



## volunteerflorida

### AmeriCorps Planning Grant – Application Guidance

AmeriCorps planning grants provide support to a grant recipient to develop an AmeriCorps program that will engage AmeriCorps members in implementing evidence-based interventions to solve community problems. Grant recipients are awarded up to \$75,000 for a 12-month planning period and are encouraged to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle. A planning grant may not be used to support AmeriCorps members. Applicants will apply for a Cost Reimbursement grant. The project period is no more than a year, with an anticipated start date of August 1, 2026. Applications must not exceed 5 double-spaced pages for the narratives. Please review the full [FY 2026 AmeriCorps Formula Funding Opportunity](#) for additional information.

#### **Application Instructions**

- A. Instructions for Submitting Applications (via AmeriCorps [eGrants](#) web-based management system). Instructions are based on the grant cycle and type of grant requested.
  - I. New Applicants:
    - i. New Applicants: After logging into the eGrants system, click “New” under “Creating an Application” box (in the lower left-hand corner of the page).
  - II. Cost Reimbursement Applicants
    - i. Cost Reimbursement applicants must select the following NOFA: FY 2026 AmeriCorps State and Territory Commission (New and Continuation).
    - ii. Cost Reimbursement applicants must select Florida from the state dropdown listing. Applicants should see that their application is linked to the Volunteer Florida Prime Application **Grant ID Number: 26AC280640**.
    - iii. All Cost Reimbursement applicants must include a detailed budget per the FY 2026 NOFO Application Instructions, [Attachment C, page 30](#). Please review the [FY 2026 AmeriCorps Formula Funding Opportunity](#) for budget guidance.
- B. Instructions for Supplemental Documentation (not submitted in eGrants)
  - I. Volunteer Florida Required Supporting Documentation is due by March 19, 2026 by 5 p.m. EST. Required supporting documentation varies depending on whether the applicant is submitting a new application, recomplete application, or a continuation application.
  - II. Supporting documentation, as specified below, should be electronically submitted through the Blackbaud Grantmaking platform. Click the following link to initiate your support documentation submission: <https://bbgm-apply.yourcausegrants.com/apply/programs/be73a652-7dd0-4b55-b682-20255af22066>.
    - i. New Applications
      - 1. The most recent Audit Report including the Management Letter and the Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs.
      - 2. Completed Provider Assessment Questionnaire [here](#).
      - 3. Certification of 60-day Operating Capital [here](#).
      - 4. Most recent agency-wide YTD consolidated Income Statement and Balance Sheet.

**Selection Criteria**

Each applicant must describe a how a project would deploy AmeriCorps members effectively to solve a significant community problem. The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization will receive funding.

Applications should include a well-designed plan with clear and compelling justifications for receiving the requested funds. Reviewers will assess the quality of applications by using the selection criteria described below.

Categories/Subcategories	Percentage
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Program Design</b>	<b>50</b>
• <b>Problem/Need</b>	20
• <b>Planning Process/Timeline</b>	30
<b>Organizational Capability</b>	<b>25</b>
• <b>Organizational Background and Staffing</b>	25
<b>Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy</b>	<b>25</b>

**Executive Summary (Required – 0 percent):**

Please fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary. Do not deviate from the template below.

The [Name of the organization] proposes a planning grant to focus on [what the community interventions will be.]

**Program Design (50 percent):**

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. Problem/Need (20 points)
  - The problem is prevalent and severe in communities where the program plans to serve and has been documented with relevant data.
  - The applicant provides a clear explanation for why a planning grant is needed.
  
2. Planning Process/Timeline (30 points)
  - The applicant reflects the [Volunteer Florida Planning Grant timeline](#) and describes a clear and logical planning process:
    - The applicant describes a detailed description of who is leading the planning process.
    - The applicant describes how the planning period will be used to develop the necessary components to effectively manage an AmeriCorps program in the future.
    - The applicant describes a detailed plan for program sustainability.
  - The planning process includes development of the following program elements:
    - Theory of Change/Logic Model
    - Intervention and evidence base
    - Member training and supervision plans



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- Program Compliance and Accountability
- Securing Match Support for the Program

### **Organizational Capability (25 percent):**

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

#### 1. Organizational Background and Staffing (25 points)

- The applicant describes how it has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan the proposed program.
- The applicant describes its plans to engage community members and partner organizations in the planning process.
- The applicant has sufficient policies, procedures, and controls in place to prevent, detect, and mitigate the risk of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, such as appropriate segregation of duties, internal oversight activities, measures to prevent timekeeping fraud, etc.
- The applicant describes the extent to which the organization has an effective mechanism in place to report, without delay, any suspected criminal activity, waste, fraud, and/or abuse to both the AmeriCorps Office of Inspector General and AmeriCorps and a plan for training staff and participants on these reporting protocols.

### **Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent):**

Reviewers will assess the quality of the application's budget to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

**These criteria will be assessed based on the budget submitted. Do not include narrative in the narrative box except for "See budget."**

#### 1. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 points)

- Budget complies with the Application Instructions document found here: [See Attachment C](#);
- Cost Reimbursement applicant meets match requirements. Applicant identifies sources in the Source of Funds section of the budget



**Performance Measures Instructions**

ALL FOCUS AREAS

**Notes**

- Should correspond to the primary focus area of the project being planned
- Targets for the output and outcome should be set as 1
- No MSYs or members should be associated with the performance measure

<b>Output</b>	Number of grantees engaged in a planning process
<b>Definition of Key Terms</b>	<b>Grantees:</b> recipients of AmeriCorps planning grants <b>Planning process:</b> activities outlined in the awarded grant application
<b>How to Measure/ Collect Data</b>	N/A

<b>Outcome</b>	Number of grantees that intend to submit an application for an AmeriCorps program grant
<b>Definition of Key Terms</b>	<b>Grantees:</b> recipients of AmeriCorps planning grants <b>AmeriCorps program grant:</b> single- or multi-state grant application for a program designed to enroll and place AmeriCorps members
<b>How to Measure/ Collect Data</b>	Self-assessment by planning grantee



**Appendix B: Performance Measures Checklist**

This checklist is used to assess performance measures during the review process. Items on the checklist are common problems that require resolution but do not represent a comprehensive list. Refer to the Performance Measure Instructions for full requirements.

Checklist Item		Primary Aligned Measure (required)
<b>Resource Allocation</b>		
1	MSY and member allocations to focus areas and objectives are zero*	
2	MSY and member allocations to the performance measure are zero*	
<b>Performance Measure Requirements</b>		
3	The application includes one applicant-determined performance measure connected to the primary focus area of the project being planned. <i>(For projects in the Capacity Building focus area, the performance measure should be connected to the Other Community Priorities focus area.)</i>	
4	The performance measure title is "Planning Grant"	
5	The output measure is "Number of grantees engaged in a planning process"	
6	The outcome measure is "Number of grantees that intend to submit an application for an AmeriCorps program grant"	
<b>Interventions</b>		
7	The intervention associated with the performance measure is "Plan an AmeriCorps program"	
8	The intervention description is "NA"	
9	No other interventions are included in the performance measure	
<b>Targets</b>		
10	Output and outcome targets are both 1	
11	The unit of measure for both output and outcome is "grantees"	
<b>Performance Measure Instructions</b>		
12	No National Performance Measures are included in the planning grant	
<b>Data Collection/Instruments</b>		
13	The data collection method is "Other"	
14	The instrument description for the output measure is "NA"	
15	The instrument description for the outcome measure is "Self-assessment by planning grantee"	

\* If you are unable to submit your application with 0 MSYs in the Performance Measure screens, enter 1 MSY and 1 member on the MSYs/Members tab