FY 2020 AmeriCorps Planning Grant
Notice of Funding Opportunity: 2020 AmeriCorps Planning Grant

Due: Thursday, June 18, 2020, 5:00 p.m. ET

Proposals are submitted through Blackbaud Grantmaking, a web-based management system. The application and all supporting documents must be received by 5:00 p.m. ET on Thursday, June 18, 2020.

I. Background

Volunteer Florida, the Florida Commission on Community Service, was established in 1994 by the Florida Legislature to administer grants under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. Volunteer Florida is the Governor’s lead agency for volunteerism and national service in Florida, administering more than $43 million in federal, state, and local funding to deliver high impact national service and volunteer programs in Florida. Volunteer Florida promotes and encourages volunteerism to meet critical needs across the state. Volunteer Florida also serves as Florida’s lead agency for volunteers and donations before, during, and after disasters.

II. Grant Period

The grant period is a twelve-month period, anticipated to begin August 1, 2020 and end July 31, 2021. The contract period will be from the date of contract receipt through July 31, 2021.

III. Grant Overview

AmeriCorps is a national service program designed to improve lives and foster civic engagement utilizing AmeriCorps members in full or part time terms of service. Members commit their time to address critical community needs like increasing academic achievement, mentoring youth, environmental stewardship, responding to disasters, and more.

This grant opportunity is to support AmeriCorps Planning Grants of up to $75,000.00 each to be awarded to up to four eligible organizations. AmeriCorps Planning Grants offer a one year (12 month) period for an organization to develop an evidence based or evidence informed AmeriCorps program concept in response to COVID-19. Organizations receiving AmeriCorps Planning Grants are expected to submit an
application for operational AmeriCorps grant funding in the subsequent grant year.

CNCS and Volunteer Florida's legal authority to award these grants is found in the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, (NCSA) (42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.).
Commission Name: Volunteer Florida (Florida Commission on Community Service)
Federal Agency: Corporation for National and Community Service
CFDA Number: 94.006

IV. Program Description
AmeriCorps Planning Grants are awarded for the purpose of developing a future AmeriCorps program. Applicants are expected to apply for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle, 2021-2022. AmeriCorps members are not included in a Planning Grant award. All Planning Grants must propose a program design that aligns with one of the six CNCS identified focus areas:

- **Disaster Services.** Grant activities will provide support to increase the preparedness of individuals for disasters; improve individuals' readiness to respond to disasters; help individuals recover from disasters; and/or help individuals mitigate disasters.

- **Economic Opportunity.** Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people; improve financial literacy; transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing; improved employability and/or employment success.

- **Education.** Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved academic performance and attendance for economically disadvantaged students; improved academic engagement/social emotional skills; improved school readiness for young learners; improved educational and behavioral outcomes; improved high school graduation; increased entrance into postsecondary and/or earning a post-secondary degree.

- **Environmental Stewardship.** Grants will support responsible stewardship of the environment including programs that increase knowledge of environmental stewardship; conserve natural habitats; maintain public lands and/or improve
energy efficiency of housing.

- **Healthy Futures.** Grants will provide support for activities that will address the opioid crisis; improve independent living for seniors or persons with disabilities; increase food security; improve health knowledge or access to medical care.
- **Veterans and Military Families.** Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength.

V. **Eligibility**

The following non-federal entities (as defined in 2 CFR §200.69) that have DUNS numbers and are registered in System for Award Management (SAM) are eligible to apply: Institutions of higher education, Indian Tribes, Local governments, Nonprofit organizations.

- Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and System for Award Management (SAM)
  - Applications must include a DUNS number and an Employer Identification Number. The DUNS number does not replace an Employer Identification Number. Applicants can obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711 or by applying online at the DUNS Request Service.
  - After obtaining a DUNS number, all applicants must register with the System for Award Management (SAM) at www.sam.gov/SAM/ and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If an applicant is awarded a grant, it must maintain an active SAM registration throughout the life of the award.

VI. **Federal Funding Opportunity Alignment**

For reference purposes only, the 2020 AmeriCorps State and National Grants, Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), can be accessed [here](#).
VII. Volunteer Florida Anticipated Timeline

- May 11, 2020 - Release Volunteer Florida AmeriCorps Planning Grant Application
- May 20, 2020 (2:00 p.m.) - AmeriCorps funding application technical assistance webinar. To register go here.
- May 22, 2020 - AmeriCorps funding application FAQs posted here.
- June 18, 2020, 5:00 p.m. ET - Applications due in Blackbaud
- June 19, 2020 – July 3, 2020 - Application review
- July 9, 2020 - Clarification provided to applicants considered for funding
- July 16, 2020 by 5:00 p.m. ET - Revised AmeriCorps applications due in Blackbaud
- July, 2020 - Estimated notification provided to applicants awarded funding
- August 1, 2020 - Anticipated contract start date

VIII. Volunteer Florida Technical Assistance Webinar

Volunteer Florida staff will host a technical assistance webinar to provide applicants with an opportunity to ask questions and receive general feedback. Questions and responses from the technical assistance webinars will be posted in an FAQ document listed here.

Technical Assistance Webinars are scheduled as follows:
- May 20, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. ET – all applicants
  - To register for the webinar, please click here.

To ensure that this funding process is carried out in a fair and equitable manner, all questions concerning the application should be submitted to americorpsrfp@volunteerflorida.org.

IX. Resources

Volunteer Florida Available Grants (Application supporting documents, FAQs and other grant information) here.
Application Criteria: 2020 AmeriCorps Planning Grant Funding Opportunity

- Applicants are eligible for cost reimbursement grants only.
- Match is not required. Match will be required for a future operational grant, at 24 percent of the total award. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the cost reimbursement grants match requirements chart found on page 6 of the 2020 State and National Grants Notice of Funding Opportunity and 45 CFR §2521.60.
- Volunteer Florida’s internal application review will align with application criteria.
- Applicants must opt into an August 1, 2020 start date.

See below for Application Criteria:

I. Narrative

Respond to each of the following in the order in which the item is presented. The narrative must not exceed 5 pages. Applicants should provide a detailed response to all prompts.

A. Executive Summary

Fill in the blanks to complete the Executive Summary. Do not deviate from the template.

- The [Name of the organization] proposes to develop an AmeriCorps program through the planning grant process to serve in [the location(s) the AmeriCorps program will serve] that will focus on the CNCS focus area(s) of [Focus Area(s)]. No AmeriCorps members will be needed to execute this plan.

B. Program Design

Reviewers will access the quality of the applicant’s response to the following criteria.

- Need - Describe the need for an AmeriCorps Planning Grant.
  - Include relevant data supporting the need.
  - Include the challenges your organization has faced due to COVID-19 and how the Planning Grant will be used to address challenges.
- List the specific goals to be achieved through a Planning Grant.
- Describe your planning process including a monthly timeline for activities.
- Provide narrative description of how you will accomplish the Planning Grant
Deliverables including monthly timeline. Include a concise overview of proposed AmeriCorps program.

- Include community partners that will be involved and their role in the planning process.
- Describe how your planning process will help you develop an effective member management model including the recruitment, training, supervision and retention of AmeriCorps members.

C. Organizational Capability

Reviewers will access the quality of the applicant’s response to the following criteria.

- The applicant clearly explains how the planning process will enhance the capacity of their organization to administratively manage an AmeriCorps program.
- The applicant includes a description of the systems and processes developed for sound programmatic and fiscal oversight.
- The applicant details the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing the AmeriCorps planning grant.
- The organization has or will develop a monitoring and oversight plan to prevent and detect non-compliance and enforce compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities and criminal history checks at the subgrantee level and future service site locations.
- The organization has a culture that values learning. The applicant’s board, management, and staff collect and use information, including performance data, for learning and decision making.

II. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

Reviewers will assess based on the submitted budget uploaded in Blackbaud Grantmaking. No narrative is necessary.

- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors and proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award.
- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget is submitted according to the 2020 AmeriCorps Planning Grant Funding Opportunity Budget Instructions.
- The submitted request is equal to or less than the maximum allowed for a Planning Grant, $75,000.
Budget Instructions: 2020 AmeriCorps Planning Grant Funding Opportunity

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

- All the amounts requested must be defined for a particular purpose. Do not include miscellaneous, contingency, or other undefined budget amounts.
- Itemize each cost and present the basis for all calculations in the form of an equation.
- Do not include unallowable expenses, i.e., entertainment costs.
- Programs must comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and the requirements of the Uniform Grants Guidance. Please refer to the Uniform Grants Guidance (UGG) (2 CFR Part 200) for allowable, allocable, and reasonable cost information, as well as audit requirements. The UGG can be found online at http://www.ecfr.gov/.
- Reimbursement will be based on the State of Florida per diem and travel guidelines per FL Statutes 112.061, and must meet all requirements as listed, and provide all required documentation.

Section I. Program Operating Costs

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. All staff charged to the grant must have a completed, cleared three-part criminal history check.

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 can list each benefit individually and provide a percentage for each.
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. Staff Travel

- Describe the purpose for which program staff will travel. Provide a calculation that includes itemized costs for airfare, transportation, lodging, per diem, and other travel-related expenses, multiplied by the number of trips/staff.
- For the 2020 – 2021 program year, all funded programs will be expected to attend three trainings hosted by Volunteer Florida. Two individuals from organizations (representing program and finance duties) should attend each of the trainings. Programs should include travel costs in their proposed budget for each.
- Volunteer Florida adheres to State of Florida meal and per diem guidelines. They are as follows:
  - If the meal is provided at the hotel, training or included in the lodging room rate, the traveler cannot claim that meal for reimbursement. If the traveler does not eat the meal provided and purchases a meal, the traveler cannot request reimbursement for the purchased meal.
  - Overnight travel is required to claim meals. No meals for same day travel will be reimbursed.
- Volunteer Florida follows the State of Florida per diem rates and requires all programs to follow the requirements as stated in section 112.061, Florida Statutes. The maximum meal allowances are as follows:
  - Breakfast – Cannot exceed $6 per person. Depart before 6:00 AM. Travel beyond 8:00 AM.
  - Lunch – Cannot exceed $11 per person. Depart before 12:00 PM. Travel beyond 2:00 PM.
  - Dinner – Cannot exceed $19 per person. Depart before 6:00 PM. Travel beyond 8:00 PM.

D. Supplies

- Include the amount of funds to purchase consumable supplies and materials and list each item separately.
E. Contractual and Consultant Services
   • Include costs for consultants related to the project’s operations, except training consultants or trainers, who will be listed in Section F., below. There is not a maximum daily rate.

F. Staff Training
   • Do not enter costs in this line unless related to training consultants or trainer fees.

G. Other Operating Costs
   • Allowable costs in this budget category should include when applicable:
     o Three-part National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHCs) for all employees or other individuals who receive a salary, or stipend or similar payment from the grant. Please include the cost for these checks for staff or explain how your program will be covering the cost.
     o Office space rental for projects operating without an approved indirect cost rate agreement that covers office space. If space is budgeted and it is shared with other projects or activities, the costs must be equitably pro-rated and allocated between the activities or projects.
     o Utilities, telephone, internet and similar expenses that are specifically used for AmeriCorps project staff, and are not part of the organizations indirect cost allocation pool. If such expenses are budgeted and shared with other projects or activities, the costs must be equitably pro-rated and allocated between the activities or projects.

Section II: Administrative/Indirect Costs
Section II is comprised of the Corporation Fixed Amount (3%) and Commission Fixed Amount (2%). Section II cannot exceed 5 percent of the total CNCS Award. If you do not have a Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate, you will use the Corporation Fixed and Commission Fixed line items in the Budget Template. You will not use the Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate line item.

Administrative costs are general or centralized expenses of the overall administration of an organization that receives CNCS 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 Omni Circulars.

For organizations that do not have an established state or federal indirect cost rate, administrative costs include:

- Costs for financial, accounting, auditing, contracting or general legal services, except in unusual cases where they are specifically approved in writing by CNCS as project costs.
- Costs for internal evaluation, including the organization’s overall management improvement costs (except for independent evaluations and internal evaluations of a program or project).
- Costs for general liability insurance that protects the organization(s) responsible for operating a program or project, other than insurance costs solely attributable to the project.
- Costs of space, base utilities, and communication (telephone, fax, and Internet) that support administrative personnel.
- Administrative costs may also include that portion of salaries and benefits of the project’s director and other administrative staff not attributable to the time spent in support of a specific project. The principles that pertain to the allocation and documentation of personnel costs are stated in the OMB circulars that are incorporated in CNCS regulations [45 CFR 2541.220(b)].

A. The Corporation Fixed Amount includes 3% of the administrative costs that are incurred by the lead agency for administering this grant. These costs are reimbursable under this line item. The calculation for this section is the CNCS Section 1 Total X .0526 X .60.

B. The Commission Fixed Amount is the fiscal agent fee paid to Volunteer Florida for overseeing the AmeriCorps grant awards. Each program must allocate a minimum of 2% out of the 5% maximum as described above of the total CNCS award in their budgets to this line item. Volunteer Florida will draw the Commission Fixed Amount from each program based on the amount expended monthly. The calculation for this section is the CNCS Section 1 Total X .0526 X .40.
C. Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate

If the applicant has a Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate, this method must be used, and the rate will constitute documentation of your administrative costs, not to exceed the 5% maximum federal share payable by CNCS. Applicants using a Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate are required to provide a copy of the approved rate documentation with the Budget in Blackbaud Grantmaking.

- You will only use the Federally Approved Indirect Cost line item in the Budget Template.
- You will leave the Corporation Fixed and Commission Fixed lines empty.

You will need to specify the Cost Type for which your organization has current documentation on file, i.e., Provisional, Predetermined, Fixed, or Final indirect cost rate and supply your approved IDC rate (percentage) and the base upon which this rate is calculated (direct salaries, salaries and fringe benefits, etc.) If you choose to claim a lower rate, please include this rate in the equation for the calculation on the budget form.

- To calculate the CNCS Share for the Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate, determine the base amount of direct costs to which you will apply the IDC rate as prescribed by your established rate agreement (i.e., based on salaries and benefits, total direct costs, or other). You will then multiply the sum of the direct costs as determined above by .0526. This is the maximum amount you can claim as the CNCS Share of indirect costs.

Please note that the Commission elects to retain 2% of the 5% total of federal funds allowable. There is no separate line item to show this calculation.
Submission Instructions: 2020 AmeriCorps Planning Grant Funding Opportunity

I. Proposal Submission

A. Complete the steps outlined in this section to submit the AmeriCorps Planning Grant proposal via Blackbaud Grantmaking.
   - Use this link to create a new application: https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_2153?SA=SNA&FID=35552
   - To return to an 'In Progress Application' or view a previously 'submitted application', use this link: www.GrantRequest.com/SID_2153?SA=AM

B. Log in to the grants management system by either using an existing username and password or by creating a new username and password.
   - Existing sub-grantees: Insert your previously created username and password, then select ‘Login.’
   - New entities: Select “New Applicant?” insert e-mail, create password (must contain at least 5 characters, with both letters and numbers), and then select continue.

C. Once the username is created, the user will be prompted to log in to answer three (3) eligibility questions.

D. The user must enter the following information:
   1. Cover Sheet
      a. Organization Name
      b. Tax ID
      c. Duns Number
      d. CEO name, title, e-mail, and phone number
      e. Name, title, e-mail, and phone number of the person submitting the proposal
      f. Name and e-mail of fiscal contact
      g. Physical Address, Mailing Address, and Fiscal Address
   
   2. Project Demographics
      a. Project Name
      b. Cities and Counties Served
      c. Primary Focus Area
3. Proposal Narrative
   a. Complete the Executive Summary, Program Design, and Organizational Capability sections.

4. Budget
   a. Insert amount requested
   b. Name the completed budget document (e.g. AgencyABC_AC_budget) and upload it to Blackbaud Grantmaking
   c. Name the Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate documentation(e.g. AgencyABC_Indirect_Cost) and upload it to Blackbaud Grantmaking, if applicable.

5. Attachments
   a. Name and upload most recent audit report including the management letter and the schedule of findings and questioned costs
   b. Name and upload Provider Assessment Questionnaire
   c. Name and upload Certification of 60 Day Operating Capital
   d. Name and upload most recent agency wide YTD consolidated financial statement and balance sheet
   e. Name and upload Planning Grant Deliverables Timeline

6. Submission
   a. Check the box agreeing with the certification of content statement
   b. Insert electronic signature and date
   c. Select “Review and Submit”

7. Review My Applications
   a. Review the AmeriCorps Planning proposal
   b. Correct any problem(s) indicated in red then select “Update”
   c. Once completed, select “Submit” to submit the proposal for funding consideration
   d. If the proposal is not ready for submission select “Save & Finish Later”
E. Once the proposal is submitted, the user will receive an automated e-mail from Volunteer Florida with a copy of the submission and a tracking number. If no tracking number is received, the proposal was not submitted and the user should follow the above listed steps to submit.