2003 AMERICORPS GUIDELINES
TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION **3**

OVERVIEW **6**

THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE 6
THE AMERICORPS NETWORK 7
2003 APPLICATIONS: KEY ELEMENTS 8
Performance Measures/Accountability *9*
Recruitment and Management of Volunteers *9*
Support for Community Organizations (Secular and Faith-Based) *10*
Citizenship *10*
Literacy and Tutoring Programs *10*
Capacity Building and Sustainability *10*
Audit and Financial Information *10*
Federal Work-Study and Student Service *10*
On-Line Grant Application Submission *11*

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT DESIGNING AN AMERICORPS PROGRAM **12**

NEEDS AND SERVICE ACTIVITIES 12
Literacy and Tutoring Programs *13*
Homeland Security *14*
DEVELOPING AMERICORPS MEMBERS 16
Citizenship *17*
Training Related to your Service Activities *17*
Leadership Opportunities *18*
Supervision, Training, and Education *18*
Support Services *18*
Diversity *18*
Disaster/Emergency Preparedness *18*
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES 19
Recruitment and Management of Volunteers *19*
Support for Community Organizations (Secular and Faith-Based) *20*
Capacity Building and Sustainability *23*
Community Involvement and Consultation *25*
EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF AMERICORPS PROGRAMS 25

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAMS USING AMERICORPS FUNDS **27**

Performance Measures and Accountability *27*
Evaluation *29*
Monitoring and Management Responsibilities *30*
Grantee Support for Programs *30*
On-Line Grant Application Submission *30*
Recruitment Tools and Resources—Grantee Requirement *31*
Federal Work-Study and Student Service *31*
Prohibited Activities *32*
Types of Application Submissions *33*
Summer Programs *34*
Terms of Service *34*
Cost Per Member *34*
Member Living Allowance *35*

Member Living Allowance Exceptions *35*
Child Care and Health Insurance *36*
National Service Identity and Service Gear *38*
Reasonable Accommodation For People with Disabilities *38*
Participation in National Days of Service *38*
Oath *38*

GRANT TERMS AND REQUIREMENTS 39

Grant Period *39*
Amounts of Grants and Restrictions *39*
Federal Financial Management and Grant Administration Requirements *39*

REVIEW PROCESS AND SELECTION CRITERIA 41

SELECTION CRITERIA 41
PROGRAM DESIGN (60%) 41
Needs and Service Activities *41*
Member Development *41*
Strengthening Communities *41*
ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (25%) 42
BUDGET/COST EFFECTIVENESS (15%) 42
ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS 42

PROGRAM SUPPLEMENTS 44

AMERICORPS*NATIONAL 44
Responsibilities of the Parent Organization *44*
Planning Grants *45*
COORDINATION WITH STATE COMMISSIONS 45
EDUCATION AWARDS 46
Addressing Key Application Elements *46*
Fixed Amount Grant Awards *46*
AMERICORPS PROMISE FELLOWS PROGRAM 47
U.S. TERRITORIES AND INDIAN TRIBES WAIVERS 47

APPENDIX A – CITIZENSHIP GOALS FOR AMERICORPS MEMBERS 49

APPENDIX B – PERFORMANCE MEASURES 51

INTRODUCTION

As the Corporation for National and Community Service enters the final year of its first decade, it is altogether fitting to take stock of what we have accomplished and where we are going. We have a great deal to be proud of and a great deal more to do.

AmeriCorps, a program which existed as only a handful of demonstration projects ten years ago, enrolled over 60,000 people of all ages and backgrounds last year in helping our nation's communities meet their most compelling needs. They provided countless hours of service in schools, health clinics, homeless shelters, wilderness areas, neighborhood centers, and other places where there was public work to be done. They recruited and managed tens of thousands of their fellow Americans to help build homes, tutor children, clean up streets and vacant lots, and feed the hungry. After September 11, 2001, they stood alongside others at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon to aid the victims of the terrorist attacks.

AmeriCorps has also begun to write a new chapter in the history of American federalism. The Corporation was designed to work collaboratively with governor-appointed commissions and national nonprofits that would largely be responsible for determining where AmeriCorps members could be most useful and then held accountable for the results. After a sometimes challenging decade, commissions are now operating in all but one state, increasingly meeting financial and administrative standards and playing key roles in new initiatives, such as assisting grassroots and faith-based groups and enhancing homeland security. Within the ranks of AmeriCorps partners can be found many of the nation's preeminent nonprofit groups as well.

Over 250,000 people have served in AmeriCorps since the program was founded. Sixty percent of those who completed their service have used the Education Awards they earned to pay for higher education. Not least importantly, AmeriCorps alumni are now taking their places as engaged citizens of their own communities.

So, a lot of progress has occurred in the last decade. But the more we have done, the better we can see what else we have to do to fulfill the twin goals of national and community service: meeting pressing, unmet needs through service and renewing the ethic of civic responsibility among our citizens. President Bush's "Principles for a Citizen Service Act" set out the steps we believe need to be taken to go to the next level. The 2003 AmeriCorps Guidelines are designed to put these principles into practice as much as possible within existing legislative authority.

These Guidelines seek to ensure that our grantees have the utmost flexibility to select the community needs their AmeriCorps programs should address. Although we have added homeland security to the list of such needs, our only priority remains the longstanding one of programs for children and youth. While we are not setting aside funds solely for programs serving young people or giving specific preference in the

selection process to such applications, we want to build upon and expand the strong programs that now exist for and with them by inviting applicants to propose new programs or strengthen existing ones in this area.

We are also asking our partners to join the Corporation in supporting AmeriCorps programs that engage volunteers in their activities. This is partly in response to President Bush's call on Americans to devote at least two years of their lives to service, but it also reflects what we have learned about AmeriCorps in the past decade. Although the tutoring, health care, environmental clean-up, and other services members provide directly are (and in our eyes, will continue to be) valuable, the commitment AmeriCorps members make—up to two years, full-time—enables them to do more than that. Recruiting, supporting, and managing volunteers are among the ways AmeriCorps members have helped in the past to build the "capacity" of the organizations with which they have worked. These Guidelines, along with revitalized training and technical assistance programs, seek to foster more—and a broader range of—such activities.

Grassroots and faith-based groups especially stand to benefit from a greater emphasis in AmeriCorps on capacity-building. Often relatively small in size, but large in stature in their communities, these organizations, we now know, are frequently among the most successful in reaching needy people. But their impact, we also know, is sometimes limited by their organizational and financial capacity.

AmeriCorps has a long tradition of assisting grassroots and faith-based groups. These Guidelines aim to build on that tradition and increase the number of members working with those organizations—or the intermediary ones that support them—to help them become more effective and sustainable.

The experience AmeriCorps members have when they work with such groups and others that sponsor programs is one of the reasons participation in national and community service can help create a lifelong habit of civic responsibility. But we have also learned that reflection is important as well, along with more formal instruction in the role civic activity plays in our system of government.

For several years, the Corporation has been developing materials designed to assist AmeriCorps programs in fostering a heightened sense of citizenship among members and intends to continue doing so, including preparing a packet of historically important documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, for use by AmeriCorps members. The 2003 Guidelines clarifies the goals of this effort, while leaving to the programs themselves considerable flexibility in the methods they use to attain them. We will continue to refine our expectations in this area as we receive feedback from partners and members. In view of the great interest Americans of all ages and backgrounds have expressed since the attacks of September 11 in becoming more active citizens of our country, we believe we have a great opportunity—and responsibility—this coming year to strengthen AmeriCorps' value as a "school" for democracy.

Last, but by no means least, the 2003 Guidelines emphasizes the importance of performance measurement and evaluation in AmeriCorps, and begins to establish some formats and objectives for doing so. We recognize that programs differ considerably in their goals, resources, and abilities to monitor the activities and impacts of members. And we also know that not everything worthwhile is always measurable and that efforts to improve accountability can sometimes produce unintended consequences, such as discouraging risk-taking and innovation.

Still, we believe that as AmeriCorps enters its second decade, it needs to continue moving toward becoming the model of the performance-driven program it was meant to be when it was created. This is not mainly to avoid the financial management problems that consumed so much of our time and energy (and money) during the past ten years—though avoid them we must. Rather, in light of the pressing needs AmeriCorps programs are trying to address and the vulnerable men, women, and children they are trying to help, we must constantly ask ourselves if programs are producing the desired results—and if not, what we can do to improve them. By focusing more on performance measurement and evaluation, in other words, we aim ultimately to ensure that AmeriCorps programs are doing as much as they can to "get things done" and bring forth a new generation of civic leaders.

In this and in other ways, the 2003 AmeriCorps Guidelines will be challenging, both for us at the Corporation for National and Community Service and for our partners in state commissions and nonprofit organizations. We are committed to working together to implement them, adapting them as necessary to fit the particular circumstances our wide variety of grantees face, learning from each other about how to improve them, and enhancing them once we have the legislative authority to do so. And we know that this will take time, understanding, and good will from all of us.

As challenging as the road ahead of us might look, we should be heartened by the fact that we start from a decade's worth of impressive accomplishments. These should encourage us not only to aim higher, but also to be confident we can succeed.

Leslie Lenkowsky
Chief Executive Officer

OVERVIEW

THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

In his State of the Union address this year, President Bush created the USA Freedom Corps, a major initiative aimed at fostering a new culture of "citizenship, service, and responsibility" and helping the nation's voluntary groups build the kind of capacity they need to better assist not only in a time of crisis, but also in the many other vital tasks they perform in our communities. In a speech reviewing the first several months of this effort, President Bush remarked:

> "You know, none of us would ever wish the evil that was done on September the 11th; yet out of the tragedy can come great good. I believe that from the bottom of my heart. Out of the evil done to America will come some good. Challenging times test the character of individuals, and test the character of our nation. In the aftermath of September the 11th, Americans have responded with courage and compassion, with great resolve and determination.
>
> "The last ten months have offered us a glimpse of what a new culture of service can be. And we're not going to let this moment pass. We'll sustain and extend the best that has emerged in our country. And there are good reasons for every American to serve our nation. We serve because it's important to our neighbors. We understand that serving others meets needs that a government can never fulfill. You see, government can hand out money, but it can't put hope in people's hearts, or a sense of purpose in people's lives. The need for kindness, and for understanding, and for love, is not a government function. It's a human function. And that's why we serve our neighbor.
>
> "We serve because it's important to our own character. Acts of compassion add direction and purpose to our lives. Serving something greater than yourself in life is part of a fulfilling life. And finally, we serve because it's important to our country. Our nation is the greatest force for good in history, and we show our gratitude by doing our duty. We express our love for America by loving Americans."

A commitment to service builds on our Nation's long and honorable commitment to assisting individuals, families, and communities who either have not fully shared in America's prosperity or have short-term needs created by changes in life circumstances. Paired with a process of civic reflection, service also reconnects those who serve with basic American ideals such as freedom, liberty, and respect for diversity; helps to bridge ethnic, racial, religious, and economic divides; and strengthens our understanding of the responsibilities of American citizenship.

As a major part of the USA Freedom Corps, the Corporation will help assure that the government contributes to and supports the volunteer and service efforts of individuals, organizations, and communities. Specifically, our mission is to support people and

organizations in using citizen service as a strategy to meet critical national and community needs, to foster an ethic of civic responsibility, and to strengthen the ties that bind us together as a nation.

We believe that service has a positive impact on those who serve. It builds civic responsibility and enables participants to practice responsible citizenship. It helps youth make the transition into adulthood. It enables seniors to leave a legacy. Through service, members of a community become citizens, not spectators, participating more fully in the civic life of the Nation. Further, through service individuals develop additional skills and gain valuable experience crucial to their future success.

For 2003, the Corporation has set several specific goals:

- Strengthening the capacity of nonprofit organizations, including community organizations (secular and faith-based), to assist individuals, families, and communities in need.
- Increasing the amount of volunteering and civic engagement in America by using Corporation resources to recruit, support, and manage volunteers.
- Achieving greater accountability and program performance.
- Leveraging resources, and investing strategically, to make the efforts of the Corporation more effective and sustainable.
- Making federal funds more responsive to state and local needs.

We have developed these application guidelines to help ensure AmeriCorps' effectiveness in achieving these goals in the coming years. They reflect input from our service partners about how to address new program directions most effectively while building upon the experience and accomplishments of AmeriCorps to date. We intend to work closely with grantees and other partners in the service field during the coming year to support the implementation of these new program directions.

For 2003, the Corporation will encourage support for high-quality programs that meet community needs, as defined by states and local communities across the country, in the issue areas of education, public safety, environment, homeland security, and other human needs. We continue to make children and youth a priority that cuts across all AmeriCorps programs and activities. Although we are not setting aside funds solely for programs serving children and youth or giving specific preference in the selection process to such applications, we want to build upon and expand the strong programs that now exist for and with children and youth. To that end, we invite applicants to propose new programs and to strengthen existing programs in this area.

THE AMERICORPS NETWORK

AmeriCorps is a national service network that provides full- and less than full-time opportunities for participants, called members, to serve their communities and build the capacity of nonprofit organizations to meet local environmental, educational, public

safety, homeland security, or other human needs. Within these five issue areas, programs may submit proposals that address specific problems of local communities. In other words, local needs drive AmeriCorps.

The AmeriCorps national service network includes AmeriCorps*State and National programs, Indian Tribe and U.S. Territories programs, Education Awards Program, AmeriCorps*Promise Fellows, AmeriCorps*VISTA, and AmeriCorps*NCCC. Through service with local organizations and agencies, in communities large and small throughout America, AmeriCorps members serve their Nation.

In the short time since AmeriCorps' inception, its members have achieved impressive results. This year, more than 60,000 AmeriCorps members will serve communities throughout the country.

You should use these guidelines if you are applying for one of the following types of programs:

- AmeriCorps*State
- AmeriCorps U.S. Territories
- AmeriCorps*Indian Tribes
- AmeriCorps Promise Fellows
- AmeriCorps South Dakota
- AmeriCorps Education Awards Program
- AmeriCorps*National program (nonprofit organizations operating a program in two or more states)

If you are applying for an AmeriCorps*State program (a local nonprofit organzation operating in one state) you should use the application instructions developed by your state commission. Visit our website at www.nationalservice.org and click on 'National Service in Your State' for state commission contacts.

If you wish to apply for any of the other categories of Corporation grants, please visit our website at www.nationalservice.org where all application instructions are available.

2003 APPLICATIONS: KEY ELEMENTS

In early 2002, the Corporation for National and Community Service, as part of the President's USA Freedom Corps, announced its plans to reform and enhance national and community service programs, consistent with the following principles and reforms:

- **Support and encourage greater engagement of citizens in volunteering.** The Corporation will reform and enhance national and community service programs to increase the quantity and quality of service opportunities for Americans.

- **Make federal funds more responsive to state and local needs.** The Corporation will give state, local, and community officials more authority and flexibility to provide service opportunities to the citizens they represent.
- **Make federal support more accountable and effective.** The Corporation will invest in service opportunities that will produce results for local communities.
- **Provide greater assistance to community organizations (secular and faith-based).** The Corporation will include more community organizations (secular and faith-based) in more national and community service programs.

In order to achieve these goals, we have developed the following key elements for 2003 applications for funding. These elements apply to all AmeriCorps grantees and subgrantees, including continuation grants (those applying for funding for a second or third year of a three-year grant). The Corporation is committed to working in partnership with nonprofit organizations, state commissions, and others to assure the effective implementation of these elements over the next several years.

If you are unable to include any element listed in these guidelines as part of your program, either because of your program model, or for any other reason, please include an explanation in your application. We will consider your explanation during the grant application review process.

As an applicant, you also need to know that in order to assist in the review of program applications within the state competitive pool, the Corporation will permit state commissions to describe the relationships of the portfolio of programs in their state to the key elements in the guidelines. A state may choose to describe unique circumstances or characteristics of their portfolio of programs that may be relevant to the Corporation's consideration of the competitive grant submissions. This would include situations where an individual program may be unable to include an element in these guidelines, but other programs in the state address the element. The state's comments will not be reviewed by peer reviewers but will be taken into consideration during staff review. States that would like to submit such information should see the administrative guidance for instructions.

Performance Measures/Accountability

For 2003, the Corporation is announcing an initiative to help strengthen the accountability and performance of programs receiving funds under national service laws. See page 27 for a description of this element.

Recruitment and Management of Volunteers

A fundamental purpose of AmeriCorps is to help recruit, support, and manage the vast networks of volunteers assisting nonprofit organizations in meeting community needs. With the President's call for all Americans to serve two years--4,000 hours--in their lifetimes, AmeriCorps has been called upon to make volunteer recruitment and management a major focus of its efforts. Accordingly, volunteer recruitment and management is a key element for AmeriCorps programs in 2003. See page 19 for additional details.

Support for Community Organizations (Secular and Faith-Based)

For 2003, we encourage applicants to support the efforts of civic, community, educational, and faith-based organizations to solve local problems and meet critical needs of individuals and communities. Applicants and continuing programs should demonstrate partnerships (sub-grantees, host sites, or volunteer recruitment partnerships) with community or faith-based organizations. You will find more information about this on page 20.

Citizenship

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, has as one of its basic purposes to "renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community throughout the United States." During the coming program year the Corporation will work with programs to introduce an enriched civics training program for members that will focus on what it means to be an American citizen, the responsibilities of democratic citizenship, and the obligations of freedom. See page 17 for more details.

Literacy and Tutoring Programs

A significant percentage of programs supported by the Corporation provide tutoring and other support to assist children in learning to read. The No Child Left Behind Act, enacted by the Congress in 2001, sets new scientifically-based standards for programs in schools across the country. This year with Corporation funding, successful applicants will have to demonstrate that their activities incorporate scientifically-based approaches to reading. Specifically, programs proposing tutoring and other literacy activities should address curricula, tutor training, outcomes, and standards for tutors. See page 13 for more details.

Capacity Building and Sustainability

Capacity building is a process that helps an organization gain greater independence and sustainability. The Corporation views its program grants as investments expected to yield a set of self-sustaining activities over time. Achieving sustainability enables programs to continue national and community service activities beyond the life of a Corporation grant or with diminishing Corporation resources. For additional information on preparing a sustainability plan, see page 23.

Audit and Financial Information

In the past, the Corporation reviewed an applicant's financial information after approval of a potential grant and prior to award. In 2003, we plan to review such information in conjunction with the application in order to assess your organization's potential for sustainability and your overall financial capacity. There are no changes to the responsibilities and roles of state commissions and the Corporation to assess an organization's financial systems for suitability to receive federal funds. See the application instructions for additional details.

Federal Work-Study and Student Service

Federal law requires that all institutions of higher education devote at least seven percent of their Federal Work-Study funds to community service unless they receive a waiver from the Department of Education. If you are an institution of higher education, you must describe your compliance with this requirement and your efforts to support community service under Federal Work-Study. The Corporation will take into consideration your institution's level of community service under Federal Work-Study in making grant decisions. See page 31 for specific details.

On-Line Grant Application Submission

We have developed a new grants management system that includes on-line grant applications, awards, and reporting. Applicants will submit their application using this new on-line system, eGrants. AmeriCorps programs will continue to use the existing Web Based Reporting System (WBRS) for member-related procedures and for financial and program reporting. See page 30 for more details.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT DESIGNING AN AMERICORPS PROGRAM

The Corporation funds and supports high-quality programs that develop an ethic of civic responsibility in those who participate, strengthen communities, and help meet needs through service in the areas of the environment, education, public safety, homeland security, and other human needs.

Your program should provide opportunities for your community to define and solve its problems. Successful applicants are able to demonstrate that their program or the service offered builds the capacity of nonprofit organizations to meet community needs and provides a benefit that the community values.

AmeriCorps provides a variety of specific and identifiable services to communities. For example, your program may use AmeriCorps members to organize volunteers to renovate low-income housing or build a playground in a vacant lot. You may engage members in human service projects such as tutoring or mentoring and recruit local volunteers to do so. Members may clean up streams or restore urban parks along side community residents. AmeriCorps members may help recruit, support, and manage community volunteers who support homeland security. Members may perform a wide variety of activities to enhance the capacity of the nonprofit organization in which they serve to meet community needs, including raising funds for approved projects, conducting research to maximize the impact of the organization, and providing support to staff in carrying out critical functions.

We will assess your program on the substance of what you propose to do (see Review Process and Selection Criteria, page 41). You need to demonstrate the relationship of the proposed activity with AmeriCorps members to the objectives you hope to accomplish.

NEEDS AND SERVICE ACTIVITIES

In meeting local community needs, AmeriCorps continues to support a wide variety of activities in the issue areas of education, environment, public safety, and other human needs. As discussed in more detail below, homeland security has been added as a fifth AmeriCorps issue area. Also discussed below are new expectations for literacy and tutoring programs that operate using AmeriCorps members.

As noted earlier, we continue to make children and youth a priority that cuts across our programs and activities.

AmeriCorps programs provide a variety of specific and identifiable services that address community needs. In the past, performing direct service activities such as tutoring children, building houses, or delivering meals to homebound seniors has been the primary focus of AmeriCorps members' service. However, AmeriCorps is now increasing its emphasis on capacity-building activities such as volunteer recruitment and management,

which also play an important role in addressing community needs and ensuring the sustainability of activities that AmeriCorps supports. Direct service and capacity-building activities are both integral strategies for effective national service programs.

Literacy and Tutoring Programs

The National Reading Panel, which issued its report in 2000, noted:

> "…too many children struggle with learning to read. As many teachers and parents will attest, reading failure has enacted a tremendous long-term consequence for children's developing self-confidence and motivation to learn, as well as for their later school performance."
>
> "While there are no easy answers or quick solutions for optimizing reading achievement, an extensive knowledge base now exists to show us the skills children must learn in order to read well. These skills provide the basis for sound curriculum decisions and instructional approaches that can help prevent the predictable consequences of early reading failure."

President Bush has made child literacy a national priority. He proposed, and signed into law, a comprehensive, bipartisan plan, known as the No Child Left Behind Act, to improve overall student performance in the Nation's schools. One key element of this plan is to support reading instruction built upon research-based methods that work to ensure that every child in public schools reads at or above grade level by third grade.

Consistent with this national priority, a significant percentage of national and community service programs designed by local communities assist children in learning to read.

In 2003, successful applicants conducting tutoring programs will be those that demonstrate that their activities occur in sites that incorporate scientifically-based approaches[1] to reading. Specifically, successful applicants proposing tutoring activities will address the following:

1. Curricula

Your application should describe curricula and tutoring strategies that are *scientifically-based* and include the five components of reading and reading instruction identified by the *National Reading Panel* **OR** demonstrate that the activities you conduct are part of a program in a school under the No Child Left Behind Act that provides individuals with systematic instruction and practice in the five basic reading components.

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[1] For information about the five basic reading components, scientifically-based reading instruction, and the National Reading Panel, see http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/readingfirst/publications.html and http://www.nwrel.org/learns.

2. Tutor training

Tutor training should take place both before and during service and give tutors the skills and knowledge to support students' learning of the specific components of reading addressed in the report of the National Reading Panel.

Your application should show how these reading components are incorporated into tutor training. Programs may also, where appropriate, demonstrate school site participation in training design and implementation and/or evidence of linkages between the instructional program of the tutee's school district and content of tutoring sessions conducted after school.

3. Outcomes

Your application should identify student achievement goals and show links between program objectives, tutoring activities, tutor training, and proposed strategies for achieving these goals. Applicants should address the approach they will use to measure outcomes.

4. Standards for Tutors

Your program should identify any standards that you propose to use to qualify individuals as tutors. For example, some programs may screen individuals through a qualifications test; others may require enrollment in, or completion of, a reading course. Still others may require demonstration of certain academic skills, such as completing at least two years of college. During the coming year, the Corporation plans to work with organizations and programs to set standards for tutors.

The Corporation will work with successful applicants to provide training and support to achieve effective tutoring programs and to maximize their impact on the individuals being served.

As you develop your application, we encourage you to examine information about best practices provided at http://www.ed.gov and http://www.nwrel.org/learns.

The Corporation recognizes that there are a wide variety of literacy activities being conducted by AmeriCorps programs, ranging from book drives to one-to-one tutoring programs. The above expectations apply only to those applicants engaged in tutoring or reading instruction in schools and related institutions such as nonprofit organizations running after-school programs.

Homeland Security

In a speech at the Centers for Disease Control in November 2001, President Bush specifically charged the Corporation with "creating new opportunities within the AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs for public safety and public health efforts." This charge reflects the long experience of national service programs in responding to natural disasters, working in public health, or helping to ensure public safety—all skills that are directly relevant to securing communities in the face of terrorist threats.

For 2003, the Corporation has designated homeland security as a major issue area on par with the environment, education, public safety, and other human needs for which you may apply for funding. We define homeland security as appropriately engaging citizens and communities in preparedness and response to acts of terrorism and other disasters. Homeland security includes programs that support public safety, public health, or disaster preparedness and relief.

How do homeland security programs differ from other AmeriCorps public safety, public health, and disaster preparedness and relief programs? While many of the day to day activities may be similar, homeland security programs also focus on preparing communities to be able to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, and respond to acts of terrorism or other disasters that breach the security and safety of their citizens. Applications submitted under this issue area should include evidence of organizing, training, and preparing people for homeland security disasters or emergencies.

The best defense is a strongly interconnected community that is able to handle a disaster or an act of terrorism. Therefore, we encourage you to partner with as many organizations and groups as possible within your community, including your Citizen Corps Council. Where such councils may not formally exist, consider partnering with organizations performing similar functions such as the local VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) or other organizations that have experience in preparing for or responding to disasters or major emergencies such as the local, county, or state emergency management offices, fire, or police departments.

Examples of homeland security include programs that:

- mobilize volunteers to assist first responders such as police departments, fire departments, and other agencies involved in public security;
- provide support for professional or volunteer fire departments, including a range of administrative duties, fire prevention and outreach, public education, and emergency response;
- organize, conduct, and support community-based immunization programs related to bio-terrorism public health concerns;
- develop materials, identify resources, and educate the public to build awareness of and readiness for both natural disasters and intentional criminal/terrorist attacks;
- provide immediate support to relief agencies responding to a disaster. Services may include relief of rescue workers, search and rescue, first aid, coordination of emergency supplies, and establishment of communication links for relief workers;
- organize communities to identify and respond to crime through existing community organizations, law enforcement, schools, institutions of higher education, and the business community. Such programs may conduct needs assessments and identify resources to support improvements, such as the creation of Neighborhood Watch programs; and
- support long-term recovery efforts associated with the impact of disasters while providing periodic training for preparedness and response to homeland security emergencies.

The above serve as a small number of examples. Local communities are in the best position to determine appropriate strategies for integrating service and volunteering into homeland security efforts. For more information about Citizen Corps, visit its website at: www.citizencorps.gov. If you wish to see descriptions of homeland security programs the Corporation approved for funding in 2002, you may find them on our website: www.nationalservice.org.

DEVELOPING AMERICORPS MEMBERS

Through AmeriCorps, members develop additional skills, gain valuable experience, and receive education awards that they can use to repay qualified school loans or for future education.

To help ensure that members are prepared for and benefit from their service, applicants are required to include plans for member recruitment and training in their applications. You should address elements such as civics training, skills training related to performing service activities, leadership opportunities, and other training necessary for a program to have a positive impact on members. Much of the training is typically achieved through use of service-learning principles. Further, we anticipate that the training will reflect the unique nature of your program and be appropriate for the age, skill level, and other differences in the backgrounds of the members.

By the end of their term of service, AmeriCorps members should:

- understand and be able to participate effectively in American democracy;
- discuss and explore their community and the people, processes, and institutions most effective in improving community conditions;
- help plan effective service projects that respond to real community needs and emergencies;
- foster within themselves and others positive attitudes regarding the value of lifelong citizenship and service for the common good;
- have new or increased existing life and/or employment skills; and
- gain a greater appreciation and understanding of what it means to be an American, including an appreciation and understanding of those of different backgrounds.

Grantees are responsible for recruiting members. The Corporation has developed and implemented an on-line recruitment system to assist grantees. You are required to supplement your recruitment efforts by using this nationwide on-line recruitment system so as to maximize opportunities for Americans who want to participate in national and community service.

The Corporation has recently developed new plans for expanding training resources available to programs, and we anticipate implementing this strategy over the next several years. Check our website at www.nationalservice.org for the latest information.

The following elaborates on key elements of member development.

Citizenship

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, has as one of its basic purposes to "renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community throughout the United States." By serving their communities in AmeriCorps, individual members are demonstrating a critical component of citizenship recognized by President Bush in recent remarks proclaiming September 17 as Citizenship Day: "Citizenship not only involves a commitment to our Nation but also to our neighbors and those in need."

Last year the Corporation, in partnership with a number of programs across the country, tested the impact of two curricula. The two sets of curricula were:

- *By the People*, developed by the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. *By the People* was designed to introduce AmeriCorps members and staff to a set of civic concepts that give a broader context to service and also a set of civic skills to help members serve more effectively.

- *A Guide to Effective Citizenship Through National Service*, developed by the Constitutional Rights Foundation. By linking citizenship to the mission of AmeriCorps, the *Guide* helps members develop the connections between their sense of themselves and their value to the community. The *Guide* provides tools for integrating active citizenship into the AmeriCorps experience through interactive sessions.

During the coming year we will modify these curricula, test them further, and disseminate materials as part of the enriched civics training program mentioned above. As part of this program, we will distribute, to every AmeriCorps member, a selection of basic documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, which set out our democratic principles and invite us to reflect on who we are as a nation and why service is vital to our communities and to our nation. We expect that programs will incorporate these and other documents in the training and service experiences provided for members. Please check our website at www.nationalservice.org for the latest information concerning the availability of these materials.

As we develop an enhanced civics training program for programs to adopt or adapt, AmeriCorps programs will continue to have flexibility to determine the specific methods and materials to be used to conduct civics training. See Appendix A on page 49 for a more detailed description of the citizenship goals for AmeriCorps members.

Training Related to your Service Activities

Successful applicants will ensure training is provided for the activities that members will conduct. For example, recruiting and managing volunteers requires certain skills that need to be developed. An individual raising funds for a particular project should have

access to others with demonstrated skills in these areas. Whether your activities involve tutoring children in reading, housing provision and improvement, or neighborhood/ community enhancement, members need to learn the basic skills and technical information associated with good practice before they perform service.

Leadership Opportunities

We encourage programs to build member leadership capacity by providing opportunities for members to coordinate activities, recruit volunteers, and serve in team leader capacities in their programs. The Corporation also provides materials and support to help you structure such leadership opportunities. You may address leadership opportunities in the member development section of the application. Please note, however, that you may not assign members as the legal supervisors of other members.

Supervision, Training, and Education

The experiences of local programs across the country verify that successful member development depends upon proper supervision, training, and education. Successful applicants will be those that provide members with the supervision, training, skills, and knowledge they need to perform their tasks. Successful applicants will also give members the background information they need on the community in which they are serving and help them understand the community's need for a specific service or project. You may also provide specific training in a particular field to your members if appropriate. This includes training and education that allows members to explore career possibilities in areas such as child development, teaching, public health, or public safety. Where appropriate, we encourage you to train members in conflict resolution and communication skills. Your program is required to have a qualified supervisor to provide members with regular and adequate oversight.

Support Services

Our legislation requires that you support members who are school dropouts in earning the equivalent of a high school diploma. We encourage you to provide all members who are completing a term of service with information about education and career opportunities.

Diversity

Your program builds strong communities when it engages members and staff from different backgrounds in common service. You should actively seek to include members and staff from the communities where your project operates, as well as men and women of various faiths, races, ethnicities, education levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, and physical and mental abilities. In assessing whether your program meets this criterion, we will take into account that your program objectives might require you to recruit members and staff who share a specific characteristic or background. Please note, however, that your program cannot violate the non-discrimination, non-duplication, and non-displacement rules that govern member and staff selection.

Disaster/Emergency Preparedness

AmeriCorps members as a group are one of the country's largest service providers. In times of national disaster or local emergencies, this resource can be collectively mobilized to provide critical support to local communities. As a result, we encourage

you to train members, where appropriate, in disaster/emergency preparedness and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

AmeriCorps strengthens communities by involving citizens directly in serving community needs. AmeriCorps members help bring individuals and groups from different backgrounds together to cooperate in achieving constructive change and to solve critical community problems.

Recruitment and Management of Volunteers

A fundamental purpose of AmeriCorps is to help recruit, support, and manage the vast networks of volunteers that meet community needs. By creating volunteer opportunities and helping organizations to effectively engage volunteers, AmeriCorps programs multiply their impact, build organizational capacity, and support the development of sustainable programs. Volunteering also provides an ideal opportunity to bring together people of many racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds around a common goal and to foster the active citizenship upon which the health of our democratic system depends. With the President's call for all Americans to serve two years-- 4,000 hours--in their lifetimes, AmeriCorps has been called upon to make volunteer recruitment and management a major focus of its efforts. Accordingly, successful applicants will be those that address how their AmeriCorps program will effectively engage and support volunteers in meeting community needs.

You can deploy AmeriCorps members in a wide variety of ways to support volunteer recruitment and management. AmeriCorps members may be responsible for enlisting, training, or coordinating volunteers. They may help an organization to develop effective volunteer management systems that include clear position descriptions, screening techniques, or volunteer policy and procedure manuals. AmeriCorps members may promote retention of volunteers by planning recognition events or providing ongoing support and follow up to ensure that volunteers have a high quality experience. Members may assist an organization in reaching out to individuals and communities of different backgrounds when encouraging volunteerism to ensure a breadth of experiences and expertise is represented in service activities.

When considering how your AmeriCorps program can promote the effective involvement of volunteers, you have flexibility to determine the best approach. Our expectation is that volunteers will be engaged in ways that support the mission of the organization being served. The involvement of volunteers should enhance or build upon any direct service goals of the program or organization of which the AmeriCorps members are a part. For example, you may decide that a few members in a program should be devoted entirely to some aspect of volunteer recruitment and management. Or, you may determine that all members will spend a portion of their time supporting volunteers. Members may also create opportunities for the beneficiaries of their service to volunteer. The following examples are illustrative only and are not an exhaustive list.

- AmeriCorps members in a teacher corps program engage their students in service learning projects that support classroom learning and provide students with volunteer experience.
- An AmeriCorps program designates a small number of members as volunteer managers who focus their efforts on recruiting and supporting volunteers whose activities complement the direct service of the rest of the corps.
- AmeriCorps members tutoring in an after-school program recruit volunteers to read with students once a week so that the program can serve additional students.
- An entire corps of AmeriCorps members is dedicated to serving as volunteer coordinators at various local host sites to assist these organizations in recruiting, training, and managing volunteers.

Whichever approach to volunteer recruitment and management you propose, include it as one of your three to five performance measures. See page 27 and Appendix B for additional information about developing performance measures.

The Corporation plans to examine ways to develop common performance measures in the area of volunteer recruitment and management to facilitate consistent reporting across programs and to permit the aggregation of data about AmeriCorps' impact in these areas nationally. We will develop these measures in consultation with grantees. For example, the Corporation is interested in creating standard definitions or categories of community volunteers based on the level of service they contribute. We are also exploring a standard approach to assessing AmeriCorps members' involvement in or contribution to the recruitment of volunteers.

During grant negotiations, we will work with approved programs to agree upon a final performance measure for the program that is based on the nationwide need for a common definition and measure of volunteer activity while also recognizing the particular attributes that shaped the program's proposed performance measurement objective for volunteer recruitment and management.

Our increased emphasis on volunteer recruitment and management is not intended to replace direct service activities which continue to be an integral part of AmeriCorps programs. However, AmeriCorps programs have much to offer their communities by building the capacity of organizations to meet community needs. The Corporation will develop training and technical assistance resources that build on existing expertise in the field to support this activity of grantees.

We understand that not every program may be able to meet this requirement, particularly in the first year. If you are unable to include volunteer recruitment and management as part of your program, either because of your program model or for any other reason, please include an explanation in your application. We will consider your explanation during the grant application review process.

Support for Community Organizations (Secular and Faith-Based)

Across the country, community organizations, both secular and faith-based, are on the front lines working to improve lives in some of the most vulnerable communities across America. The religious commitment and identification with the local community found in many of these groups sustains their service, often over long periods of time. The programs and activities supported through the Corporation already give vital help to these front-line workers and their community-based efforts. But we can do more.

The Corporation's support for community organizations extends across all of our programs. In 1993, the national service legislation included community organizations as a category for support and defined them as private nonprofit organizations that represent a community or a significant segment of a community and that are engaged in meeting human, educational, environmental, and public safety community needs. The legislation specifically included churches and other faith-based organizations in this definition, recognizing the importance of such groups in dealing directly with the most difficult problems facing individuals in our communities.

Most recently, the Corporation has undertaken a number of efforts to assist state commissions and grantees in supporting community organizations. These efforts include the creation of a new Faith and Communities Engaged in Service (FACES) initiative; the development of twelve champion states to develop more strategies and tools to assist such organizations; the provision of training and technical assistance to these organizations; and the funding of organizations and intermediaries to meet community needs.

For the purpose of providing a common language to applicants, we consider a faith-based organization to include:

- a religious congregation (church, mosque, synagogue, temple, etc.);
- an organization, program, or project sponsored/hosted by a religious congregation (may be incorporated or not incorporated);
- a nonprofit organization founded by a religious congregation or religiously-motivated incorporators and board members that clearly states in its name, incorporation, or mission statement that it is a religiously-motivated institution; or
- a collaboration of organizations that clearly and explicitly includes organizations from the previously described categories.

Defining a community organization is particularly challenging, and there is no universally accepted definition. Most individuals refer to community organizations as those that involve members of the community in the governing structure. Some even use the zip codes of a Board of Directors to determine if an organization is community-based.

The Corporation does not intend to impose a single definition of faith- or community-based organization, but encourages states and local programs to employ a definition that accounts for an organization's ability to represent the interests of the community in which it serves, including those organizations and groups that have not received funds from federal or state human service programs.

For 2003, our goals in this area are to increase the number of community, faith-based, and grassroots organizations that access AmeriCorps resources and to encourage larger nonprofit organizations to seek partnerships with community organizations (both secular and faith-based). We encourage applicants to support the efforts of civic, community, education, and faith-based organizations to solve local programs. Successful new applicants and continuing programs will be those that demonstrate partnerships (e.g., sub-grantees, host sites, or volunteer recruitment partnerships) with community organizations (secular and faith-based). This includes nonprofit organizations, schools, and neighborhood groups, as well as the faith-based organizations identified above.

In developing applications and strengthening activities with community organizations, we encourage you to make use of training and technical assistance resources provided by the Corporation. See our website at www.nationalservice.org.

We are not prescribing any particular approach for meeting this goal of providing support to community organizations (secular and faith-based). As noted above, in some instances, community or faith-based organizations may be direct applicants for grant funding. In other cases, Corporation-funded programs might partner with such organizations to meet their objectives. In still other cases, Corporation grantees may serve as intermediaries.

Intermediary Organizations

Intermediary organizations provide the mechanism by which a number of community or faith-based organizations or grassroots groups may access AmeriCorps and other Corporation resources. We define intermediaries as national, regional, state, or local organizations that agree to provide the technical and financial support to assist community or faith-based organizations that do not have the capacity to perform these functions. Intermediaries serve as the legal applicant for a Corporation grant, thereby ensuring that the systems to manage a federal grant are in place. Intermediaries may place individual members at the site of many neighborhood, community or faith-based organizations and assume responsibility for monitoring the progress of the sites. We encourage organizations that have the capacity to assist community or faith-based organizations in utilizing AmeriCorps members in their service activities to consider applying as an intermediary.

Examples of programs providing support to community and faith-based organizations include:

- A Texas community partnership of volunteer teams from businesses, civic groups, and churches is helping families along the path toward self-sufficiency. The program utilizes a team approach with AmeriCorps members organizing the skills, experiences, and resources of many people to help families receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) to overcome barriers to getting and keeping a good job.
- Catholic Network of Volunteer Service (CNVS), an AmeriCorps Education Awards Program, is a membership organization of 220 faith-based volunteer programs. CNVS serves as an intermediary that performs the grantee responsibilities and links these local programs to federal resources. These

programs operate in 50 states, and CNVS member programs work with local community social service agencies, faith-based organizations, and other non-profits to identify community needs that may be met through service primarily in the areas of education and human needs.

- The Washington State Commission on National and Community Service has provided support to the Church Council of Greater Seattle. The Council helps support a team of AmeriCorps members, provided by the Notre Dame Mission Volunteer program, who are placed in schools, community centers, and church facilities to provide mentoring and after-school tutoring and to involve youth in safe, structured, out-of-school activities.
- An urban interfaith council has decided to place AmeriCorps members at each one of its member organizations to assist in their separate community service activities including housing counseling, after school programs, pre-school, adult literacy and English as a Second Language. The interfaith council selects the member organization with the greatest capacity to manage a federal grant as the organization that will apply.

Capacity Building and Sustainability

Effective capacity building is a process that enhances the mission, strategy, skills, and culture, as well as systems, infrastructure, and human resources of an organization. Often organizations view capacity building as only "technical assistance," such as improving systems, infrastructure, and/or human resources functions. However, it also refers to an organization's relationship with other organizations, people, and institutions that can provide critical information and resources which lead to the sustainability of the organization and its programs.

Why is capacity building important? Capacity building is a process that helps an organization gain greater independence and sustainability. The Corporation views our program grants as investments expected to yield a set of self-sustaining activities over time. Our view is that an organization is achieving its sustainability goals if the activities supported enhance the capacity of the organization to meet community needs absent federal funding. But because organizations, and the challenges they face, differ, we do not have a philosophy that limits our funding to a maximum period (e.g., three years).

Achieving sustainability enables programs to continue national and community service activities beyond the life of a Corporation grant. Some examples of sustainability include:

- *Diversification of Revenue Sources:* Multiple sources of funds to support and operate national and community service programs is a good measure of whether or not a program is sustainable. In contrast, organizations that depend on a single source of funds (including Corporation funds) to support and operate national and community service programs are inherently less sustainable;
- *Earned Income:* Organizations that diversify revenue structures for national and community service programs by generating revenue through fees or other kinds of earnings, consistent with OMB rules on project income, can lead to more sustainable programs;

- *Other Public (state and local) and Private Funding:* Organizations that diversify revenue structures for national and community service programs by building relationships with other public and private funding organizations, as well as businesses, can lead to more sustainable programs, including receipt of support (in-cash and in-kind) from local and state government, community foundations, national foundations, and businesses;
- *Program Quality and Efficiencies:* Organizations that demonstrate an increased level of productivity with flat or declining levels of federal support demonstrate effective models of sustainability. While these programs may not be totally independent of federal sources of revenue, the reduction of overhead costs and increased efficiencies in the means by which services are delivered can help make the program's efforts sustainable in a community in the long term;
- *Volunteer Recruitment and Management:* Organizations that recruit large numbers of volunteers as part of their AmeriCorps program can use the volunteers to conduct a wider range of community service activities;
- *Sustained Activities:* In communities where AmeriCorps programs have collaborated with a number of partners, the partners can agree to divide the national and community service activities among themselves such that the actual service continues without a grant from the Corporation; and
- *Corporate Organizations' Role:* AmeriCorps members work to establish community service programs for which corporations can commit their employees as volunteers on an ongoing basis for an extended period of time.

The Corporation sees sustainability as vital to meeting the needs of communities across the country. In order to ensure that Corporation programs are sustainable, applications should include specific information that demonstrates how an organization intends to improve capacity and move towards sustainability, ensuring that its national and community service program can continue in the absence of Corporation funding. We will use plans and progress towards achieving sustainability as a criterion in making new and continuation grant awards.

As a means of achieving sustainability and assisting organizations in meeting community needs, AmeriCorps members may assist grantee organizations in capacity building activities. Previously, the Corporation had advised that only AmeriCorps*VISTA members may conduct certain capacity-building activities. We now encourage AmeriCorps members to engage in certain capacity building activities as well. For example, AmeriCorps members may recruit and manage other volunteers. They can write training materials that will be used to instruct the public about disaster preparedness. AmeriCorps members may assist in raising funds and securing resources to support service activities. They may conduct outreach to expand the number of individuals served by the nonprofit organization. Or AmeriCorps members may develop community partnerships that are intended to strengthen communities.

Achieving sustainability is a complex undertaking; the Corporation is committed to working with organizations to accomplish this goal. In addition, as the Corporation

anticipates many specific questions about the authorized activities of AmeriCorps members, we intend to issue regulations on this topic in the near future.

Community Involvement and Consultation

We see local involvement and input as vital to the development of high-quality service programs that sustain and build communities. Successful programs will be those that use extensive, broad-based local input to design, implement, and evaluate their projects. This includes consultation with:

- representatives from the communities you serve;
- members (or potential members) in your program; and
- appropriate community agencies (secular and faith-based), businesses, foundations, local labor organizations representing employees of service sponsors, and local government.

Partnerships with community groups may help to enhance organizational capacity and strengthen communities. They afford opportunities for you to collaborate and share technical expertise and resources.

EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF AMERICORPS PROGRAMS

You have great flexibility to design a program that develops the citizenship and skills of members, strengthens nonprofit organizations, and addresses community needs. You may assign members to individual projects or organize them in teams. Similarly, you may determine whether a full-time or less than full-time schedule is more appropriate to your program's goals. Our regulations provide a list of program types that illustrate the range of national service programs (see 45 C.F.R., Chapter XXV, Section 2522.110). You may find that your program fits more than one type because program characteristics overlap in some areas.

Some examples of types of programs are:

- programs that recruit, train, and support several hundred college volunteers to serve elementary school students in after-school tutoring programs;
- college-based programs in which student AmeriCorps members, including Federal Work Study students, perform substantial service in local schools or other community settings;
- programs where members respond to disasters, recruit and train disaster responders, and teach health and safety classes;
- faith-based programs that provide literacy and English as a Second Language training for low-income adults, reading improvement for homeless elementary school-age children, or teach and model social skills to children;
- programs where members provide community disaster/emergency preparedness education and training to individuals, families, and community organizations (secular and faith-based);
- programs where members recruit volunteers to help restore and revitalize degraded urban watersheds;

- full-time service programs run by faith-based organizations, youth corps, or other entities; and
- professional corps programs that recruit and place qualified AmeriCorps members in positions as teachers, nurses, doctors, police officers, lawyers, architects, engineers, or other professionals helping to meet critical needs in communities with inadequate numbers of such professionals.

To learn about a number of programs focusing on different issue areas, visit our web site at www.americorps.org.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAMS USING AMERICORPS FUNDS

The Corporation's requirements for AmeriCorps are set forth in the regulations and in these guidelines. In addition to being thoroughly familiar with the regulations, you should read these application guidelines carefully because in some cases, more specific information is provided here.

The regulations for programs funded by AmeriCorps are published in the Code of Federal Regulations (at 45 CFR Parts 2510, 2513, et seq.), and may be available at your public library or can be found at www.access.gpo.gov/ecfrl.

Performance Measures and Accountability

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, requires applicants for funding to apply measurable performance goals to determine the impact of AmeriCorps on communities and participants. Since 1993, programs and state commissions have been using varying forms of performance measures to articulate program goals and results.

With these guidelines, the Corporation is launching a major effort to work with applicants and programs over the next several years to strengthen the accountability and performance of organizations receiving funds under the national service laws. The Corporation is placing increased emphasis on the importance of performance measures as both a program management tool and a means by which to communicate program impact. This initiative builds upon the history of programs' efforts to measure the results of their activities and implements findings from a recently completed study by the Urban Institute that is available on the Corporation's website at www.nationalservice.org/research/index.html.

Experience has shown that designing measures can be difficult and that success requires flexibility and a cooperative approach. Therefore, the Corporation will work closely with state commissions and AmeriCorps programs over the next several years to determine and refine the best approach to measuring program performance. Currently, the approach we have devised (explained in detail in Appendix B) is intended to be a tool to define the need the program will address and the impact the program will have. The measures then provide indicators as to whether the program is having the intended effect.

An AmeriCorps program will:

- develop output, intermediate-outcome, and end-outcome measures [see Appendix B on page 51 for definitions of these measurement types];
- include 3-5 performance measures, as described in the next paragraph, in the application;
- participate in negotiating these measures as part of any grant award;
- develop a system for collecting and organizing this performance data on an ongoing basis; and

- include the results in progress and final reports.

Programs will likely have many performance measures. With respect to those reported to the Corporation, you should specify no more than five and no less than three objectives as performance measures in the objectives worksheets. Among those should be at least one output, one intermediate-outcome, and one end-outcome measure. We do not require that there be at least one performance objective in each of the three categories – Needs and Service Activities , Member Development, and Strengthening Communities. Finally, at least one of the 3-5 measures should reflect the goal related to managing and recruiting volunteers (see page 19) unless your application describes why you cannot address this element.

Programs seeking continuation grants, that is, those seeking funds for the second or third year of a three-year grant, are expected to provide performance measures, unless the program model makes it unable to do so. In such cases, the applicant should provide alternative measures of performance consistent with these guidelines.

The Corporation fully recognizes that these performance measures will reflect individual program goals and circumstances, and we expect that there will be a wide spectrum of different performance measures across all grantees. For example, a program that places individual members in separate nonprofit organizations (sites) to perform activities for those organizations will have measures that differ substantially from a program that uses AmeriCorps members to recruit volunteers to tutor in a single school. In certain programs, outcome measures may reflect the activities of a subset of members, not necessarily all members. We recognize that performance measures alone do not reflect the full scope and impact of AmeriCorps programs. Therefore, these measures are not the only items we will consider when evaluating an application.

During implementation of a grant, we also anticipate that performance measures may need to be adjusted based on program experience. Over time we expect that performance measures will reflect the full scope of activities and goals of AmeriCorps programs, including meeting needs and service activities, developing members, and strengthening communities.

We encourage you to take extra care in developing objectives that lend themselves to performance-measured outcomes. During the grant review process, we will evaluate the three to five proposed performance measures as part of the selection criteria for new programs and in approving continuation grants.

If your organization is selected for funding, we will negotiate specific performance measures with you in the grant[2]; and we will take into account a program's record of meeting such performance measures in determining future funding. The Corporation plans to issue draft regulations on this topic for comment later this year.

[2] An organization receiving funding under the state formula category will negotiate performance measures with the applicable state commission. An organization receiving funds under the state competitive category will negotiate performance measures with the state commission and the Corporation.

As part of a broader effort to collect uniform and aggregate data across all AmeriCorps programs, in order to better understand the effectiveness of national service, we will also develop a few performance measures that will apply to all AmeriCorps programs. We will consult with grantees on the type and number of uniform measures we will require, and in developing them take into account the diversity of programs and needs those programs serve. As in the past, these measures will include tracking member enrollment and attrition data, which will be considered in future funding decisions.

Appendix B, on page 51, provides critical information concerning performance measures. Before completing your application, please read this appendix carefully. The Corporation anticipates that applicants, grantees, state commissions, and other partners will develop greater capacity to develop and implement performance measures over the next several years, and we will work with programs and organizations to receive feedback on this effort and to help build expanded capacity through training and technical assistance.

Evaluation

Performance measures are designed to capture ongoing progress towards meeting program objectives. These ongoing (at least annual) program performance assessments should be supplemented with more in-depth, rigorous evaluation studies that measure the particular impact of national and community service programs.

While performance measurement and evaluation both include systematic data collection and measurement of progress, evaluations use scientifically-based research methods to systematically investigate the effectiveness of programs by comparing the observed program outcomes with what would have happened in the absence of the program. Evaluations estimate the impacts of programs by comparing the difference between the outcomes for individuals receiving a service or participating in a program to the outcomes for similar individuals not receiving a service or not participating in a program.

The National and Community Service Act specifies that an applicant arrange for an evaluation of an AmeriCorps national service program receiving assistance from the Corporation. The Corporation will consider such evaluation studies when making judgments about an organization's application for funds. Summary information concerning all evaluations of program outcomes completed in the last four years should be included in your application if available and the complete evaluation needs to be made available to the Corporation either via an electronic or printed version. See the Application Instructions for information on how to submit evaluation materials.

When considering evaluation studies in assessing an applicant's proposal, we recognize that the existence, scope, and nature of evaluations will vary based on the organization, its resources, program activities, and model. However, in order to continuously improve the value of Corporation efforts for both participants and the people they serve, we will be encouraging all grantees to provide for evaluations as part of their programs.

Applicants should recognize that evaluation is an allowable grant expense.

Monitoring and Management Responsibilities

Organizations face many challenges in administering AmeriCorps programs. Certain program models may make monitoring and program management a particular challenge for organizations. These include individual placements, programs that are spread out geographically, and programs that attempt to address many issue areas at once. If your program design includes one of these challenges, you should address it specifically in your application and provide specific strategies for monitoring and management. Strategies may include: recruiting and enrolling members who can work independently; providing appropriate orientation, ongoing training, and a means of regular communication; selecting strong host sites and ensuring strong support from direct-line supervision of members; and narrowing the range of tasks members perform to make monitoring easier.

If you are approved for an AmeriCorps grant, you are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the grant and sub-grant-supported activities to assure you are in compliance with applicable federal requirements and you achieve your performance goals. Monitoring needs to cover each program, function, or activity. You are responsible for ensuring program quality and that your program has an impact on the problems facing the communities in which it operates. This includes monitoring the service of members. You are responsible for the timely and accurate documentation of member eligibility and service hours. Each program should develop systems that closely track and monitor these requirements.

Grantee Support for Programs

[Not applicable to Indian Tribes, Education Awards Programs, or Promise Fellows]

Programs must provide, account for, and document all financial support for programs. We encourage all programs to raise some funds from the private sector, e.g., corporations, foundations, individuals, local businesses, and nonprofit organizations. We require, at a minimum, the following aggregate matches: Member Support Costs (at least 15%) including living allowance, FICA, Unemployment Insurance, Worker's Compensation and Health Insurance; and Program Operating Costs (at least 33%) including Staff, Operating Costs, Internal Evaluation, and Administration. However, the Corporation encourages projects to secure greater support from state and local funding sources, including private sources. The selection criteria for grant applications include 15% for Budget/Cost Effectiveness (see page 41). Commitment of applicant organization or host agency to securing resources, i.e., non-federal support for program implementation or sustainability, is our major focus under this criterion.

The match for member support costs (excluding health insurance) must be in non-federal cash. You may provide your share of operating costs in cash or in kind, and may use non-Corporation federal funds as match, if permitted by the rules governing those federal funds.

On-Line Grant Application Submission

The Corporation is working with other federal agencies to simplify federal grant-making processes (as required under Public Law 106-107) and provide access to federal activities over the Internet (in response to the President's Management and Performance Plan). We have developed a new grants management system that includes on-line grant applications, awards, and reporting. AmeriCorps programs will continue to use the existing Web Based Reporting System (WBRS) for member-related procedures and for financial and program reporting. However, other activities, including applying for grants, audit resolution, and the award process are now done through the new system, which is named eGrants.

This year, submit your application on-line by using the Corporation's new eGrants system. If your organization is applying for an AmeriCorps program in one state, you need to contact your state service commission to receive the appropriate application deadlines and instructions. If your organization is applying directly to the Corporation for funding, use the "eGrants: how to Complete Your Application" instructions on our website: www.nationalservice.org.

Recruitment Tools and Resources—Grantee Requirement

Historically, grantees have had to develop their own recruitment systems. Within the last 18 months, the Corporation has introduced an on-line system to support grantees' efforts. In order to supplement grantees' recruiting efforts, and to make sure that the information in the nationwide system is comprehensive and of maximum benefit to individuals who want to be AmeriCorps members, use of the recruitment system, found on the AmeriCorps website (www.americorps.org), is now mandatory for AmeriCorps programs. This system allows AmeriCorps programs to post information about their programs and their member assignments. All AmeriCorps programs will be responsible for having a comprehensive program profile on-line and will consider on-line applicants for their AmeriCorps positions. Programs may list multiple assignments as well as multiple geographic sites. Using their own criteria, programs may search for prospective members for their recruitment outreach efforts. Programs can e-mail prospective members and applicants to alert them to program information and updates, interview schedules, and other service opportunities. For more information, visit the website. As part of the web-based recruitment system, prospective members may apply directly to participating AmeriCorps programs electronically, as well as search for programs based on their interests, eligibility, and geographic preference. For those without web access or for prospective members who want information and application materials, we have an AmeriCorps hotline available at 1-800-942-2677.

Federal Work-Study and Student Service

[Required for Higher Education Institutions Applying for AmeriCorps funding]

The Higher Education Reauthorization Act of 1998 requires that all institutions of higher education who receive Federal Work Study (FWS) funds utilize a minimum of 7% of their total FWS budget for community service placements. Each college must also include a literacy component that is defined in regulations by the Department of Education. Because this is an important vehicle to encourage and expand student service, the Corporation is very interested in what campuses are doing to meet and exceed this requirement. Community service activities undertaken using FWS can be a valuable

resource for national service programs. While the FWS program is administered by college financial aid offices, many colleges have built strong relationships between the community service, service-learning, or volunteer office and the financial aid office to enhance community service efforts of the campus. Some service offices even manage the community service FWS program on their campus. Both service offices and community partners can assist the financial aid office in enhancing community service FWS programs. For more information on the FWS for Community Service program, you can read about it online at www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/pubs/WorkStudy/.

The Corporation has summarized data reported to the Department of Education on Federal Work Study for Community Service usage. If you would like to see how your institution's usage compares to other institutions, you can view this report online at www.nationalservice.org/resources/.

For new and continuing programs operated by higher education institutions that are applying for funding, applicants should describe their institution's efforts to support community service under FWS. Specifically include the percentage of your school's 2001-2002 FWS funds that were used for community service placements and your plans for further efforts in this area. We will use this information in determining whether to make an award to your institution.

Prohibited Activities

In August of 2002, the Corporation published regulations concerning prohibited activities under AmeriCorps subtitle C programs. These regulations state:

What activities are prohibited in AmeriCorps subtitle C programs?

(a) while charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or the Corporation, staff and members may not engage in the following activities:

(1) attempting to influence legislation;
(2) organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
(3) assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
(4) impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
(5) engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
(6) participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
(7) engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
(8) providing a direct benefit to--
    (i) a business organized for profit;
    (ii) a labor union;

(iii) a partisan political organization;
(iv) a nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
(v) an organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (g) of this section, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities; and

(9) such other activities as the Corporation may prohibit.

(b) individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-Corporation funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.

In the future, as called for under the proposed Citizen Service Act, the Corporation anticipates publishing regulations that set forth additional compliance requirements for AmeriCorps programs in a variety of areas, including requirements affecting programs that: refer individuals for federal assistance; conduct sex education; serve children; and transport minor children. We will invite grantee comment on these issues, including the timing of implementation, before final regulations are issued.

Types of Application Submissions

First-time Applicants

If you are applying for the first time to become an AmeriCorps*State/Indian Tribe/South Dakota/Education Awards Program/U.S. Territory; or AmeriCorps*National program, you must submit an application following these guidelines and the specific program's application forms and instructions.

Continuing Programs

If your program seeks funds for its second or third year of operation within a multi-year grant period, you must submit a continuation request as described in the application instructions entitled "Continuation Instructions." Please read these carefully.

AmeriCorps Programs in the Final Year of Grant Cycle

If your program is in its final year of a grant cycle, you must submit a new application following these guidelines and the specific program's application forms and instructions. Your application must include a summary describing your program's impact and accomplishments for the previous three years of Corporation funding. **This summary is a requirement of the application. If you receive Corporation program funds and you omit this section, we will not review your application.** In addition to your application, our staff will review and consider previous grant performance information and data from our management information systems, including enrollment and retention rates and impact data. We will consider the quality of your program and the extent to

which you have successfully met your outcome objectives in determining whether to recommend funding for a new grant.

Summer Programs

We encourage but do not require you to operate a summer program as a component of your year-round program, or to expand your operations during the summer months. Care must be taken to ensure that the summer component is consistent with the overall mission of your program and that you do not design it as separate from the year-round operation. You should also make sure that your summer program instills the ethic of service in the participants and is not just a summer job. Any members you add for a summer period must complete at least 300 hours of service.

Terms of Service

Programs may engage members full-time or less than full-time. Full-time members must serve at least 1700 hours during a period of not less than nine months and not more than one year. Half-time members must serve at least 900 hours during a period of one or two years as indicated in the approved budget. No member can serve less than 300 hours during a one-year period. Programs may propose at least 300 hours for minimum-time, at least 450 hours for quarter-time, and at least 675 hours for reduced half-time members based on the program design. However, within a program, we generally require all reduced half-time, quarter-time, and minimum-time members to serve the same number of hours. If any less than full-time program has a need for greater flexibility, we will consider a proposal for two different sets of hours within the same program.

Title	**# of Hours**	**Education Award**
Full-time	at least 1700	$4,725.00
One Year Half-time	at least 900	$2,362.50
Two Year Half-time	at least 900	$2,362.50
Reduced half-time	at least 675	$1,800.00
Quarter-time	at least 450	$1,250.00
Minimum-time	at least 300	$1,000.00

Cost Per Member

The requirements in the following table apply to the cost per member that may be paid with Corporation funds.

AmeriCorps*State	AmeriCorps*National, South Dakota, U.S. Territories, Indian Tribes	AmeriCorps*Education Awards Program, Promise Fellows
Average budget cost per member, across all programs within a state, is $12,800. The maximum cost for any individual program is $16,000.	Maximum cost per member is $12,800.	Not applicable.

Member Living Allowance

The minimum fiscal year 2003 living allowance for a full-time member is $9,900. By law, the amount of the living allowance that you may pay members with the Corporation's and other federal funds may not exceed 85% of the minimum living allowance, or $8,415. We do not set a minimum living allowance for members serving in Education Awards programs.

The maximum living allowance that may be paid with all sources of funds is $19,800 for full-time members and is set for anything less than full-time according to the chart on the page below

We do not require you to provide a living allowance to half-time, reduced half-time, quarter-time, and minimum-time members. If you choose to provide any less than full-time members with a living allowance, you may use the chart below to determine the maximum amount you may provide and the maximum Corporation share. Please note that if your half-time program requires more than 900 but less than 1,700 hours, you may prorate the maximum living allowance to be between $9,900 and $19,800, but the maximum federal share remains $4,455.

	# of hours[1]	Maximum Total Living Allowance	Maximum Federal Share of Living Allowance[2]
Full-Time	1700	$19,800.00	$8,415.00
One Year Half-Time	900	$ 9,900.00	$4,455.00
Two Year Half-Time	900	$ 9,900.00	$4,455.00
Reduced Half-Time	675	$ 7,425.00	$3,341.00
Quarter-Time	450	$ 4,950.00	$2,227.00
Minimum-Time	300	$ 3,300.00	$1,485.00

A living allowance is not a wage. The Corporation will continue to work with other federal agencies, states, and local entities so that they treat the living allowance appropriately for determining eligibility for other assistance categories, such as unemployment insurance.

Member Living Allowance Exceptions

Prior Existence: If your program existed prior to the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (enacted September 21, 1993), the law does not require you to provide living allowances to your members. If you choose to offer living allowances, they are exempt from the minimum requirement but not from the maximum requirement. Thus, you may offer full-time members living allowances between $0 and $19,800. Even if the allowance is less than $9,900, the portion that you may pay with the Corporation's and other federal funds cannot exceed 85%. For

[1] Represents the minimum number of hours a member serves.

[2] Federal share of living allowance is fixed for all positions regardless of hours served (this is current policy of FT and HT positions); programs have the option of adding more than 15% to increase member living allowance; programs are not required to provide living allowance to less than full-time members.

example, if a program chooses to pay its full-time members $5,000, the Corporation will pay up to 85% of that amount, or $4,250.

Waiver or Reduction of Living Allowance: We may, at our discretion, waive or reduce the living allowance requirements of your program. You must demonstrate to our satisfaction that such requirements are consistent with the objectives of your program. Additionally you must show that without living allowances, members will be able to meet the necessary and reasonable costs of living in the area in which the program is located. These costs include food, housing, and transportation.

Residential Program: If we have granted a waiver or reduction of the living allowance and your program provides your members room and board, we will consider, on a case-by-case basis, allowing the portion of that living allowance that may be paid using Corporation and other federal funds to be between 85% and 100%.

Professional Corps: A professional corps program may recruit and place qualified AmeriCorps members in positions as teachers, nurses, doctors, police officers, lawyers, architects, engineers, or other professionals helping to meet critical needs in communities with inadequate numbers of such professionals. Public or private nonprofit employers must sponsor AmeriCorps members and agree to pay 100 percent of AmeriCorps members' salaries and benefits (excluding the national service education award that we provide). Such salaries may exceed the maximum living allowance allowed in other national service programs.

Child Care and Health Insurance

[Not applicable to Education Awards Program]

Child Care

We directly fund child care for any full-time member who is eligible for and needs such assistance to participate in the program. We pay 100% of the allowance as defined by payment rates of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). We can provide technical assistance to your program and can help you determine member eligibility, provider eligibility, and child care allowance. Direct payments will be made to the child care providers. Therefore, do not include child care assistance in your AmeriCorps budget. We base member eligibility for child care on need. Members' needs must be consistent with the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990:

- total family income of members must be less than 75% of the state median income, as defined by the state under CCDBG guidelines;
- members must reside with and be a parent or guardian of a child under the age of 13.

When you accept members in your program that are receiving and continue to receive child care assistance from other sources such as a parent or guardian, they are ineligible for child care from your program. On the other hand, if members become ineligible for assistance because of their enrollment in your program, or

the member certifies that he or she needs child care to participate in the program, you must provide child care.

Health Insurance

You must provide full-time members with health insurance at the time of acceptance into your program if the member is not otherwise covered by a health insurance policy that provides the minimum benefits described below. If a member who previously had coverage loses it through no deliberate act of his or her own, such as parental or spousal job loss, you must provide the member with basic health insurance that meets our requirements.

You may obtain health insurance for your members through any provider you choose, as long as the policy provides the minimum benefits and is not excessive in cost. We pay 85% of the cost of a policy that meets the above requirements as long as we do not determine the cost to be excessive. We do not pay any share of the cost of the policy that does not include the minimum benefits. Nor do we cover any person other than members. In general, we do not pay the costs of health benefits for half-time members unless they serve full-time for a sustained period of time. For example, members may receive benefits when they serve in a summer program for thirty-five hours per week with other members who receive health benefits.

Minimum Benefits

If your program has health insurance coverage, the coverage must provide or exceed these minimum benefits.

Covered Services: Physician services for illness or injury, hospital room and board, emergency room, x-ray and laboratory, prescription drugs.
Limited Coverage: Mental/nervous disorders, substance abuse.
Annual limits

Deductible: Not more than $250 per individual.
Coinsurance: Member pays no more than 20% or alternatively, comparable fixed fee. Exception: mental and substance abuse may require a 50% co-payment.
Out-of-pocket: Not more than $1,000 per individual.
Maximum Benefit: At least $50,000.

If you elect to use a current health insurance policy that meets the above minimum benefit requirements, upon selection we may require you to provide specific information on the benefits and policy.

Child Care and Health Insurance for Education Awards Programs

The AmeriCorps Education Awards Programs does not require that you provide either child care or health insurance for members. However, it may be offered by the local program that is responsible for the members.

National Service Identity and Service Gear

We ask that you identify your program as part of the national service network and as a program in which AmeriCorps members serve. You can do this by using AmeriCorps logos, common application materials, and other means. You are not required to call your program AmeriCorps, though you may use the AmeriCorps name along with your own program's name.

You may use grant funds to pay for a standard Service Gear package (AmeriCorps T-shirt, sweatshirt, hat, pin, decals, and buttons) for members. While it is optional, we encourage you to provide this package to your members. The standard Service Gear package is priced at $35. Many AmeriCorps members serve in settings where a shirt with a collar is the appropriate attire. If your members need the shirt with a collar, you may include an additional amount of up to $35, for a maximum total of $70 of Corporation funds per member in your budget. We will also reimburse up to $150 per member for additional safety apparel that is necessary for members to perform their daily service with a justification in the budget narrative. Gear can be ordered online at www.nationalservicecatalog.org.

Reasonable Accommodation For People with Disabilities

Increasing the participation of people with disabilities in national and community service programs is a key interest of the Corporation. We encourage all AmeriCorps programs to actively reach out to and include people with disabilities. Programs and activities must be accessible. You must provide reasonable accommodation to known mental or physical disabilities of otherwise qualified members, service recipients, applicants, and program staff. All selections and project assignments must be made without regard to the need to provide reasonable accommodation. By far, the vast majority of accommodations are inexpensive. For those limited cases where reasonable accommodations are more costly, there may be money available to provide accommodations for members serving in an AmeriCorps program.

Participation in National Days of Service

As part of the National Service Network, there are a number of opportunities for your programs to take part in national service days. We expect all national service programs, including AmeriCorps programs, to participate in one or more days of service, including the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, National Volunteer Week, Youth Service Day, and Make a Difference Day. In addition, we expect programs with AmeriCorps members to participate in other national service activities such as common opening ceremonies (including the administration of an oath or affirmation), orientations, and training.

Oath

During the coming year, the Corporation anticipates making available to programs for their use not only the existing AmeriCorps pledge related to service, but an oath comparable to that signed by AmeriCorps*VISTA members that incorporates the principles contained in the Federal oath of office and in the oath taken to become a citizen of the United States.

GRANT TERMS AND REQUIREMENTS

Grant Period

We generally provide funding for a three-year project period. Applications must include proposed activities and a detailed proposed budget for the first year of operation and program objectives for a one-year period.

If we approve your application and enter into a multi-year award agreement, we will usually provide funding at the outset only for the first year of the program. The Corporation has no obligation to provide additional funding in subsequent years. Funding for the second and third years of an approved program is contingent upon the availability of funds, adequate performance including satisfactory progress in relation to the approved objectives, submission of proposed changes in activities or objectives, a detailed budget and budget narrative for the applicable program year, and any other criteria established in the award agreement.

In addition, Congress is considering changes to the Corporation's authorizing statutes. If changes are enacted, they will have an effect on grants supported by the Corporation, and will likely require changes in the grant, including potentially the grant period. The Corporation will work with grantees to assure the effective implementation of any changes and improvements made by Congress to our programs.

Amounts of Grants and Restrictions

The grant amount will vary by circumstance, need, and program model. You may have only one application covering a particular project pending before the Corporation at one time. For example, if a national nonprofit organization includes a local affiliate in its application to us, the local affiliate may not seek additional funds for the same project through an AmeriCorps*State application.

Federal Financial Management and Grant Administration Requirements

As with all federal grant programs, it is the responsibility of all grantees funded by the Corporation to ensure appropriate stewardship of federal funds entrusted to them. Under our regulations, each grantee must maintain financial management systems that provide accurate, current, and complete disclosure of the financial results of its program. To meet this requirement, you must have adequate accounting practices and procedures, internal controls, audit trails, and cost allocation procedures. OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Nonprofit Organizations, requires all organizations to have financial audits if they annually expend $300,000 or more under federal awards. This requirement applies to the organization's total expenditures each fiscal year under all of its federal awards, not just an AmeriCorps grant.

As with all federal grant programs, you must ensure that your programs or activities, including those of any subgrantees, will be conducted, and facilities operated, in compliance with the applicable civil rights statutes and their implementing regulations. You must obtain assurances of such compliance prior to extending federal financial assistance to subgrantees. For civil rights purposes, all programs and projects funded or

receiving service members under the National and Community Service Act, as amended, are programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. See your grant provisions for specific requirements.

The Corporation's requirements related to program participation, including discrimination requirements, are set forth in applicable grant provisions.

REVIEW PROCESS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

We frequently receive far more applications then we can award. We select applications using an extensive, multi-stage process that may include reviews by state commissions, peer review panels, and Corporation staff with approval by our Chief Executive Officer.

During the peer review process we use outside experts including community service practitioners, educators, administrators, former national service participants, and specialists in the areas of environment, public safety, education, homeland security, and other human needs to evaluate the quality of applications. During the staff review we determine the relative quality among applications but also consider statutory funding requirements. We may conduct clarifying interviews in person or through conference calls.

SELECTION CRITERIA

We use the following criteria to determine quality and select programs and projects that will receive assistance.

PROGRAM DESIGN (60%)

Needs and Service Activities

- Well-documented compelling community need
- Well-designed activities with appropriate performance measures
- Well-defined roles for participants that lead to measurable outcomes or impact
- Previous history of accomplishments in the proposed activity areas
- Effective involvement of target community in planning and implementation
- Ability to provide or secure effective technical assistance

Member Development

- Effective plans for recruiting, developing, training, supervising, and recognizing participants
- Well-designed activities that promote an ethic of service and civic responsibility
- Well-designed plan to engage participants in high-quality service learning as defined by the Corporation[1]

Strengthening Communities

- Developing community resources, including recruiting and managing volunteers, with appropriate performance measures
- Strong community partnerships, including well-defined roles for faith- or community-based organizations

[1] We encourage all applicants to include service-learning activities in their program design. However, this is only a selection criterion for Learn and Serve America.

- Potential for sustainability
- Enhanced capacity building of organizations and institutions
- Bring together people of different backgrounds

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (25%)

- Ability to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight
- Sound track record of accomplishment as an organization
- Well-defined roles for staff and administrators
- Well-designed plan or systems for self-assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement

BUDGET/COST EFFECTIVENESS (15%)

- Commitment of applicant organization or host agency to securing resources, i.e., non-federal support, for program implementation or sustainability
- Adequate budget to support program design
- Cost-effective within program guidelines

The bullets under each sub-heading describe what we consider important and what you should include in your application narrative. Program Design includes three sub-categories and represents 60 percent of the basis we use to evaluate and select each program. The sub-categories of Participant Development, Strengthening Communities, and Needs and Service Activities are related and are therefore grouped in a single Program Design criteria. The Corporation will give equal importance to these subcategories when judging applications.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following is a list of considerations we will give to applications in making final selections:

- programs that are high-quality, innovative, have the potential to be replicated by programs in other areas, and that can sustain themselves or the service activities with other support when the grant period ends;
- programs that collaborate with or propose to foster Federal Work Study students in community service;
- a wide range of program designs and approaches to community service that meet community needs;
- programs that are geographically diverse across the state, region, or country and include urban and rural areas;
- programs that sponsor AmeriCorps activities in areas of high concentrations of low-income people;
- programs in areas affected by military downsizing; and
- programs that demonstrate they can effectively develop and administer an AmeriCorps program with proper supervision, monitoring, evaluation, and financial controls.

In addition, we seek a participant pool that includes young and older adults, a balance of individuals who have not attended college and those with college education experience, approximately equal numbers of men and women, individuals with disabilities and individuals of all races, ethnicities, faiths, and economic backgrounds.

PROGRAM SUPPLEMENTS

AMERICORPS*NATIONAL

Responsibilities of the Parent Organization

AmeriCorps*National applications must clearly identify the parent organization, defined as the single entity responsible for implementing and managing the proposed AmeriCorps program. An operating site is a local organization responsible for managing, operating, and reporting on a high-quality program. Depending on program design, the operating site may also be responsible for receipt and disbursement of grant funds.

A parent organization may also act as an intermediary, serving to perform certain financial and management tasks where an operating site might not have the capacity to do so. An intermediary organization will typically support the involvement of faith- or small, community-based organizations in the AmeriCorps*National program.

We seek to develop high-quality service programs operated by parent organizations that have:

- national or multi-state networks;
- the existing capacity needed to monitor and support a national service program; and
- experience in operating similar programs.

The parent organization must demonstrate a strong institutional commitment of personnel, resources, training, and technical expertise. We recommend that parent organizations develop strong and well-coordinated multi-site programs rather than loosely tying together several local programs that should have applied through their state commissions.

The parent organization has several crucial roles and responsibilities in operating a high quality, multi-site AmeriCorps program. All parent organizations are expected to:

- select high-quality operating sites;
- provide ongoing monitoring, technical assistance, and support to operating sites;
- assist in member recruitment, especially with national strategies;
- conduct appropriate training for staff and members;
- foster an ethic of service;
- assist in the coordination of AmeriCorps efforts with state commissions and other local Corporation-funded programs;
- provide strong financial management for the aggregate program and at sites;
- act as liaison between the Corporation and the operating sites;
- work with sites to develop long-term sustainability;

- develop and conduct an aggregate program evaluation;

- ensure that operating sites that receive federal funds (either from the parent organization or other sources) obtain financial statement audits as required under the OMB Circular A-133, obtain and review the audit reports, and follow up on corrective action taken for relevant audit findings;
- establish procedures (in conjunction with obtaining, reviewing, and following up on audit reports) and carry out continuous monitoring of financial management, program performance, and performance measurement at operating sites; and
- submit timely aggregate financial and program reports.

Planning Grants

The Corporation is accepting planning grant applications for the 2003 – 2004 program year to assist faith- or small, community-based organizations in their development of a strong AmeriCorps program design. The purpose of planning grants is to bring small community- or faith-based programs to the verge of implementation so that they may compete successfully for operating assistance in the following grant cycle. The Corporation will make planning grants available to eligible applicants that have identified a sound concept for a national service program, but that require resources in order to plan, develop, and prepare the program for implementation. While the amounts and terms of planning grants will vary by circumstance and need, in general they will range up to $50,000 and cover a period of six months to a year**.** All planning grants are subject to a minimum 33% grantee share. See the planning grant section in the application instructions for specific details.

COORDINATION WITH STATE COMMISSIONS

*[applicable to Education Awards and AmeriCorps*National]*

The National and Community Service Act of 1990 requires the establishment of an independent non-partisan commissions in each state to assume responsibility for the distribution and expenditure of funds related to AmeriCorps*State programs, including commission-supported Education Awards Programs and Learn and Serve community-based organizations. In addition to their grantmaking responsibilities, state commissions operate according to a unified plan for service in the state, including statewide events, opportunities for training and technical assistance, and networking between service programs. All programs with AmeriCorps members in a state are considered part of the AmeriCorps network in that state and are expected to have an active and positive relationship with their state commission.

State commissions are responsible for coordinating all Corporation-related service in their states including technical assistance and support to Education Awards Programs that are subgrantees of the Corporation.

Each Education Awards Program and AmeriCorps*National program should maintain regular communications with its state commission and keep the commission informed of program progress, specifically:

- consult with the commission in each state where AmeriCorps members will be placed. Outcomes of this consultation and agreed-upon steps to be taken to ensure that the program fits into the commission's overall priorities in the application planning process should be included in your application;
- give the commission a summary of the program and member activities within the state;
- notify commissions of new sites that have not been determined at the time of application as soon as the site selection occurs;
- place the state commission on mailing lists;
- keep the commission informed of any general training and technical assistance needs of your operating sites;
- participate whenever possible in events, training, and meetings and the development of state plans for service; and
- respond in a timely fashion to requests, invitations, and communications.

We also invite commissions to submit their views about applications to us and we may consider such views in the review process. See our website at www.nationalservice.org for a complete list of AmeriCorps*State Commission contacts.

EDUCATION AWARDS

Addressing Key Application Elements

The Education Awards program can present a special challenge to sponsoring organizations, since the Corporation currently provides up to $400 per full-time equivalent member to carry out the national service program. A sponsoring organization typically will have to use non-Corporation sources to support the program. At the same time, since the Corporation is making a substantial investment of federal resources by providing education awards for members of Education Award programs, it expects to see as many of the key elements of these guidelines (as identified on pages 5-7) incorporated into these programs as possible.

We expect that the implementation of these elements by Education Award programs will vary in nature and extent. We also anticipate, however, that applicants may develop creative approaches to addressing these key elements with the resources provided or committed from non-Corporation sources. The intent of the guidelines is to encourage applicants to develop, and then to describe in their applications, the approach that makes sense for their individual programs. If there are instances where you are unable to include an element of the guidelines as part of your program, please include an explanation in your application. Your explanation will be considered during the grant application review process.

Fixed Amount Grant Awards

Upon approval, we will make a Fixed Amount Grant Award that reduces the administrative burdens related to grant management and fiscal reporting for grant

recipients. This strategy also streamlines the grant award process for us. It is based on the premise that the reasonable and necessary costs inherent in carrying out the program significantly exceed the amount of assistance provided by the Corporation.

You are not required to keep separate records to document expenditures or provide financial status reports to us. Instead, the actual amount of the grant is tied explicitly to program performance. You may be awarded up to $400 per FTE, and enrollment of members is the critical standard for entitlement to the grant funds. Generally a program that fails to enroll members for whom it was awarded grant funds may not ultimately be entitled to those funds.

Grantees may treat the grant funds as funds available to support the program overall. Fixed Amount Awards do not require adherence to Federal Cost Principles. We will not issue budget requirements that you must follow. However, Federal Administrative Requirements do apply to grantees, as defined in the Education Awards Program provisions that accompany a grant award.

AMERICORPS PROMISE FELLOWS PROGRAM

In 1998, the Corporation launched the AmeriCorps Promise Fellows program to provide a leadership cadre of full-time AmeriCorps members—the AmeriCorps Promise Fellows—to spearhead state and local efforts to deliver the five promises of America's Promise to children and youth. Since then, the program has been funded as a demonstration program, using innovative features such as the fixed amount award.

For 2003, the Corporation is integrating the AmeriCorps Promise Fellows program with its standard ("subtitle C") AmeriCorps*State and National grants program. Current AmeriCorps Promise Fellow grantees will apply for Corporation funding in 2003 in accordance with the requirements and priorities established in these guidelines. All program requirements, such as volunteer recruitment and management, citizenship education, faith- and small, community-based organizations, will apply to grants currently funded as AmeriCorps Promise Fellow programs.

There are, however, potentially some unique aspects of the AmeriCorps*Promise Fellows grants that may be continued. Through the ongoing reauthorization and appropriation processes, the Corporation is seeking authority to issue fixed amount awards for subtitle C. The outcome of these legislative processes will affect how the Corporation can issue grants next year to current AmeriCorps Promise Fellow grantees. Therefore, we will issue supplemental guidance as soon as the outcome of these efforts is known to provide additional instruction about how these awards will be made.

U.S. TERRITORIES AND INDIAN TRIBES WAIVERS

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended (NCSA), and the Corporation's grant provisions require recipients of AmeriCorps funds to provide match

for funds they receive from the Corporation. In light of 48 U.S.C. §1469a, which requires that departments and agencies waive "any requirement for local matching funds under $200,000 (including in-kind contributions) required by law" for Guam, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands, the Corporation waives the AmeriCorps matching requirements for those territories. Additionally, the Corporation will consider requests to waive the maximum cost per member for the territories listed above.

In addition, in compliance with Executive Order 13175, we will handle waiver requests from Indian tribes in an expedited manner.

APPENDIX A – CITIZENSHIP GOALS FOR AMERICORPS MEMBERS

A successful applicant will provide training and use the service experience to help members acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to be active citizens of communities--local, state, and national. This primarily means enhancing members' understanding of how our democracy works and the value of their playing an active role in it.

Citizenship goals for AmeriCorps programs to consider adopting for their members are to:

- foster within themselves and among their team members positive attitudes regarding the value of lifelong citizenship and service for the common good;
- discuss and explore their community and the people, processes, and institutions that are most effective in improving community conditions;
- enhance their ability to plan effective service projects that respond to real community needs; and
- develop the social, cultural and analytical skills necessary to effectively participate in American democracy.

In achieving these goals, programs could assist AmeriCorps members in attaining the following educational outcomes:

Knowledge

Members will:

- recognize the variety of characteristics and actions of effective, participating citizens;
- identify and describe the community in which they live;
- understand and be capable of explaining the role and importance of the voluntary sector in our nation;
- understand and be capable of explaining how the principles set out in the Declaration of Independence, and the Preamble to the Constitution, are related to the voluntary sector;
- identify, define, and describe local problems and their connection to problems on the state and national levels; and
- discuss and explore the variety of ways an individual can help solve community problems.

Skills

Members will:

- process and evaluate information for objectivity, accuracy, and point of view;
- apply information to effective efforts to help solve social problems;
- assess the consequences of and appropriate context for personal action;
- further develop and use critical-thinking skills and ethical reasoning to make informed and responsible decisions;

- further develop and use verbal and written communication skills to convey ideas, facts and opinions in an effective and reasonable manner;
- work cooperatively with others and develop effective teambuilding practices;
- effectively advocate individual and shared interests; and
- assess and apply their AmeriCorps experiences for future educational or professional development.

Attitudes

Members will:

- respect what we have in common as Americans;
- recognize and respect the different backgrounds of Americans;
- develop a sense of personal efficacy;
- understand that rights and freedoms require accepting civic responsibilities; and
- foster within themselves the value of service, the importance of continued involvement in the community, and attachment to the principles of freedom and equality on which our nation rests.

APPENDIX B – PERFORMANCE MEASURES

As stated in the Performance Measures and Accountability section of the guidelines on page 27, the Corporation is placing increased emphasis on the importance of performance measures as both a program management tool and a means by which to communicate program impact. The approach presented in this document builds upon the history of AmeriCorps program managers' efforts to measure results and implements findings from a recently completed study by the Urban Institute that is available on the Corporation's website at www.nationalservice.org/research/index.html.

Performance measures are intended to be a useful tool for program managers to define and communicate **the need** their program will address and **the impact** the program will have. The measures provide indicators as to whether the program is having the intended effect.

Defining performance measures is just one step in the program design phase. If it is helpful, you may want to use a standard framework (called a "logic model") to help you 1) think through each of the different activities in which your AmeriCorps members will engage, 2) identify the likely result of those activities, and 3) determine how to measure those results. The table below is an example of how you might structure your approach to defining activities and measures to accomplish a specific goal. The table is illustrative only; you do not have to include this table in your application.

Goal: AmeriCorps members help high-school students increase school success and positive behavior

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	Intermediate OUTCOMES	End- OUTCOMES	MEASURES
Staff; AmeriCorps members; and high-school students with low grades and poor school attendance	AmeriCorps members mentor youth in three one-hour sessions each week during the school year.	30 AmeriCorps members spent 120 hours each with 30 high-risk teenagers.	59% of teens being mentored improved school attendance 67% improved attitudes toward school 64% improved attitudes toward family life	95% had no contact with juvenile justice system during the program 70% were promoted to the next grade level 23% obtained employment	*School attendance records *Youth surveys *Criminal justice records *Employer surveys

For each major activity you should think through what the likely outputs, intermediate-outcomes, and end-outcomes might be. Below are definitions; however, it is important to note that assigning a measure to these categories is not a science. You should use this categorization as a way to help organize your thinking and recognize that there is not a "right" or "wrong" answer as each program will have its own set of circumstances.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE DEFINITIONS

Output indicators -- specify a count of the amount of service members or volunteers have completed, but do not provide information on benefits or other changes in the lives of members and/or beneficiaries.

Intermediate-outcome indicators -- specify a change that has occurred in the lives of beneficiaries and/or members, but is still short of a significant, lasting benefit for them.

End-outcome indicators -- specify a change that has occurred in the lives of beneficiaries and/or members that is significant and lasting.

Once you determine your program activities and define how to track your progress, you will choose which measures you want to report to the Corporation/State Service Commission. Remember, you only have to report one output, one intermediate-outcome and one end-outcome. These three measures could pertain to three different activities (for one activity you report only on outputs, for a second activity you report only on intermediate-outcomes, and for a third activity you report only on end-outcomes). Or, you could take one activity and apply each of the measurement types to it as shown in the school success example above.

After you have chosen which measures to report, you will fill out the objective worksheets enclosed in the application packet. This year, we have redesigned the worksheet to reflect the Corporation's heightened emphasis on performance measurement. The worksheets will prompt you to identify which type of measure you will use for each objective, what activity will lead to the output, intermediate-outcome, or end-outcome you have identified, and the measurement method. These new objective worksheets will be a part of the e-grants system. We encourage you to make use of the performance measurement objective worksheets early in the process of completing your application, as experience indicates well-constructed objectives are essential to a quality application.

A few examples follow. See the application instructions for more details.

Outputs Examples

Environment
6 members and 40 volunteers (providing 3000 hours of volunteer service) will conduct a series of neighborhood cleanup projects to improve the safety and usability of neighborhood parks, as measured by attendance logs.
Other Human Needs
15 members and 50 volunteers (providing 3500 hours of volunteer service) will organize and pack food and clothing at a local distribution center, with 3,000 at-risk individuals receiving aid as measured by the organization's distribution logs.
Education
10 members will train 400 residents through 2 workshops on ways to prevent or better address environmental problems in the community, as documented by workshop sign-in sheets.

Intermediate-outcomes examples

Volunteer Recruitment
10 Members will recruit and manage 100 volunteers (providing 800 hours of service) to prepare and deliver nutritious meals twice a week to homebound HIV/AIDS patients, as measured by volunteer time sheets.

Member Development
40 members will receive training in housing counseling, problem-solving, and construction in order to increase members' abilities to serve homeless and low-income persons, as measured by 100% of members receiving certification as Housing Counselors or Construction Assistants from the Federation of Appalachia Housing Enterprises (FAHE).

Community Strengthening
10 members will recruit 32 families (100 students) to participate in a parent-child reading activity resulting in 80% of parents reporting at least a one hour increase in parent-child reading each week as reported through weekly family diaries of reading activities.

Capacity Building
5 members will help expand the community computer center's programs to include fee-based courses, which will generate an additional $5,000 in revenue to sustain the center's free community services, as reported on accounting records.

End-outcomes examples
Education
12 Members will provide 7,650 hours of in-class tutoring to 85 elementary school students with 80% of students currently reading *below basic* increasing to at the least the *basic* reading level, as measured and documented by the Stanford Achievement Test Series, Ninth Edition.

Public Safety
20 members will assist victims of domestic violence to make personal safety plans, get temporary restraining orders, and find alternative living situations or housing resulting in an 80% decrease in repeat calls to police (as documented by police reports).

Other Human Needs
5 members and 15 volunteers (generating 600 hours of volunteer service) will provide job search training at the county career center to unemployed immigrants to improve their employability, resulting in a 30% increase in the number of job placements as documented by the center's annual reports.

Member Development
Members will increase their belief that they can participate in and improve civic life, as measured by a standardized questionnaire.

The Corporation plans to make available, on our website and through technical assistance resources, information that will facilitate the development of objectives and assist in the long-term implementation of performance measures within national and community service. Check our website – www.nationalservice.org – for information on performance measurement topics. We recommend that you use any of the following resources in developing your performance measures:

- *Evaluation Toolkit: A User's Guide to Evaluation for National Service Programs* www.projectstar.org/star
- *W.W. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook* www.wkkf.org/pubs/Pub770.pdf
- *Measuring Volunteering: A Practical Toolkit* www.independentsector.org/research/toolkit/default.html
- *Online Evaluation Resource Library* www.oeri.sri.com
- *Center for Accountability and Performance* www.aspanet.org/cap/index.html
- *Outcome Measurement Resource Toolkit, United Way of America* www. national.unitedway.org/outcomes
- *Urban Institute Report on the Corporation's performance measurement at* www.nationalservice.org/research/index.html.
- *The Results & Performance Accountability Implementation Guide* www.raguide.org/Default.htm

We also encourage programs, when needed, to seek the help of local or regional professionals to perform and oversee performance measurement activities, including the development of a plan that encompasses the collection of and reporting on outcome data that will be used to improve program quality.