

2009 AmeriCorps Planning Grant  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

September 29, 2009 10:00 am and 4:00 pm

- Q: Please explain how the living allowance affects the budget.
- A: AmeriCorps Members serving in an operational program receive a living allowance (or stipend) while they are serving. An applicant must budget for the AmeriCorps Member living allowance. The AmeriCorps Member living allowance for the 2009-2010 year will be \$11,800. The AmeriCorps Member benefits chart can be found in the AmeriCorps operational grant application which is also located at [www.volunteerflorida.org](http://www.volunteerflorida.org).
- Q: How much are AmeriCorps Members paid through the living allowance?
- A: AmeriCorps Members receive a living allowance based upon the type of position in which they serve. For the 2009-2010 program year, full-time AmeriCorps Members are eligible to receive \$11,800 during a term of service. The AmeriCorps Member benefits chart can be found in the AmeriCorps operational grant application which is also located at [www.volunteerflorida.org](http://www.volunteerflorida.org).
- Q: How does the educational award work?
- A: The educational award is a post-service benefit received by the AmeriCorps Member upon completion of their service requirement. Applicants do not budget for the AmeriCorps Member educational award. The funding for AmeriCorps Member education awards is managed by the Corporation for National and Community Service Trust office. The Member receives a voucher upon completion of their service requirement that can be used at any college or university that accepts federal student financial aid. More information about the educational award can be found in the 2009-2010 AmeriCorps operational grant application at [www.volunteerflorida.org](http://www.volunteerflorida.org) and [www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org).
- Q: Are applicants required to budget for trainings during the planning grant period?
- A: There is no requirement to budget for trainings. Trainings are an allowed cost and can be budgeted if part of the planning process.
- Q: Is there a list of national health care providers available for members?
- A: Yes, many current programs choose to use a national health care provider because the cost is significantly less than using an agency's current health care plan. Volunteer Florida does not endorse any specific health care carrier. We will provide the contact information for national health care providers upon request.

- Q: Who is responsible for member recruitment?  
A: The lead agency (agency receiving the grant) is responsible for the entire management of the program, including recruitment of AmeriCorps members.
- Q: What are the match requirements for the planning grant and the AmeriCorps operational grant?  
A: There is a 24% overall match for both. The match can be cash and/or in-kind.
- Q: Are planning grants renewable?  
A: No, planning grants are funded for one year only.
- Q: Does an applicant have to budget for a minimum MSY when applying for a planning grant?  
A: No. MSY (member service year) is the number of full-time members (or the equivalent) for which an organization is applying. The number is used to calculate the total amount of funding an organization that is applying for an AmeriCorps operational grant is eligible to receive. Since planning grants do not include member costs, there is no need to budget for MSY.
- Q: Can retired professionals serve as AmeriCorps Members?  
A: Yes, AmeriCorps Member requirements include U.S. citizenship; a clear background check; be at least 17 years of age; and must possess a high school diploma or agree to work towards a GED during their year of service. Any current AmeriCorps lead agency may have more requirements but retired professionals are a great resource when considering potential AmeriCorps Members.
- Q: Is there any federal training money for a first year AmeriCorps program to assist with training members?  
A: There is no separate funding available to train AmeriCorps Members. Applicants may include the cost of member trainings as a part of their operational budget.
- Q: Should applicants provide letters of support or proof of partnerships already in place?  
A: No, applicants are required to submit their proposal using the federal eGrants system at [www.cns.gov](http://www.cns.gov). The system does not accommodate attachments and Volunteer Florida will not accept any additional information.

Q: What is the difference between direct and indirect costs, and should they be reflected in the budget?

A: Direct costs are those expenses directly related to the AmeriCorps program and its objectives. For example, costs associated with Member support and trainings are indirect costs. This can include but is not limited to: staff, supply and travel costs.

Indirect costs are necessary expenses but are not included in the direct management of the program (accounting, evaluation, payroll services). An applicant can budget up to 5% of the overall budget for indirect costs.

Q: Is there a specific definition of Community that an applicant should use?

A: No, an applicant should define their community as a part of their description of need in the narrative. A community could be a specific area, county, or region.

Q: Should an applicant include a logic model in the applications?

A: No. Logic Models are a great way to help develop your program design. However, the planning grant proposal is made of narrative only and the eGrants system can not accommodate attachments.

Q: Is the requirement to maintain 90% of AmeriCorps Members based on one year?

A: Yes, all AmeriCorps programs are expected to recruit and maintain 90% of AmeriCorps Members each year.

Q: If an applicant focuses on an area of service that is outside of the priority areas, will that negatively impact the application scoring?

A: No, each application will be scored on how well the proposal addresses the application prompts. Those applications addressing a national or state priority area will receive additional points. However, applicants not focusing on another priority area will not be scored lower.