Serve Kentucky Request for Applications Guidance
2024-25 AmeriCorps State Grants – Planning Grant

General Information and Timeline

Serve Kentucky is the conduit for federal funds from the AmeriCorps federal agency. Single state applicants must go through Serve Kentucky's Request for Applications (RFA) process and may not apply directly to AmeriCorps. The legal authority for Serve Kentucky to award AmeriCorps subgrants is found in the Kentucky Revised Statues (KRS 194A.578).

This guidance is specifically for new planning grant applicants. This application process is a two-part process. The first part will occur outside of the online federal eGrants system. Organizations will submit a planning grant application and budget narrative worksheet to Serve Kentucky for review, modification (as applicable), and approval. Once approved by Serve Kentucky, organizations will be instructed to enter the information into eGrants.

Developing and implementing a new AmeriCorps program can be an overwhelming proposition - even for the most capable organization. Program design, member management, site relationships, and evaluation are just a few of the variables that factor into the initial process. It takes time and resources to sort it all out - exactly what a planning grant provides.

Application documents should be emailed to AmeriCorps@ky.gov.

Serve Kentucky Formula Planning Grant RFA Timeline

Jan. 11, 2024	Serve Kentucky RFA Guidance released
Feb. 22, 2024	Intent to Apply due to Serve Kentucky via online survey
Feb. 28, 2024	Grant application, additional documents, and match waiver requests due to Serve Kentucky
Mar. 1-22, 2024	Internal and External Grant Review
Mar. 25, 2024	Grant review feedback provided to applicants
April 4, 2024	Revised competitive grant applications due to Serve Kentucky
April 12, 2024	Notification of Commission decision to submit applications to the AmeriCorps competition
Feb. 28-April 4, 2024	Serve Kentucky Resolution period
April 22, 2024	Kentucky Formula applications submitted to AmeriCorps via eGrants (goal date)
May 17, 2024	Kentucky Formula applications submitted to AmeriCorps via eGrants (actual due date)

Required Resources

Applicants are required to complete applications for funding in accordance with:

- 2024 Serve Kentucky Request for Applications (This will be your main document)
  - 2024 AmeriCorps State and National Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO or Notice)
  - 2024 Mandatory Supplemental Information
  - 2024 Application Instructions
  - 2024 Performance Measure Instructions for Planning Grants

Serve Kentucky serves as the State Commission referenced in the NOFO and other AmeriCorps documents. These and other resources are located on both the [Serve Kentucky website](#) and [AmeriCorps website](#).

Note: Dates referenced in the NOFO materials are for National Directs (programs operating in multiple states) and State Commissions such as Serve Kentucky. At no time during the process should single state applicants contact AmeriCorps directly.

Training and Technical Assistance

Current and potential applicants may request [one-on-one training and technical assistance online](#) before the grant application deadline. Resources will also be posted on the [Serve Kentucky website](#).

Serve Kentucky Requirements

The grant period is a twelve-month period, beginning **September 1, 2024 and ending August 31, 2025.** Applicants must submit a copy of the IRS letter of 501(c)3 status, if applicable.

Budget

- Planning Grant applicants may request up to $75,000 in federal AmeriCorps funds.
- All new applicants are required to provide match funding at 24% of the total budget amount.

In addition to the general requirements in the Application Instructions, Kentucky applicants must budget for:
- Travel costs (lodging, meals, mileage, etc.) for staff to attend the "KY AmeriCorps Accelerator," an annual training event including a swearing-in ceremony, to mark the kick-off the AmeriCorps service year (typically a two-day event held in Central Kentucky during October).
- Travel costs for program staff to attend Serve Kentucky-sponsored training/technical assistance meetings (four meetings, including a 2-day event).
  - Recommended: travel costs for program staff to attend regional conferences sponsored by [America's Service Commissions](#).
- Adequate Program Staffing (Personnel costs may be on the federal share, grantee share or a split).
- Administrative/indirect costs up to **1% for Serve Kentucky** (see budget instructions for details).
- The cost of conducting [National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC)](#) for all staff members listed on the budget narrative worksheet.
  - Serve Kentucky recommends budgeting $80 per person. This amount is an overestimate but covers the potential for unforeseen (and allowable) expenses related to conducting a compliant NSCHC process.

Please note: Subgrantees may not begin charging expenses to the AmeriCorps grant until a signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and Grant Award are in place. The Grant Award incorporates the approved application as part of a binding commitment under the grant, as well as the AmeriCorps regulations and grant provisions.

Application Review Information

Serve Kentucky's internal and external application review will align with the application review information criteria published in the AmeriCorps NOFO. Serve Kentucky staff will review all applications to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completeness requirements. If an application meets compliance standards, Serve Kentucky staff will assess each application's content. Some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information and/or make changes to their application, including program design, budget, or statistical support information. A request for clarification from AmeriCorps or Serve Kentucky does not

guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to requests for additional information in a timely fashion may result in the removal of the application from consideration.

Grant Review Panel and Program Committee

Serve Kentucky Commissioners and an external Grant Review Panel will review applications. The panel is comprised of current and former commissioners, individuals familiar with National Service programs, and volunteers with federal grant experience. All grant reviewers are required to each sign forms certifying (1) that they have no real or perceived conflicts of interest, and (2) that they will not disclose any confidential information about the programs until after the grant review process is completed.

Assessment Criteria

The grant review panel will assess each of the applications based on how well the applicant answers the questions and follows the directions included in the NOFO and Application Instructions. Funding is not guaranteed for any applicant – even for a current subgrantee, continuation or recompete applicant.

The Commission Program Committee assesses applications on risk and past performance, when applicable. In addition to the feedback provided by the grant review panel, the Commission Program Committee may take other factors into consideration, including governor-identified priorities, state, and local needs, focus areas, funding priorities, geographical and target populations.

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