

Responses to Questions for RFP#2019-01 AmeriCorps Formula Pool

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| Q1 | <p><b>1. We have an account on eGrants and when I signed on to see what all is entailed when submitting a planning grant under this opportunity I didn't find "New York State AmeriCorps 2019 Formula Pool" as an option to click and pursue.</b></p> <p><b>2. Which option do I need to pick and then continue as if the posted January deadline applies to this RFP which was issued on 3/29/2019 and is not due until 5/2/2019?</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| A1 | <p>“New York State AmeriCorps 2019 Formula Pool” is the title of the Request for Proposals (RFP). The two grants types (opportunities) that are applicable to this RFP in eGrants are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Cost Reimbursement Grant (Application ID: 19AC213522); and</li> <li>ii. Fixed-Cost Grant (Application: 19ES213523)</li> </ul> <p>Planning Grants are an available subtype of the Cost Reimbursement Grants. Please refer to the chart “Type of AmeriCorps Awards” on page 17 of the RFP for additional details. <u>Please disregard the January deadline in eGrants.</u> The <b>Deadline for Submission of Proposals</b> and <b>Deadline for Submission of New York State Supporting Documents</b> is May 2, 2019 by 4:49 p.m. Eastern Time as specified in Section 1.2 of the RFP.</p> |
| Q2 | <p><b>We currently host AmeriCorps members who serve with us for 10.5 months and usually work with 2-6 per year. Our questions is if this grant potentially provides funding to cover our annual cost for AmeriCorps members, which includes their monthly salary/stipend.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| A2 | <p>The Commission is not able to address this question directly due to insufficient information. Please see Section 4.1 B. Member Living Allowance.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Q3 | <p><b>My organization is the recipient of a multi-year AmeriCorps contract and will be submitting a continuation application for Year 3 of 3 of our contract term in response to this RFP. Are continuation applicants required to submit the New York State supporting documents listed in RFP Section 1.6 (OCFS-2633, OCFS-1634, Federal Assurances and Certifications, OCFS-4629, OCFS-3460, OCFS-2647, and Statement on Sexual Harassment) in addition to the continuation application through eGrants?</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| A3 | <p>Yes. <u>All applicants</u> are required to provide the New York State Supporting Documents in accordance with Section 1.6 of the RFP.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Q4 | <p><b>Where may I find the questions a planning grant needs to address? I have found questions from other states but not NY.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| A4 | <p>The criteria for planning grants is addressed in section 4. 1 and Section 5.1 of the RFP. Additional information can be found in the <b>Performance Measures Instructions for Planning Grant Applicants</b>, available <a href="#">here</a>.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Q5 | <p><b>Please confirm the allowed ‘Cost per MSY’ we can request.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. In the NYS RFP, Page 17 the cost is listed as \$16,000/MSY</li> <li>b. In the NOFO, Page 3 the cost is listed as \$15,192</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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| A5         | The cost per MSY for this RFP is at the discretion of the NYS Commission. Applicants may request up to a maximum of \$16,000/MSY (based on the type/subtype of their application) Section 4.1 section C. Maximum Cost per Member Service Year (MSY).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Q6</b>  | <b>Regarding Contract Start Dates, in the NYS RFP Calendar of Events the following dates are listed: Anticipated Contract Start Date- 9/1/2019 (Fall Educational Programs) and 11/1/2019 (All other programs). We are an ‘other’ program and have traditionally had a 15-month contract from Oct 1 through Dec 31 of the following year. Will we now have contracts running Nov 1, 2019 through Jan 31, 2021? Please confirm.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| A6         | For all programs other than fall education-based programs:<br>Continuation applicants receiving funding in response to this RFP will maintain their current contract start and end periods. (Section 2.4 Term of Contract).<br>For new and re-competing applicants, the first 15-month contract period for fall educational programs will have a start date no earlier than September 1, 2019 and will end no later than January 31, 2021. The first 15-month contract period for all other contracts will have a contract start date of no earlier than November 1, 2019 and will end no later than January 31, 2021 (RFP Section 2.4 Term of Contract) |
| <b>Q7</b>  | <b>What is the definition of an “educational program”? – Section 2.4, “Terms of Contract”</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| A7         | The definition of an educational program is found in Section 4.1.G of the RFP.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Q8</b>  | <b>Is the Commission at liberty to inform a potential applicant whether or not they are considered an “educational program” or not, when asked? - Section 2.4, “Terms of Contract.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| A8         | No, the Commission cannot inform a potential applicant whether or not they are considered an “educational program.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Q9</b>  | <b>The RFP does not have a section that instructs interest applicates to showcase a community need/problem, outside of the logic model, compared to prior RFPs. Was it the intention of CNCS/the Commission to purposely leave this out? – Section 5.1, Criteria for Operating Grant, Page 27</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| A9         | The Community Need section was removed by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) in its 2019 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for AmeriCorps grants. While there is no longer a standalone section, Community Problem/Need is discussed in various sections of the RFP.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Q10</b> | <b>Where should the need/community problem be argued/explained if there is no section to describe the need/community problem? – Section 5.1, Criteria for Operating Grant, Page 27.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| A10        | See answer A9.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Q11</b> | <b>What are the key differences between Formula Funding/awards and Competitive Funding/awards?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| A11        | They are distinct federal funding sources for which there are two independent procurements. Formula funding is used for NYS priorities and Competitive funding is used for CNCS priorities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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| Q12 | <p><b>The Application Instructions instructs interested applicants to “Please add \$54 plus the cost of the state check for criminal history checks for each covered position in the CNCS share of the budget” – Application Instructions, Budget Instructions, Page 10</b></p> <p><b>Can applicants budget a higher amount per member that will cover all necessary costs of the required NSCHCs, or do they need to explicitly list “\$54” plus the costs of state checks?</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| A12 | <p>Yes. Applicants can budget a higher amount per member as long as it’s inclusive of the estimated \$54.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Q13 | <p><b>Leveraging volunteers: Are AmeriCorps members required to leverage volunteers to participate in the same program / intervention as the members are placed? For example, could an AmeriCorps volunteer leverage volunteers to provide clerical or program assistance to an organization’s program not affiliated with AmeriCorps activities?</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| A13 | <p>It depends on the specific program design. The Commission is not able to address this question directly due to insufficient information. Please be advised that <a href="#">AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities</a> state that time charged to the AmeriCorps program is prohibited from providing direct benefits to certain types of organizations which include, but are not limited to, for-profit businesses.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Q14 | <p><b>Regarding Evidence Base:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. In responding to the Evidence Tier section of Evidence base, are we required to indicate at which evidence tier we fall?</b></li> <li><b>2. In providing citations, are these included as an attachment or are they included as part of the narrative? Are citations included as part of the 10 page maximum.</b></li> <li><b>3. We are proposing to implement an evidence based intervention that has been in place for over 30 years. As such, there are limited new studies published in peer reviewed journals that are re-studying the intervention. We are able to provide research reports from other organizations, but these are not peer reviewed. Can you clarify how this type of evidence would be viewed within the context of Evidence Quality?</b></li> </ol> |
| A14 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No, Applicants are not required to identify an evidence tier as part of an application. Please see section 5.1 of this RFP.</li> <li>2. Per section 5.1, of the RFP: “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.”</li> <li>3. No, the Commission cannot provide guidance on how the narrative in a particular application would be reviewed. See Section 5.0.1.B.2 of the RFP and the <a href="#">2019 AmeriCorps State &amp; National Mandatory Supplemental Guidance</a> for additional information about evidence.</li> </ol>                                                                              |

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| Q15 | <p><b>Evaluation Report:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. We are an existing program that is required to submit an Evaluation Report of our last program cycle. However, the evaluation conducted was not conducted on the evidence-based intervention itself, but rather on the impact of AmeriCorps members in the EBI. We want to ensure that the Evaluation Reports is not used as part of the assessment of Evidence Tier or Evidence Quality for this new Formula application. Can you provide guidance on how to assure this?</b></li> <li><b>2. On RFP p.32, the rfp states that the Evaluation Report is reviewed based on whether it meets CNCS requirements and is of satisfactory quality. Can you provide us with guidance regarding what CNCS requirements are concerning the presentation of Evaluation Reports?</b></li> </ol> |
| A15 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Commission cannot provide guidance on how the narrative in a particular application would be reviewed.</li> <li>2. CNCS evaluation policies are located at <a href="#">this website</a> which includes the federal regulations for evaluation requirements.</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Q16 | <p><b>This is a question regarding the RFP Section 2.4 Term of Contract which states that: "Continuation applicants receiving funding in response to this RFP will maintain their current contract start and end periods."</b></p> <p><b>We are currently in the final year of a competitive grant which runs from 8/1/18-10/31/19. Would we be able to maintain our current start and end periods?</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| A16 | <p>Any applicant who receives an award under this RFP must comply with Section 2.4 of the RFP, Term of Contract.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Q17 | <p><b>On page 18 of the NYS AmeriCorps 2019 Formula Pool RFP it appears that you are accepting New Applicants and Planning Grant applications. Yet when we follow the instructions in the eGrants system, we cannot select a planning grant – the only available selections we see are for Tribes, which we are not.</b></p> <p><b>The College would like to submit a planning grant application as a new applicant. Will we be able to apply? And, if needed, will we be able to get technical assistance to help us navigate this point in eGrants?</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| A17 | <p>Please see A1. Planning grant is one of the subtypes under Cost Reimbursement Grant. Yes, the Formula RFP is currently open for sub applications. For eGrants technical assistance help, please contact the <a href="#">eGrants Help Desk</a>.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Q18 | <p><b>Do Volunteer hours count toward Match?</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| A18 | <p>It depends on the type of volunteer services provided, please see <a href="#">this website</a> and the website listed in A21 from CNCS for additional guidance.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Q19 | <p><b>Can the contract reflect/be amended to accommodate our season (1 February -31 January)</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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| A19        | No, all contract periods must be 15-month in duration with start and end dates in accordance with RFP Section 2.4 Term of Contract.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Q20</b> | <b>What are the dates for mandatory conferences/training?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| A20        | These dates have not been set for 2019-2020. They will be announced to all grantees and posted on the Commission's website once finalized.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Q21</b> | <b>Can and EPF grant awarded through the CFA be used as match?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| A21        | The Commission is not able to address this question directly due to insufficient information. Other Federal funds may be used as match under certain circumstances; please see Section 4.1 E of the RFP.                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Q22</b> | <b>Can a RTP grant, awarded through the CFA be used as match?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| A22        | Please see A21.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Q23</b> | <b>What is the font type and size used by e-grants?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| A23        | The eGrants system is a proprietary electronic system managed by CNCS directly, and has a predetermined font type/size. We strongly recommend applicants enter their narrative into eGrants and print out a copy as early as possible, in order to check their printed application against the page limit. eGrants provides page numbers on the printed application. |
| <b>Q24</b> | <b>New applicants can not submit to Fixed Amount, correct? per page 18</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| A24        | New applicants that have never received AmeriCorps funding are NOT eligible to apply for Full-Time Fixed-Amount grants (Section 4.1 of the RFP).                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Q25</b> | <b>It is NYS funding priorities OR Commission's priorities. So we don't need to do both to receive up to 5 points, correct?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| A25        | Yes, that is correct. An applicant may be eligible to receive up to five (5) bonus points for addressing <u>any</u> New York State <u>and/or</u> Commission funding priorities. (Section 5.2 of the RFP).                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Q26</b> | <b>What is the Commission's requirement on Evaluation Plan and Evaluation Summary?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| A26        | The Commission is fully adopting CNCS's evaluation policy and requirement in this RFP. Please see A15 for additional details.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Q27</b> | <b>I submitted an application to the REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS RFP # 2018-19 New York State AmeriCorps 2019 Competitive Pool, and was not funded. May I apply for 2019 Formula Pool funding under this RFP?</b>                                                                                                                                                          |
| A27        | Yes. If you applied for 2019 AmeriCorps Competitive Funding through the NYS Commission and were not funded, you may now apply for Formula Funding through the REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS RFP# 2019-01 New York State AmeriCorps 2019 Formula Pool                                                                                                                         |

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|  | <b>Additional Resources:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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|  | <b>eGrants – National Service Hotline Contact</b><br>Website: <a href="https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask_eg">https://questions.nationalservice.gov/app/ask_eg</a><br>Phone number: 1-800-942-2677                                                                                                         |
|  | <b><u><a href="#">2019 AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity</a></u></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Best Practice in Demonstrating Evidence</li><li>2. Best Practice in Development Performance Measures</li><li>3. Best Practice in Budget Development</li></ol>                                    |
|  | <b><u><a href="#">CNCS Planning Grant Instruction</a></u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|  | <b>CNCS Evaluation Resources &amp; Training</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <a href="#">Evaluation Core Curriculum Courses</a></li><li>2. <a href="#">Best Practice in Demonstrating Evidence</a></li><li>3. <a href="#">Evidence Exchange</a></li><li>4. <a href="#">CNCS hosted webinars</a></li></ol> |
|  | <b>Commission Informational Meeting Session Recordings</b><br>(please see section 1.3 of the RFP) <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <a href="#">Programmatic Informational Meeting Session</a></li><li>2. <a href="#">Technical Informational Meeting Session</a></li></ol>                                    |