AmeriCorps State Grant FFY2021OCSFormula
Notice of Funding Opportunity (**NOFO**) Planning Grant *Supplement*

This Planning Grant *Supplement* outlines the process to apply for an AmeriCorps *planning grant only*. Planning grant funding is provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and administered by the Montana Governor's Office of Community Service (ServeMontana). The level and timing of grant funding is subject to annual appropriations. OCS reserves the right to modify any component of this RFP, at any time.

Section I: Planning Grant Supplement Information
This *Supplement* should be read with the FFY2021OCSFormula *Notice* of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

ServeMontana
Montana's Commission on Community Service was established in 1993 to administer grants under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, amended by the Edward M Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009. Under the Montana Commission on Community Service, ServeMontana administers funds to AmeriCorps State programs, encourages citizens of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to engage in service, involves youth in the life and work of communities, and strengthens volunteerism for all Montanans.

Purpose
The purpose of an AmeriCorps planning grant is to provide resources to eligible organizations to assess and develop an AmeriCorps intervention to meet needs in Montana, while developing contributors. Planning grants do not provide AmeriCorps members**.** Planning grants do not require performance measures.

Funds may be available to *new* applicants to increase AmeriCorps programs statewide by applying for a on year planning grant. Planning grants provide initial funding to support current staff or to hire staff to assess needs and plan the proposed AmeriCorps program. Examples of expected activities include, needs assessment, collaborations with partners, developing meaningful training, developing data collection for performance measures, and assuring adequate financial systems for successful implementation an AmeriCorps operational grant program. When completing an application for submission, applicants should use this *Supplement*, the ServeMontana Formula Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), CNCS Application Instructions, Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, and other available resources.

Expectations ServeMontana expects all respondents to display the following features,

✓ Address rural, Tribal, underserved, or areas of poverty not currently served by AmeriCorps programs

✓ Clearly connect proposed activities to the needs and priorities in the Montana State Service Plan

✓ Collaborative approach to program planning, design, and the delivery

✓ Inclusive design and delivery, the program is accessible to individuals with disabilities

Who Should Apply to this Planning Grant *Supplement* under this *Notice* Of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)?
Organizations seeking to apply for a one-year Planning Grant to assess feasibility to see if AmeriCorps State resources are best-suited to meet identified needs. Planning Grants do not include performance measures or provide service positions. Planning Grants are intended to support staff, travel, and other allowable expenses to plan an operational AmeriCorps State program and then apply for a program grant. In the planning grant period, OCS and/or the planning grantee may determine that AmeriCorps State is not the best resource.

Dual Points of Contact – **Same as Formula Notice**
From the date this Request for Proposal (RFP) is officially posted until an applicant(s) is selected and announced by OCS**,** *applicants shall only communicate with designated state staff listed below, regarding this Notice.* Any unauthorized contact may disqualify the application from further consideration.

Sarah Sadowski, OCS Grants Manager   Sheree Isola, OCS Financial Manager
ph: 406.444.5547   ph: 406.444.1809
ssadowski@mt.gov   ShIsola@mt.gov

Costs/Ownership of Materials *- See Formula NOFO*

Montana State Service Plan
The 2019-2021 Montana State Service Plan outlines the community needs, goals and objectives of the Governor's Office on Community Service. Read the Plan at, http://serve.mt.gov/About/State-Service-Plan. ServeMontana strongly encourages new programs that meet the needs identified in that Plan.
- Refer to the Formula NOFO for Governor priorities

This Planning Grant *Supplement* consists of 4 main sections and 3 titled attachments

Section I: Planning Grant *Supplement* Information
Section II: Application Submission Information and the Planning Grant
Section III: Assessment Criteria
Section IV: eGrants Application Information

Attachment A: Performance Measures Instructions for Planning Grants
Attachment B: Detailed Budget Instructions
Attachment C: General AmeriCorps Planning Grant Requirements

Timeline

March 26, 2021 Official posting of the _Notice_

April 2, 2021   All NEW PROGRAM AND PLANNING applicants, due to <u>serve@mt.gov</u> by 5pm
- Letter of Intent (LOI)
- PDF of current SAM & CCR registration, https://www.sam.gov/portal/SAM/#1
- Documentation of Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate, _if applicable_
- New Applicant Readiness Self-Assessment
- Current organization audit, _if applicable_

New Planning Grant applicants must also submit the following
- Current organizational chart
- Current Strategic plan

April 5-9   Formula Technical assistance period* Submit questions via email to serve@mt.gov.

April 9   Last day to submit an Alternative Match Request

April 15   <u>Formula applicants:</u> Application Due Date 5pm Mountain Time
- Complete Application, submitted in eGrants http://www.nationalservice.gov/egrants/
- Additional Documents, submitted via email to serve@mt.gov
- CNCS Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS)

May 12   Grant Review Workgroup Meeting

May 17-21   Formula clarification period

May 21   Clarified applications resubmitted in eGrants _no later_ than 5pm MST

July 2021   Applicants notified of funding determination

*Technical Assistance
Participation in the technical assistance period is optional, and highly encouraged. Applicants are encouraged to use the opportunity to ask clarifying questions, obtain a better understanding of the RFP process, the project, and to notify the State of any ambiguities, inconsistencies, or errors discovered in this RFP. All questions and written responses will be posted on the ServeMontana website at http://serve.mt.gov/AmeriCorps/americorps-grants.

CNCS Focus Areas - _See Formula NOFO_

Montana Governor's Initiatives - _See Formula NOFO_

AmeriCorps Funding Priorities - _See Formula NOFO_

Montana Encouraged Planning Elements

- Program design that incorporates National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service's recommendations in their Final Report Appendix C, Best Practices in Civic Education and Service Learning. AmeriCorps member development planning should include impactful civic education and/or service-learning that increases knowledge and deepens the members ethic of service.
- Program design plan includes engaging citizens with lived experience to serve people in the area of defined need with robust training, development, and support.
- Intended program design engages Montanans and uniquely prepares them to serve the communities where they live.

Performance Measures

Planning Grant applicants do not include performance measures. To submit the application, specific instructions must be followed in the eGrants performance measure module.

Federal Award Information – Planning Grants

Types of Award

AmeriCorps planning grants will only be awarded on a line item cost reimbursement basis. Cost reimbursement grants fund a portion of program operating costs and require documented match. Planning Grants do not provide service positions or education awards. ServeMontana seeks organizations with a proven track record managing federal funds and if applicable, national service programs.

Available Funds

AmeriCorps State funding process is generally competitive. See Formula NOFO for information on funding priority of applicants. All funding available is based on CNCS appropriations, allocations, and approval.

Estimated Award Amount

Awards for planning grants may not exceed $70,000 and may average $30,000-$50,000. Funds will be used to support development of an AmeriCorps program (no AmeriCorps member positions). ServeMontana will review applications and determine the appropriate award amount, if any.

Project and Award Period

If funds are available, planning awards will be granted for ONE YEAR only. There is no guarantee allocations will be available to fund future years although ServeMontana expects organizations receiving planning grants will apply for an AmeriCorps operational grant in the next grant year or will responsibly determine that an AmeriCorps program is not the best strategy to meet the stated needs. The project start date may not occur prior to the date CNCS awards the grant. The earliest suggested program start date is September 1, 2021, with the understanding some applicants may choose to operate on the calendar year.

Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants – *See Formula NOFO*

Dun & Bradstreet University Numbering System (DUNS) & System for Award Management (SAM) – *See Formula*

Types of Applicants – *See Formula NOFO New Applicants*

Threshold Requirements – planning grant specific
Applications should meet all threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying.
- All applicants should budget staff travel and staff training on the CNCS share of the budget for 1-2 staff to attend the America's Service Commission's Program Boot Camp in Fall 2021 in Austin, TX, ServeMontana Symposium in March 2022 in Helena, MT, and National Service Regional Training in Spring 2022, location TBD.
- Planning Grant applicants should budget on the CNCS share to attend and complete the web-based Community Building Institute, https://mtcompact.org/training-resources-2/community-building-institute/

Other Requirements – *See Formula NOFO*

Funding Restrictions – *See Formula NOFO*

Member Living Allowance – N/A

Maximum Cost per Member Service Year (MSY) – N/A

Segal AmeriCorps Education Award– N/A

Match Requirements
Successful new applicants are required to match at 24 percent for the first three years of funding, as calculated by the CNCS Application Instructions. Starting with year four, the match requirement increases every year to 50 percent by year ten. Section 121(e)(5) of the National and Community Service Act requires programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant to report the amount and source of these funds to ServeMontana and CNCS on the Federal Financial Report.
- ***See Formula NOFO for match schedule and Application Instructions for calculation requirements***

Alternative Match – *See Formula NOFO*

Indirect Costs – *See Formula NOFO and Application Instructions*

Section II: Application Submission Information and the Planning Grant

Application Package Information necessary to apply is accessible at http://serve.mt.gov/funding/. Applicants may email serve@mt.gov or call 406.444.5547 for printed materials. TTY # is 800.833.3722.

Content and Form of Application In eGrants, enter the following components of a complete application:
- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: Populates when applicant completes eGrants fields
- Narratives
    - Executive Summary
    - Program Design
    - Organizational Capability
    - Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
    - Evaluation Plan
- Logic Model
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certification

Additional Documents – email to serve@mt.gov as appropriate, see Additional Documents section

Page Limits - *Read all page limit information in Formula NOFO*

Planning Grant applications **may not exceed 7 pages** for the Narratives including the Executive Summary and SF-424 Face Sheet, as the pages print from eGrants. This limit does not include the narrative portion of the evaluation plan or the logic model, budget, performance measures, or the additional documents, as applicable.

To confirm the application does not exceed the page limit prior to submission, CNCS and OCS strongly encourage applicants to print the application from the "Review and Submit" tab in eGrants.

Submission Dates and Times – *Read all Submission information in Formula NOFO @page 14*

Notification of Intent to Apply
Submission of a Letter Of Intent (LOI) to apply is requested by Friday, April 2, 2021, early submissions welcome. Submit the LOI by completing the template and emailing it to serve@mt.gov

Applications are due Thursday April 15, 2021, by 5:00pm Mountain Standard Time to OCS via eGrants.
This deadline applies to new, recompeting, continuation, and planning applicants, and includes submission of additional documents. OCS reserves the right to add documents to the RFP and to extend the submission deadline. Any *Notice* of such changes will be posted on OCS's website. Late applications may not be reviewed. *When the application is submitted in eGrants, send an email to serve@mt.gov*.

Late Applications – *See Formula NOFO*

Additional Documents – *See Formula NOFO page 15 and Planning Grant Timeline, all applicable additional documents must be submitted no later than April 15, 2021 using correct naming and labeling of individual materials.*

OCS recommends applicants use the assessment criteria described in each section as prompts for narratives. Use guidance on points to prioritize the length in each section. Prior to submission, OCS recommends that applicants use the assessment criteria and/or score sheet to review the application, or to have a peer review.

Each applicant must clearly propose to plan a program model that will deploy AmeriCorps members effectively to solve a significant community problem. The quality of the application will be an important factor in determining funding. Applications will be assessed as follows:

Application Review Information by Application Fields

Categories/Subcategories	Percentage
Executive Summary	**0**
Program Design	**50**
Rationale and Approach	15
Theory of Change and Logic Model	10
Evidence Tier	10
Evidence Quality	10
Notice Priority	5
Organizational Capacity	**25**
Organizational Background and Staffing	10
Compliance and Accountability	10
Culture That Values Learning	5
Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	**25**

A. Executive Summary (Required – Pass/Fail - 0 percent)

Fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary. **Do not deviate from the template.**

The [Name of the organization] proposes to plan to utilize AmeriCorps members to [service activities the members will be doing] in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will serve]. The organization will learn about AmeriCorps grant and financial management. The organization will complete planning and financial reporting on time. At the end of the planning period, the [Name of the organization will be responsible for developing an AmeriCorps program that will result in [anticipated outcome/benefit and for whom]. In addition, organization will plan to leverage [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing.]

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area(s) of [Focus Area(s)]. * The CNCS investment of $[amount of request] will be matched with $[amount of projected match], $[amount of local, state, and federal funds] in public funding and $[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.

*If the program is not operating in a CNCS focus area, omit this sentence.

II. Program Design (50 points)
Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below.
Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

1. Rationale and Approach (15 points)
- The applicant clearly describes why they are applying for a planning grant and what they intend to achieve during the one-year planning award period.
- The applicant provides detailed description of the planning process and a timeline for planning activities.
- The applicant clearly describes how the community need has been or will be identified by the program.
- The applicant clearly describes how the community need/problem is prevalent and severe in communities where members will eventually serve, and the need has been well documented with relevant data.
- Describe how AmeriCorps members could serve to help you address the community need, and the target communities you would serve.

2. Theory of Change and Logic Model (10 points)
- The applicant clearly describes how they will arrive at the proposed intervention, including the roles of potential AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) the roles of leveraged community volunteers.
- The applicant clearly describes how they will plan an intervention and is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change.
- The applicant clearly describes how they will ensure AmeriCorps members will produce significant and unique contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.
- All elements of the logic model are logically aligned.

The logic model shall depict:
- A summary of how the community problem outlined in the narrative will be determined.
- Inputs or resources necessary to identify the need and plan the intervention, including:
  - Research and need statement development
  - Research and evidence-based strategy development
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
  - Assessment of location(s) or site(s) in which members will provide services
  - Assessment of the number of AmeriCorps members that will deliver the intervention
  - The outputs that will result from planning the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served)
  - The planned outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the planned intervention.

Planning grant applicants may include short, medium, or long-term outcomes in the logic model. Applicants are not required to measure all outcomes that are included in the logic model. Applicants with multiple interventions should complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each intervention.

2. *Evidence Base* (20 points)

The assessment of an applicant's evidence base has two parts. First, the applicant will be assigned to an evidence tier (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance.) Second, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the degree to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored.

Evidence Tier (10 points)

An evidence tier will be assessed for each applicant for applying the strategic characteristics (moderate/strong evidence) and understanding the relative strength of each applicant's evidence base and the likelihood that the planned intervention will lead to outcomes identified in the logic model.

Planning grant applicants who have outcome or impact evaluation reports of the same intervention described in the application (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance for a definition of "same intervention") may submit up to 2 of those reports, plus (if applicable) the evaluation report from their last three-year grant cycle, to qualify for the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tier.

The intervention evaluated in the submitted report(s) must match the intervention proposed by the applicant in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the Theory of Change and Logic Model sections of the application:

- • Characteristics of the beneficiary population
- • Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention
- • Dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities
- • The context in which the intervention is delivered
- • Outcomes of the intervention

Submitted reports that do not sufficiently match the intervention proposed by the applicant in all these areas will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points. Submission of additional documents that are not consistent with the guidance and requirements described in the *Notice* (e.g., advocacy pieces, policy briefs, other narratives that are not research studies or program evaluations) will not be reviewed.

In the Evidence Tier section of the application narrative, applicants must (1) summarize the study design and key findings of any outcome or impact evaluation report(s) submitted and (2) describe any other evidence that supports their program planning, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies that inform their program design.

Applicants who submit evaluation reports for consideration must also describe in the Evidence Base section of the application narrative how the intervention described in the submitted reports is the same as the intervention described in the application (see Mandatory Supplemental Guidance).

Applicants should provide citations for the studies they describe, if applicable; however, reviewers will not review any documents external to the application other than evaluation report(s) submitted in accordance with the *Notice* instructions.

Applicants must meet all requirements of an evidence tier to be considered for that tier. If the evaluation reports submitted by the applicant do not meet the definitions in the Mandatory Supplemental Guidance, the applicant may be considered for a lower evidence tier.

Evidence Quality (10 points)

After the applicant's evidence tier has been assessed, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the extent to which it supports the proposed program planning will be assessed and scored.

For applicants who are assessed in the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tiers, reviewers will score the submitted evaluation reports using the following standards:
- The submitted reports are of satisfactory methodological quality and rigor for the type of evaluation conducted (e.g., adequate sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, appropriate use of control or comparison groups, etc.);
- The submitted reports describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years;
- The submitted reports show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.

For applicants who are assessed in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier, reviewers will score the narrative provided in the Evidence Base section of the application using the following standards:
- The applicant uses relevant evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies, to inform their proposed program design;
- The described evidence is relatively recent, preferably from the last six years;
- The evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.
- The evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.

Applicants assessed in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier who do not provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality standards will not meet the threshold requirements for this *Notice* and will not be considered for funding.

All applicants, including new grantees, are required to provide additional information in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field of the application (See Section E. Evaluation Plan).

3. Notice Priority (5 points)
The applicant proposed Planning Grant fits within one or more of the Planning Grant Priorities on page 4 in this document, or the 2021 AmeriCorps and Montana priorities as outlined in the *Funding Priorities* section.

III. Organizational Capacity (25 points)
Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below.
Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

1. Organizational Background and Staffing (10 points)
- The applicant provides a brief history of the organization including the year it was established and any funding history with ServeMontana and CNCS, if applicable.
- The applicant discusses prior experience in the proposed area of programming and examples of the organization's leadership in the community.
- The applicant describes the organization's management and staff structure and the role the board of directors, administrators, and staff members will play in the planning process.
- The applicant clearly describes how the organization has adequate experience administering federal grants.

- The applicant describes how the planning period will be used to develop the organization's capacity to effectively manage an AmeriCorps program including:
  o Establishing systems and processes for sound programmatic and fiscal oversight
  o Developing a strong position description and training plan for a full-time AmeriCorps Program Director
  o Creating a process for selecting operating and service sites (if applicable) that will ensure the most appropriate and capable organizations are selected
  o Planning service site orientation and training, including site supervisors (if applicable)
  o Planning AmeriCorps members orientation and training

2. Compliance and Accountability (10 points)
- The applicant clearly describes how the applicant's organization, in development of its AmeriCorps program, will prevent and detect compliance issues.
- The applicant clearly describes how the applicant will hold itself accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified.
- The applicant clearly describes how the organization will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities.
- The applicant is willing to receive and secure effective technical assistance.

3. Culture that Values Learning (4 points)
- The applicant's board, management, and staff collect and use information, including performance data, for learning and decision making.

IV. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 points)
Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below.
Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

1. Cost Effectiveness (13 points)
- Describe plans to develop a cost-effective program including how you will develop diverse non-federal resources to support program implementation, growth, and sustainability.
- Discuss the budget adequacy to support the planning process including the 24% match (cash and in-kind) and how the organization will secure any additional resources needed.
- The budget is sufficient to carry out the planning grant effectively.
- The budget aligns with the applicant's narrative.
- The applicant has raised or describes an adequate plan to raise non-CNCS resources to fully support the planning grant.

2. Budget Adequacy (12 points)
- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors.
- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget is in compliance with the budget instructions.

See 2021 CNCS Application Instructions for Budget Instructions Applicants must complete & validate the budget.

Applicants must complete the Source of Funds section of the budget in eGrants. Identify each match source separately. Include dollar amount, the match classification (Cash, In-Kind, or Not Available) and the source type (Private, State/Local, Federal, Other or Not Available). Define all acronyms the first time they are used.

<p align="center">**V. Evaluations Summary or Plan**   (Required - zero points - Pass/Fail)</p>

If the applicant is competing for the first time, please provide a data collection plan in the "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field that includes the following:

- A description of the applicant's data collection system and how it is sufficient to collect high quality data that will support the implementation of AmeriCorps performance measurement during the first three years of the program grant. If the applicant does not yet have a data collection system, describe the plan and timeline for developing a high-quality system.
- A description of how the applicant will read and learn the CNCS AmeriCorps evaluation requirements using relevant national service terminology as possible.

For information about developing a high-quality data collection plan, visit CNCS Knowledge Network, https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/americorps/building-effective-data-collection-plans-presented-october-12-2017

VI. Amendment Justification	Enter N/A
VII. Clarification Information	Enter N/A
VIII. Continuation Update	Enter N/A

Cost Sharing and Matching Requirements – *Read Cost Sharing and Matching in Formula NOFO page 12-13 and in the 2021 Application Instructions*

Section IV: eGrants Application Information

A. How to Apply
- Get a DUNS number and Register with SAMS
- Establish an eGrants account
- Write a high-quality application responsive to the *Notice* and specifically the *Planning Grant Supplement*
- Provide required additional documents via email, as applicable
- Submit the application via eGrants and additional documents to serve@mt.gov by the deadline

B. How to Submit an Application in eGrants

Applicants must submit their applications electronically via the CNCS web-based system, eGrants. Because it is a unique system, it is recommended that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application in advance of the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word document and copy and paste the document into the appropriate eGrants fields.

An application is only complete if it includes all required documentation and is received by the application due date. Incomplete applications will not be considered. All additional documents should include the applicant organization name and Application ID number at the top of the page and are due by the application deadline to serve@mt.gov . Emails should include in the Subject line, the applicant organization name and Application ID number.

If a problem arises while creating an account or while preparing or submitting an application in eGrants contact the National Service Hotline at 800-942-2677 or https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask If technical issues prevent an applicant from submitting an application on time, you must contact the National Service Hotline prior to the deadline to explain the technical issue and receive a ticket number. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, the applicant must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit via eGrants.

C. Application Fields and Page Limits

In eGrants, before Starting Section I you will need to:
1. Start a New Grant Application
2. Select a Program Area: AmeriCorps
3. Select a NOFA: FY2021 AmeriCorps State and Territory Commission (New and Continuations), Due Date listed is 01/06/2021
4. Select State applying to: Montana
5. Select Prime Application ID: 21ACXXXXX – MT Commission on Community Service

The application in eGrants consists of the following components. Complete each section.
- Applicant Info
- Application Info
- Narratives
- Logic Model
- Performance Measures: Planning grant applicants must enter text to proceed. Follow Attachment A.
- Program Information
- Documents
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- Funding/Demographics
- Review, Authorize, and Submit

Reviewers will not consider submitted material that is over the page limit in the printed report, even if eGrants allows an applicant to enter and submit text over the limit. Do not submit other items not requested in the *Notice* or Application Instructions. ServeMontana will not review or return them.

D. Applicant Info

In eGrants, complete the Applicant Info Section. This section is particularly important for data collection and evaluation. Please take the time to reflect your activities accurately in this section.

- Enter your contact information into the fields that appear.
- Select a primary Program Model, and a secondary Program Model, if appropriate.
- Then select characteristics that fit your project under Program Design, Program Location, and Program Focus. Enter or select a Program Director and Program Website URL.

E. Application Info

Information entered in the Applicant Info, Application Info, and Budget sections will populate the SF 424 Face Sheet, the standard cover sheet for federal grant applications. In the Application Info Section enter:

- Program/Title: PLANNING GRANT <Your Organization's Name>
- Areas affected by your proposed AmeriCorps activity
- Requested project period start and end dates: Sept 1 – Aug 31, 2021 **OR** Oct 1, 2020 – Sept 30, 2021
- Indicate if you are delinquent on any federal debt
- State Application Identifier: Enter N/A
- State Single Point of Contact: pre-filled "No, this is not applicable"
- Waiver of Volunteer Leveraging Requirements: Do Not Enter
- Leave the box for "Program Initiative" blank

F. Narratives

Provide a narrative that addresses the following elements. Enter N/A in sections in the eGrants narratives that do not apply to planning grant applicants. In eGrants, enter text for:

- Executive Summary,
- Rationale and Approach/Program Design,
- Organizational Capability, and
- Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
- Evaluation Summary or Plan (data collection plan)

Note: the Narratives Section also includes fields for Amendment Justification, Clarification Information, and Continuation Changes. Enter N/A in these fields.

G. Logic Model

H. Performance Measures

- Performance measures are not required for planning grants. However, to submit the application, eGrants requires the performance measure module to be completed. Follow the directions in Attachment A.
- See Attachment C for information on required accomplishments during the planning grant period.

I. Program Information

J. Documents

K. Budget and Budget Narrative

L. Review, Authorize, and Submit

M. Documents: in eGrants, enter as follows:

- Evaluation - N/A
- Federally Approved Indirect Cost Agreement - Submit via email if applicable, otherwise enter N/A
- Labor Union Concurrence - N/A
- Other Documents - N/A

N. Budget: Refer to 2021 CNCS Application Instructions and Planning Grant Attachment B

The proposed budget should be mission capable to perform the tasks described in the proposal narrative. Reviewers will consider the information provided in this section in the assessment of the Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy selection criteria.

Follow the detailed budget instructions to prepare the budget. OCS highly recommends preparing the budget using the Budget Worksheet prior to entering it in eGrants. This document is posted under the AmeriCorps Grants section on serve.mt.gov.

The eGrants system will create the budget and the budget narrative automatically from the detailed budget information you enter. Once the budget is entered in eGrants, you must validate it, and eGrants will check the submission for errors. Be prepared to spend time correcting errors and re-validating your eGrants submission as this can be a lengthy process.

Overview of Key Budget Requirements

Applicants are required to match funds based on the chart below. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet the match requirement at the time of application submission. The match can be non-CNCS cash and/or in-kind contributions. A first-time successful applicant is required to match 24% for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases each year, to 50% by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in 45CFR§2521.60 and below.

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

Grantees are required to meet an overall matching rate that increases over time. You have flexibility to meet the overall match requirements in any of the three budget areas, as long as the minimum match of 24% for the first three years, and the increasing minimums in years thereafter. If applying for the first time, you must match with cash or in-kind contributions at least 24% of the planning grant total Operating Costs (Section I) plus Administrative Costs (Section III).

Program requirements, including match requirements, are in the AmeriCorps regulations and summarized below. Allowable sources of match are federal, state, local, private sector, and/or other funds in accordance with applicable AmeriCorps regulations.
http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/olc/moodle/fm_key_concepts_of_cash_and_in_kind_match/view9468.html?id=3213&chapterid=2268

O. Funding/Demographics

Other Revenue funds: Enter the amount of funds that your program uses to run the program that are not CNCS share or match**.** All other fields enter zero.

P. Review, Authorize, and Submit

Prior to submission, eGrants requires applicants review and verify the entire application. In addition to the application being verified without errors, the following sections in eGrants must be complete:

- Review
- Authorize
- Assurances
- Certifications
- Verify
- Submit

Read the Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications carefully. The person who authorizes the application must be the applicant's Authorized Representative or his/her designee and must have an active eGrants account to certify these documents electronically. An Authorized Representative is the person in your organization authorized to accept and commit funds on behalf of the organization. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

- *Tip: You must view or print the assurances/certifications before clicking on each "I Agree" for assurance or certification. The authorized person (i.e. Executive Director) must login to eGrants to complete this step.*

Prior to submission, eGrants will require that you verify the application. In that process, the system will generate a list of errors if there are sections that need to be corrected. If someone else is acting in the role of the applicant's authorized representative, that person must log into his/her eGrants account and proceed with Authorize and Submit. After signing off on the Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications, his/her name will override any previous signatory that may appear and show on the application as the Authorized Representative.

Review and Selection Process Applications cleared through this process will be submitted as ServeMontana supplicants to the Corporation for National and Community Service for funding determination.
The review process will consist of:

- OCS staff review Letters of Intent; Additional Documents and Audit Report, as applicable. If the applicant is determined to have sufficient capacity to manage federal grants, they are eligible to continue the application process.
- Submitted applications are reviewed for compliance with pertinent state and federal regulations, the NOFO, and responsibility to the Request For Proposal. All compliant and responsive applications will continue through the review process.
- Applications passing staff review will next be reviewed by a Grant Review Workgroup responsible for scoring applications and making funding decisions.
- The Grant Review Workgroup will individually score the applications then convene with applicants present to arrive a consensus scores and a funding recommendation.
- Grant Review Workgroup recommendations are presented to the Montana Commission on Community Service for approval. If the proposal of the review committee is rejected by the Montana Commission the review process may be repeated.

> ***All remaining sections of the Supplement are incorporated as in the 2021 Formula Notice***
> **Read pages 25-31, including National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) requirements.**

ATTACHMENT A: Performance Measures Instructions for Planning Grant

Note: Performance measures are NOT required for planning grants. However, to successfully validate the application for submission eGrants requires you to complete this section. Follow the instructions below.

Performance Measure Module Home Page
To start the module, click the "**Begin**" button on the Home Page. As you proceed, the Home Page will summarize your work and provide links to edit the parts of the module you have completed. You may navigate sections of the module using the tab feature at the top of each page. Once you have started the module, clicking "**Continue Working**" will return you to the tab where you last closed the module. To edit the interventions, objectives, MSYs, and slot allocations, click "Edit objectives/MSYs/Slots".

Objectives Tab
An expandable list of CNCS Focus Areas appears on this tab. When you select a Focus Area, a list of objectives from the CNCS strategic plan appears. A list of common interventions appears under each objective.
- **To submit the application, you are required to select a Focus Area, an objective, and an intervention.** First click on a Focus Area. Then click on an objective and select an intervention. For all sections, select "other" from the list.

Member Service Years (MSY)/Slots Tab
On this tab, you will enter information about the allocation of MSY. **Planning Grant applicants must enter "1"** when entering the total MSYs. *Otherwise, eGrants will continue to give error messages and prevent submission.*
- Next, **enter "1" for the number of objectives** selected on the previous tab.
- In the slots column, **enter "1" for number of members** that will be assigned to each objective.

Performance Measure Tab Performance measures are not required for planning grants. However, you must create at least one aligned performance measure for eGrants to allow submission.
- Begin by selecting "other" as an objective.
- Enter "N/A" for the title for your performance measure.
- Enter "N/A" in the text box.
- For the intervention section, click "add user intervention" and enter "N/A" for the intervention.
- Select "Add User Outcome" and enter "N/A" in the text box.
- Enter "1" for the number of MSYs and slots section.
- Click "next" to proceed to the data collection tab.

Data Collection Tab
- Expand each output and outcome and enter "N/A" in each text box.
- Enter "1" for the output or outcome.
- After entering "N/A" for the outputs and outcomes section, click "Mark Complete." You will return to the Performance Measure tab.

Summary Tab The summary tab shows all of the information you have entered in the module.
- To print a summary of all performance measures, click "Print PDF for all Performance Measures."
- To print one performance measure, expand the measure and click "Print This Measure."
- Click "Edit Performance Measure" to return to the Performance Measure tab.
- Click "Edit Data Collection" to return to the Data Collection tab.
- Click "Validate Performance Measures" to validate this module prior to submitting your application.

ATTACHMENT B: Detailed Budget Instructions
These instructions have been modified for AmeriCorps Planning Grant Applicants.
Use CNCS 2021 Application Instructions. Submitted budgets must comply with the instructions.

Section I. Program Operating Costs
Complete Section I, Program Operating Costs of the Budget Narrative by entering the "Total Amount," "CNCS Share," and "Grantee Share" for Parts A-I, as follows:

A. Personnel Expenses
Under "Position/Title Description," list each staff position separately and provide salary and percentage of effort as percentage of FTE devoted to this award. Each staff person's role listed in the budget must be described in the application narrative and each staff person mentioned in the narrative must be listed in the budget as either CNCS and/or Grantee share. Because the purpose of the planning grant is to enable national service and stimulate community volunteerism, do not include the value of direct service performed by community volunteers. However, you may include the value of volunteer services contributed to the organization for organizational functions such as accounting, audit work, or training of staff and AmeriCorps members.

- Budget for one full time staff person. If awarded, ideally the planning staff person will be retained by the organization to see the planning and if applicable, program grant, process through.

B. Personnel Fringe Benefits
Under "Purpose/Description," identify the types of fringe benefits to be covered and the costs of benefit(s) for each staff position. Allowable fringe benefits typically include FICA, Worker's Compensation, Retirement, SUTA, Health and Life Insurance, IRA, and 401K. You may provide a calculation for total benefits as a percentage of the salaries to which they apply or list each benefit as a separate line item. If a fringe benefit amount is over 30%, please list covered items separately and justify the high cost. Holidays, leave, and other similar vacation benefits are not included in the fringe benefit rates, but are absorbed into the personnel expenses (salary) budget line item.

C. 1. Staff Travel
Describe the purpose for staff travel by trip needed for the planning activities such as outreach, site development and training. Provide a calculation that itemizes costs for airfare, transportation, lodging, per diem, and other travel-related expenses multiplied by the number of trips/staff. Where applicable, identify the current standard reimbursement rate(s) of the organization for mileage, daily per diem, and similar supporting information. Reimbursement should not exceed the federal mileage rate unless a result of applicant policy and justified in the budget narrative. Only domestic travel is allowable.

All applicants must include funds in this line item for travel for staff to attend *one or more* CNCS-sponsored training events. There are typically two to three such opportunities per year. Budget for at least 2 of the following: AmeriCorps Service Commission's Program or Fiscal Boot Camp, National Service Regional Training, ServeMontana Symposium. ServeMontana will determine which meeting(s) are applicable on an annual basis after review of the planned CNCS events.

Itemize the costs. For example: One staff member will attend the National Service Regional Training in Albuquerque, NM. 1 staff X $550 airfare + $25 ground transportation + (4 days X $200 lodging) + $100 per diem = $1475.

C. 2. Member Travel N/A for planning grant applicants

18

D. Equipment N/A for planning grant applicants

E. Supplies
Include the amount of funds to purchase consumable supplies and materials. Any single item costing $1,000 or more must be individually listed.

F. Contractual and Consultant Services
Include costs for consultants related to the project's operations, except training or evaluation consultants, who will be listed in Sections G. and H., below. There is not a maximum daily rate.

G. 1. Staff Training
Include the costs associated with training staff on project requirements and training to enhance the skills staff need for effective project implementation, i.e., project or financial management, team building, etc. If using a consultant(s) for training, indicate the estimated daily rate. There is not a maximum daily rate. Include registration costs for conference event(s) in this section.

G. 2. Member Training N/A for planning grant applicants

H. Evaluation/Data Collection
Include costs for project evaluation or data collection tool development, including additional staff time or subcontracts, use of qualified consultants, purchase of instruments, and other costs specifically for this activity not budgeted in Personnel Expenses.

I. Other Program Operating Costs
- Refer to the 2021 Application Instructions for detailed instructions on Section III of the budget
- National Service Criminal History Checks should be budgeted in this Section
- All submitted budgets must comply with the instructions.

Section II. Member Costs N/A for planning grant applicants
> **A. Living Allowance** N/A for planning grant applicants
> **B. Member Support Costs** N/A for planning grant applicants

Section III. Administrative/Indirect Costs
- Refer to 2021 Application Instructions, for Section III detailed instructions
- All submitted budgets must comply with the instructions.

C. Source of Match
In the "Source of Funds" field that appears at the end of Budget Section III, enter a brief description of the match. Identify each match source separately. Identify if the match is secured or proposed. Include dollar amount, the match classification (cash or in-kind), and the source type (Private, State/Local, or Federal) for your **entire match**. (The total amount in the Source of Funds field should match the total amount in the budget narrative exactly.) Define all acronyms the first time they are used. The total amount of Source of Match must equal the Grantee Share amount.

ATTACHMENT C: General AmeriCorps Planning Grant Requirements

To be accomplished and documented during the planning grant award period. Successful Planning Grant recipients complete quarterly progress reports and monthly financial reporting.

Organization Capability

Ensure Adequate Organization Capability
- Leadership and oversight for program and within organization
- Financial Management systems
  - Financial and accounts procedure manual
  - Plans for securing match
  - Accounting program required to manage AmeriCorps funding
- Policies and procedures
- Position description for program staff
- Capacity to develop and implement National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC)

Define and Document Community Needs
- Problem to be addressed is a true need of the community
- Local data to support the need
- Community benefit

Identify Evidence-based Service Intervention to be provided and Program Structure
- Evidence for evidence-based intervention(s)
- Proposed Service Plan and Program Structure
  - National/Montana Priority Areas
  - Member Structure (Number of Members and Slot Types)
  - Program Service Year defined (10-month, 8-months…)
- Staff members working on the program and roles
- Advisory Committee/Board
- Participation in National Service Days

Identify Partners and Service Locations
- Current partners and past relationships
- Collaboration with local faith based and or small community-based organizations
- Service site identification with national service
- Member supervision strategy
- Site supervisor training strategy
- Commitment letters from potential host sites

Develop Logic Model and Identify Performance Measures
- Develop logic model as per CNCS definition
- National Performance Measures (*alignment with logic model*)
  - Outputs
  - Outcomes
  - Data collection instruments

Member Recruitment and Management
Program Systems in Place
> o   Policy and procedure manual including all member procedures, along with programmatic policies and procedures

Develop Member Position Descriptions in compliance with CNCS
- Minimum requirements and characteristics
- Primary/secondary duties

Member Recruitment
- Recruitment plan
- AmeriCorps National Recruitment webpage
- Diversity within the program, recruitment from locations where the service occurs
- Inclusivity, members with disabilities and reasonable accommodation

Member Orientation & Training
- Member onboarding plan and procedures, including NSCHC
- Training for members (program orientation, host site orientation, ongoing) including:
  - o Policy and procedures
  - o National Identity to AmeriCorps and storytelling tips
  - o Member time sheets
- Affiliation with AmeriCorps, training and issuance of official service gear

Service Site/Community Partner Plan/Fiscal Agent

Service Site
- Service site recruitment plan
- Site supervisor position description
- Orientation and ongoing training plan for host sites, supervisors, and staff
  Justification for the number of members placed at a site
- Site visit plan for ensuring compliance at host sites

Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement
- Service Site agreements
  - o Outline responsibilities
  - o Policy and procedure expectations
  - o Member placement
  - o Fiscal responsibilities; example Financial support from sites; cash and in-kind match

Application, Interview, and Selection
- Application packet to distribute to interested persons
- Screening and interview process
  - o Final selection of members
  - o Matching members to host sites

Member Supervision
- Plans for convening members on a regular basis
- Member evaluation procedure
  - Mid-term evaluation
  - End of term evaluation
- Plans for visiting service sites
- Plans to prepare members for Life after AmeriCorps

Manuals and Tracking Instruments
- Member handbook for each service location
- Member service agreement that includes all the required items in the grant Terms and Conditions
  - Position description
  - Term type and dates
  - Drug free workplace policy
  - Discipline, suspension, and termination policy
  - Grievance procedure
  - HS Diploma, equivalency, or agreement to obtain prior to using education award

Procedure to assure the program obtains the required documentation
- Signatures
- Health care enrollment/waiver
- Media/photo release
- Childcare benefit (as applicable)
- Tax forms
- Member's eligibility to serve

Public Outreach Plan
- Plan to increase awareness and educate the community about the program
- Program website and brochures
- Develop standard messaging about program that includes AmeriCorps and identifies as service

Sustainability Plan
- Plan for non-AmeriCorps, community volunteer generation
  - One time, Episodic and Reoccurring
- Plan for volunteer management, training, and tracking
- Current relationship with funders such as foundations and corporations
- Plans for the next three to five years
- Plans for the program to continue if AmeriCorps resources are cut

ServeMontana will work with planning grantees to complete objectives and progress reporting.

Thank you for your interest in an AmeriCorps Planning Grant!

End.