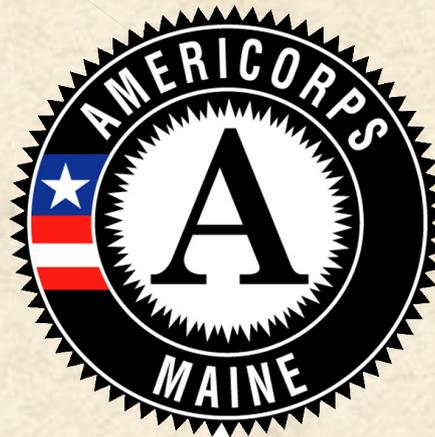




WELCOME TO
THE INTRODUCTION OF

Maine Rural AmeriCorps Grants



March 2017

What This Session Covers

- What is AmeriCorps
 - > Differences between branches of AmeriCorps
- AmeriCorps purpose
- AmeriCorps program/project design
- Unique traits of Maine Rural AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps Basics



What is AmeriCorps?



- ◎ It is a National Service program
 - > Created by Congress in 1993
National and Community Service Trust Act
 - > Funded through the Corporation for National and Community service (a federal agency)
 - > Each year engages over 75,000 Americans in community service
 - > Focus → direct service to meet critical needs and permanently improve situation
 - > Be the domestic Peace Corps



What is AmeriCorps?

- 3 related branches
- Each has a distinct mission
 - > AmeriCorps NCCC – disaster response, relief and in “peace time” community projects
 - > AmeriCorps VISTA – alleviate poverty by developing organizations (indirect service)
 - > AmeriCorps State/National – direct service & capacity building





AmeriCorps State

- Directly serve clients/students/residents.

Examples

- > Teach classes
- > Organize community gardens
- > Train home child care staff
- > Winterize or repair homes, community buildings
- > Conduct financial literacy programs
- > Do health assessments





AmeriCorps State

- AND build capacity.
Examples

- > Implement volunteer management
- > Conduct volunteer training
- > Recruit local residents to volunteer
- > Serve alongside volunteers, teaching them the AmeriCorps members' job
- > Connect with partners who share the vision/mission of grantee agency



AmeriCorps State



○ AmeriCorps Members

> Serve in teams

- You can't have "just one"
- Normally must have at least 20 members
- **Rural AmeriCorps – min 2 and max 5**

> They have a common work plan

- Every Member works on the same goal
- Service activities the same regardless of the setting
- Activities are from a model solution proven to change situation



AmeriCorps State



- > Requires implementation of all volunteer management practices
 - Members have role descriptions, applications, background checks, orientation, terms of service, training, supervision, time reporting, etc.
 - Service is documented – how much accomplished, for who, when
 - Resources used recorded – cash or in-kind, supplies or people or service
 - Agency has or develops policies on volunteer engagement
- > Commission technical assistance and training helps grantees develop volunteer management capacity



AmeriCorps State

> Services focus in specific areas

- What federal law allows:
 - Economic Opportunity
 - Healthy futures
 - Education
 - Public Safety (including Disaster Services)
 - Environmental Stewardship (includes housing)
 - Veterans Services

> Each grant competition highlights a subset

- Federal award selection → federal priorities
- State award selection → state priorities





AmeriCorps State

- > **Economic Opportunity means**
 - Grants support and/or facilitate
 - access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people;
 - help economically disadvantaged people to have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy;
 - transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing; and/or
 - have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed.





AmeriCorps State

- > **Disaster Services means**
 - Grants support and/or facilitate service that
 - increases preparedness of individuals for disasters,
 - improves individual readiness to respond to disasters,
 - helps individuals recover from disasters, and/or
 - helps individuals mitigate disasters.



AmeriCorps State



> Environmental stewardship means

- Grants supports service that
 - increases individual behavioral change leading to increased energy efficiency, renewable energy use, and ecosystem improvements particularly for economically disadvantaged households and communities.
 - decreases energy & water consumption;
 - improve at-risk ecosystems; and/or
 - increase green training opportunities that lead to employment in related fields.



AmeriCorps State



> Healthy Futures means

- Grants supports service that
 - improves access to primary and preventive health care for communities served by CNCS-supported programs;
 - increases seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible; and/or
 - increases physical activity and improve nutrition in youth with the purpose of reducing childhood obesity.



AmeriCorps State



> Education means

- Grants support service that contributes to
 - improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children;
 - improved school readiness for economically disadvantaged young children;
 - improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or
 - preparing economically disadvantaged students for success in post-secondary educational institutions.





AmeriCorps State

- > **Veterans and military families means**
 - Grants support service that
 - positively impacts the quality of life of veterans and improves military family strength;
 - increases the number of veterans, military service members, and their families served by CNCS-supported programs; and/or
 - increases the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through CNCS-supported programs.



Maine Rural AmeriCorps Program and Grants



Maine Rural AmeriCorps

◎ Purpose

- > Develop the capacity of private nonprofit & public agencies in rural Maine to
 - engage community volunteers in their mission-related work
 - bring AmeriCorps resources to bear on local needs
- > Develop organizations' abilities to balance
 - 1) implementing an evidence-based service activity that measurably improves issue
 - 2) building internal capacity to meet local demand for services
 - 3) managing pro bono human resources.





- Maine Rural AmeriCorps
 - > Capacity building is highest priority
 - > Equally important, need must be priority to the community
 - > **All** federal priority areas considered
 - > Proposed service to meet local need must be allowable under federal requirements

Questions

Use chat box to submit or raise hand and unmute

A Closer Look:

AmeriCorps Design





- Operate through grants made to local organizations
 - > Eligible entities must have EIN
 - Public agencies – municipal, county
 - Private nonprofit agencies
 - School districts and higher ed institutions
 - Faith-based organizations
 - > May only operate a program in Maine
 - > Maine Rural AmeriCorps
 - This must be the first AmeriCorps grant
 - Must have at least 1 employee who will devote time to AmeriCorps
 - Must be physically present in community
 - Grant award is for 2 years; start 9/1/2017





◉ Service targets need or problem in a community

- > Goal → measurably improve situation
- > Impact on a specific geographic area, target population

◉ Service is “evidence based”

- > Proven to work by research or evaluation
- > Model promoted by expert on the topic
- > Implement in your locale “with fidelity” meaning “without tinkering with model”

◉ Community consultation

- > Those who will benefit help design it
- > Community advises during implementation
 - Provides feedback on what's working
 - Reviews assessments, results
 - Helps build connections, resources





- ◎ Grantee organization is ready
 - > Leadership supports goals, methods, and engaging AmeriCorps members
 - > Other employees support and will welcome AmeriCorps members and volunteers
 - > Local resources are real not “hoped for”

- ◎ Able to track effectiveness with national performance measures
 - > Pick from national menu of paired outputs and outcomes
 - > Follow instructions provided by CNCS for measuring
 - > Assess 3 aspects of impact:
 - service activities – how things improve
 - community capacity – local volunteer growth
 - member development – what members learn





- Can articulate a theory of change
 - > Has a strong understanding of community status in terms of addressing the need
 - At the 50 yard line? In opponent's end zone?
 - Everyone in agreement or still debating?
 - > Describes why this service activity is the right one for the current status
 - > Describes what will change and by how much as a result of AmeriCorps effort
 - How far down the field can you move the ball towards your goal of solving the problem



- Plan is so well thought out, it fits into a logic model
 - > End goal is clear
 - > Short-term + intermediate outcomes known
 - > Activity types & amounts to accomplish outcomes are known
 - > Resources needed for activities are at hand

- ◉ What an AmeriCorps grant provides

- > Authorized AmeriCorps member slots (positions)
- > Funds to support the Members
 - Federal agency annually sets a maximum per-member amount



- ◉ What local sources provide

- > Funds for other aspects of program operations

- ◉ AmeriCorps helps with *personnel*

- ◉ Budget flexibility

- > If local donors prefer to support the members, AmeriCorps funds can cover supervision, training, etc.





◎ Budget flexibility example

- > Local resources cannot cover Members but will cover other expenses

	AmeriCorps	Local Share	Total
Member support	\$\$\$\$		
Project director/ Member supervisor		\$\$\$\$	
Member travel		\$\$\$\$	
... other (phone, internet, training, supplies, etc.)		\$\$\$\$	



○ Budget flexibility example 2

- > Local resources prefer to cover Members but are not able to cover other expenses

	AmeriCorps	Local Share	Total
Member support		\$\$\$\$	
Project director/ Member supervisor	\$\$\$\$		
Member travel	\$\$\$\$		
... other (phone, internet, training, supplies, etc.)	\$\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$	

○ Difference from being a AmeriCorps host site

- > No cost share paid to another agency.
- > You budget to fit your circumstances



◎ Possible sources of local share

- > Local share makes up 30% of total project budget.
- > Local share is a mix of cash and in-kind.
 - Cash = any expense paid with organizational cash; if not match on another grant can be
 - an allocation of someone's time
 - a portion of indirect
 - supplies, copying, technology, space
 - other items used to deliver service
 - Will need \$500 per member to cover support costs not covered by AmeriCorps funds
 - In-kind = expenses covered by third party such as waived training fees, housing if members come from another community, supplies donated for service effort, etc.



NOTE: Housing isn't a requirement. Just an idea.

○ Some local share options in proposal for 2 AmeriCorps members

- > Local share total at this size - \$13,830
- > *These are just ideas to start your thinking.*



Item	Calculation	Total
Member support	About \$500/pp cash needed for expenses not covered by AC funds	\$1,000
Supervision – allocate part of existing staff	25% of staff person whose wage is \$30,000 and benefits/taxes are 20% for total \$36,000/yr (10 hrs/wk working with or advising members)	\$9,000
Indirect	Only 5% of AmeriCorps funds can go to indirect.* Under federal rules, the difference can be allocated as match. So your agency indirect is 15%, the 10% not claimed on AmeriCorps goes under match.	\$1,383
Space (if not part of indirect)	\$7/sq foot including utilities X 100 sq ft	\$ 700

Questions

Use chat box to submit or raise hand and unmute

Adding Resources:

AmeriCorps Members



- ◎ A “regular” AmeriCorps program

- > Member service terms have 5 options:

- 1700 hours completed in 1 year;

- 900 hours finished in 1 year;

- 675 hours

- 450 hours

- 300 hours

- Any terms could be 40 hrs/wk but most shorter ones require only a few hours/week.

- > Living allowance only provided if serving 40 hrs/wk.

- ◎ **Maine Rural AmeriCorps**

- > Member terms → 1,700 hrs **only**

- > At 40 hrs/wk, term lasts min. 43 weeks

- > Supported by living allowance and benefits



◎ Maine Rural AmeriCorps model

- > Minimum size is 2; maximum size is 5
 - Everyone must serve full-time, 1700 hours



◎ “Member development”

- > Equivalent to professional development of staff.
 - Orientation and training -- onboarding
 - Training on skills, knowledge for task (20 % of time)
 - Education or training that will improve Member understanding of issue, agency, community context
 - Helping member document performance



◎ AmeriCorps Members

- > Commit to term of service
- > Member service agreement
 - Rolls into one document requirements and details
- > Member position description is like volunteer role description
 - Term of service
 - Qualifications, Skills, Knowledge, Abilities (essential and preferred)
 - Duties or responsibilities; daily hours and location; etc.
- > Benefits
 - for full-time: living allowance, health coverage, child care
 - forbearance on payment of student loans; trust pays interest accrued
 - on successful completion, <\$5,815+ Education Award



○ AmeriCorps Members

- > Are recruited, selected, supervised, and evaluated by the grantee agency
- > Receive training to perform all the service activities at the start as well as during their terms
- > As a result of reflection activities organized by program, develop an ethic of service and civic responsibility



If age 55 or over, have the option to transfer the Ed Award (\$5,500 +) to their child or grandchild

Questions

Use chat box to submit or raise hand and unmute

Recap:

Maine Rural AmeriCorps



Rural AmeriCorps Grants

DESIGN

- 2 -5 AmeriCorps members only
- Members serve only full-time (1700 hrs)
- Only serve with one agency – no sharing
- Year 1 – implement volunteer services & systems
- Year 2 – undertake organizational capacity building thru expanded volunteer engagement
- May apply for one additional rural AC grant

ELIGIBILITY

- Never had an AmeriCorps grant
- Has EIN (established organization)
- Currently has physical presence in county or community to be served
- Has at least 1 employee with time to devote to AmeriCorps program
- Municipal, nonprofit, higher ed, county

Rural AmeriCorps Grants

FINANCES

- Award: \$13,830 X 2 members or \$27,660
- Amount is each year for 2 years
- Local share – cash + in-kind mix
 - > 30% of total grant budget
 - > Cash is report of agency funds or project donations used for program (supervision, space, indirect rate)
 - > In-kind resources (training, supplies donated, etc.)

EXAMPLE

PREFERENCES

- Any rural area
- Preference points for very rural counties*:
 - > Aroostook, Washington, Hancock
 - > Waldo, Lincoln, Knox
 - > Piscataquis, Oxford, Franklin, Somerset

*USDA rural-urban continuum codes 6, 7, or 8

Rural AmeriCorps Grants

PROJECT EXPENSES

MEMBER EXPENSES

- Living Allowance and Required Expenses: (sample – varies slightly by grantee) **\$14,245 tot.**
 - > \$ 12,630 Living Allowance/Stipend
 - > 966 FICA (paid to aid in earning quarters)
 - > 250 Accidental Injury/Death Insurance
 - > 360 Health Coverage estimate – this varies with Member's personal situation
 - > 39 Background check (fed. regulation)

- Determined by program design:
 - > Member training
 - > Member travel related to service activity
 - > Program supplies (curriculum, tools, wood, dirt, ...)
 - > Facilities (office, program activity, ...)
 - > Program director and member supervisor
 - > Staff travel for program and state training (6X/yr)
 - > Indirect
 - > Etc.

Questions

Use chat box to submit or raise hand and unmute

Questions submitted earlier

- ✓ If your organization has multiple projects it operates on a statewide level and has hosted AmeriCorps in the past, would that project be eligible?

An organization that has hosted AmeriCorps members in the past but has not had a grant would be eligible. The design of this project would need to focus on a community. If the agency has multiple projects and a statewide reach, it should consider a regular AmeriCorps grant application in Fall 2017 or 2018.

Questions submitted earlier

- ✓ Under the USDA Continuum Code our county is classified as a 2. However the area meets Rural Development requirements through HUD. Is the rural designation determined at a county level?

This grant program uses the USDA Rural-Urban Continuum Code which is based on counties. No area is excluded from applying but the preference points will only be awarded to proposals from counties with codes of 6, 7, or 8.

Questions submitted earlier

- ✓ Does VISTA count as a previous AmeriCorps grant?

Hosting an AmeriCorps VISTA member does not disqualify an organization from applying.

A host organization pays the VISTA project a share of the cost of the entire project. Control of the project is with the organization that receives the payment.

A grant would mean the organization was given federal funds to operate the project and has control over the funds, the work, the goals, etc.

That is why being a host site for VISTA or AmeriCorps State/National does not disqualify an agency from submitting a Maine Rural AmeriCorps proposal.

Questions submitted earlier

- ✓ If a program is state-wide, but has an office in Hancock County and will place members there, does it qualify as in Hancock?

Yes. And the program would need to maintain the service focus on that rural area (Hancock county).

Questions submitted earlier

- ✓ If our agency has offices in two rural areas and wants to put AmeriCorps members in each, should we submit 1 or 2 applications?

Under federal rules, the same AmeriCorps program may not be funded under 2 different AC grant programs to do the same thing. So, if both proposals were for the same program, one would be disallowed.

However, the same agency can submit 2 applications if the AmeriCorps programs will be different – example: financial literacy in one county and nutrition education in another.

Questions submitted earlier

- ✓ Is the 30% match required each year or does that amount cover 2 years?

Each year because the costs for full-time members do not decrease.

- ✓ Can that match come from grant sources?

Possibly. If you mean other federal sources, many federal agencies are encouraging use of their funds as local share for AmeriCorps. You would need to ask the federal program officer first.

Questions submitted earlier

- ✓ Can you check our understanding of the grant match? The match is a percentage of the AmeriCorps funds, right?

No. The local share (aka match) is a percent of the total project costs.

The AmeriCorps share of the project is 70% and the local share is 30% of the total project (100%).

To discuss your idea or ask questions..

Contact Michael Ashmore

(michael.ashmore@maine.gov; 207-624-7734)

Once the formal Request for Proposal is published Commission staff are not allowed to provide individual advice.

At that point you may submit questions in writing and answers will be posted on the grant announcement page for all to see.



Looking forward to seeing your ideas!

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