AmeriCorps Planning Grant Overview

AmeriCorps: What Is It?

AmeriCorps (*previously known as "The Corporation for National and Community Service" or "CNCS")* is the federal agency tasked with **elevating service and volunteerism** in America.

AmeriCorps

Pronounced: "Ameri – CORE"
NOT "Ameri – corpse"

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AmeriCorps: What What Does It Do?

Leads **National Days of Service** (*including the 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance and Martin Luther King Jr. Day*)

Provides **Volunteer Generation Fund Grants** in order to promote skilled volunteerism

Helps **connect individuals and organizations** to help communities tackle their toughest challenges

Provides grants to fund programs such as AmeriCorps State, AmeriCorps VISTA, and AmeriCorps Seniors

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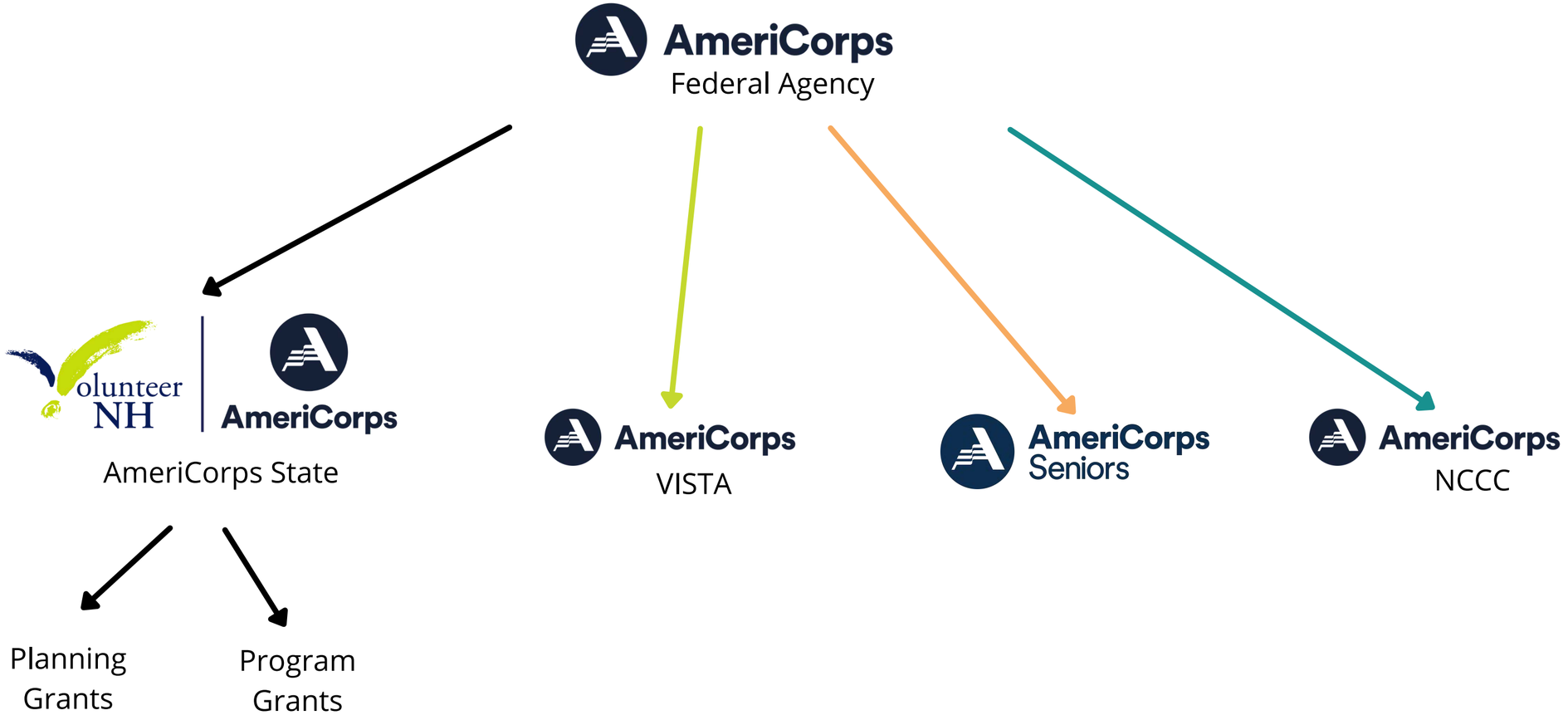
AmeriCorps Focus Areas

AmeriCorps has identified **six areas** that most (but not all) programs fall under.

Disaster Services	Economic Opportunity	Education
Environmental Stewardship	Healthy Futures	Veterans & Military Families

What are the Types of AmeriCorps Programs?



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Volunteer NH Priority Areas

As New Hampshire's State Service Commission, Volunteer NH is also able to choose specific areas of need to focus funding and other initiatives on. Below are the priority areas from 2023-2025 (identified through public input).

Affordable Housing

Food Security

Mental Health

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Planning Vs. Program Grants

Planning Grants

Planning grants are awarded to eligible organization to spend up-to one year to develop (and apply for) an AmeriCorps Program

Activities could include:

- Solidifying member activities
- Creating a recruitment strategy
- Finalizing program partners and host sites
- Identifying sources of match funding
- Developing a training and data collection plan

Used to develop

Program Grants

Program grants place members in service in New Hampshire location(s) to make an impact on a particular community need.

Service Activities:

- Direct service (i.e. where members are directly working with the beneficiaries of service)

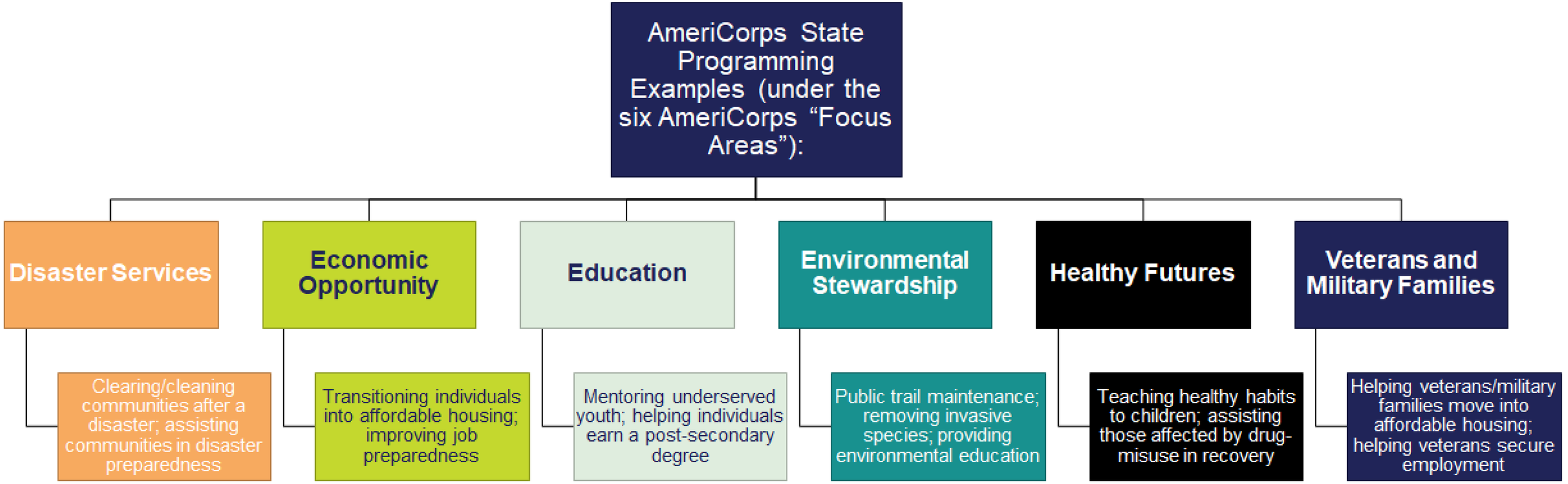
Cohort Size

- Volunteer NH generally expects a program to have at least **10 members**.

Member Hour Requirement

- Depending on the program model, members must serve anywhere from **100 hours to 1,700 hours** in the space of 3-12 months.

AmeriCorps State Program Activity Examples



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Prohibited & Unallowable Activities

While AmeriCorps programs have the flexibility to do many different types of service activities, there are many things that AmeriCorps members and staff are NOT able to do (or recruit volunteers to do for them).

You can view a full list in the 45 CFR § 2520.65

- **Engage in partisan political activities**
- **Engage in religious instruction**
- **Provide a direct benefit to a for-profit**
- **Provide abortion services**
- **Lobbying**
- **General fundraising**
- **Duplicating or displacing existing volunteers or staff**

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Planning Grant Requirements

Organization Eligibility & Capacity Requirements

- **Organization Type:**
  - Institution of Higher Education
  - Local/State Government
  - Nonprofit

- **Fiscal Requirements:**
  - Be able to supply 24% of the overall budget as match
  - Have an annual audit or independently reviewed financial statements (*or be willing to fulfill this requirement before applying for a program grant*)
  - Have adequate internal fiscal policies and controls in place.
  - Be able to operate on a monthly reimbursement basis.

- **Other Requirements:**
  - Be willing to provide adequate staffing to the grant
  - Be able to communicate timely with Volunteer NH staff.
  - Be registered in Sam.gov before receiving the grant
  - Have office space in NH (or be willing to obtain it before receiving a Program Grant)

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AmeriCorps Project Requirements

When considering applying for an AmeriCorps Planning Grant, your organization should ask the following questions:

- Would the program we want to develop have unique and valuable service activities for members?
- Would the activities I want AmeriCorps members to do already done by existing staff/volunteers?
- Would the program have enough activities for 10+ members to serve full-time for 10-12 months?
- Would the program I want to develop be sustainable past one year?
- Would this program be in direct responsible to a pressing community need? Could I support this need with relevant data?
- If we eventually receive a program grant, is my organization willing to contribute the financial and staffing resources necessary for compliance?

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A Note on the Planning Grant Budget…

- **Maximum Amount:**
  - **$75,000**

Allowable Budget Items:

- **Staff Time** (*existing staff or hiring a new staff*) to work on Planning Grant activities such as
  - Holding stakeholder meetings
  - Contacting potential host sites
  - Creating template member documents
  - Writing progress reports
- **Hiring a contractor** to help with planning grant activities
- **Staff Travel** (to planning grant-related meetings, etc.)
- **Stakeholder Meeting Costs**
- **Other Support Costs** (supplies, printing, etc.)
- **Administrative Costs** (please note this is limited to 5% of the federal share)

NON-ALLOWABLE Budget Items

- **AmeriCorps Member Costs**
- **General Organization Expenses**
- Anything **not directly related** to planning grant activities (*as outlined in your application)*

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Next Steps

If your organization is ready to seek funding, here are your next steps:

1. **Read the Notice of Funding Opportunity** (*if not released yet, read last year's)*
2. Submit a Concept Paper
3. If Concept Paper is approved, submit a full application in eGrants (*make sure to read the Application Instructions you will receive carefully)*
4. If your application is approved, your Planning Grant will most likely start in late summer/early fall.

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Questions? Concerns? Want to Talk Over a Possible Idea?

Programmatic Questions:

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Fiscal Questions:

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