Introductions

1. Name
2. Organization
3. Experience with AmeriCorps
   - none
   - less than a year
   - 1-3 years
   - more than 3 years
4. Experience with writing AmeriCorps grant
   - none
   - written one full grant
   - only done a continuation grant
   - I am an old hat

Agenda

Understanding AmeriCorps

Focus Areas

- Disaster Services

- Economic Opportunity

- Education

- Environmental Stewardship

- Healthy Futures

- Veterans and Military Families

Disaster Services

- Increase the preparedness for disaster

- Improve readiness to respond to disasters

- Help individuals recover from disasters

- Help individuals mitigate disasters

Economic Opportunity

AmeriCorps

- Help economically disadvantaged people
- Enhance financial literacy
- Transition into or remain in affordable housing
- Improve employability

Education

📖 Improve educational outcomes or school readiness for economically disadvantaged children

📖 Improve educational & behavioral outcomes for students in low-achieving schools

📖 Support economically disadvantaged students in post-secondary institutions

AmeriCorps

Healthy Futures

🍴 Improve access to primary & preventative health care

🍴 Increase seniors' ability to remain in their homes

🍴 Increase physical activity & improve youth nutrition

Veterans and Military Families

AmeriCorps

★ Positively impacts veterans' quality of life and improves military family strength

★ Connecting veterans to volunteer service opportunities

★ Mentorship and tutoring for military children, legal assistance, affordable housing, health care, counseling, and more

AmeriCorps Guiding Principles

Get Things Done
Focused Impact and Activities
Evidence-Informed

Member Experience
Member Development
Encouraging Responsibility
Expanding Opportunity

Strengthen Communities
Volunteer Integration
National Days of Service
Inclusion and Diversity
Bringing people together

Brand and Corps Identification
Integrating the A
Understanding the Larger Identity
Building the Corps

Understanding AmeriCorps Funding

Funding Dollar Pools

- Competitive
  - National Competition for dollars that are available at the federal level
  - Application is typically due in January of each year
- Formula
  - State competition for dollars that are available from each State Commission (Serve Washington)
  - Application timelines vary
    - Washington State Funding Announcement will be released in February

Application Types

- New
- Re-compete
- Continuation
- Planning Grant

Who is Eligible

- Eligible Entities
  - Nonprofit organizations
  - Schools or Districts
  - Higher Education
  - Government Agencies
  - Indian Tribes

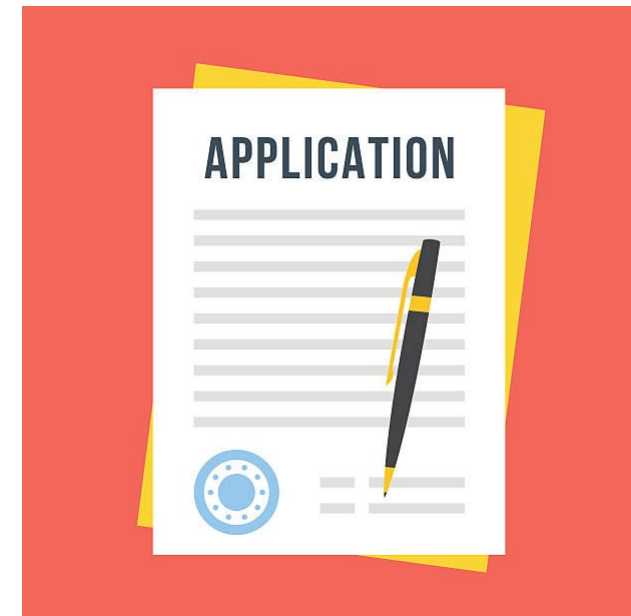# AmeriCorps Application Fundamentals

Grants

Grant Notice Documents

- Notice of Funding Opportunity (RFGA)
- Application Instructions
- Performance Measure Instructions
- Mandatory Supplemental Information
- Evaluation Plan Template

Training Opportunities

- AmeriCorps Technical Assistance Webinars:
  - https://www.americorps.gov/partner/funding-opportunities
- Serve Washington Technical Assistance Webinars
- On3Learn Courses - https://on3learn.digitalchalk.com
  - On3Learn Applicant Courses
    - Is Our Organization a Fit?
    - Understanding the Application and Narrative
    - Logic Model
    - Performance Measures
    - Budget
  - On3Learn Staff Courses
    - Budget Part 1
    - Budget Part 2
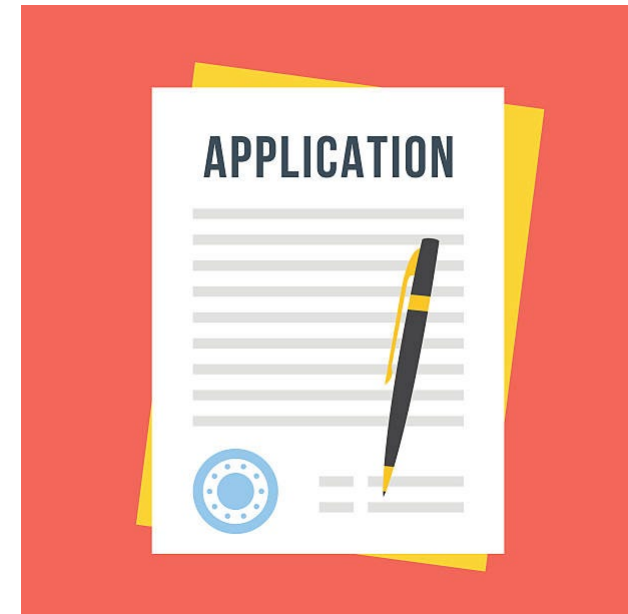
SAM registration and eGrants

SAM AND UEI

▶ MUST have an active registration and Unique Entity Identifier

▶ https://sam.gov/

▶ Can take several weeks to receive

▶ Organization name and address must match exactly as it is in eGrants.

eGrants

▶ MUST have an account to apply

▶ https://egrants.cns.gov

▶ Click "Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account"

Application Elements

Within eGrants

- Narrative
- Logic Model
- Performance Measurements
- Budget
- Source of Match Funds
- Required funding demographic, program information, and document status

Outside eGrants:

- Operational and Financial Management (OFMS) Survey
- Additional Documents, as applicable

Applicant Info
Application Info
Narratives
Logic Model
Performance Measures
Program Information
Documents
Budget Section 1
Budget Section 2
Budget Section 3
Funding/Demographics
Review
Authorize and Submit

Additional Documents and Submission Requirements

Potential Additional Documents:

▶ Evidence documents referenced in the Evaluation section of the narrative

▶ Labor Union Concurrence, if applicable

▶ Evaluation Plan, if applicable

▶ Evaluation Report, if applicable

Each additional document must be labeled in a specific way and have in the heading specific details

Other Submission Requirements:

▶ Operational and Financial Management (OFMS) Survey – submitted online

    ▶ You can download a pdf version in advance and complete it for yourself before the online submission - https://americorps.gov/sites/default/files/document/2025-01/2025_1_7_OFMS_Survey_Viewable.pdf

    ▶ Recommend you take a screenshot of confirmation page

▶ Serve Washington requirements, as applicable.

Understanding the Review Process

Review Audience

- "Peer" Reviewers
  - Don't know your program
  - Likely not experts in your focus area
  - Review solely based on criteria
  - Don't always read all of the elements
  - Human beings that are reading many grants at one time so are prone to error and missing things
  - Despite criteria, interpretation plays a role

Reviewer Roles and Responsibilities

Evaluate the quality of the applications based on criteria provided in the Notice of Funding Opportunity and Score Sheets

RESPONSIBILITY
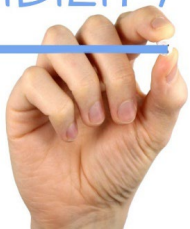
Scoring

Narrative

▶ Based on the criteria and what was requested in each section

Logic Model

▶ Based on the criteria and what was requested in each section

▶ Does it read well left to right and right to left

▶ Is it plausible, reasonable

▶ Does it convey a strong theory of change

Performance Measures

▶ Does it follow the requirements and rules outlined in the PM instructions

▶ Does it follow the checklist that is included in the instructions

Budget

▶ Based on the criteria and what was requested in each section

▶ Are there any errors, non-compliant budget items, concerning costs or non-costs

Does each item provide the required and requested detail?

Are there any red flags?

Are there any items that require clarification?

Would you recommend this program for funding based on what was provided?

Page and Character Limits

- Narrative*
  - Up to 10 pages as it prints in eGrants
- Logic Model**
  - Up to 8 pages as it prints in eGrants
  - Each row cannot exceed 4,000 characters (includes spaces)
- Performance Measures**
  - 2,000 characters max per section (includes spaces)
- Budget
  - Position/Title and Purpose fields – 180 characters (includes spaces)
  - Calculation field – 250 characters (includes spaces)

*please note that if your narrative exceeds the page count, reviewers will not read those sections and your score will be a "0"

**please note that if you exceed the character limit, you will not get a warning and the text will not be included

Before You Begin

Recommended Steps

1. Read the NOFO and associated documents in their entirety (maybe twice)

2. Talk to your partners and internal staff about ideas, strengths of the program, and/or growth opportunities for next year

3. Assess what did and did not work well and what impact that might have on what you submit in the grant application

4. Create or secure templates for each of the elements (narrative, logic model, performance measures, budget)

5. Take On3Learn courses, listen to past recordings of AmeriCorps T/A calls, or take advantage of future AmeriCorps or State Commission sponsored training sessions
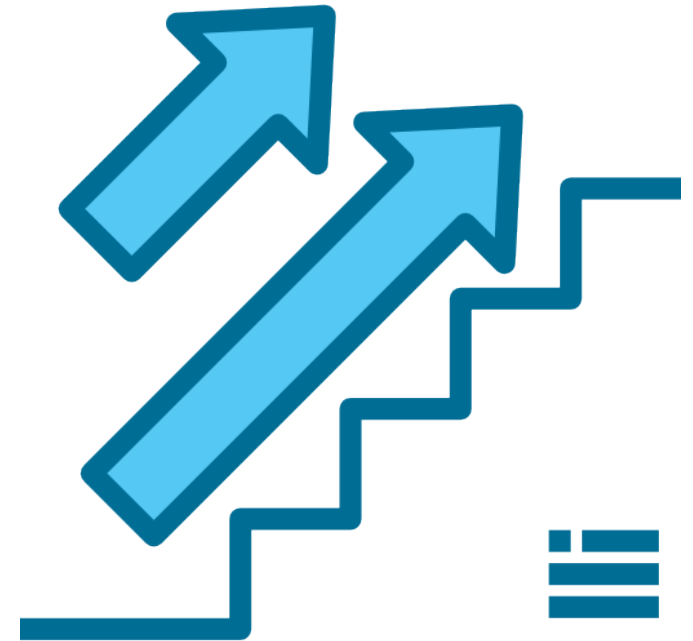
As You Write

Communicating My AmeriStory

➤ Program Design/Theory of Change (AKA Community and Logic Model in the AmeriCorps Application):

  ➤ 2 pieces that are reviewed for the full points

    ➤ First section of the Narrative; and

    ➤ Logic Model Document

Writing Tips - Narrative

► Create a template based on the NOFO sections and criteria, with Clear and Accurate Area and Section Headings

► Use active voice

► Avoid jargon and technical language

► Be clear and concise

► Avoid Parroting – simply stating in your application that you will do the criteria and not providing details

Writing Tips - Narrative

▶ Don't write things that sound more like they are just inserted to serve as a check off of one of the AmeriCorps priorities versus being integral to program design and outcomes

▶ Provide details, data, information

▶ Check your spelling, especially with the word **AmeriCorps**

▶ Do things in word, google doc, or some other sharing system – NEVER, EVER do things directly in eGrants.

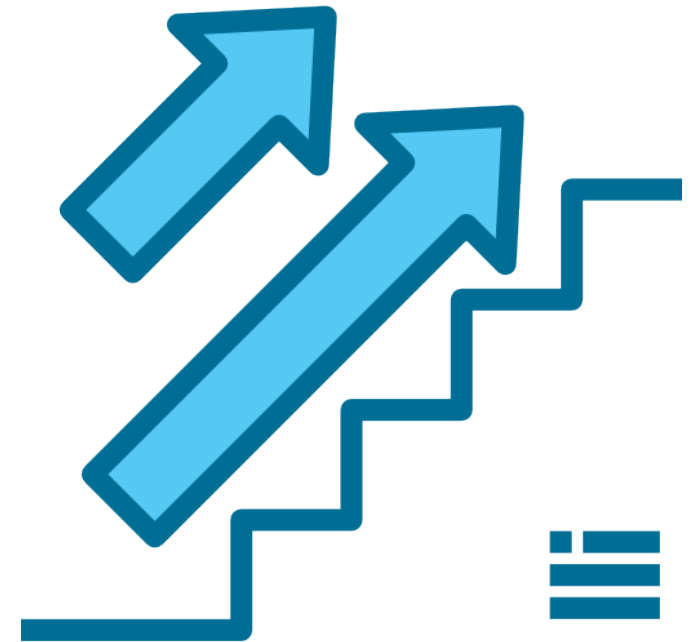▶ Just put your thoughts on paper without worrying about page limits

As You Approach the Deadline

Recommended Steps

▶ Ask others to review with a critical eye

▶ Test page and character limits

▶ Complete a checklist to ensure all elements are done and are high quality

Member Activities

Allowable Activities

Activities that are consistent with the approved **grant narrative**, **logic model**, **performance measurements**, program documents, **budget**, and larger national priorities.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

▶ Entering into eGrants at the last minute

▶ Failing to follow instructions i.e. page limits, formatting, additional documents, etc.)

▶ Submitting incomplete applications

▶ Overlooking the importance of proofreading and editing

eGrants Recommendations

- Make sure SAM Registration information EXACTLY matched your eGrants Information

- Always start with documents in Word or Excel

- Enter content into eGrants a minimum of 1 week prior to the due date – the earlier the better

- Test page counts early for narrative and logic model - YOU WILL HAVE TO CUT!

Understanding the AmeriCorps Budget

AmeriCorps

People Grant

VS.

Money Grant

Budget vs. Program Year

Budget Period – 12 months

Program Year – AmeriCorps Members Service Term

Program Budget vs. Grant Budget

Program Budget

All expenses necessary to run a high-quality AmC program

Grant Budget

A subset of your program budget. Doesn't include the entire program budget to keep match low.

Budget is a Team Effort

Agency Leaders/ Department Heads

Accounting Staff/ Department

HR Staff/ Department

Site Staff

Application

Grant Closeout

Grant Implementation

Budget Development

▶ Member costs – living allowance, health care (as applicable), FICA, workers comp/AD&D, Member Assistance Program (MAP)

▶ Compliance Costs – NSCHC costs, member gear, NOFO required budget line items.

▶ Technology – timekeeping, reporting, staff cell phones, laptops, etc.

▶ Staffing

▶ Training (Staff, Members and Sites)

▶ Site Development and Monitoring

▶ Outreach and Recruitment (Staff, Sites and Members)

▶ Retention

▶ Data Collection and Evidence Building

Training Series Calendar

Monthly Call	Pre-Work
Wednesday, 2/5 – 11 am PT	AmeriCorps Grants and Budget Development 101
Wednesday, 2/19 – 11 am PT	Communicating Your Program Design (Narrative, Logic Model/Theory of Change)
Wednesday, 3/5 – 11 am PT	Performance Measures and Evaluation
Wednesday, 3/19 – 11 am PT	Budget Nuts and Bolts

Questions