

Corporation for National and Community Service

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Title: AmeriCorps State and National Retention Policy Change

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Summary: This communication addresses a change in expectations regarding member retention.

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

TO: State Service Commissions and AmeriCorps National Grantees

FROM: Chester W. Spellman
Director of AmeriCorps State and National

SUBJECT: 2018.01: AmeriCorps State and National – Retention Policy Change

DATE: May 8, 2018

This communication addresses a change in expectations regarding member retention, consistent with information previously shared via the monthly AmeriCorps State and National Update Call. Effective May 1, 2018, AmeriCorps State and National has changed the threshold for member retention which requires explanation and/or corrective action. Grantees and subgrantees with 85% member retention, or higher, will no longer be required to provide additional information concerning member retention plans and strategies. Further, grantees and subgrantees with at least 85% member retention will be assessed as having met CNCS programmatic expectations. The decision to change the retention rate is to reduce administrative burden and provide a more realistic retention benchmark. This change in expectation will affect various AmeriCorps State and National processes. These process changes, and how and when they will be implemented, are explained below.

Grantee Progress Reports (for grants with member positions):

Year-end grantee progress report instructions will be amended to only require explanation and corrective action (for direct grantees and competitive commission subgrantees) for member retention rates below 85%. Grantees/Subgrantees with at least 85% retention will be assessed as having met CNCS expectations.

This change will be implemented with the end of year reports due October 31, 2018.

Grant Application Review Process (GARP) – Assessments of Past Performance:

Past performance assessments for recompeting grantees will now be based on whether the grantee, for the last complete program year, achieved at least 85% member retention.

This change will be implemented with the 2019 AmeriCorps State and National competitions.

Fixed Price Grants: Enrollment and retention rates currently have no impact on the computation of earned, to be paid, fixed price grant dollars; this will not change. EAP type fixed price grant funds will continue to be earned based on the count of successfully enrolled members and adjusted by eGrants Slot type MSY conversion factors to account for less than full time Slot type enrollments. Full cost fixed price grant funds will continue to be earned based on the hours served by each successfully enrolled member, up to the total hours associated with each Slot type based on eGrants Slot type MSY conversion factors.

Additionally, AmeriCorps State and National is reviewing internal documents and procedures related to staff training and grantee monitoring and will make updates as necessary to reflect this new expectation. Finally, grantee technical assistance resources, including those supporting new grantee start-up, will be reviewed and edited to reflect this change.

We appreciate the work done by grantees and subgrantees related to member retention to ensure rates are as high as possible. Program Officers are available to continue to support these efforts as well as to answer any questions you may have specific to the changes outlined in this communication.