



AmeriCorps Planning Grant Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is an AmeriCorps Planning Grant?

An AmeriCorps Planning grant is a grant awarded by Volunteer NH to eligible organizations wishing to spend up-to a year developing an AmeriCorps Program. After the Planning Grant year, organizations are expected to apply for an AmeriCorps Program grant.

2. What is the difference between an AmeriCorps Planning Grant and an AmeriCorps Program Grant?

An AmeriCorps Program Grant is awarded to organizations to operate an AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps Programs place at least 10 members in one or more sites in New Hampshire to do unique and valuable service activities (typically for a period of 10-12 months).

A Planning Grant is given to organizations that want to apply for and operate an AmeriCorps program but need the time to develop it. It is a smaller amount of funding and no members are awarded in this grant.

3. What activities would Planning Grantees spend the year doing?

Typical planning grantee activities include:

- Determining the most appropriate AmeriCorps member activities to address the identified community need.
- Determining the desired characteristics of AmeriCorps members and designing a recruitment strategy.
- Developing a performance measurement system to ensure that reliable data is gathered to demonstrate impact on the communities to be served.



- Creating a process for selecting operating and service sites (if applicable) that will ensure the most appropriate and capable organizations are selected.
- Planning orientation and training for operating and service sites (if applicable).
- Planning orientation and training for AmeriCorps members.
- Ensuring you have the ability to provide or secure effective technical assistance (if applicable).
- Creating required AmeriCorps documentation templates.

4. What types of expenses would a Planning Grant cover?

Examples of allowable costs include:

- Staff time to be devoted to planning grant activities (e.g. holding stakeholder meetings, contacting potential host sites, reporting on progress) and associated fringe benefits
- Hiring a contractor to help with outreach to communities and potential host sites, research the specific need in areas, etc.
- Staff travel (for Planning Grant-related activities)
- Stakeholder meeting costs – including space, supplies, and facilitators
- Other support costs specifically allocable to the planning grant (i.e. supplies, printing, etc.)

5. What types of expenses would a Planning Grant NOT cover?

Planning grant funds cannot be used to carry out regular program activities or costs incurred for existing organizational programs – the sole use of funds must be to design an AmeriCorps program.

Examples of NON-Allowable Costs include:

- Hiring a contractor to do general marketing of your organization



- Buying supplies for general use for your organization

6. What types of organizations are eligible to receive an AmeriCorps Planning Grant?

As written in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, eligible organizations include:

- Institutions of Higher Education
- Local & State government agencies
- Nonprofit organizations

7. What other eligibility requirements are there?

Organizations wishing to receive an AmeriCorps Planning Grant must:

- Be registered in www.SAM.gov
- Fall under one of the six AmeriCorps Focus Areas and/or one of Volunteer NH's Funding Priorities (unless otherwise allowed).
- Have reviewed financial statements or a Single Audit (or be willing to comply with this requirement by the time the applicant applies for an AmeriCorps program grant).
- Be able to match funds at 24% (cash or in-kind).
- Intend to create an AmeriCorps program that provides service in New Hampshire.

8. How do we know whether our organization has the capacity to apply for a Planning (and eventual Program) Grant?

Organizations should assess the following:

- Whether the organization has paid staff members that have the time to devote to the grant activities.



- Whether the organization has previously managed a state and/or federal grant (*though not a requirement, it is helpful for organizations to have experience with this type of funding*).
- Whether the organization has internal or external staff dedicated to financial operations.
- Whether the organization has sufficient cash-flow to operate on a reimbursement-basis.

Be aware that even if your organization may not have the capacity to administer an AmeriCorps grant, it is allowable for the organization to find a fiscal agent to conduct those operations for them.

9. How do I know if the program we want to develop is the right fit for an AmeriCorps program?

Organizations should consider the following when deciding whether a project would be the right fit for an AmeriCorps program:

- Whether your proposed program would address a significant community need or problem and be backed with data and statistics that show there is a significant need/problem.
- Whether your proposed program will be able to identify a set of performance measures and have a data collection process to assess performance.
- Whether the proposed program is entirely new or an expansion of an existing program (*rather than wanting to fill current open volunteer and/or employee slots, which not allowable*)
- Whether the activities you would want AmeriCorps members to do would duplicate or displace already existing volunteer/employee activities (*this is not allowable*)



- Whether the program could potentially offer unique and valuable service activities to at least 10 full-time (1,700-hour) members for a period of 10-12 months.
- Whether the service activities can be performed by members who are at least 17 years of age.
- Whether the organization intends the program to be sustainable past a year.

10. Our organization's office is located in another state. Can we still apply?

Yes. However, the AmeriCorps program being developed must be intended to operate in New Hampshire. Should the planning grantee successfully apply for an AmeriCorps Program grant in the future, Volunteer NH requires that the organization have an office located in New Hampshire as well.

11. What is the maximum funding amount for a Planning Grant?

Volunteer NH will not award more than \$75,000 for an AmeriCorps Planning Grant.

12. What is the term of a Planning Grant?

A Planning Grant is awarded for no more than one year. Typical Planning Grants start in July, unless otherwise requested.

13. What are other expectations of Planning Grantees?

Planning Grantees will:

- Need to provide the contact information of at least two people in the organization. One will need to be the staff that conducts financials.



- Be able to communicate timely with VNH staff (including responding to emails and requests for clarifications)
- Attend required meetings and trainings throughout the year.
- Be able to submit financial and programmatic reports.

14. Who should I reach out to if I have a question?

If you have a programmatic application question, please reach out to Senior Program Officer, Andrea Johnston (andrea@volunteernh.org) and cc Program Officer, Emily Planchet (emily@volunteernh.org).

If you have a budget or financial question, please reach out to Finance and Grants Officer, Lesley Rossi (lesley@volunteernh.org).

15. What are some trainings I can do to learn more about what an AmeriCorps Program is?

To learn more about AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps State programs, you can go to the AmeriCorps website: <https://www.americorps.gov/partner/how-it-works/ameri-corps-state-national>

To watch webinars about AmeriCorps and its specific program requirements, go to www.On3Learn.com. (We specifically recommend the [AmeriCorps 101 webinar](#)). Contact VNH to download webinars for free.