AmeriCorps 201:
What you need to know

Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (2007)

Learning Objectives:

1. **Planning your program**

2. **Planning your budget**

3. **Program requirements**

4. **Next steps**

Objective 1:
Planning Your Program

Member Service Activities: Allowable Activities

- "Direct service activities that will advance the goals of your program … that will result in a specific identifiable service or improvement that otherwise would not be provided" (45 CFR §2520.25)

- "Capacity-building activities that advance your program's goals" (45 CFR §2520.30)
  - Up to 10% of time may be spent fundraising (45 CFR §2520.40)

- Must be included in, or consistent with, your approved grant application

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Examples of Allowable Direct Service Activities (45 CFR §2520.25)

- Tutoring children in reading
- Helping to run an after-school program
- Engaging in community clean-up projects
- Providing health information to a vulnerable population
- Providing relief services to a community affected by a disaster
- Conducting a neighborhood watch program as part of a public safety effort

Examples of Allowable Capacity-Building Activities (45 CFR §2520.30)

- Strengthening volunteer management and recruitment

- Conducting outreach and securing resources in support of service activities that meet specific needs in the community

- Helping build the infrastructure of the sponsoring organization

- Fundraising

- Developing collaborative relationships with other organizations working to achieve similar goals in the community

Requirement to Recruit & Support Volunteers (45 CFR §2520.35)

- Some component of your program that is supported through the grant must involve recruiting or supporting <u>non-AmeriCorps volunteers</u>.

- If this requirement would constitute a fundamental alteration to your program structure, it may be waived in response to your written request for such a waiver in the grant application.

Prohibited Activities
(45 CFR §2520.65)

- Attempting to influence legislation

- Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;

- Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing

- Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements

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Prohibited Activities (cont.)

- Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office

- Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials

- Helping to register people to vote

Prohibited Activities (cont.)

- Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization

- Providing a direct benefit to a business organized for profit, a labor union, a partisan political organization, a non 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, or an organization engaged in religious activities, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities

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Members vs. Employees
(45 CFR §2540.100)

- **Supplantation**:
  - ❑ Grants may not be used to replace State and local public funds that had been used to support programs of the type eligible to receive Corporation support

- **Nonduplication:**
  - ❑ Corporation assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program

Members vs. Employees (cont.)
(45 CFR §2540.100)

- **Nondisplacement**:
  - Grants may not be used to provide services and activities that could otherwise be performed by employed workers or that will supplant the hiring of, or result in the displacement of, employed workers in the community
  - An organization may not displace a volunteer with an AmeriCorps member
  - A service opportunity for a member cannot be created if it will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual
  - Members cannot perform the duties of a former employee or a current employee that is on leave or is on strike/locked out

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Objective 2:
Planning Your Budget

Sections of the Budget

- **Section I: Program Operating Costs**
  - Staff costs, travel, equipment, training, etc.

- **Section II: Member Costs**
  - Living allowance, FICA, healthcare, etc.

- **Section III: Administrative/Indirect Costs**
  - Costs to operate the organization not directly attributable to the program
  - Cannot exceed 5% of total Corporation funds actually expended under this award.

Matching Funds
(45 CFR §2521.35-2521.90)

- **Member Support Costs** (Section II)
  - ❑ Federal share must not exceed 85%
  - ❑ Grantee share must be non-federal cash

- **Program Operating Costs** (Sections I & III)
  - ❑ Federal share must not exceed 67%
  - ❑ Grantee share could be cash or in-kind

Member Benefits
(45 CFR §2522.240-2522.250)

- **AmeriCorps educational awards**
  - Provided 100% by the National Service Trust – not part of the grant
  - Used to finance future education or to pay off qualified student loans
  - $4,725 for full time; pro-rated for part time
- **Living allowance**
  - Allows members to meet certain costs of living while serving in the program
  - Maximum Corporation share is 85%
  - Not required for education award grants and less than full time positions
  - Minimum $11,400 per year for full time (1,700 hours)
  - Pro-rated for less than full time

Member Benefits (cont.)

- **Childcare** (45 CFR §2522.250)
  - Program must provide child care assistance to qualified full-time members
  - Assistance may be through an eligible provider or a childcare allowance
  - Corporation will pay 100% of the allowance or cost of care at eligible provider, whichever is less
- **Healthcare** (45 CFR §2522.250)
  - Program must provide health care coverage to all eligible full time members
  - Coverage must meet minimum standards determined by the Corporation
  - Corporation share must not exceed 85%

Other Costs to Consider:

- **Programs responsible for:**
  - Member training
  - All aspects of member recruitment and management
  - Member orientation
  - Program-related travel
- **Costs should be written into the budget**

Minimum Number of MSY's

- **MSY = Member Service Year**
  - Equivalent to one full time term of service over the course of the year (1,700 hours)

- **Minimum number of MSY's that can be requested in grant application is ten (10)**

Possible Terms of Service in MSY's

- **1 Full Time Member = 1 MSY**
  - 1,700 hours of service

- **1 Half Time Member = 0.5 MSY**
  - 900 hours of service

- **1 Reduced Half Time Member = 0.375 MSY**
  - 675 hours of service

- **1 Quarter Time Member = 0.25 MSY**
  - 450 hours of service

- **1 Minimum Time Member = 0.2 MSY**
  - 300 hours of service

Cost Per MSY (45 CFR §2522.485)

- Requested amount **may not exceed $12,600 per MSY**

- Example:
  - XYZ Organization is awarded 10 MSY's, which it will use for 10 full time AmeriCorps members
  - The maximum amount they can receive from the Corporation would be:

    10 MSY's x $12,600 = $126,000

  - This amount **does not** include the education award nor childcare costs, which are provided separately from the grant.
  - This amount **does** include member support costs, program staff salaries, overhead, travel costs, etc.

Staffing Suggestions

- This is <u>not</u> a program that could easily be absorbed into the duties of current staff

- We recommend **at least** one person charging 90% of their time to the grant as a program director/manager

- We recommend that the program director and the fiscal manager not be the same person

- Depending on the size of the program, other staff might be beneficial as well

Objective 3:
Program Requirements

Program Development Assistance and Training

- Approximately 4-6 all-day seminars planned over the course of the program year
  - Address important topics relevant to AmeriCorps program management
    - Performance measurement
    - Member recruitment and retention
    - Financial management
    - Program sustainability
    - Program updates, clarifications, reminders
    - Etc.
- All programs required to be represented

Programmatic Reporting

- **Progress Reports**
  - ❑ Due quarterly
  - ❑ Member data (slots filled, hours served, etc.)
  - ❑ Volunteer data (volunteers recruited by program, hours served, etc.)
  - ❑ Progress on performance measures
  - ❑ Great stories
  - ❑ Challenges and significant program changes

Financial Reporting

- **Periodic Expense Report (PER):** due monthly
  - Program Operating Costs for month
  - Member Costs for month
  - Administrative Costs for month
  - Broken down into grantee share (match) and CNCS share

- **Financial Status Report (FSR):** due quarterly
  - Computed from PER's
  - Information merged automatically from last three PER's

Performance Measures
(45 CFR §2522.500-2522.650)

- All grantees must establish, track, and assess performance measures for their programs

- All grantees must ensure that any program under their oversight fulfills performance measure and evaluation requirements

- Each application must include a minimum of one set of aligned performance measures
  - Includes one member output, one intermediate outcome and one end outcome

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Example of a Set of Aligned Performance Measures

TutorCorps AmeriCorps Tutoring Program:

- **Output:** Number of students that participated in a tutoring program

- **Intermediate-Outcome:** Percent of students reading more books

- **End-Outcome:** Number and percent of students who have improved their reading score to grade level

Types of Performance Measures

- **Community-Focused**
  - *Needs and Service Activities*
    - Examples: tutoring, building homes, running after-school programs, etc.
  - *Community Strengthening*
    - Examples: developing volunteer programs in a community; engaging residents in community development efforts, etc.

- **Member-Focused**
  - *Participant Development*
    - Examples: increasing member civic engagement, providing members with technical training, etc.

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Evaluation (45 CFR §2522.500-2522.540 and §2522.700-2522.740)

- Evaluation is a more in-depth, rigorous effort to measure the impact of programs

- Programs receiving more than $500,000 in federal funds (other than EAP) must arrange for an **independent evaluation** of the program

- Programs receiving less than $500,000 in federal funds and EAP grantees must arrange for an **internal evaluation** of the program

- OFBCI will cover the costs of the evaluation for certain grantees through a contractor

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Performance Measurement Vs. Evaluation

- **Performance Measurement**:
  - ❑ Annual snapshot of program progress
  - ❑ Used for monitoring and accountability
- **Evaluation**:
  - ❑ Covers at least one year
  - ❑ More in-depth, rigorous effort to measure process and/or impact
  - ❑ Uses scientifically-based research methods
  - ❑ Compares program outcomes with what would have happened in the absence of the program

Internal vs. Independent Evaluation

- **Internal Evaluation**:

  - Performed "in house" with the assistance of someone knowledgeable about evaluation

- **Independent Evaluation**:

  - Conducted by an independent expert (or experts) external to the program/organization

Objective 4:
Next Steps

Interested in Applying for Funding?

- Take the organizational readiness assessment, which can be found at www.ofbci.in.gov.

- Watch the website for the issuance of the Request for Proposals (RFP).

- Join the OFBCI mailing list: info@ofbci.in.gov

- Attend a technical assistance session to be conducted at various locations around the state to learn how to fill out the grant application.

- Contact OFBCI with further questions.

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Useful Links:

- **Performance Measurement/Evaluation:**
  - http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/resources/online_pubs/perf_meas/ac_home.php

- **Budget and Other Resources:**
  - www.ofbci.in.gov – click on "AmeriCorps"

- **AmeriCorps Regulations:**
  - http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/manage/index.asp

- **Our Website:**
  - www.ofbci.in.gov

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For More Information:

Other questions: call OFBCI at
(317) 233-4273 or send an email to
RFP_FAQ@ofbci.in.gov