

Grant Proposal Report from Task Force

Recommendation: Fund only if corrections can be negotiated

Legal Applicant: Greater Portland Council of Governments

Program Name: AmeriCorps Resilience Corps

Category: AC Formula -- Standard
 AC Formula – Rural State
 AC Competitive
 Other Competition

Type: Planning
 Operating
 Fixed Price
 Ed Award Only

Federal Focus Area:

Applicant type: New (no prior AmeriCorps)
 Re-compete (# of yrs: __)

Proposed Dates: Start: 10/15/2020
 End: 10/14/23

Requested Resources: Funds and Slots

	CNCS		Local Share
Operating	5,966		120,451
Member Support	199,906		56,553
Indirect (Admin)	10,829		38,268
CNCS Award amount	216,701	Total Local Share (cash + in-kind)	215,272
% sharing proposed	50%		50%
% min share required	70%		30%
Cost-per-member proposed	\$14,279 (\$15,479 allowed)		

Total AmeriCorps Member Service Years: 14	Slot Types Requested						
	FT	HT	RHT	QT	MT		Total
Slots With living allowance	14						14
Slots with only ed award							

Program Description (executive summary):

The Greater Portland Council of Government proposes to have 14 AmeriCorps members who will enable increased capacity and impact of the municipalities and agencies throughout the greater Portland and Lakes region of Cumberland County. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for Increased local and regional capacity for community resilience. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage 120 volunteers who will be engaged in program activities supported by Members and their efforts to conduct data collection, planning, outreach, engagement and project implementation. This program will concentrate on the CNCS focus area(s) of capacity building. The CNCS investment of \$216,701 will be matched with \$215,272, \$215,272 in public funding and \$0 in private funding.

Applicant proposes to deliver services:

- Within a single municipality
- Within a single County but not covering the entire County
- County-wide in a single County
- Multiple Counties but not Statewide
- Statewide

Service locations/Host sites:

- Regional & local municipalities

Performance measures (targets proposed for Year 1):

CAPACITY BUILDING

OUTPUT: G3-3.4: Number of organizations that received capacity building services

Proposed target: 12

OUTCOME: G3-3.10A Number of organizations that increase their efficiency, effectiveness, and/or program reach

Proposed target: 9

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

OUTPUT: # of AmeriCorps members trained

Proposed target: 14

OUTCOME: # of AC members that have increased knowledge and skills

Proposed target: 11

Scoring Detail:

Peer Reviewer Consensus Score.

	Score
Program Design	
Need	4
Theory of Change & Logic Model	16.08
Evidence Tier	n/a
Evidence tier narrative (argument for tier they claim)	4.69
Evidence quality	5.36
Notice Priority	0.67
Member Experience	4.02
Organizational Capability	
Organizational Background & Staffing	6.03
Compliance/Accountability	6.7
Member Supervision	4.02
Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	16.75
Data Plan Quality (assessed as weak but no points given for this component)	n/a
Total Peer Reviewer Score	68.32

Task Force Consensus Score. *The Task Force reviewers assess the additional technical criteria that states are directed to consider by the CFR.*

	Score
Program Model	10.05
Past Performance	10.05
Financial Plan	6.7
Fiscal Systems	10
Total Task Force Score	36.8
Peer Review Score	68.32
Final Score for Applicant	105.12

Final Assessment of Application:

- Fund with no corrections/modifications
- Fund with corrections/modifications
- Do Not Fund

Referenced Conditions/Corrections

The following narrative issues need to be clarified or, in the case of missing required elements, added.

- The DUNS number on the application does not match the DUNS in SAM. Please correct with the assistance of the help desk.
- In the clarifications field of the proposal, please explain the relationship between the legal applicant, Greater Portland Council of Governments, and the Center for Regional Prosperity. The latter's 990 was submitted with the application and the organization is referenced in the proposal; however, its role in the project is unclear especially with respect to financial responsibility.
- The description of the Source of Funds for grantee share is inadequate, particularly with regard to use of other federal funds. AmeriCorps regulations require that other federal funds be identified and assurance provided that the federal grant/program officer has authorized their use in the AmeriCorps project. Please identify all the sources of funds more specifically in the budget section and address the federal funds use in the clarifications field.
- In the Budget, please review the following and adjust as needed:
 - Personnel Fringe for Director of Innovation: as written, the calculation is $90,000 \times 21.96$ which does not equal 1,932.
 - Please review the calculation for travel to the regional conference in VT. As written, it calculates to \$892.
 - The formula for a consultant (Program Design and Recruitment) is written as (100×100) but 9,600 is entered as the cost. Please review and adjust.
 - Please review the formula for member health care. The one provided indicates 75% of the 14 members would need healthcare for 12 months. $(75\% \times 14) \times \303×12 works out to more than is budgeted.
- As a condition of award, correct the deficiencies in the Data Collection Plan before program start.

Peer Reviewer Notes and Appraisal Summary:

Program Design.

- The narrative laid out the basis for their project, as well as defined three target areas. This section was the strongest one in the proposal. Responded to the criteria.
- The proposal seems long on goals (all great goals) but short on evidence that more than 30 municipalities will cooperate
- One criterion was not addressed: duration of intervention

Organizational Capability.

- This is an experienced organization with a long history, though the aspect of supervision and support for members need to be clearly identified
- The applicant gave a good description of the organization, their levels of staff and staffing performance management system, however, there was no mention on how the organization engages volunteers or how they plan to utilize them.
- The hiring criteria/qualifications for Program manager is not specified, though that is part of the assessment criteria.

Budget Adequacy and Cost Effectiveness. (CNCS did not allow narrative for this section in this year's application. They directed reviewers to consider the budget narrative and its+ formulas, accuracy, expense items.)

- The travel expenses to the Maine State Volunteer Conference and the member transport reimbursement costs seem low considering the work that they are doing.
- The agency has applied for the full cost/MSY for their 14 members but does seek to match the grant funds just about dollar for dollar.

Data Collection Plan. (Refers to applicant's plan for collecting data that will be used for performance measurement, continuous improvement, and development of an evaluation plan.)

- Using Microsoft tools for saving data doesn't tell much about how the collection of data is systematic. The "plan" doesn't seem to respond to the criteria.
- Would be more informative to outline what kind of data would show change in each area.

SUMMARY APPRAISAL

1. Having reviewed all elements of the proposal, is this applicant likely to be effective in this category of grant? Yes

Comments:

- The purpose of the program is to help prepare the communities for their future viability. They have a well thought out plan for their program, and specific targets they wish to meet.
- Perhaps. With the parent organization's power, much data can be collected. Surely the 14 people would have a useful educational experience. But what is to be achieved, specifically, remains confusing.
- They have staffing with experience in the field and a staff support plan for the AmeriCorps program. They have done the research and developed their action plan and are filling a need in the community and the state.
- They would have done better if they outlined criteria for selecting the communities AmeriCorps members will assist. Very broad.
- Because the program is not spelled out, if someone came to me as a member of the board of selectman, I would probably say I don't have the time to figure out how to work with them. Needs clarity.
- Logic model is clearest representation. Hope they follow it rather than the narrative.

Task Force Review Notes and Appraisal Summary:

Program Model.

- Proposal is not in one of the identified priority areas, focus is on capacity building in terms of addressing community resiliency
- The idea of building resiliency into the CEDS process makes sense and could be the focus of the group/regional work, be it focused on workforce replacement or climate change adaptation. The work in the local communities could be driven by what those communities identify as an important need rather than somewhat pre-ordaining that need as broadband/digital knowledge/technology; transit access; and health and equity planning. It's not clear why those areas were chosen for special emphasis.
- They presented three target areas and are using the logic model. The narrative seemed a little vague with a lot to accomplish with unclear structure and execution.
- They have the potential to be successful in their endeavors, permitted they keep their members results driven and supported throughout their term.
- GPCOG has significant experience in receiving, implementing, and managing federal grants. It has a build in network of municipalities via its membership structure that should offer good member placement opportunities. They seem to be providing enough staff, although they are partially relying on Members to

handle elements of that work and the supervision to be provided by local communities could be better identified explained. Local supervisors, for example, should be offered some training and given a set of clear expectations.

- The examples provided as models, such as Teach for America, are not totally on point, the Island Institute would be a better model.

Assessment of Past Performance

- GPCOG has significant experience in receiving, implementing, and managing federal grants and, as such, are aware of and able to follow the numerous federal/state rules that are required.
- It has a built-in network of municipalities via its membership structure that should offer good member placement opportunities.
- Used studies to support their goals, not own past performance.

Assessment of Financial Plan

- Generally, budget seems ok with some minor adjustments, although the peer reviewers raised some questions about adequacy of individual line items.

Fiscal Systems

- Organization is in a strong financial position and has significant experience in handling grants and associated requirements. No obvious weaknesses. In one place the documentation indicates the organization has a federal indirect rate. In another that it doesn't. Seems like it should, given the nature of the organization.
- Strong fiscal system