Expand opportunities for all Americans to serve.
- Embrace innovative solutions that work.
- Build the enduring capacity of individuals, organizations and communities to effectively use service and volunteering to solve community problems.



The Corporation's national service priorities as identified by the SAA for AmeriCorps are programs that address:

Disaster Services—Grants will help individuals and communities prepare, respond, recover, and mitigate disasters and increase community resiliency.

Economic Opportunity—Grants will provide support/and or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people.

Education— Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged people, especially children. CNCS is particularly interested in program designs that support youth engagement and service-learning as strategies to achieve high educational outcomes.

Environmental Stewardship—Grants will provide direct services that contribute to increased energy and water efficiency, renewable energy use, or improving at-risk ecosystems, and support increased citizen behavioral change leading to increased efficiency, renewable energy use, and ecosystem improvements particularly for economically disadvantaged households and economically disadvantaged communities.

Healthy Futures— Grants will meet health needs within communities including access to care, aging in place, and addressing childhood obesity

Veterans and Military Families—Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength.

The Corporation distributes AmeriCorps grant funding to Governor-appointed State Commissions and multi-state grantees also known as National Directs. State Commissions award subgrants to organizations in their states, and the National Directs work through operating sites in more than one state. These organizations recruit AmeriCorps members to respond to local needs.

CaliforniaVolunteers

CaliforniaVolunteers (CV) is the state entity responsible for increasing the number and impact of Californians engaged in service and volunteering. CaliforniaVolunteers serves as the national service commission for the state of California. Karen Baker, the nation's first state cabinet level Secretary for Service and Volunteering leads the organization in consultation with a 25-member Commission appointed by the Governor. CaliforniaVolunteers administers a range of programs and initiatives that encompass different areas of the service and volunteerism sector and guides policy development to support the nonprofit and service fields. Through these programs and initiatives, Californians of all ages and abilities are provided with ongoing opportunities to volunteer, to become better prepared to respond to emergencies and disasters, and ultimately, to embrace a lifetime ethic of service. CaliforniaVolunteers has three program departments.

The AmeriCorps Department manages a \$26 million program portfolio that engages more than 4,000 AmeriCorps members in service to address pressing unmet needs within communities throughout the state. Since its inception, CV has secured and disseminated over \$352 million in AmeriCorps funding to local and statewide public and nonprofit agencies creating opportunities for more than 60,000 AmeriCorps members to serve California. CaliforniaVolunteers provides AmeriCorps programs with extensive training and ongoing technical assistance to support the development of high quality AmeriCorps programs. Each program works closely with a CV program associate to ensure progress toward program performance measures, a meaningful service experience for AmeriCorps members, and compliance with applicable regulations.



The Volunteer Action Department oversees programs and projects that strengthen the infrastructure for organizations that use volunteers, particularly nonprofit organizations. Significant programs include the California Volunteer Matching Network, through which individuals and families can search approximately 50,000 volunteer opportunities for activities that match their interests.

The Disaster Volunteering and Preparedness Department builds the state's volunteer network capacity to respond effectively to disasters and emergencies. By executive order, CaliforniaVolunteers is responsible for ensuring the coordination of volunteer activities related to disaster response and recovery, including necessary training, equipment, and transportation provisions.

CaliforniaVolunteers AmeriCorps Values

As home to the largest and most diverse population in the country, California faces many significant public challenges that need our attention. With this in mind, CV is committed to investing AmeriCorps resources in programs that are:

- *Targeted at solving a critical challenge facing California.* CaliforniaVolunteers values program models that clearly address an identified critical community issue, not merely the expansion of a single organization's mission. AmeriCorps programs are required to perform activities that are designed, implemented and evaluated with extensive and broad-based local input. This input is provided in consultation with representatives from the community served and community-based agencies with a demonstrated record of experience in providing services.
- *Focused on measurable outcomes.* CaliforniaVolunteers values strong program designs built to address the community need by logically connecting all components back to that need. The program design is built to deliver the services that achieve the desired end result and can quantifiably measure and report the impact annually.
- *Able to demonstrate that national service is an appropriate strategy.* CaliforniaVolunteers is committed to demonstrating the effectiveness of using service as a strategy to address community challenges. Successful program designs clearly identify direct beneficiaries of the stated community need, identify a research based intervention proven to address the need and clearly articulate why an AmeriCorps member is the appropriate strategy to deliver the intervention.
- *Dedicated to quality.* CaliforniaVolunteers seeks to invest in programs that are committed to making a difference and incorporate quality management practices to oversee the program and protect precious taxpayer dollars. CaliforniaVolunteers values programs which can successfully implement the program design by assuring that the systems and processes necessary for managing and assessing the effectiveness of the program model are in place prior to operation. This includes adequate oversight in the management of each component to assure that the program design and systems are implemented and assessed, and that stakeholder feedback leads to continuous improvement.



GRANT APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

CaliforniaVolunteers Grantmaking Overview

CaliforniaVolunteers, as the State Service Commission, is the recipient of AmeriCorps grant funding from the Corporation through two separate funding streams: formula and competitive funds. CaliforniaVolunteers subgrants these funds to applicants based on results of a review process. Grants are awarded to organizations who propose AmeriCorps programs that will operate solely in California. Successful applicants will receive grants to support AmeriCorps member positions that will engage members in service to meet critical needs in California.

CaliforniaVolunteers receives formula funds from the Corporation through a population-based allocation. Competitive funds are awarded through a national competition administered by the Corporation to applicants that have competed successfully at both the state and national levels. CaliforniaVolunteers anticipates awarding new, recompeting, and continuation AmeriCorps grants for fiscal year 2012. The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual federal appropriations. In awarding funds, continuation grants are considered first, followed by new and recompeting grants. Based on recent experience and expressions of interest, CV anticipates that this AmeriCorps grantmaking year will be highly competitive.

CaliforniaVolunteers' review and selection process will be used to determine applications that will be considered for funding. Some finalists will be nominated by CV for the national competition. These applications will be sent to the Corporation to be scored in the national competition. The Corporation will make final funding decisions for programs that will be funded with competitive funds. If selected for competitive funds, these applications are considered grantees of CV, and CV has the final funding/contracting decision for any State program. Applications submitted to the national competition are not guaranteed and Corporation and/or CaliforniaVolunteers funding (formula or competitive). Unsuccessful applicants will return to a rank-order list for consideration of formula funds following competitive funding announcements. CaliforniaVolunteers anticipates announcing final funding decisions in June.

Review and Selection Process

The review process occurs in several phases:

Compliance Check: CaliforniaVolunteers staff will review all applications to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completeness requirements. Applications that meet all requirements will advance to the Peer Review

Peer Review: A panel of at least three peer reviewers evaluates each application against a selection matrix. All external reviewers will be trained and screened for conflict of interest. Applications that meet the minimum score established for the Peer Review will advance to the Staff Review. Applications identified for additional assessment during the peer review, will receive a quality control review which may include a second appraisal by a different peer review panel or a CV staff quality control reviewer at the discretion of the AmeriCorps Director.

Staff Review: Those applications that meet the minimum score in the Peer Review process will advance to the CV Staff Review. Following staff assessment, some applicants may receive requests to provide clarification. Clarification may take the form of an in-person interview, conference call, or written response. This process will be determined at the discretion of the AmeriCorps Director. Please note that failure to respond to clarification requests in a timely manner will result in removal of the application from funding consideration.



Selection

The primary consideration of selection of AmeriCorps programs is merit. Applicants must meet a minimum score at each review stage in order to be considered for funding. In selecting applicants to participate in the national competition, CV considers areas such as past performance, compliance history, innovation, evidence-based- design, strength of impact, focus area, cost per MSY, issue area focus. CaliforniaVolunteers staff has discretion to determine the best strategy in selecting applicants to compete in the national competition.

An applicant's final score from each review stage is weighted according to the weights assigned to each category and sub-category as illustrated in the table below. An applicant's final score is created by weighting the scores from the Peer Review and Staff Review.

To help achieve a balanced portfolio, the final selections will take into consideration the following:

- CaliforniaVolunteers' Statewide Geographic Distribution Policy, in which the Commission will seek to ensure a minimum of 40 MSYs in the Los Angeles region and 20 MSYs per the remaining other eight regions as determined by the California's Economic Strategy Panel. In order to achieve geographic parity, a program in an already represented region may be skipped, and another program may be selected. Under no circumstances will the Commission provide formula funding to an applicant that receives a score that is 10 or more points below the applicant it displaces.
- Ensure a minimum amount of funding for programs led by non-profit and non-state governmental organizations as required by AmeriCorps regulations.

Results of the grant review process are presented to the CV Commission along with staff recommendation of eligible applicants selected to represent California in the national competition. The Commission makes final approval of funding decisions. Commission funding decisions are final—there is no appeal process.

Selection Criteria

In addition to the focus areas and AmeriCorps values identified in the Funding Opportunity Description Section, reviewers at both the state and national level will assess program design, organizational capability, cost-effectiveness, and budget adequacy. Additional selection factors will be applied to balance the portfolio with regard to program models, program activities, geographic distribution, and communities served as described in 45 CFR §§ 2522.420–2522.448. The Application Instructions accompanying this RFA provides additional details and recommendation for addressing each selection criteria.

Basic Selection Criteria: Categories, Sub-Categories, and Respective Weights

Category	Sub-Categories and Weights
Program Design – 50%	Rationale and Approach (10%)
	Member Outputs and Outcomes (20%)
	Community Outputs and Outcomes (20%)
Organizational Capability – 25%	No sub-categories
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy - 25%	Cost-Effectiveness (15%)
	Budget Adequacy (10%)



Section 2522.450 of the AmeriCorps regulations addresses types of programs or program models that may receive special consideration in the selection process. Section 2522.455 addresses how you can find out about additional priorities governing the selection process. Section 2522.470 addresses other factors or information the Corporation may consider in making final decisions.

The following outline summarizes selection criteria for each category:

Each application must clearly describe a project that will effectively deploy AmeriCorps members to solve a significant community need and respond to the following criteria.

- 1. Program Design (50 percent)**--Reviewers will examine the degree to which the applicant demonstrates how AmeriCorps members are particularly well-suited to solving the identified community needs. Specifically, reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant:
 - Provides persuasive evidence that the identified needs exist in the targeted community(ies).
 - Describes the ways in which AmeriCorps members are a highly effective means to solving the identified community needs, including the unique value added by AmeriCorps.
 - Describes how the interventions the AmeriCorps members and volunteers are engaged in are both **evidence-based** and will have a measurable impact that is meaningful.
 - Describes the program components that enable AmeriCorps members to have powerful service experiences that produce increased community impact and lead to continued civic participation and connectivity with other AmeriCorps and national service participants.
 - Convincingly links four major elements: (1) the needs identified, (2) the evidence-based intervention that will be carried out by AmeriCorps members and community volunteers, (3) the ways in which AmeriCorps members are particularly well-suited to deliver the intervention, and (4) the anticipated outcomes.

Recompeting grantees must describe their efforts and impact to date, and provide persuasive evidence they should continue to be funded.

If a new applicant is already working to meet the community need identified in the application, the applicant should describe how the proposed use of AmeriCorps members will add value, i.e., be more effective than what is currently being implemented, or enhance existing efforts.

- 2. Organizational Capability (25 percent)**--Reviewers will assess the extent to which:
 - The organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan, implement, and evaluate the proposed program.
 - The organization has secured, or describes an effective plan for securing, the financial and in-kind resources necessary to support program implementation and to demonstrate community stakeholder support.
 - The organization has the ability and structure to ensure that it understands all federal and state rules and regulations that apply to this AmeriCorps grant; and that its subgrantees and/or service location understand and are in full compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including prohibited activities.
 - Multi-state applicants have consulted with state and territory service commissions to ensure non-duplication and coordination of Corporation resources.



- Current or previous AmeriCorps grantees filled the member positions they were awarded and retained the AmeriCorps members they enrolled or have provided an explanation for less than 100% enrollment and retention.
- Current or previous AmeriCorps grantees have met performance targets and demonstrated compliance with grant terms and conditions.

3. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent)--For cost-reimbursement grants, reviewers will assess the extent to which:

- The budget is clear, reasonable, cost-effective, and in alignment with the program narrative.
- The requested funds do not exceed the maximum cost per Member Service Year (MSY), or for existing programs, have not increased over previous years. The amount requested is a competitive factor in the selection process.

For Education Award Only Programs (**EAPs**) and Full-Time Fixed-Amount Grants, reviewers will assess:

- The applicant's understanding of total program cost and capacity to raise additional resources beyond the fixed-amount.
- The amount requested per member. Fixed-amount applicants are encouraged to request less than the full maximum amount allowed per MSY. The amount requested is a competitive factor in the selection process.

AmeriCorps Guidance Overview

In its role as the State's service commission, CV selects and administers AmeriCorps grants under the provisions of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 and amended provisions authorized by the SAA. All AmeriCorps programs must abide by the regulations, AmeriCorps provisions, and federal policies included in these two laws. In addition to these federal requirements, AmeriCorps programs funded by CV must comply with state-specific policies as well as, grant terms and conditions.

Prospective AmeriCorps programs must understand and follow a number of AmeriCorps documents when considering applying for an AmeriCorps grant and moving into the program design phase. A program applicant should consult the following documents to ensure that it has the latest information regarding the regulations, provisions, and requirements of becoming an AmeriCorps program:

- 2012 AmeriCorps Request for Applications (RFA)
- 2012 AmeriCorps RFA Instruction
- 2012 AmeriCorps RFA Forms
- California AmeriCorps Program Guide
- AmeriCorps Federal Regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520-2550 available online at www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr

Once an organization receives AmeriCorps funding, the guiding documents will also include:

- AmeriCorps Program Proposal (application) and any modifications
- AmeriCorps grant or contract issued by CV, which includes state policies, terms and conditions of the grant award.
- The *approved* budget, which contains the maximum amount of funds possible (up to) for the program as well as its obligations to raise matching funds and in-kind contributions.



The sections that follow provide information and further clarification on CV and Corporation grantmaking and program design policies. .

CaliforniaVolunteers’ AmeriCorps Policies

This section is organized by *prompting* questions, which are followed by the applicable CV policy written in italicized font. For each policy or requirement, information is provided to further clarify the intent of the requirement

1. What are the federal requirements for AmeriCorps programs?

CV Grantmaking Policy A.1--Federal Grantmaking Polices and Requirements.

Successful applicants will be required to comply with AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR §2520-2550, AmeriCorps provisions, and any applicable subsequent changes in federal requirements as issued by the Corporation or state requirements issued by CV.

[Revised Per Program Committee Meetings: 6.16.04; 11.16.04; 6.15.05; 9.28.05; 10.08.09; 7.07.11]

Clarification. Compliance with federal requirements is critical to assuring quality programming and effective management of taxpayer funds. The full AmeriCorps regulations, 45 CFR § 2520-2550, are available online at www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr. The AmeriCorps regulations include the criteria used to select applicants for funding and other pertinent information (see table below).

Program Requirements in the AmeriCorps Regulations

Requirements and Selection	Citation in the AmeriCorps Regulations
Member Service Activities	§2520.20 - §2520.55
Prohibited Activities	§2520.65
Tutoring Programs	§2522.900-2522.950
Matching Funds	§2521.35-2521.90
Member Benefits	§2522.240-2522.250
Calculating Cost Per Member Service Year (MSY)	§2522.485
Performance Measures	§2522.500-2522.650
Evaluation	§2522.500-2522.540 and §2522.700-2522.740
Selection Criteria and Selection Process	§2522.400-2522.475

The major AmeriCorps program components required by the Corporations are summarized below.

Matching Requirements

AmeriCorps programs that receive standard federal grants (non-fixed amount grants) are required to provide a single overall match of 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with the second three-year cycle, match gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to 45 CFR § 2521.60 summarized in the following table:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Minimum Overall Share	24%	24%	24%	26%	30%	34%	38%	42%	46%	50%



Programs may provide their share of operating costs and overall match through cash or in-kind resources, and may use non-Corporation federal funds if specifically allowed by the other federal agency. Matching funds must be verifiable; not included as match for other federal programs; be necessary and reasonable for the purpose of your program and, be allowable under Office of Management and Budget (OMB) cost principles. Matching funds must be secured on an annual basis. CV strongly recommends that applicants planning to use federal funds from another federal agency as match secure authorization to do so.

The legal applicant is the entity responsible for meeting matching funds requirements. The legal applicant may request that partnering organizations provide a share of the match necessary to meet matching funds requirements. Applicants must demonstrate sufficient match to meet the minimum requirements, but are advised not to include match in excess of the minimum if sources are uncertain. Failure to secure matching funds identified in the budget may result in adverse audit findings in addition to negatively affecting future grant applications to the Corporation.

Both CV and the Corporation encourage programs to exceed the minimum match levels and to secure greater support from state and local funding sources, including private sources such as corporations, foundations, individuals, local businesses, and nonprofit organizations. In particular, the Corporation places greater value on non-federal matching funds due to direction received from Congress that the Corporation should increase the level of matching funds provided by the private sector.

Education Award Program and other Corporation fixed-amount grants such as the 2010 Fixed-Amount Grant Pilot do not have match requirements.

Federal Financial Management and Grant Administration Requirements

As with all federal grant programs, it is the responsibility of all grantees to ensure appropriate stewardship of federal funds entrusted to them. Under the Corporation's regulations, each grantee must maintain financial management systems that provide accurate, current, and complete disclosure of the financial results of its program. To meet this requirement, programs must have adequate accounting practices and procedures, internal controls, audit trails, and cost allocation procedures. OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Nonprofit Organizations, requires all organizations to have A-133 financial audits if they annually expend \$500,000 or more in federal awards. This requirement applies to the organization's total expenditures each fiscal year under all of its federal awards.

As with all federal grant programs, legal applicants must ensure that activities, including those of any subgrantees, will be conducted, and facilities operated, in compliance with the applicable civil rights statutes and their implementing regulations. Programs must obtain assurances of such compliance prior to extending federal financial assistance to subgrantees. For civil rights purposes, all programs and projects funded or receiving member services under the National and Community Service Act, as amended, are programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

2. What is the role of the CV Commission in the grant selection process?

Grantmaking Policy B.1. Funding Decision Authority. In any given grantmaking process, the CaliforniaVolunteers Commission approves new grant awards and CaliforniaVolunteers staff reviews and approves continuation of these grants annually.



[Revised per Program Committee Meetings: 6.16.04; 11.16.04; 6.15.05; 9.28.05; 7.07.11]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to clarify funding decision authority. Traditionally, AmeriCorps grants are awarded in a three-year cycle to any given applicant type¹. The Commission has traditionally awarded the opportunity for new applicant to have a three year cycle. CV staff will assess the programs' performance annually. The intention is to assist programs to be awarded year two and year three.

3. What are CVs eligibility requirements for an AmeriCorps grant applicant?

Grantmaking Policy B.2. Partnership Requirements. *A funded program must have a partnership of at least three independent entities, of which one must be public and one private partner (non-profit or for-profit).*

[Revised per Program Committee Meetings: 6.16.04; 11.16.04; 6.15.05; 9.28.05; 7.07.11]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to maximize community involvement in AmeriCorps that goes beyond AmeriCorps placement sites and the grantee. The Commission has a long standing policy of supporting strong community partnerships that use AmeriCorps resources to develop and operate impactful strategies to address challenges that face California communities. The Commission prefers partners to have a significant role in planning, operating, and sustaining the program (e.g. match contribution, training, assessment, quarterly meetings, etc.) to ensure the success of the program.

It should be noted that an organization classified as a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply, serve as a host site for member placements, or act in any type of supervisory role in the proposed AmeriCorps program. Because 501(c)(4) non-profits tend to be organizations whose primary activities revolve around advocacy activities, such organizations may run the risk of using AmeriCorps members in strictly prohibited advocacy activities.

- **Support for Small Community Organizations.** All applicants are encouraged to support the efforts of small community organizations to meet local needs. Small community organizations may include civic, community and/or nonprofit organizations, neighborhood groups, disability organizations, or faith-based organizations. Applicants might engage small community organizations in roles such as subgrantees, member placement sites, or volunteer recruitment partners. Such partnerships should be detailed on the applicant's Partnership Form. In developing an application and strengthening activities with faith-based and/or small community organizations, applicants should consult the Corporation's Faith-Based Toolkit, available at – www.nationalserviceresources.org/faces. In some

¹ There are three types of applicants: (1) New Applicants, (2) Recompeting Applicants, and (3) Continuation Applicants. "New Applicant" is one in which neither the legal applicant, nor primary partnering organizations, nor individuals involved in developing the current AmeriCorps application have developed an AmeriCorps application that has been awarded an operating grant, or were previously employed as core program staff of a funded program, state Commission staff, or Corporation staff in the last *five years*. "Recompeting Applicants" are programs that have completed a three-year grant cycle (in most instances) and opt to "recompete" for another three-year award. Typically, all existing programs entering the final year of their grant period are eligible to re-compete. Such programs will receive a program assessment completed by their Program Associate (PA). The assessment will include things such as an analysis of the program's performance as well as its member enrollment and retention data, and Corporation Inspector General audit findings (if applicable). "Continuation Applicants" are programs submitting requests for years two and three of the three-year grant cycle. Continuation requests are typically submitted for the same number of Member Service Years (MSYs) with minor changes in the budget request due to inflationary cost per Member Service Year (MSY) increases, or cost per MSY reductions based on CVs' cost per MSY schedule.



instances, small community organizations may be direct applicants for grant funding. In other cases, they might partner with other organizations to meet their objectives. In still other cases, Corporation grantees may serve as intermediaries for small organizations.

- **Intermediary Organizations.** Intermediary organizations provide the mechanism for which small community organizations may access AmeriCorps and other Corporation resources. Intermediaries are national, regional, state, or local organizations that agree to provide the technical and financial support to assist small community 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. Providing that there is a common community need, intermediaries may place members at the sites of small community organizations and assume responsibility for monitoring the progress of the sites. Intermediaries may take different forms. For example, a regional intermediary may support community organizations engaged in one or more complementary issue areas, or a statewide intermediary may support community organizations engaged in one primary issue area. Intermediaries should not serve as brokers of AmeriCorps member positions, but instead should assume a leadership role in convening and providing administrative support to smaller organizations united around a similar community need.

4. What is CVs' limit on the amount awarded per member?

Grantmaking Policy B.3. Cost Per Member Service Year. Commission approved cost per MSY schedule will set the maximum funding levels for operating grants, including fixed-amount grants² based on number of previous funding years received by legal applicant and/or program. The schedule may be adjusted or waived at the discretion of the AmeriCorps Committee and/or CV staff due to extenuating circumstances. CV staff is responsible to monitor operating programs' member enrollment & retention to adjust budget to maintain cost per member, as needed.

2012 Cost Per MSY Schedule

Grant Cycle	Grant Years	Maximum Cost Per MSY
1	1, 2, 3	\$16,000
2	4, 5, 6	\$15,000
3	7, 8, 9	\$14,000
4	10, 11, 12	\$13,000
5	13, 14, 15	\$12,000
6	16, 17, 18	\$11,000
7+	19+	\$10,000

²**Fixed-Amount Grants--** The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act (SAA) signed into law by President Obama on April 21, 2009 authorizes the Corporation to award fixed-amount grants in FY 2010. Fixed-amount grants allow programs to apply for a fixed dollar amount per member. The fixed amount awarded per member is significantly less than the cost of running an AmeriCorps program and the applicant must raise the additional revenue necessary to operate the program. **Education Award Programs (EAP)** have been authorized to receive fixed-amount grants for many years, and may continue to enroll less-than-full-time members. EAP programs can apply up to \$800 per MSY to support administrative costs and use their own or other resources for the members' living allowance and program costs. An AmeriCorps program that receives a fixed-amount grant is like any other AmeriCorps program except that, unlike the more typical cost-reimbursement grant, the fixed amount grant does not require:

- Compliance with OMB Cost Principles.
- Detailed, line-item budgets.
- Corporation FFRs.
- Match or documentation of match.

In 2010, the Corporation made available full-time fixed-amount grants to programs that enroll full-time members only. An applicant may apply for a fixed amount grant, provided that the applicant maintains the cost per MSY appropriate to the level established for its associated funding years and that its cost per MSY does not exceed the maximum costs per MSY for fixed-amount grants set by the Corporation. Successful applicants receiving fixed amount grants must also comply to any other federal requirements determined by the Corporation.



[Revised per Program Committee Meetings: 6.16.04; 11.16.04; 6.15.05; 3.30.09; 10.08.09; 7.07.11]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is three-fold: (1) To provide a mechanism for CV to stay within the Corporation's cap on state cost per member; (2) To methodically increase grantee share over time by encouraging programs to look for other sources of funding; and (3) free dollars to fund new promising programs.

Budgets are awarded based on full-time AmeriCorps members. CaliforniaVolunteers calls this Cost per Member Service Year (MSY) or amount awarded per member. This policy sets limits on maximums as well as charges CV to maintain appropriate cost per member. CaliforniaVolunteers and the Corporation determine the maximum amount an applicant can request per member on an annual basis. Applicants calculate their MSY by dividing the Corporation's share of their budget request by the number of MSYs requested in the application. One MSY is the equivalent to a full-time term of service and does not include child care or the value of the education award. The Corporation and the Commission use this number to compare costs of programs.

The Commission initially created the cost per MSY policy in 1999, which requires programs to "ramp down" their program's reliance on AmeriCorps funding over time. Programs are required to reduce the federal funding request annually per the cost per member schedule to free up formula funds to support additional programs. The following represents the Commission's most recently approved cost per member schedule:

Grant Cycle	Grant Years	Maximum Cos Per MSY
1	1, 2, 3	\$16,000
2	4, 5, 6	\$15,000 [-675]
3	7, 8, 9	\$14,000 [-1,000]
4	10, 11, 12	\$13,000 [-1,000]
5	13, 14, 15	\$12,000[-1,000]
6	16, 17, 18	\$11,000[-1,000]
7+	19+	\$10,000[-1,000]

The Commission reviews the cost per MSY schedule annually to determine whether increases in the maximum levels can be accommodated. Historically, CVs' cost per MSY schedule has been adjusted to account for increases in the minimum living allowance for members, rising health care costs, and additional programmatic requirements.

5. What is the grant period for an AmeriCorps grant?

Grantmaking Policy B.4. Grant Period. The Commission follows the Corporation's practice of awarding up to three-year grants, which are evaluated annually for continued funding. Continued funding for all three years is contingent upon funding availability at the federal level and the program's performance. Should continuation funds be granted, the program must enter into a contract for every year of the award.

Revised per Program Committee Meetings: 6.16.04; 11.16.04; 6.15.05; 9.28.05; 07.07.11]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to provide programs with significant time to establish a strong program while maintaining an element of competition and flexibility.



6. What types of grants does CV offer?

Grantmaking Policy B.5. Grant Types. *The Commission typically approves three-year operating grants. Following the grant review process, the Commission may approve staff recommendations to award “program development” or “planning grants” to applicants.*

[Revised per Program Committee Meetings: 6.16.04; 11.16.04; 6.15.05; 9.28.05; 10.08.09; 07.07.11]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to provide a qualified³ applicant an opportunity for up to 12 months of planning/development. Since 1994, the Commission has identified three grant-types:

1. "Operating Grants" – (new, recompetes, and continuation) – funds provided to support AmeriCorps members and their respective service activities;
2. "Planning Grants" – funds to support the development of an AmeriCorps operating grant proposal; and,
3. "Program Development Grants" – provide one-year funding to operating grant applicants, who were unsuccessful due to funding and/or Member Service Year (MSY) limitations, but may receive operating grants in years two and three of the grant cycle – funds are used to establish program systems, including site orientation and member recruitment.

7. What percentage of grant funds is allowable for indirect administrative costs?

Grantmaking Policy B.6. Indirect Administration. *CV retains 1% of funds actually expended (as opposed to funds granted) for contract administration and allows programs to use up to 4% of funds for indirect administration of their program. Percentage remains constant regardless of cost per MSY.*

[Revised per Program Committee Meetings: 6.16.04; 11.16.04; 6.15.05; 9.28.05]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to maximize funding for program operations and minimize funding for administration. Corporation policy mandates that no more than 5% of Corporation funding may be used for indirect administration.

Administrative costs are general or centralized expenses of the overall administration of an organization that receives Corporation funds and do not include particular project costs. These costs may include administrative staff positions. For organizations that have an established indirect cost rate for federal awards, administrative costs mean those costs that are included in the organization’s indirect cost rate agreement. Such costs are generally identified with the organization’s overall operation and are further described in Office of Management and Budget Circulars A-21, A-87, and A-122.

Applicants can choose to use one of two methods to calculate allowable administrative costs – a Corporation fixed percentage method or a federally approved indirect cost rate method. Regardless of the option chosen, the Corporation’s share of administrative costs is limited to 5% of the total Corporation funds **actually expended** under this grant.

Options for Calculating Administrative/Indirect Costs (choose A. or B.)

A. Corporation Fixed Percentage Method-- Fixed Administrative Costs Option

The Corporation fixed rate allows you to charge administrative costs up to a cap without a federally approved indirect cost rate and without documentation supporting the allocation. If you choose the Corporation Fixed Percentage Method (Section IIIA in eGrants), you may charge, for administrative costs, a fixed 5% of the total of the

³ A “qualified” applicant is likely to be funded based on their state ranking.



Corporation funds expended. To charge this fixed 5%, the grantee match for administrative costs may not exceed 10% of all direct cost expenditures.

1. To determine the Corporation share for Section III: Multiply the sum of the Corporation funding shares of Sections I and II by 0.0526. This is the maximum amount you can request as Corporation share. The 5% maximum is calculated by multiplying the sum of the Corporation's share of Section I and Section II by the factor 0.0526. The factor 0.0526 is used to calculate the maximum amount of federal funds that may be budgeted for administrative (indirect) costs, rather than 0.0500, as a way to mathematically compensate for determining Section III costs when the total budget (Sections I + II + III) is not yet established. (If 0.0500 was used, the resulting Section III costs would be less than the maximum 5% of total costs that are permitted under the Corporation's regulations.) As allowed by the Corporation, CV retains 20% of the federal share of administrative costs.
2. To determine the maximum Grantee share for Section III: Then multiply the total (both Corporation and grantee share) of Sections I and II by 10% (0.10) and enter this amount as the grantee share for Section III A.
3. Enter the sum of the Corporation and grantee shares under Total Amount.

B. Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate Method

If you have a Federally Approved Indirect Cost (IDC) rate and choose to use it, the IDC rate will constitute documentation of your administrative costs including the 5% maximum payable by the Corporation. Specify the Cost Type for which your organization has current documentation on file, i.e., Provisional, Predetermined, Fixed, or Final indirect cost rate. Supply your approved IDC rate (percentage) and the base upon which this rate is calculated (direct salaries, salaries and fringe benefits, etc.). It is at your discretion whether or not to claim your entire IDC rate to calculate administrative costs. If you choose to claim a lower rate, please include this rate in the Rate Claimed field.

1. Determine the base amount of direct costs to which you will apply the IDC rate, including both the Corporation and Grantee's shares, as prescribed by your established rate agreement (i.e., based on salaries and benefits, total direct costs, or other). Then multiply the appropriate direct costs by the rate being claimed. This will determine the total amount of indirect costs allowable under the grant.
2. To determine the Corporation share: Multiply the sum of the Corporation funding share in Sections I and II by 0.0526. This is the maximum amount you can claim as the Corporation share of indirect costs. As allowed by the Corporation, CV retains 20% of the federal share of administrative costs.
3. To determine the maximum Grantee share: Subtract the amount calculated in step b (the Corporation administrative share) from the amount calculated in step a (the Indirect Cost total). This is the amount the applicant can claim as grantee share for administrative costs.

Calculation of CV/Grantee Share of Federal Administrative Costs

As allowed by the Corporation, CV elects to retain a share of the 5% of the federal funds available for administrative costs. To calculate these fractional shares, within Section III of the subgrant budget, one-fifth (20%) of the federal dollars budgeted for administrative costs are allocated to the commission's share and four-fifths (80%) of the federal dollars budgeted for administrative costs are allocated to the program's share. Because programs budget the



5% administrative maximum by multiplying the Corporation's share of Section I and Section II costs by the factor 0.0526, the allocation between commission and program shares would be calculated as follows:

$$([\text{Section I Corporation Share}] + [\text{Section II Corporation Share}] \times 0.0526) \times (0.20) = \text{CV Share}$$

$$([\text{Section I Corporation Share}] + [\text{Section II Corporation Share}] \times 0.0526) \times (0.80) = \text{Subgrantee Share}$$

8. What are CVs' limits on maximum grant size?

Grantmaking Policy B.7. Minimum and Maximum Grant Size. *New programs, including experienced applicants, can request no more than \$400,000 in formula funds and recompeting programs may request no more than \$850,000 in formula funds. Programs seeking competitive funds are not subject to a maximum limit.*

Applicant Type	Formula Funding Limit	Competitive Funding
New Applicant	\$400,000	No limit
Experienced Applicant	\$400,000	No limit
Previously Funded Program	\$850,000	No limit
Recompeting Program	\$850,000	No limit

Programs that are unsuccessful in their attempt to secure competitive funding will be considered for formula funding, based on their state ranking. Such programs may be subjected to a reduced budget up to \$850,000.

[Revised per Program Committee Meetings: 6.16.04; 11.16.04; 6.15.05; 9.28.05; 10.08.09; 07.07.11]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to ensure that formula funding will be distributed to a large number of applicants throughout the state while providing flexibility to provide larger grants to programs that can effectively use them. Historically, the amount of available funds for formula grants is less than the amount available for competitive grants. The purpose of formula grants is to support AmeriCorps service throughout California and maximum limits have been set so that more applicants are considered to be funded. Maximum limits have been set for competitive grants only when the amount of national funding is limited.

9. What is CVs' limit on program size?

Grantmaking Policy B.8. Minimum Program Size. *While the Corporation encourages a minimum program size of 20 MSYs, CV requires a minimum program size of 20 MSYs. CaliforniaVolunteers will review requests for exemptions submitted by specialized programs that require reduced-hour positions or programs focused on a need that inherently requires a relatively small number of members. CaliforniaVolunteers will not accept proposals requesting fewer than 10 MSYs.*

[Revised per Program Committee Meetings: 6.16.04; 11.16.04; 6.15.05; 9.28.05; 07.07.11]

Clarification. AmeriCorps programs are designed to address unmet compelling community needs. The program design should consider the scope of the need, the intensity of the service required, and the individual needed to deliver the service. The intent of this policy is to ensure that CVs' portfolio of programs can maintain a high quality is manageable and



does not consist of hundreds of programs each with a few members⁴ and provide members in numbers that can make a substantial difference relative to locally identified needs.

10. What is CVs' definition of a new applicant?

Grantmaking Policy C.1. Portfolio Development. *A new applicant is one in which neither the legal applicant, nor primary partnering organizations, nor individuals involved in developing the current AmeriCorps application have developed an AmeriCorps application that has been awarded an operating grant, or were previously employed as core program staff of a funded program, state commission staff, or Corporation staff in the last five years.*

CV will add 10% to the score of all new applicant proposals following the staff/peer review process to increase the likelihood that new applicants receive an invitation to the staff interview process. Once staff interview invitations are issued, the score adjustment will be removed, and then reapplied in calculating the applicant's final score.

[Revised per Program Committee Meetings: 6.16.04; 11.16.04; 6.15.05; 9.28.05; 07.07.11]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to level the competition among experienced and new applicants/programs. CaliforniaVolunteers actively conducts outreach to, and encourages the participation of, new applicants prior to every three-year grant competition. CaliforniaVolunteers has adopted a policy that explicitly provides for strong representation of new applicants in its portfolio.

11. How are CVs' funding priorities treated in the grant review process?

Grantmaking Policy C.2. Funding Priorities and Governor's Initiative.

State Funding Priorities--*CaliforniaVolunteers has the option to develop procedures to award "priority points" to applications that address Governor priorities and/or initiatives, if identified by the Governor.*

Governor's Initiatives--*At the request of the Governor, the Commission may create partnerships designed to address specific unmet needs. Governor's Initiatives must be approved by the Commission and may be exempt from the competitive process (e.g. peer review, staff review, etc.) at the discretion of CV staff.*

[Revised per Program Committee Meetings: 6.16.04; 11.16.04; 6.15.05; 9.28.05; 10.08.09; 07.07.11]

Clarification. States can identify funding priorities when considering funding awards. The intent is to encourage applicants to address state priority needs and to have Governor Initiatives go through the same review process.

12. What score must an applicant earn to be considered for funding?

Grantmaking Policy C.3. Minimum Score Threshold. All applicants must meet a minimum "adequate" score threshold based on the scoring matrix in order to be considered for funding. A program application must earn an "adequate" minimum score established for each grantmaking process by CVs' staff to be considered for funding.

[Revised per Program Committee Meetings: 6.16.04; 11.16.04; 6.15.05; 9.28.05; 10.08.09; 07.07.11]

⁴ Over the last decade, CV has had roughly with about 2,000 full-time members—equivalent to approximately 5,000 member slots. If a program were to request the minimum number of members (20), that would be about 100 programs to monitor and provide oversight.



Clarification. The intent of this policy is to maintain the quality of the CV program portfolio and the credibility of CVs' grantee selection process. Additionally, the the Corporation requires state commissions to conduct the following grantmaking processes:

- Review and select new/recompeting competitive and Education Award Program (EAP) applications to submit to the Corporation for funding;
- Prepare ranking and recommendations for new/recompeting competitive programs to fund;
- Select programs for formula funding, either separately or as part of the same competition used for the Corporation's competitive grants process;
- Thoroughly review the recommended applications to ensure they are complete, accurate, and in compliance with all program and budget requirements before submitting them to the Corporation in eGrants;
- Review Financial Status Reports to monitor and report on programs' progress toward the matching requirements stipulated in the AmeriCorps rule 45 CFR §§ 2522.35-2522.91; and
- Read, understand, and sign all assurances, certifications, and restrictions, including the certification of programs' progress toward the matching requirements.

State commissions are not required to conduct a peer review process for applications submitted to the state competitive or EAP process, however, the Corporation expects states to conduct a rigorous review and to send forward only those applications that are considered to be high quality and that meet all requirements outlined in the Application Instructions. Commissioners must vote to approve the applications submitted, and commissions are required to maintain a record of that vote.

13. How does CV ensure that AmeriCorps resources are well represented throughout CA? *Grantmaking Policy C.4. Statewide Geographic Distribution.* The primary consideration for selection of AmeriCorps programs is merit. Under no circumstance will the Commission fund an applicant that receives a score deemed unacceptable in any grantmaking process.

The Commission uses the California Economic Strategy Panel's (ETP) nine economic regions by county in analyzing geographic distribution. These regions are combinations of similar counties with particular attention paid to geography, demography and economic conditions⁵.

At the end of a grantmaking process, when deciding whether a program will receive formula funding, the Commission will seek to ensure a minimum of 20 MSYs per region

⁵ The regions and accompanying counties are as follows:

- **Northern California:** Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Nevada, Plumas, Sierra, Siskiyou, Trinity
- **Northern Sacramento Valley:** Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Shasta, Tehama
- **Greater Sacramento:** El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Yolo, Sutter, Yuba
- **Bay Area:** Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma
- **San Joaquin Valley:** Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare
- **Central Coast:** Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara
- **Central Sierra:** Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Inyo, Mariposa, Mono, Tuolumne
- **Southern California:** Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, Riverside, San Bernardino
- **Southern Border:** Imperial, San Diego



with the following exception of 40 MSYs in the Los Angeles region. All members proposed in this region will count towards meeting this requirement, including those placed by single region, multi-region, and statewide programs. In order to achieve a geographic parity, a program in an already represented region may be skipped, and another program may be selected in order to achieve geographic balance. Under no circumstances will the Commission provide formula funding to an applicant that receives a score that is 10 or more points below the applicant it displaces.

In the event this policy cannot be met due to funding and configuration limitations, multi-region and statewide programs will be encouraged to place a minimum number of MSY in regions that are underrepresented.

[Revised per Program Committee Meetings: 6.16.04; 11.16.04; 6.15.05; 9.28.05; 10.08.09; 07.07.11]

Clarification. The Commission seeks a statewide portfolio that covers all geographic regions of California, including both rural and urban communities. The intent of this policy is to increase opportunities for communities throughout the state to access AmeriCorps resources.

14. How does CV assure that the California AmeriCorps portfolio does not exceed the Corporation's state aggregate cost per member policy?

Grantmaking Policy C.5. Statewide Cost Per Member. *When finalizing funding decisions, CV will monitor budgets as necessary in order to meet the Corporation's state aggregate Cost Per Member policy.*

[Revised per Program Committee Meetings: 6.16.04; 11.16.04; 6.15.05; 9.28.05; 07.07.11]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to maintain a state average at or below the Corporation's limit. The Corporation's policy requires that a state's portfolio average Cost per MSY may not exceed an annually set limit.

15. How does CV ensure that AmeriCorps do not primarily support programs carried out by the state or by a state agency?

Grantmaking Policy C.6. Maximum State and Minimum non-State/Private Sector *Final decisions will consider this requirement and adjustments will be made as necessary.*

[Revised per Program Committee Meetings: 6.16.04; 11.16.04; 6.15.05; 9.28.05; 07.07.11]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to comply with Corporation's requirement by ensuring a minimum amount of funding for programs led by non profit and non-state governmental organizations. The Corporation requires that at least 60% of funds support programs that are not carried out by the state or by a state agency. The Corporation will waive the requirement if an adequate number of acceptable applications from non-state agencies are not received.



AMERICORPS PROGRAM DESIGN ELEMENTS

Program Design Overview

Across California, AmeriCorps provides a variety of specific and identifiable services to communities. For example, programs use AmeriCorps members to mentor previously incarcerated youth, provide family support services to families facing significant economic and social challenges, or recruit and organize local volunteers to renovate low-income housing. Members restore streams or urban parks alongside community residents. AmeriCorps members help recruit, support, and manage community volunteers who support disaster preparedness. Members may also perform a variety of infrastructure development activities that enhance the capacity of the community-based organizations in which they serve, including raising funds to support approved projects and conducting research to maximize the impact of the organization. Although programs may engage members in a variety of activities, the majority of the member's time must be dedicated to addressing a specific community need. CaliforniaVolunteers expects that all programs will be able to demonstrate significant and measurable impacts in their communities as a result of members' service activities.

Performing *direct service* activities such as tutoring children, building houses, or delivering meals to homebound seniors tends to be the primary focus of AmeriCorps members' service. The Corporation defines *direct service* activities as those that provide a direct, measurable benefit to an individual, group, or a community. It is also permissible for AmeriCorps programs to engage AmeriCorps members in *indirect service* activities, those that produce organizational outcomes, including enhancing the systems, infrastructure, and human resources of an organization that is addressing otherwise unmet community needs. Although direct service activities typically remain the focus of member service hours, AmeriCorps members may engage in infrastructure development activities that are consistent with the scope of the proposed program.

Local involvement and input are vital to the development of high-quality service programs that build and sustain communities. Successful programs are those that use extensive, broad-based local input and representatives of key stakeholder groups to design, implement, and evaluate their projects. This includes consultation with:

- Representatives from the communities the program serves;
- Program members (or potential members); and,
- Appropriate community agencies (secular and faith-based), businesses, foundations, local labor organizations representing employees of service sponsors, and local government.

Member activities will fall into one of three program design categories:

- *Needs and Service Activities* – direct service that addresses the identified need;
- *Member Development* – the training members receive to impact both their knowledge and skills to perform quality service, including member orientation, ongoing training, and life after AmeriCorps training; and,
- *Strengthening Communities* – volunteer recruitment and management in addition to other infrastructure development activities (if proposed).



Applicants will develop performance measures in each of the three program design categories that quantify the impact of member service activities.

As a general rule, AmeriCorps members (in aggregate) devote at least 80 percent of their service hours toward the program's activities in the areas of *Needs and Service Activities* and *Strengthening Communities*. Up to 20 percent of service hours may be directed towards providing members the training they need to successfully complete service activities. If programs choose to engage their AmeriCorps members in community strengthening activities, beyond volunteer recruitment, no more than 10 percent of member service hours may be dedicated to fundraising activities.

Member Hours Allocation

<i>No less than 80 percent of a term of service</i>		<i>No more than 20 percent</i>
Needs and Service Activities	Strengthening Communities Activities	Member Development
Direct service activities	Volunteer recruitment and/or support activities	Member training
	Infrastructure development (e.g., partnership development, strengthening organizational infrastructure, community outreach, etc.)	
	Fund raising activities Not more than 10 percent of term of service	

As part of the submission package, AmeriCorps program applicant must complete performance measurement worksheets that will connect the identified community need with the AmeriCorps member service activities and the desired outcomes of the proposed program. Successful applicants will ensure that their performance measures are consistent with the community need and service activities described in the program narrative.

The section that follows describes the Commission's policies on required AmeriCorps program design elements.

AmeriCorps Member Requirements

Well-qualified and prepared AmeriCorps members are essential to the success of any quality AmeriCorps program. Programs are responsible for the recruitment and training of its members, and are encouraged to recruit members that reflect the characteristics of the communities in which it serve.

Member Eligibility

- **Member Eligibility Requirements.** Programs must ascertain and document the eligibility of all of its members. An eligible member is an individual that:
 - Is a US citizen, US national or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States;
 - Is at least 17 years of age at the commencement of service; and,
 - Has a high school diploma or GED, or agrees to obtain one before using an education award; or,



- If a member is a US citizen, US national, or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States and is not at least 17 years of age at the commencement of service, (s)he must:
 - Be enrolled in a full-time, year-round youth corps, or full-time summer program, and be between the ages of 16-25, inclusive; or,
 - Be enrolled in a program for economically disadvantaged youth and be between the ages of 16-24, inclusive; and,
 - Have been deemed incapable by an independent assessment of obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent.
- **Criminal History Checks.** Under the SAA, *all* AmeriCorps members and grant-funded staff of programs enrolled or hired on or after October 1, 2009, regardless of whether the individual has recurring access to vulnerable populations, must complete a state criminal history check, and a National Sex Offender Registry Check (NSOPR).

An individual who is convicted of murder or is registered, or required to be registered, on a state sex offender registry, is INELIGIBLE TO SERVE. Programs who do not comply with the criminal registry check and NSOPR requirements risk loss of funding. Further, the Corporation may disallow costs attributable to an individual who is disqualified as a sex offender. Fees associated with obtaining criminal history checks may be included as an expense in the program budget.

Member Recruitment and Selection

Each AmeriCorps program selects its members and the selection criteria may vary. However, programs must conduct their selection processes in a non-partisan, non-political, and non-discriminatory manner. Additionally, programs must establish minimum qualifications reflective of the service that members provide. Programs are encouraged to select members who possess leadership potential as well as a commitment to the goals of national service, regardless of educational level, work experience, or economic background.

- **Recruitment.** Member recruitment is the responsibility of the program. Program recruitment strategies vary based on the program's service activities and its essential and preferred qualifications. Most programs find that recruitment is a year-round process. All recruitment materials should identify the position as an AmeriCorps member position and include minimum qualifications and benefits.

Programs build strong communities when they engage members and staff from different backgrounds in common service. Applicants should actively seek to include members and staff from the communities where the project operates, as well as men and women of various faiths, races, ethnicities, education levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, sexual orientation, and physical and mental abilities.

Programs must ensure that member positions and activities are accessible to people with disabilities. Applicants that target populations with special needs are encouraged to consider appropriate design elements such as use of part-time positions and appropriate modifications of level and type of supports that might be needed to assure successful completion of service for all members. California Volunteers has access to technical assistance providers and has staff available to assist grantees in providing appropriate accommodations for members with disabilities and to determine whether their living allowance might impact their disability benefits. For more information about inclusive



recruitment and outreach, applicants can also visit www.serviceandinclusion.org/handbook/index.php?page=sectioniv#appendixresources.

- **Planning for the Term of Service.** Programs must develop member position descriptions that provide for meaningful service activities and performance criteria that are appropriate to the skill level of members. The grantee must ensure that each member has sufficient opportunity to complete the required number of hours to qualify for a post service education award. In planning for the member's term of service, the grantee must account for holidays and other time off, and must provide each member with sufficient opportunity to make up missed hours.
- **Member Contracts.** The grantee must require that each member signs a contract that, at a minimum, includes or refers to the following:
 - Member position description;
 - The minimum number of service hours (as authorized by statute) and other requirements (as developed by the grantee) necessary to successfully complete the term of service and to be eligible for the education award;
 - Standards of conduct, as developed by the grantee or subgrantee;
 - Prohibited activities, including those specified in the regulations;
 - Requirements under the Drug-Free Workplace Act (41 U.S.C. 701 *et seq.*);
 - Suspension and termination rules;
 - The specific circumstances under which a member may be released for cause;
 - Grievance procedures; and
 - Other requirements as established by the grantee.

Programs should ensure that the contract is signed before commencement of service so that members are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Member Benefits

Pursuant to state law, members are exempted from the California wage and hour laws. Under California Labor Code Section 1171, AmeriCorps members are exempted from state overtime laws. Members must be informed at the time of enrollment that they may be required to serve in excess of eight hours per day or 40 hours per week, or both, and must be allowed to opt out of the national service program at that time. This law also prohibits discrimination against participants for refusing to work overtime for a legitimate reason.

- **Living Allowances.** Pursuant to the National and Community Service Trust Act, AmeriCorps members are provided with a living allowance (monthly stipend) to support basic subsistence costs while dedicating their lives to service. For the 2011-12 program year, each full-time member must receive a minimum living allowance of \$12,100, and may not receive an allowance in excess of \$24,200 (see table below). *Programs are not required to provide a living allowance to half-time, reduced half-time, quarter-time, or minimum-time members.* Programs choosing to provide part-time members with living allowances should use the guidelines in the chart below. The minimum living allowance amounts listed for part-time members are prorated as a percentage of the full-time living allowance and are provided for reference only. Education Award Program applicants are not required to provide a living allowance, but if so, it should comply with the maximum requirement.



Term of Service	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Living Allowance	MSY
Full-time	1,700	\$12,100	\$24,200	1.000
Half-Time	900	\$6,400	\$12,800	0.500
Reduced Half-Time	675	\$4,800	\$9,600	0.381
Quarter-Time	450	\$3,200	\$6,400	0.2646
Minimum-Time	300	\$2,150	\$4,300	0.2117

Because the minimum living allowance may not fully cover the actual living expenses of members, programs may wish to offer living allowances in excess of the minimum requirements. Programs are prohibited from comparing member service hours to an “hourly wage.”

Programs seeking exemptions to the member living allowance requirements due to either existence prior to the enactment of the National and Community Service Trust Act, or their status as residential or professional corps programs should contact CV.

- Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards.** AmeriCorps members serving in a program funded with 2011 dollars who successfully complete a term of service will receive an education award as defined in the chart below. The amount of the Education Award is indexed to the value of the Pell Grant award, as required by the Serve America Act and as such, will increase on an annual basis. The member may use the award to pay for current educational expenses at qualified institutions of higher education, or to repay qualified student loans. Education awards are not calculated as part of the program’s grant. The following chart shows the relationship between the number of hours an AmeriCorps member serves and the education award the member receives based upon the successful completion of the term of service:

Term of Service	Number of Hours	Education Award
Full-time	at least 1,700	\$5,550
Half-time	at least 900	\$2,775
Reduced half-time	at least 675	\$2,114
Quarter-time	at least 450	\$1,468
Minimum-time	at least 300	\$1,175

A member has up to seven years after the term of service has ended to use the award. AmeriCorps members who commence service on or after October 1, 2009, who are age 55 or older at the time they commence service, may, upon successful completion of a term of service, transfer the education award to a child, grandchild, or foster child.

While they serve, members who have outstanding qualified student loans may be eligible for forbearance on their payments. To qualify, they must contact their loan holders. Upon successful completion of a member’s terms of service, the Corporation will make payments for interest that accrued during the period of forbearance.



- **Child Care.** Programs must make child care available to any full-time member who is eligible and needs such assistance in order to participate in the program. Members serving in EAPs are not eligible for the childcare benefit, no matter their term of service. The Corporation funds child care directly at 100 percent of the allowance defined by payment rates of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), which is administered through the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (refer to as AmeriCorps@CARE). Programs that choose to provide childcare as a match source (as approved in their budget) may use AmeriCorps@CARE for technical assistance. Programs can contact AmeriCorps@CARE at (800) 570-4543 with questions regarding childcare.

The Corporation can provide technical assistance to programs in determining member eligibility, provider eligibility, and the child care allowance. Direct payments are made to child care providers. Member eligibility for child care is based on the following need:

- Total family income of members must be less than 75 percent of the state median income, as defined by the state under CCDBG guidelines; and,
- Members must reside with and be a parent or guardian of a child under the age of 13.

If members in a program receive child care assistance from other sources such as a parent or guardian, they are ineligible to receive child care from the Corporation. If members become ineligible for other assistance due to enrollment in an AmeriCorps program, or the member certifies that he or she needs child care in order to participate in the program, the program must provide child care. More information on requirements and eligibility criteria are in the AmeriCorps regulation 45 CFR § 2520-2550.

- **Health Insurance.** With the exception of EAPs, programs must provide full-time members with health insurance at the time of acceptance into the program if the member is not otherwise covered by a health insurance policy that provides the minimum benefits described below. Programs must provide coverage to those full-time members who lose coverage during their term of service as a result of participating in the program, or through no deliberate act of his/her own (such as parental or spousal job loss). Education Award Programs are encouraged, but not required to provide health care to their AmeriCorps members.

Generally, the Corporation does not pay the costs of health benefits for less than full-time members unless they serve full-time for a sustained period of time (such as a full-time summer project). In that case, a less than full-time member may be eligible for health care benefits supported by Corporation funds.

Programs that have health insurance coverage must provide or exceed these minimum benefits:

- *Covered Services:* Physician services for illness or injury, hospital room and board, emergency room, x-ray and laboratory, and prescription drugs;
- *Limited Coverage:* Mental/nervous disorders, substance abuse;
- *Deductible:* Not more than \$250 per individual;
- *Co-insurance:* Member pays no more than 20 percent or alternatively, comparable fixed fee. Exception: mental and substance abuse may require a 50 percent co-payment;
- *Out-of-pocket:* Not more than \$1,000 per individual; and,
- *Maximum Benefit:* At least \$50,000 per occurrence or cause.



Member Development

AmeriCorps expands opportunities, helping those who help America. Through AmeriCorps, members develop additional skills, gain valuable experience, and receive education awards that they can use to repay qualified school loans or for future education.

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, including skills training for service activities. Applicants are encouraged to include leadership development and other training designed to have a long-term positive impact on members, including opportunities to explore educational and career choices. Further, training should reflect the unique nature of the program and be appropriate for the age, skill level, and other differences in the backgrounds of members.

By the end of their term of service, AmeriCorps members should have opportunities to:

- Discuss and explore their community and the people, processes, and institutions most effective in improving community conditions;
 - Develop the skills to 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 civic engagement and service for the common good;
 - Increase life and/or employment skills; and,
 - Gain a greater appreciation and understanding of those from different backgrounds.
- **Member Oath and Training Plans.** Programs must provide members with opportunities to collectively take the AmeriCorps pledge or a similar oath. Programs must also provide an initial orientation, as well as initial and ongoing training. Orientations must contain information regarding the community in which members serve, the history of national service, and expectations of members. The program is responsible for training regarding the service they will provide, volunteer recruitment, site specific topic areas and an end of service component that includes topics such as accessing and utilizing the education award, future national service opportunities, career or continuing education options, etc. Whether member 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. In addition, members must receive ongoing training that supplements their initial orientation and provides added depth to their service experience. Training that must be included in the training plan:
 - *Member Orientation* – history of national service, introduction to AmeriCorps, member contract, payroll/benefits, member expectations, key staff and other introductions, etc.
 - *Initial Member Training* – community overview, design of program, program-specific training related to member service activities, team building, diversity training, etc.
 - *Site Specific Orientation* – overview of placement site, introduction of key contacts, policies and procedures for placement site;
 - *Ongoing Training* – additional program-specific training related to member service activities, volunteer recruitment and support training, ethic of service/civic responsibility, etc.
 - *Life After AmeriCorps* – training to help members transition from the AmeriCorps experience, including resume writing, interview skills, nonprofit and public sector job



resources, graduate school programs, using the education award, etc. Resources to assist with this training are available from the Corporation.

- **Member Orientation.** Programs must conduct an orientation for members and comply with any pre-service orientation or training required by the Corporation. This orientation should be designed to enhance member security and sensitivity to the community. Orientation should cover member rights, and responsibilities, including the program's code of conduct, prohibited activities (including those specified in the regulations), requirements under the Drug-Free Workplace Act (41 U.S.C.701 *et seq.*), suspension and termination of service, grievance procedures, sexual harassment, other non-discrimination issues, and other topics as necessary.
- **Other Member Training Elements.** Programs may also wish to include the following elements in their plans for ongoing training:
 - *Conflict Management* – Training for effectively managing conflict;
 - *Support Services* – Programs are **required** to assist members who have not completed high school in earning the equivalent of a high school diploma (GED). Programs are encouraged to support GED efforts that are clearly linked to higher education opportunities.
 - *Accommodations* – Programs are encouraged to identify types of accommodations and universal design features they plan to employ, and ways in which they will respond to requests for accommodations;
 - *Communication Skills* – Skill development that assists members in becoming more effective communicators;
 - *Teambuilding* – Activities that help build a team environment and esprit de corps among members with diverse attitudes, knowledge, skills and life experience;
 - *Leadership Development* – Training that assists members in developing leadership skills;
 - *Diversity Training* – Training that helps members appreciate and respect the differences among and between team members and the larger community;
 - *First Aid/CPR* – Programs are encouraged to train members in standard First Aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR);
 - *CERT Training* – This training includes disaster medical assistance; and,
 - *Career Exploration* – Training and education that allows members to explore career opportunities in areas such as child development, teaching, public health, or public safety.

Member Supervision and Support

- **Member Supervision.** As the experience of Corporation programs across the country demonstrates, successful member development and retention depends upon appropriate supervision and coaching of members. Training should incorporate relevant AmeriCorps policies and procedures, impart skills and knowledge to guide members, and provide useful advice on their service. The legal applicant is charged with providing members with an individual who has regular oversight. Individuals with oversight responsibilities of members must be prepared and trained prior to actual placement of members. Costs associated with site supervisors, including salary and training, may be charged to the AmeriCorps grant or used as matching funds. Members may not serve as the legal supervisor of other members. Successful applicants will describe plans to provide members with close supervisory support, modeling behavior expected of a member while giving guidance on a consistent basis.



- **Member Performance Reviews.** Programs must conduct and keep a record of at least a midterm and end-of-term written evaluation of each member's performance for full and half-time members and an end-of-term written evaluation for less than half-time members. The end-of-term evaluation should focus on such factors as:
 - ✓ Whether the member has completed the required number of hours;
 - ✓ Whether the member has satisfactorily completed assignments; and
 - ✓ Whether the member has met other performance criteria that were clearly communicated at the beginning of the term of service.

- **Grievance Procedures.** Programs must establish a grievance procedure for members who believe that they have been unfairly released and for other grievances filed by members or other interested parties. *The procedures must include an opportunity for a hearing and binding arbitration within statutory deadlines.* Additionally, programs are encouraged to establish an alternative dispute resolution procedure, such as mediation.

Prohibited Service Activities

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or the Corporation, staff and members may not engage in the following activities:

- (1) Attempting to influence legislation;
- (2) Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- (3) Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
- (4) Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- (5) Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- (6) Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
- (7) Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction 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;
- (8) Providing a direct benefit to:
 - (i) A business organized for profit;
 - (ii) A labor union;
 - (iii) A partisan political organization;
 - (iv) A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
 - (v) An organization engaged in religious activities unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities; and, other prohibited activities deemed by the Corporation.

In addition to the above prohibited activities, **members may not provide abortion services or make referrals for such services. Program staff and members may not engage in voter registration drives.** Grant funds, in no way, should be used to coordinate voter registration



drives. Of course, individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their own initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-Corporation funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.

AmeriCorps members may spend up to 10 percent of their term of service engaged in other capacity building activities, including fundraising. However, AmeriCorps members engaging in fundraising activities MAY NOT:

- Raise funds that provide benefit to the placement site's general operating budget or endowment or that of other programs sponsored by the placement site;
- Fundraise for required matching funds necessary to cover program operation costs; and,
- Prepare grant applications for funding provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service or any other federal agency.

AmeriCorps Identity

As part of a national network, programs must identify the program as an AmeriCorps program and members eligible for an education award as AmeriCorps members. Programs must provide AmeriCorps uniforms to members (bearing the AmeriCorps logo). Programs may use grant funds to pay for a standard service gear package (AmeriCorps t-shirt, sweatshirt, hat, pin, decals and buttons) for members. Programs are encouraged to provide recognition to members through graduation ceremonies that honor the completion of a term of service, or other similar recognition events throughout the course of the program year.



1. How should an application document the community need to be addressed through AmeriCorps?

Program Design Policy B.1. Applicants must provide evidence of a compelling community need through local data (e.g. city, county, state data that matches the area to be served). Proposed AmeriCorps member activities and results must directly relate to the identified need.

[Revised per Program Committee Meeting: 9.28.05]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to ensure that AmeriCorps meets pressing community [and local] needs. AmeriCorps was designed to focus the time, energy, and skills of national service participants on pressing local needs. The Corporation and CV have an interest in ensuring that grantees can identify *specific* needs and conditions that require AmeriCorps resources. Such statistics should document the scope and severity of the specific need to be addressed by the AmeriCorps program and avoid those that provide a portrait of the community as a whole. For example, the Porterville Police Department documented a 55% increase in youth-involved theft during hours immediately following the close of school (rather than a generic statement that there is a national trend toward higher youth crime during after-school hours).

Current policy requires applicants to produce evidence of a compelling community need using local data that demonstrates the need.

2. What “added” value must AmeriCorps resources bring to the community?

Program Design Policy B.2. Applicants (1) describe why AmeriCorps resources, rather than paid staff, volunteers, or existing resources, are needed to meet identified needs, and (2) establish how AmeriCorps resources result in services and impacts that are above and beyond what would have been otherwise possible.

[Revised per Program Committee Meeting: 9.28.05]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to ensure that AmeriCorps resources represent an effective strategy and added value for addressing identified unmet community needs. Federal law prohibits AmeriCorps members from displacing either paid staff *or* volunteers. Thereby, AmeriCorps was created to target unmet community needs (i.e., needs that are not already receiving attention through other programs and organizations).

3. What is CVs’ requirement on member placement?

Program Design Policy B.3. Minimum Number of Member per Operating Site. Program must place a minimum of two AmeriCorps members at each placement site..

[Revised per Program Committee Meeting: 9.28.05; 10.08.09]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to ensure strong program design and to provide members with at least a minimal mutual support network. Requests for single site placement must show enhanced impact and member support mechanisms. Experience has shown that assigning an individual AmeriCorps member to placement site generally brings major challenges. At the program level, it is difficult for a lone AmeriCorps member to have a significant impact or bring about meaningful results. For members, single site placements often fail to provide a supportive environment conducive to effective service.



Placed alone at their sites, members also lack connection to the larger national service community or even the immediate local program.

4. **What is CVs' requirement on disaster awareness training for AmeriCorps members?**

Program Design Policy B.4. Disaster Awareness Training. *The Commission strongly supports the preparation of AmeriCorps members in areas of emergency response (e.g. Community Emergency Response Training (CERT), local disaster awareness training, if possible, at a minimum, provide staff and AmeriCorps members with CPR and standard first aid training).*

[Revised per Program Committee Meeting: 9.28.05; 10.08.09]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to assist with the creation of a foundation for community preparedness in the event of disasters and other emergencies. California is prone to a wide variety of natural disasters (most notably, fires, earthquakes, and floods). CaliforniaVolunteers believes that AmeriCorps members are valuable resources who are well-suited to assist communities in times of natural disaster, emergencies, and acts of terrorism.

Disaster Volunteering and Preparedness Department (DVP)

As part of the CV disaster mission, AC programs may be trained to support the State's volunteer and donations management function. The DVP will provide specific language to define expectations of future AC grantees in support of CV disaster role.

5. **What are CVs' requirements for direct and indirect member service activities?**

Program Design Policy C.1. Direct and Indirect Member Service Activities.

AmeriCorps resources should be invested in programs that:

- *Promote direct service as a means to address a compelling community need; and,*
- *Demonstrate the capacity to operate an AmeriCorps program at the time of submitting an application.*

CaliforniaVolunteers values the direct service that has traditionally been a foundation of AmeriCorps. Direct service activities focus on the beneficiaries of service, while capacity building activities lead to organizational outcomes. AmeriCorps members are permitted to engage in indirect service activities that are consistent with the community need addressed by the program. According to the Corporation, such roles may include volunteer recruitment and/or support, fundraising, and conducting community outreach and partnership development. If an applicant intends to have members provide any indirect services, these services must be clearly defined in the program design, specifically in the performance measurement worksheets.

[Revised per Program Committee Meeting: 9.28.05; 10.08.09; 7.07.11]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to have programs designed to impact as strongly as possible direct beneficiaries with indirect services being a clear added value.

Traditionally, AmeriCorps member activities focused on direct service activities. Other activities -- such as clerical support and fundraising (often referred to as indirect service activities) -- had been prohibited. In contrast, these were allowable activities for



AmeriCorps*VISTAs, whose service activities must focus on indirect service, include: volunteer management, training direct service providers, coordinating projects, public speaking, writing press releases, organizing fundraising events, organizing task forces/coalitions, and conducting outreach.

AmeriCorps members are permitted to assist grantee organizations in building capacity (specifically, activities such as volunteer recruitment). Other allowable activities include conducting outreach, developing infrastructure to support a volunteer program, developing partnerships in the community and securing resources to support service activities. CaliforniaVolunteers values the direct service that has traditionally been a foundation of AmeriCorps. Direct service activities focus on the beneficiaries of service, while capacity building activities lead to organizational outcomes. AmeriCorps members are permitted to engage in indirect service activities that are consistent with the community need addressed by the program.

6. What are CVs' requirements on volunteer recruitment and management activities?

Program Design Policy C.2. Volunteer Recruitment and Management AmeriCorps members are required to recruit volunteers. Applicants may apply for a volunteer recruitment waiver which will be reviewed by CV staff

[Revised per Program Committee Meeting: 9.28.05; 10.08.09; 7.07.11]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to require AmeriCorps members to recruit volunteers to address community needs. The Corporation has determined that AmeriCorps programs must include a volunteer recruitment or support component. Likewise, CV requires programs to include a volunteer recruitment and/or support component in their program design. Effective involvement of volunteers will vary among AmeriCorps programs, depending on the nature of the service activities and the partnership's capacity to utilize and sustain the efforts of community volunteers.

CaliforniaVolunteers has a volunteer recruitment performance measure that captures the number of community volunteers and number of service hours performed.

"Volunteer recruitment" refers to AmeriCorps recruiting volunteers to perform activities consistent with allowable AmeriCorps member service activities. Members charging time to an AmeriCorps grant may not support volunteers engaged in activities prohibited by AmeriCorps regulations.

7. What are CVs' requirements for participation in National and State Days of Service?

Program Design Policy C.3. Days of Service. AmeriCorps programs must conduct both a swearing-in and graduation ceremony for all cohorts/classes of members and participate in All AmeriCorps Week. Programs are strongly encouraged to participate in other National Service Days (e.g. Make a Difference day, September 11th Day of Service, Martin Luther King Day of Service or Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning).

[Revised per Program Committee Meeting: 9.28.05; 10.08.09]



Clarification. The intent of this policy is to encourage and promote the development of service and volunteerism throughout the state. CaliforniaVolunteers strives to create a strong platform for promoting volunteerism and to convey to event volunteers and AmeriCorps members that they are participants in a larger movement that extends beyond their local community by participating in National Days of Service. Days of service focus on a particular theme or group (i.e., Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning).

8. What types of AmeriCorps member positions are funded through CV?

Program Design Policy D.1. Terms of Service CaliforniaVolunteers establishes the following member positions (hours are hours per year):

1,700 hours:	Full-time
900 hours:	Part-time
675 hours:	Reduced part-time
450 hours:	Quarter-time
300 hours:	Minimum-time

CaliforniaVolunteers strongly encourages applicants to use the most intensive term of service appropriate to their program designs.

[Revised per Program Committee Meeting: 9.28.05]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to provide service opportunities for individuals to commit a year of their life to a community need.

AmeriCorps was designed to provide members with intensive service experiences. While an ideal position would engage members in full-time service such as that performed by Peace Corps Volunteers, other positions could enroll members in “terms of service” that would provide meaningful experiences while allowing for a degree of flexibility in individual program designs. In addition to a full-time (1700 hours per year) term of service, AmeriCorps allows for 900, 675, 450 and 300 hour terms of service.

Terms of service of less than 1700 hours are meaningful only to the extent that they provide members with a focused and intensive experience. For example, a member with no formal obligations (college enrollment, a full-time job, etc.) would not need to make a major commitment to enroll in a 300 hour (i.e., 6 hours per week) term of service. A full-time student, however, would need to make a significant commitment if (s)he were to serve 300 hours over the course of a nine-month academic ye

9. What are CVs’ requirements on performance measures?

Program Design Policy E.1. Performance Measures. Successful applicants must follow CV performance measurement rules/guidelines outlined in the current year’s AmeriCorps Request for Applications (RFA) and accompanying Application Forms and Instructions. All member hours must be captured within the program’s performance measures.

[Revised per Program Committee Meeting: 9.28.05]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is ensure AmeriCorps programs have the mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness of AmeriCorps program activities. The



National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, requires programs to apply measurable performance goals to determine the impact of AmeriCorps on communities and beneficiaries. Programs are required to develop performance measures in three categories: needs and service (direct service), member development, and strengthening communities.

The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act (**SAA**) signed into law on April 21, 2009 requires that the Corporation design and use national performance measures to collect meaningful data on the critical impact of AmeriCorps across the country in the five national service priority areas identified (e.g. Education, Healthy Futures, Clean Energy/Environment, Veterans, and Opportunity). For the FY 2010 application process the Corporation will release national measures as an option. 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 SAA.

With the passage of SAA, the Corporation is placing increased emphasis on the importance of performance measures as both a program management tool and a means by which to communicate program impact. Consistent with this national objective, the Commission values programs seeking an investment of California AmeriCorps resources that are committed to and capable of quantifiably measuring and reporting on the outcomes their program will produce. In particular, the Commission is most interested in programs that can show a direct connection between the outcomes they generate and the community need identified. Historically, programs funded by the Commission have long been demonstrating the ability to achieve significant lasting impact in the lives of beneficiaries served through AmeriCorps as captured through annual end outcome performance measurement targets. The Commission values these outcomes and continues to receive encouragement and support from Corporation staff to continue this practice..

10, Does CV require standardized performance measures?

Program Design Policy E.2. Standardize Performance Measures. *CV may establish a core set of widely accepted outcome indicators and data collection procedures for issue areas in which CV funds a number of programs (i.e., member performance, youth development).*

[Revised per Program Committee Meeting: 9.28.05; 10.08.09]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to enable CV and its programs to provide real and meaningful data to constituencies, both local and state-wide. CaliforniaVolunteers established this policy for the 2003 AmeriCorps program year to enable staff to develop common performance measures across programs in areas where a great deal of program activity occurs, such as education programs or volunteer management.

For the 2003-04 program year, CV established common performance measures for volunteer management and civic education. The Corporation removed civic education as a requirement in 2004. CaliforniaVolunteers continues to encourage civic education as part of the member development plan; standardized performance measures are no longer a requirement. The volunteer management performance measurement required all programs to measure two outputs: 1) the number of community volunteers recruited; and, 2) the number of service hours performed by community volunteers. For example, during the 2003-04 program year, AmeriCorps members recruited 15,816 volunteers who served 211,878 hours.



Staff has not developed additional common performance measures in the Needs and Service Activities program area as originally envisioned. However, the Corporation will be developing national performances measures for 2010 to allow for aggregated reporting of impact across the portfolio and contribute to the growth of AmeriCorps envisioned in the Serve America Act.

11. What are CVs' evaluation requirements for AmeriCorps programs?

Program Design Policy E.3. Evaluation. *Competitive programs need to follow federal evaluation requirements as described in the AmeriCorps Regulations, Section 2522.710 and federal policy for submitting an evaluation summary or plan, as applicable, at the time of application. Formula programs are not required to conduct an evaluation.*

[Revised per Program Committee Meeting: 9.28.05; 10.08.09]

Clarification. The intent of this policy is to support evaluation's value in assisting programs with continuous improvement and communicating their value to a range of stakeholders. The National and Community Service Trust Act stresses the value of outside evaluations of a program's effectiveness and activities. Independent evaluations can establish the impact that an AmeriCorps program has had on a community (as opposed to what might have taken place had the program not been in existence), provide useful insight into potential avenues for improvement, generate information on aspects of the program that might be replicated in other communities, etc.

The Corporation requires that all competitive and national direct grantees receiving an average annual Corporation grant of \$500,000 or more must arrange for an independent evaluation of their program. Furthermore, the Corporation requires that all state competitive and national direct grantees whose average annual Corporation grant is less than \$500,000, or is an Education Award Program grantee, must conduct an internal evaluation of their program.



CALIFORNIA AMERICORPS PROGRAM STANDARDS

California AmeriCorps Program Standards Overview

The California AmeriCorps Program Standards outline the essential components of a successful, high quality AmeriCorps program in California. The Standards provide common language for communication, outline CVs' expectations, set a level of satisfactory quality, and can be used as a blue print for AmeriCorps program operations. Programs are required to demonstrate their ability to meet each of the five standards. CaliforniaVolunteers staff apply the Standards to monitoring processes, funding decision-making, and the identification of technical assistance needs.

STANDARD ONE—Strong Organization—Strong Collaborative

Program management and administration impact an organization's and program's ability to effectively achieve goals and provide vital community services. Well administered AmeriCorps programs have a strong lead agency or committed partnership whom actively engage the community and resources to address a compelling community need. Qualified staff receive adequate support, provide operations management and have effective systems for monitoring compliance and effectively utilizing resources.

- 1) Partnering agencies have shared vision and mission of program design.
 - a) Governing structure is in place and includes roles and responsibilities for partnering agencies;
 - b) Key program partners meet regularly and utilize communication systems to coordinate, communicate key issues and implement the program;
 - c) Key program partners meet annually to discuss program progress, effectiveness and provide feedback for continuous improvement.
- 2) Program has and utilizes systems to effectively involve and engage a wide range of community members in identification of, planning for, and addressing of local needs, and provides information regarding impact.
 - a) Involves broader community input in identifying needs to be addressed;
 - b) Involves broader community input in developing plans to address the need.
- 3) Program has management and administrative systems in place.
 - a) Program operating systems specific to AmeriCorps programs are integrated into all partners management systems;
 - b) Operating systems include:
 - (1) Administrative functions – time/hours record and performance reporting
 - (2) Information systems – data collection, analysis, reporting, evaluation
 - (3) Member management – documentation and oversight
 - (4) Communication and Marketing
 - (5) Continuity of Operations Plan
 - c) Staff with necessary skills to fulfill program tasks are selected and trained, including a minimum 1 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff person to cover grant responsibilities;
 - d) Staff training and development include AmeriCorps regulations, provisions, policies and issues of compliance.
- 4) Program maintains strong fiscal controls through the following systems:



- a) Has written Policies and Procedures Manual in accordance with California Volunteers requirements;
 - b) Uses standard accounting practices. (Pr. V.B1);
 - c) Knows and implements sufficient internal controls. (Pr. V.B1);
 - d) Separates costs by year and budget line item. (Pr. V.B1);
 - e) Maintains supporting documentation for all expenditures, providing a clear audit trail. (Pr. V.B1);
 - f) Provides and accounts for matching funds as agreed upon in budget;
 - g) Maintains supporting documentation for all Grantee-provided cash and in-kind expenses in the budget, including source documentation justifying the appropriate value of the contributions;
 - h) Maintains signed time and attendance records (including distribution of time) for each employee whose salary/wage is included in the approved budget;
 - i) Maintains service hour records for members that differentiate between direct and indirect service hours AND records are all signed by the member and the supervisor (Pr. IV.C2);
 - j) Member Living Allowance payments are within the allowable ranges and the CORPORATION share does not exceed the CORPORATION maximum amount per slot type;
 - k) Health care made available to all eligible members serving full-time (Pr. IV.14)
 - l) Child care available to all eligible members (Pr. IV.15);
 - m) Maintains written contracts with all consultants/subcontractors;
 - n) Stays within the daily maximum rate of \$540/day for all consultants;
 - o) Maintains fully executed Memoranda of Understanding with all partners;
 - p) Demonstrates aspects of a strong Control Environment, per A-133, Part 6;
 - q) Fiscal staff have been to appropriate trainings and/or is aware of pertinent AmeriCorps rules, regulations, provisions, and procedures;
 - r) PERs (Periodic Expense Reports) and FSRs (Financial Status Reports) show adequate match and are accurate.
- 5) Program looks to the future and has a financial strategy that moves it toward long-term sustainability.
- a) Sustainability plan incorporates transition from AmeriCorps to non-AmeriCorps service delivery within the program design;
 - b) Program has a long-term funding strategy in place;
 - c) Program has identified key/strategic stakeholders to build a resource network.

STANDARD TWO--Needs and Service Design

Program is built to address the community need and all components logically connect back to that need. Program design is built to deliver the services that achieve the end outcomes. These elements apply to each direct service Performance Measurement Worksheet.

- 1) Program has clearly identified direct beneficiaries of the stated community need.
 - a) Referral process is clearly documented to identify the targeted population;
 - b) Clear process to select the beneficiaries with whom the intervention will have the most success.
- 2) Intervention is appropriate and will lead to desired results.
 - a) Intervention is research based – proven strategy to address need;
 - b) Identified the dosage of service to meet the target;
 - c) Activity is clearly defined and explains the process of the intervention.



- 3) National service is an appropriate strategy to deliver the intervention.
 - a) Member position type supports the design;
 - b) Program planned for AmeriCorps members;
 - c) Position descriptions provide a clear understanding of AmeriCorps duties ;
 - d) Program has identified qualifications, essential functions, minimum skills/education, etc. for AmeriCorps positions.
- 4) Host sites are appropriate and well managed.
 - a) Sites are selected based on their ability to conduct the intervention;
 - b) Program has formal orientation and training plan for placement sites;
 - c) Site supervisor is identified and trained at each member placement site;
 - d) Program has systems to provide routine oversight and support to placement sites;
 - e) Placement sites are actively involved in overall program success.

STANDARD THREE – AmeriCorps Member Design

Partnerships are required to recruit, train, support and retain AmeriCorps members to carry out activities designed to address the compelling community need. Programs must provide members with the training, skills, knowledge and supervision necessary to perform the tasks required in their assigned project positions, including specific training in a particular field and background information on the community served. Programs must clearly outline member expectations including roles, responsibilities, personal conduct and commitment to serve. Program design ensures that each member has sufficient opportunity to complete the required number of hours to qualify for a pos-service education award. In planning for the members' term of service, program calendar accounts for holidays and other time off, and provides each member with sufficient opportunity to make up missed hours.

- 1) Program has developed an inclusive recruitment plan, including a timeline.
 - a) Plan contains outreach strategies to market member opportunities to targeted populations;
 - b) Recruitment plan includes marketing materials which clearly describe: AmeriCorps service opportunities, member roles, responsibilities and expectations, inclusion, a description of the community, activities, qualifications, member benefits and term of service;
 - c) Service opportunities are posted on the national recruitment database;
 - d) Program utilizes an AmeriCorps application that complies with AmeriCorps regulations;
 - e) Recruitment timeline considers selection process timeline and program start date to achieve a minimum of 90% enrollment.
- 2) Program has a clearly defined selection process to assure compliance with AmeriCorps regulations.
 - a) Selection process includes a member application and reference review;
 - b) Selection process includes an interview process involving placement site representation;
 - c) Selection process includes an assessment of candidate background, commitment to service and experience and skills in order to effectively match members to appropriate positions and sites;
 - d) Intake process clearly documents member eligibility and other program requirements (vaccinations, skills testing, etc.);
 - e) Intake process documents local/national fingerprint clearance and background checks, where applicable.



- 3) Program has developed an orientation plan designed to prepare members for the term of service. At a minimum, the orientation covers:
 - a) History of national service with specific focus on AmeriCorps;
 - b) Geographic/demographics of community, compelling need being addressed, targeted community, program mission/goals, partnership, performance measures and expectation of members;
 - c) Program calendar covering project timeline including required national days of service, community events, holidays, training and direct service hours to ensure successful completion of term of service;
 - d) Member rights and responsibilities including code of conduct, prohibited activities, requirements under the Drug-Free Workplace Act, suspension and termination from service, grievance procedures, sexual harassment, other non-discrimination issues and member performance reviews;
 - e) Member benefits including timesheet and stipend distribution, health care, child care, education award;
 - f) Training required to equip members with any basic knowledge and skills needed before beginning service;
 - g) Site orientation including site supervision, expectations, communication channels and member responsibilities to the site;
 - h) Review of member contract/handbook;
 - i) Review of safety plans and emergency procedures;
 - j) Formally acknowledges AmeriCorps commitment through swearing-in ceremony including the AmeriCorps oath.

- 4) Each member has been officially enrolled in AmeriCorps and the National Service Trust through a signed member contract and enrollment form/AmeriCorps portal entry. The member contract stipulates:
 - a) The minimum number of service hours and other requirements (as developed by the program) necessary to successfully complete the term of service and to be eligible for the education award;
 - b) Program start and end dates, specifically focused on member term of service;
 - c) Distribution of living allowance, if applicable;
 - d) Acceptable conduct;
 - e) Prohibited activities, including those specified in the regulations;
 - f) Requirements under the Drug-Free Workplace Act;
 - g) Suspension and termination rules;
 - h) The specific circumstances under which a member may be released for 'cause';
 - i) The position description;
 - j) Grievance procedures;
 - k) Member signature and date.

- 5) AmeriCorps members are registered and managed in AmeriCorps portal within 30 days of their official start and end dates according to the following process:
 - a) A commitment was entered into commitment tracker within 30 days of making an offer to an AmeriCorps members;
 - b) Member Information Profile is created and approved within 30 days of each member's start date;
 - c) Member enrollment form is created and approved within 30 days of each member's start date;
 - d) Members are exited from the system within 30 days of each member's end date.



- 6) Program has a training plan, covering the program year, which uses service experiences to help members achieve the skills and education needed for productive active citizenship. The training plan includes the following:
 - a) Training hours account for no more than 20% of the aggregate member hours;
 - b) Identify skills need to perform activities as outlined on performance measure worksheet;
 - c) Site/partner mandated trainings;
 - d) Assessment of member skill levels against the skills required list (see b);
 - e) Input from site supervisors and members;
 - f) Training required to develop skills and knowledge for all member activities;
 - g) Teambuilding and esprit de corps;
 - h) Opportunities for site specific training, as required;
 - i) Training that will assist members in their transition from their AmeriCorps positions (Life After AmeriCorps).

- 7) Program is designed to provide a high quality member experience through direct member supervision.
 - a) Supervision structure provides opportunities for individual one-on-one time with each member;
 - b) Supervision structure provides linkage to support services, as necessary;
 - c) Closure activities to support members through transition from service experience to achieve life goals;
 - d) Conducts a midterm and end-of-term written evaluation of each member's performance for full and part-time members and an end-of-term for less than half-time members. Performance evaluations include factors such as:
 - i) Whether the member has completed the required number of hours;
 - ii) Whether the member has satisfactorily completed assignments; and
 - iii) Whether the member has met other performance criteria that were clearly communicated at the beginning of the term of service.

- 8) Member development activities, as described by performance measurement worksheets, are tracked and documented:
 - a) Program representatives adequately deliver to members a continuum of skill development needed both during and after service;
 - b) End outcomes directly reflect member growth and progress;
 - c) Program achieves member development outcome targets.

STANDARD FOUR—Community Involvement Design

All AmeriCorps programs are required to perform projects that are designed, implemented, and evaluated with extensive and broad-based local input. This input is provided in consultation with representatives from the community served, AmeriCorps members (or potential AmeriCorps members) in the program, community-based agencies with a demonstrated record of experience in providing services, and local labor organizations representing employees of project sponsors (if such agencies exist in the area to be served by the program).

- 1) Program design involves the broader community in carrying out the efforts to address the community need by providing opportunities for volunteers to participate in program-associated activities and considers:
 - a) The level of volunteering that is needed for the program including the number of volunteers, the number of hours of service for volunteers, whether volunteers will serve on a one-time or re-occurring basis, and the frequency of volunteer service required;



- b) What volunteer skills and experiences are needed to make the program successful (developing volunteer opportunities and clearly stated goals and objectives for the volunteers);
 - c) A recruitment strategy which strives to achieve broad representation from the community, including making materials accessible to audiences;
 - d) How members will provide the support necessary for volunteers to develop difference and/or higher levels of volunteer responsibility and grown in their personal capacity.
- 2) Program had and utilizes systems for recruiting and maintaining community volunteers as a component to address identified needs.
 - a) Member(s) directly involved in volunteer recruitment activities have clear roles, responsibilities, activities and supervision;
 - b) All members participating in volunteer recruitment and support activities receive training in volunteer recruitment and management skills and bests practices;
 - c) Program’s volunteer management system includes training, support and recognition of community volunteers.
 - 3) Capacity building activities that AmeriCorps members perform enhance the mission, strategy, skills and culture, as well as systems, infrastructure and human resources of an organization that is meeting community needs.
 - a) Capacity building activities are pre-planned, clearly documented on a performance measurement worksheet and have defined end-outcomes;
 - b) Fund raising activities are clearly defined, directly support the efforts of the program and result in no more than 10% of a member’s originally agreed upon term of service;
 - c) Member time sheets and WBRS time documentation clearly separates hours spent on fund raising activities from direct service and member training hours.
 - 4) AmeriCorps member activities are tracked and documented.
 - a) Program achieves volunteer targets;
 - b) Program has systems to report on results or impacts made by community volunteers.
 - 5) Program has developed a marketing and communication plan to publicize program progress and accomplishments to the community:
 - a) Program uses effective mechanisms to inform community of progress to achieve goals and community impact;
 - b) Program has opportunities for the broad community to provide feedback to program design.

STANDARD FIVE – Program Design is Effective

Program representatives have successfully implemented the program and systems are in place to assess the effectiveness of the program model. There is adequate oversight to the management of each component to assure that contracted performance measures are implemented and analysis and stakeholder feedback leads to continuous improvement. Effective program design has a “**review process**” to gauge appropriate progress of the program throughout the program year:

- 1) Effective program has an “**initial review**” process that quickly checks assumptions of what needs to be in place for the program design to work:
 - a) Program has appropriate instrument(s) to gather pre-service data on targeted beneficiaries;



- b) Program has completed the plan for each instrument, outlining who is responsible for collecting, analyzing and reporting these pre-service data and the timeline associated with each step;
 - c) The pre-service data gathered is collected, analyzed and reported to inform decisions about the effectiveness of the design;
 - d) Analysis of the “initial review” process includes staffing patterns, member configuration, member/staff/site training, dosage, targeted beneficiaries, partner commitments, etc.
- 2) Effective program has an on-going “**implementation review**” process to confirm that the activities and processes are being implemented as designed:
- a) Program has appropriate instruments to gather information on implementation of performance measures;
 - b) Program reviews attainment of established benchmarks and determines progress toward targets;
 - c) Program identifies challenges or barriers that effect ability to meet targets and seeks technical assistance from partners, commission, and other expertise.
- 3) Effective program has a “**results review**” process to assess impact of intervention toward meeting community need.
- a) Program has answered the three results components for each outcome target: percent who change, what changed and the amount of change;
 - b) Program partners meet to discuss program outcomes and identify continuous improvement strategies.
- 4) An effective program has developed mechanisms to validate both qualitative and quantitative data from the “**review process**” and determine and incorporate corrective actions, as appropriate.
- a) Program management and partners look at a variety of sources to determine program effectiveness;
 - b) Program management and partners ensure the reliability of the data and validation of the findings;
 - c) Program management and partners endorse and implement corrective action steps, as needed.



PRE-CONTRACT SELF-ASSESSMENT

This *Pre-Contract Self-Assessment* is taken from the *California AmeriCorps Program Standards*. The purpose of both documents is to provide CV subgrantees with guidance to gauge progress toward a high quality AmeriCorps program. CV developed *Standards* with assistance from a subgrantee advisory committee. CaliforniaVolunteers has recognized that certain program elements need to be in place for a subgrantee to be prepared to launch an AmeriCorps program successfully. The *Pre-Contract Self-Assessment* was designed to let subgrantees know exactly what is expected to be in place before contracting between CaliforniaVolunteers and the subgrantee can be completed.

This *Pre-Contract Self-Assessment* is a “subset” of the full *Program Standards* document. You will notice that numbering within the *Self-Assessment* seems to be off at times. Actually, the numbering in this document matches the numbering in the full *Program Standards* document. Not all of the standards and elements in the full document need to be completed in the pre-contract document. Therefore, some standards and elements may be missing. If you have questions, contact your PA.

Who Should Complete a Pre-Contract Self-Assessment? All programs should complete the *Self-Assessment* as they begin a new contract year. It’s a good time to review systems.

When Should the Self-Assessment be Completed? The *Self-Assessment* should be completed before contracting and service begins. The expectation is that high quality programs would have these elements in place before launching a program that puts members into the community. It is entirely possible that you use a process that meets the standard and/or element of a standard that is not identified as a check box item. We are completely open to accepting appropriate documentation that clearly demonstrates the element is in place. If you are unable to demonstrate an element, you should work with your PA to see how this situation can be resolved.

Definitions:

Subgrantee:	Entity that contracts with and receives funding from the CaliforniaVolunteers
Program:	Typically, this refers to the “AmeriCorps” portion of the subgrantee’s agency
Legal Applicant:	Entity listed on application as the responsible party and on the contract as the responsible party
Sites:	Locations where members provide service

Prerequisites to Completing the Self-Assessment:

- [1] Complete AmeriCorps 101 On-line Training <http://californiavolunteers.org/>
Click “Grantee Central” and log in; click “Training & TA”; click “Online Training”
- [2] Read: a) *California AmeriCorps Resource Manual* [which includes the full program standards within the *Manual*] b) *2007 AmeriCorps Fiscal Manual*; c) *Federal Legislation, Regulations and Provisions Governing AmeriCorps Programs*

Each of these manuals is available at <http://californiavolunteers.org/>

Note: The symbol ☒, indicates that a particular document will need to be sent to your PA. You will see these symbols in several places—one to signify the area has a document to be sent to your PA, and one directly on the specific item to be sent.

Directions: After reading the standard, place a check [✓] in all boxes that apply to that element. By checking the box, you’re indicating the particular component is present in your AmeriCorps operation. There is room for comment after each element. In most cases, your check mark will convey all the information needed. Also, feel free to add check boxes where you have different evidence to support the element.

Return completed assessment and documentation to your Program Associate on the agreed upon date.



Program:	Name:	Date
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STANDARD 1: Strong Organization – Strong Collaborative
 Program management & administration impact an organization’s & program’s ability to effectively achieve goals, & provide vital community services. Well administered AmeriCorps programs have a strong lead agency or committed partnership that actively engage the community & resources to address a compelling community need. Qualified staff receive adequate support, provide operations management & have effective systems for monitoring compliance & effectively utilizing resources.

Complete	1) Partnering agencies have shared vision and mission of program design.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>a. Governing structure is in place and includes roles and responsibilities for partnering agencies</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Program Administrative Manual describes governing structure including partnering agencies’ roles & responsibilities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Contracts and/or MOUs with all host sites and partnering agencies</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>b. Key program partners meet regularly and utilize communication systems to coordinate, communicate key issues and implement the program</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Formal partnership meeting agendas, sign in sheets and/or minutes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Contracts and MOUs with all host sites and partnering agencies</p> <p>Comments:</p>



Complete	3) Program has management and administrative systems in place.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>a. Program operating systems specific to AmeriCorps programs are integrated into all partners management systems</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Chart shows AmeriCorps as part of organizational structure, & staffing assignments from both the AmeriCorps program and key program partners <input type="checkbox"/> Program Administrative Manual describes program policies and procedures, administrative systems, and program structure within the sponsoring agency <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts & MOUs with organizations that have specific roles & responsibilities in the program <input type="checkbox"/> Staff partners position duty statements <p>Comments:</p>

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>b. Operating systems include: (1) Administrative functions – time/hour records and performance reporting</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff and member timesheets template <input type="checkbox"/> Process developed to distribute living allowance that follows federal regulations <p>Comments:</p>
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<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>b. Operating systems include: (2) Information systems</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Process to identify common tools to collect data, responsibilities, timeline, etc <input type="checkbox"/> Process to validate and analyze data <input type="checkbox"/> Process to communicate results to sites, make adjustments, solicit feedback, etc
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	<p>Comments:</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>b. Operating systems include: (3) Member management – documentation and oversight</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Policies & procedures outline roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in member management: day to day supervision, training, service projects and evaluations <input type="checkbox"/> Program calendar identifies all member commitments including time at placement site, service events, training, generating volunteers, presentation, holidays, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Training Plan and calendar considers skills needed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence that partners understand plan and their involvement (MOU, site specific training) <input type="checkbox"/> Partner participation in development of position description & minimum qualifications of candidates <input type="checkbox"/> Determination on necessity of criminal Clarification. checks & who makes decisions on results <input type="checkbox"/> Process for addressing member issues, specifically regarding issuance of pro-rated awards or release for cause <input type="checkbox"/> Review and commitment of partnership to following disciplinary process, including grievance policy and procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Written process for documentation of member eligibility, tracking hours & eligibility for education award <input type="checkbox"/> Utilization of member file checklist to document each file contains eligibility and required documentation. <p>Comments:</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>b. Operating systems include: (4) Communication and Marketing</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Program organizational chart identifies communication chain, levels of authority, who needs to know what, when and how frequently <p>Comments:</p>



<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>b. Operating systems include: (5) Continuity of Operations Plan</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence that members will understand steps to be taken in the event of an emergency-who to call and when <input type="checkbox"/> Member and Site handbooks have emergency contact information. <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>c. Staff with necessary skills to fulfill program tasks are selected & trained, including a minimum 1 full-time equivalent staff person to cover grant responsibilities</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <input type="checkbox"/> AmeriCorps staff position descriptions that include essential and desirable qualifications, functions, and percent of time dedicated to AmeriCorps <input type="checkbox"/> Approved budget narrative that describes staff assigned to the program <input type="checkbox"/> Functional timesheet template and instructions for staff less than 100% <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>d. Staff training and development include AmeriCorps regulations, provisions, policies and issues of compliance.</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff training plan and/or listing of staff training opportunities provided to AmeriCorps staff <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance at CV training <p>Comments:</p>
Complete	4) Program maintains strong fiscal controls through the following systems:



<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>a. Has written Policies and Procedures Manual in accordance with California Volunteers requirements</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Written and updated Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual that includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Approval Documentation Authority Chain <input type="radio"/> Payroll/Compensation Procedures <input type="radio"/> AmeriCorps related Member Intake Practices: including Eligibility Checklist, Health Care Enrollment, and Child Care Benefit Enrollment <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>q. Fiscal staff have been to appropriate trainings and/or is aware of pertinent AmeriCorps rules, regulations, provisions and procedures</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Staff training record that indicates that key fiscal staff have received AmeriCorps fiscal training to perform their duties and that fiscal staff is aware of pertinent AmeriCorps rules, regulations, and procedures</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Attendance at CV training</p> <p>Comments:</p>
Complete	5) Program looks to the future and has a financial strategy that moves it toward long-term sustainability.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>c. Program has identified key/strategic stakeholders to build a resource network.</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Listing of match sources and amounts received</p> <p>Comments:</p>



STANDARD 2: Needs & Services

Program is built to address the community need and all components logically connect back to that need. Program design is built to deliver the services that achieve the end outcomes. These elements apply to each direct service Performance Measurement Worksheet.

Complete	1) Program has clearly identified direct beneficiaries of the stated community need.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	a. Beneficiary referral process is clearly documented to identify the targeted population Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Referral process description for partner agencies served. Comments:
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	b. Clear process to select the beneficiaries with whom the intervention will have the most success Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Beneficiary selection process is described in the performance measurement worksheet [PMW] Comments:



Complete	2) Intervention is appropriate and will lead to desired results.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>a. Intervention is research based – proven strategy to address need</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research in field of intervention with proven results of intervention strategy stated in PMW</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>b. Identified the dosage of service to meet the target</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Research in field of intervention that indicates appropriate dosage stated in PMW</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>c. Activity is clearly defined and explains the process of the intervention</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Full description of member activity in PMW that draws a picture of exactly what members will be doing.</p> <p>Comments:</p>



Complete	3) National service is an appropriate strategy to deliver the intervention.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>b. Program planned for AmeriCorps members</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Member position description includes explanation of AmeriCorps duties, service commitment, and areas of responsibility <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Program Organizational Structure.</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>d. Program has identified qualifications, essential functions, minimum skills/education, etc. for AmeriCorps positions.</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Program's member position description includes list of qualifications, service commitment and minimum skills/education</p> <p>Comments:</p>
Complete	4) Host sites are appropriate and well managed.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>a. Sites are selected based on their ability to conduct the intervention</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Process of site selection</p> <p>Comments:</p>



<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>b. Program has formal orientation and training plan for placement sites</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Site orientation outline to include a diagram of placement sites and identity of the site supervisors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>c. Site supervisor is identified and trained at each member placement site</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Site Agreement</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>d. Program has systems to provide routine oversight and support to placement sites</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Outline of system for placement site communication, feedback, data collection, and site visits</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Outline of communication structure between members and placement site.</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>e. Placement sites are actively involved in overall program success.</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Outline of how placement site will be involved in program model implementation, member training/orientation, and placement site feedback.</p> <p>Comments:</p>





STANDARD 3: AmeriCorps Member Design

Partnerships are required to recruit, train, support, & retain members to carry out activities designed to address community need. Programs must provide members with training, skills, knowledge, & supervision necessary to perform tasks required in their positions, including specific training in a particular field & background. information on the community served. Programs must clearly outline member expectations including roles, responsibilities, personal conduct, & commitment to serve. Program design ensures each member has sufficient opportunity to complete required hours to qualify for a post-service education award. In planning for member term of service, calendar considers holidays & other time off, & provides member with sufficient opportunity to make up hours.

<p>Complete</p>	<p>1) Program has developed an inclusive recruitment plan, including a timeline.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>a. Plan contains outreach strategies to market member opportunities to targeted populations</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment plan that includes a timeline and outreach strategies</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>e. Recruitment timeline considers selection process timeline and program start date to achieve a minimum of 90% enrollment.</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment plan with selection process timeline</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Timeline for national registration of member opportunities.</p> <p>Comments:</p>







Complete	2) Program has a clearly defined selection process to assure compliance with AmeriCorps regulations.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 	<p>a. Selection process includes a member application and reference review</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Selection process checklist for each member which indicates applicant's completion of application requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Selection process spreadsheet that includes all members indicating each applicant's completion of application requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Member application form  <input type="checkbox"/> Reference Checking Questions <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>b. Selection process includes an interview process involving placement site representation</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Template with interview questions with signature of interviewer <input type="checkbox"/> Chart or spreadsheet template to show who interviewed each applicant <p>Comments:</p>





<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>c. Selection process includes an assessment of candidate background., commitment to service & experience & skills in order to effectively match members to appropriate positions & sites</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Template with pre-screening (pre-interview) checklist or questions to assess program and placement site compatibility Comments:
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>d. Intake process clearly documents member eligibility and other program requirements (vaccinations, skills testing, etc.)</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Selection process checklist for each member with eligibility verification <input type="checkbox"/> Template with results of member compliance e.g. paraprofessional test, TB test, criminal background. check Comments:
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>e. Intake processes documents local/national fingerprint clearance and background checks, where applicable.</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Fingerprint Clarification. Check approval form with reviewer's signature to be kept in member file. Comments:



Complete	3) Program has developed an orientation plan designed to prepare members for term of service. At a minimum the orientation covers:
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 	<p>a. History of national service with specific focus on AmeriCorps</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Orientation schedule which lists training topics </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> List of required trainings</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 	<p>b. Geographic/Demographics of community, compelling need being addressed, targeted community, program mission/goals, partnership, performance measures and expectation of members</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Orientation schedule that shows the information in 3b </p> <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>c. Program calendar covering project timeline including required national days of service, community events, holidays, training and direct service hours to ensure successful completion of term of service</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Program calendar</p> <p>Comments:</p>



<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>d. Member rights & responsibilities including code of conduct, prohibited activities, requirements under Drug-Free Workplace Act, suspension & termination from service, grievance procedures, sexual harassment, other non-discrimination issues & member performance reviews</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Included in Member contract and handbook</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>e. Member benefits including timesheet and stipend distribution, health care, child care, education award</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Included in Member Handbook</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Letter or handout describing member benefits</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 	<p>h. Review of member contract/handbook</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Handbook Verification form to be signed by members</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Member Contract meets minimum requirements </p> <p>Comments:</p>



<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>j. Formally acknowledges AmeriCorps commitment through swearing-in ceremony including the AmeriCorps oath</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Plans for swearing-in</p> <p>Comments:</p>
Complete	6) Program has a training plan, covering the program year, which uses service experiences to help members achieve the skills and education needed for productive active citizenship. The training plan includes the following:
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>a. Training hours account for no more than 20% of the aggregate member hours</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indicated on member development PMW</p> <p>Comments:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>b. Identify skills needed to perform activities as outlined on performance measure worksheet</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Member position description reflects PMW activities</p> <p>Comments:</p>



<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>f. Training required to develop skills and knowledge for all member activities</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Plan to assess member skills</p> <p>Comments:</p>
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STANDARD 5: Program Design is Effective

Program representatives have successfully implemented the program and systems are in place to assess the effectiveness of the program model. There is adequate oversight to the management of each component to assure that contracted performance measures are implemented and analysis and stakeholder feedback leads to continuous improvement. Effective program design has a “**review process**” to gauge appropriate progress of the program throughout the program year.

Complete **1) Effective program has an “initial review” process that quickly checks assumptions of what needs to be in place for the program design to work.**

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>a. Program has appropriate instrument(s) to gather pre-service data on targeted beneficiaries</p> <p>Possible Evidence: check the box next to evidence you have for this element. Add evidence boxes as needed.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Copies of instruments with instructions regarding how instrument is administered</p> <p>Comments:</p>
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TTA requested to complete this form <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	How can we help you get prepared?
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Return to your PA along with requested documentation.

Thank you.



APPENDIX A – SMALL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS (SECULAR AND FAITH-BASED)

Overview

Through its range of grant programs, CV has observed that many small organizations – both secular and faith-based – provide a range of valuable services in their local communities. Unfortunately, government grant accounting, reporting and evaluation requirements demand an infrastructure and level of administrative capacity that often precludes smaller organizations from administering public funding. It is CVs' goal to make AmeriCorps resources more accessible to small community organizations that may have little or no experience with government grants. Small community organizations with the capacity to administer public funds are certainly classified as eligible legal applicants. However, small community organizations can also benefit from AmeriCorps program roles such as member service site, source of volunteers, beneficiary of volunteer projects, etc.

Faith-Based Organizations

A general guideline for faith-based organizations receiving AmeriCorps funds is that AmeriCorps members cannot proselytize or engage in any religious activity while they are officially engaged in their service activities. Thus, AmeriCorps tutors serving at a faith-based organization could work with students in schools, but could not attempt to encourage them to attend religious services. Applicants are also advised that AmeriCorps funds are not covered under Charitable Choice provisions.

Resources

Community organizations throughout California have access to a network of community foundations.

- There are more than 25 California community foundations that provide support to local organizations. All community foundations provide grants, while some also provide referrals to other sources of funding. More information on community foundations can be found at www.lccf.org

The University of Southern California's Center for Religion and Civic Culture has produced products that may be of interest to FBOs. The Center's Web site (www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/religion_online/index.html) also contains links to other organizations of interest to faith-based organizations.



APPENDIX B – PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Overview

Performance measurement is the art and science of assessing how well an organization is achieving its goals. By examining the ways in which programs are “getting things done,” performance measurement empowers key stakeholders, strengthens AmeriCorps, and helps to maximize programs’ benefits to communities and participants. CaliforniaVolunteers continues to place emphasis on use of performance measures as a program management tool and as a means to communicate program impacts.

Program Design and Performance Measures

Creating performance measures is an important part of program design. Applicants should:

- 1) Identify the likely impact or change that will result that the community needs;
- 2) Think through different activities AmeriCorps members may engage in to achieve the result;
- 3) Determine the number and type of members needed to achieve results; and
- 4) Determine how to best measure those results.

While performance measures provide good indicators of progress toward program goals, defining these measures is just one aspect of program design. Performance measurement is most useful as part of a larger process of program planning.

Choosing and Reporting Performance Measures

Once you determine the result, program activities to achieve results, and define how to track your progress, you will report to CV per the requirements outlined in the RFA. The Performance Measurement Worksheets (included in the *Application Instructions*) will help you flesh out each measure.

Successful applicants consider these components early in the application process, as experience indicates that well-constructed performance measures are essential to a quality application. To develop performance measures, the Performance Measurement Worksheets require you to describe:

- The result the community expects you to achieve;
- How you will achieve the result;
- The data and instruments you will use to measure the result; and,
- The targets you intend to meet for each measure.

Successful AmeriCorps programs concentrate member activities to “specific” results. Keep in mind that multiple needs and service performance measurement worksheets tend to dilute impact, energy, and resources. A well focused program has the best opportunity at really making a difference.

Resources

Please use CVs’ website as a resource for Performance Measurement assistance at www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org.



APPENDIX C – EVALUATION

OVERVIEW

Performance measurement and evaluation are related but distinct. By using both of methods, programs can most effectively understand their work and their progress.

Performance measures are designed to capture ongoing progress towards meeting program objectives. These ongoing program performance assessments should be supplemented with more in-depth, rigorous evaluations that isolate the *particular impacts* of national and community service programs. Evaluation refers to an analytic study providing an overall picture of the results that can be attributed directly to program activities. Specifically, evaluations compare the difference between the outcomes for individuals participating in a program to the outcomes for similar individuals not participating in a program.

Designing an Evaluation

In completing evaluations, the Corporation recognizes that different applicants will face different challenges and bring different resources to the table. To allow programs flexibility in addressing these issues, the Corporation does not prescribe a single methodology for evaluation. Instead, the Corporation has identified a broader set of guidelines based on generally accepted research standards. Evaluations should include:

- Rigorous, systematic, and objective research methods;
- Procedures to collect reliable and valid data relevant to activities and programs;
- Experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals or programs are compared utilizing appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random assignment experiments;
- Procedures to control for the influence of other factors through the use of control or comparison groups so that any changes in outcomes can be attributed to participation in the program; and,
- Methods presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings.

These efforts should include engaging an evaluator with expertise in scientifically-based research methods at the beginning of the program year. Although evaluations are most often conducted by an independent researcher, there may be evaluation approaches that meet the standards described above without the use of an outside evaluator.

In planning for a rigorous, scientifically-based study of program outcomes, it is important to determine an appropriate scope of the activities to be evaluated. Evaluations are intended to investigate program effectiveness as broadly as possible. But if your program includes a wide range of distinct service activities, you should select activities for rigorous evaluation that best reflect the overall mission of the program and the service activities conducted.

Resources

There are a number of resources available to assist you as you begin to think about your program evaluation:

- Project Star has created a User's Guide to Evaluation for National Service Programs, available at www.projectstar.org/star/Library/toolkit.html.



- The United Way of America provides an overview of outcome-based evaluation at www.unitedway.org/outcomes.

Keep in mind that choosing the “right” local resource that will meet your needs is critical. Identify the specific tasks you would like the local resource to assist you with (e.g., instrument development, data analysis). You should stay involved in the evaluation process throughout your program year. In other words, don’t pass the entire task of evaluation to your local resource. You may not get what you need in the end.

The cost of having the local resource assist you is another issue to bear in mind. The cost will depend on the amount of effort you would like the local resource to assume. The more involved you are in your evaluation, the less your local resource will need to do, reducing costs. For a discussion of budgeting and planning for evaluation, see the *W. K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Toolkit* available at www.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=75&CID=281&NID=61&LanguageID=0.



APPENDIX D – VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Overview

Effective involvement of volunteers will vary among AmeriCorps programs, depending upon the nature of the service activities and the partnership's capacity to utilize and sustain the efforts of community volunteers.

Factors to Consider When Designing Your Volunteer Recruitment and Support Component

In determining how volunteer recruitment will support the overall mission of the program, applicants should assess their ability to run a volunteer program by considering:

- The level of volunteering that is needed for the program, including the number of volunteers, the number of hours of service for volunteers, whether volunteers will serve on a one-time or recurring basis, and the frequency of volunteer service required;
- What volunteer skills and experiences are needed to make the program successful (developing volunteer job descriptions and clearly stated goals and objectives for the volunteers can assist in making these determinations);
- Whether the recruitment strategy is feasible and strives to achieve broad representation from the community, including making materials accessible to audiences from different languages and backgrounds; and,
- How applicants will provide the support necessary for volunteers to develop different and/or higher levels of volunteer responsibility and grow in their personal capacity.

Implementing the Volunteer Recruitment and Support Component

Please be mindful of the “six keys” to recruiting and supporting volunteers. These six keys include:

- *Value Volunteers*
 - Identify and value the contributions volunteers can make
 - Delineate between staff and volunteer roles
 - Ensure your organization's culture and infrastructure reflect a belief in volunteerism
- *Recruitment and Marketing*
 - Develop volunteer position descriptions, including tasks to be completed, number of hours/frequency, essential qualifications, etc.
 - Identify target audiences for recruitment based on needs of volunteer positions
 - Describe the organization where the volunteer will be placed and the impact the volunteer will have
- *Selection and Placement*
 - Interview volunteers – especially long-term volunteers – and place with the same care as paid staff
 - Match volunteer interests and available time with the needs of the organization
 - Check-in with the volunteer periodically to make sure the placement is a good fit



- *Orientation and Training*
 - Provide the volunteer with adequate orientation and training, including introductions to key staff, agency norms, and minimum expectations
- *Ongoing Support and Retention*
 - Provide volunteers with the same respect you would other agency staff, including providing information regarding upcoming agency events
 - Provide volunteers with additional opportunities and/or training depending on their interests and agency needs
 - Assign a supervisor and provide feedback
- *Recognize Volunteers*
 - Plan recognition events for volunteers
 - Provide formal recognition through such programs as the President's Volunteer Service Award program and/or the California Governor and First Lady's Service Award program.

California Volunteer Matching Network (CVMN)

The California Volunteer Matching Network (CVMN – a program of CaliforniaVolunteers) can help programs find new volunteers, receive expert advice on volunteer management and create new ideas that engage volunteers in high-impact and meaningful ways.

CV and our statewide network of local volunteer connector agencies (volunteer centers and others) have created a simple, searchable online tool to connect volunteers to nonprofits and public agencies that need them. These volunteer opportunities are posted locally, but because our partner's volunteer postings aggregate to CaliforniaVolunteers.org as well, programs' opportunities are available both locally and statewide. Programs' listed opportunities also feed into a national database at USAFreedomCorps.gov. This helps eliminate the need to post opportunities in more than one place.

Local nonprofit organizations and public entities with volunteer needs are encouraged to connect with local Hub organizations (volunteer centers, Hands On affiliates, etc.). In doing so, organizations will be able to post volunteer opportunities to local Web sites that aggregate up to CVs' Web site. This promotes volunteer opportunities locally (and statewide), providing additional exposure. A list of California Volunteer Matching Network Hubs can be found at www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org/hubs.asp.



APPENDIX E – SERVICE-LEARNING

Definition

Service-learning is an instructional reform strategy which actively involves youth in academic programs through service to their communities. The term “service-learning” means a method under which students or participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that:

- Is conducted in and meets the needs of a community;
- Helps foster civic responsibility and is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program, and with the community;
- Is integrated into and enhances the core academic curriculum of the students, or the educational components of the community service program in which the participants are enrolled; and,
- Provides structured time for the students or participants to reflect on the service experience.

Examples of Service-Learning

Students and teachers have opportunities throughout the activities and at the end to reflect on their service-learning experiences.

Elementary: Fourth-grade students, some of whom are reading below grade level, buddy with first graders for one-on-one reading. The fourth-grade teacher instructs her students in several simple reading strategies, such as picture cues and letter-sound correspondence. The fourth graders must select age-appropriate books that are of interest to their “buddy,” practice reading the book in an interesting way, and define vocabulary words that may be difficult for the younger child. The students meet weekly for their Book Buddy sessions.

Middle Grades: Middle school students work in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service to conduct an in-depth study of a nearby watershed as part of their science curriculum. The students identify what constitutes a healthy watershed, and with the help of the teachers and volunteer biologists, hydrologists, and environmental engineers, design a rehabilitation plan to restore degraded areas of the watershed. In their language arts classes, students develop articles and public service announcements to educate the greater community and highlight the importance of environmental sensitivity.

High School: Students in advanced Spanish courses practice second-language acquisition, writing, and speaking skills while volunteering at local health care facilities and human service agencies that primarily serve Spanish-speaking clients. Students serve as translators and assist clients by helping them complete registration forms and by providing instructions and information related to their care and treatment.

College and University: A California State University (CSU) faculty member coordinates a licensed preschool for homeless children. The school provides clothing, parenting classes and health care services free of charge. CSU students enrolled in child development courses use their knowledge of social development to design educational activities that benefit children who attend the preschool.



AmeriCorps: AmeriCorps members in a school-based tutoring program sponsored by a county office of education promote, plan and develop service-learning in middle schools. As part of the program's volunteer component, a small team of members develop community partnerships at the school and district level. They make presentations to community groups, assess the needs of community organizations, facilitate contact with teachers and provide technical assistance to teachers planning their projects. Other members serving in the afterschool program lead students in campus-based service-learning projects and other activities.

Resources

Service-learning resources that may be useful to applicants include:

- The *California Department of Education's CalServe Initiative* Web site (www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/si) contains an overview of CalServe-funded Learn and Serve K-12 school-based programs, tools, research and links to regional networks of service-learning specialists.
- The Web site of The Center for Community Engagement at the California State University (CSU) Chancellor's Office contains information on academic service-learning, research and publications, program summaries and links to service-learning programs throughout the CSU system. More information can be found at www.calstate.edu/csl.
- The Learn and Serve America Web site (www.learnandserve.gov) provides an overview of Corporation-funded service-learning programs for K-12 schools, colleges and universities, and community-based organizations, as well as tools and resources.
- The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse supports the service-learning community in higher education, kindergarten through grade twelve, community-based initiatives and tribal programs, as well as all others interested in strengthening schools and communities using service-learning techniques and methodologies. More information can be found at www.servicelearning.org/index.php.

