

**Washington Commission for National and Community Service
Bidders' Meeting – Spokane, Washington
October 21, 2009**

Frequently Asked Questions

FINANCIAL

Q. Can program income cover the local share of required match?

A. Yes. Program income is defined as gross income received by the grantee or subgrantee during the grant period directly generated by a grant supported activity or earned only as a result of the grant agreement. Grantees are encouraged to earn program income to defray program costs. A new grantee is required to match at 24% percent for the first three-year funding period. The match requirement can be met using a combination of cash and/or in-kind depending on how you build your budget. Starting with the second three-year cycle, match gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in 45 CFR 2521.60. For more information on program income refer to 45 CFR 2541.250.

Q. What are the correct Member Service Year (MSY) rates as there are differences in those rates on pages 28 and 33 of the RFGA?

A. The maximum amount of Corporation funds to support a full-time MSY is \$13,000. The amount stated on page 28 (\$11,800) refers to the minimum living allowance that may be paid to members serving in full-time positions.

Q. What indirect rate should we use if we have a rate approved by another federal agency?

If your organization has a federally approved indirect cost rate and chose to use it, the indirect cost will constitute documentation of your administrative costs including the 5% maximum payable with Corporation funds. The Corporation fixed rate allows you to charge administrative costs up to a 5% cap without a federally approved indirect cost rate and without documentation supporting the allocation. If you choose the Corporation's fixed price percentage you may charge 5% of the total Corporation funds expended. In order to charge the fixed 5%, the grantee match for administrative costs may not exceed 10% of all direct cost expenditures.

FIXED PRICE GRANTS

Q. In the fixed price cost model, do grantees have the ability to convert full time positions to less than full time after a member exits the program?

A. No. Applicants may only utilize full-time positions and slot conversions are not permitted.

MISCELLANEOUS

Q. How much flexibility does a grantee have in determining the program start and end dates?

A. The applicant proposes its desired start and end dates in its application; however the program start date may not occur prior to the award date. We anticipate that the Corporation for National and Community Service will announce the results of the competition in June 2010. Most programs in Washington state start between August and October.

Q. Has the prime application number been released and where do we find it?

A. Two prime applications are open for organizations interested in operating an AmeriCorps program in Washington state. Applications will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on November 16, 2009. The prime application number for a reimbursable AmeriCorps grant is 10AC107515 and the fixed amount grant prime is 10ES107517.

Q. What is the definition of a full-time member?

A. A full-time member is defined as one who completes a minimum of 1700 hours in a term of service of not more than one year as defined by the program.

Q. Is there a way to get copies of previously funded/approved AmeriCorps applications?

Yes. Please contact Brian Lock or Debbie Schuffenhauer. Refer to page 4 of RFGA 10-800 for contact information.

Q. Should the response to the RFGA exactly follow the outline for the various sections?

To ensure that you increase your likelihood of receiving the highest number of points during the grant application review process, we recommend that you address each element using the detailed outline provided in the application instructions. On occasion, this may mean duplication of information that was provided in another section of the grant application.

Q. How should applicants request technical assistance as they complete their application?

Staff are available to answer technical assistance questions related to the application instructions. Contact information for Brian Lock and Debbie Schuffenhauer is noted on page 4 of RFGA 10-800 or can be found by visiting our website at: <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/servewa/about/staff.asp>.

Q. How best do we state who the partners are in communities that are isolated and might have minimal number of partner agencies and organizations?

Typically a national service program is designed to address an unmet need in a community that would benefit from using service as a strategy. Therefore it is important to focus on the rationale and approach for the proposed program; member outputs and outcomes; and community outputs and outcomes. When providing information about potential community partners, clearly state the value that this partner will add to your program, your members and/or the community you intend to serve. The partnership should complement the program design and build upon local efforts without duplication.

Q. What types of background checks are required for AmeriCorps members?

National service programs are required to conduct: 1) a National Sex Offender Registry Check (NSOPR); and 2) either a State criminal registry check or an FBI fingerprint check. In addition, the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act requires that programs conduct all three checks (NSOPR, State, and FBI fingerprint checks) on individuals serving vulnerable populations (children under the age of 17, people over the age of 60, and individuals with disabilities). However, this additional requirement will come into effect two years after the enactment of the bill, but will not apply to:

- individuals whose access to vulnerable populations is episodic or for less

- than one day,
- organizations that are not authorized by State or Federal law to conduct an FBI check,
 - organizations for whom the checks will be prohibitively expensive, or
 - organizations that the Corporation exempts for good cause.

The Serve America Act directs the Attorney General to conduct a feasibility study on the efficiency and effectiveness of criminal history checks with an interim report due in six months and a final report due within a year of enactment. The report would examine, among other things, the availability, accessibility, and cost of the checks.

Q. Can an educational award application be combined with a fixed price grant application or does it need to be separate?

The concept behind these types of grant awards is the same, however applicants only seeking education awards can apply for up to \$800 per MSY from the Corporation and they use their own or other resources for the member's living allowance, if applicable, and program costs. For example, if you propose a program with 50 full-time members, the maximum amount of funds the Corporation will provide is \$40,000 (50 MSYs multiplied by \$800).

In the fixed price model, successful applicants will receive a fixed price per full-time MSY. Please note, as of November 3, 2009 the fixed price has not been announced by the Corporation as of November 3. This fixed price model includes Corporation funding to support a significant portion of the cost of operating an AmeriCorps program but there is no set match requirement for fixed price grants. For illustrative purposes, if the fixed price established by the Corporation was \$13,000 per MSY, your total grant award would be \$650,000 (50 MSYs multiplied by \$13,000).