

Serve Kentucky Request for Proposals Guidance 2020-21 AmeriCorps State Grants – **Competitive**

Revised 11/14/19

General Information and Timeline

Serve Kentucky is the conduit for federal funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Single state applicants must go through Serve Kentucky’s request for proposals (RFP) process, and may not apply directly to CNCS. The legal authority for Serve Kentucky to award AmeriCorps subgrants is found in the Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS 194A.578).

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in **evidence-based or evidence-informed** interventions/practices to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust that members can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

Serve Kentucky Competitive RFP Timeline

October 18, 2019	Intent to Apply due to Serve Kentucky via online survey
November 8, 2019	Grant applications due to Serve Kentucky via eGrants by 5 p.m. Eastern
November 12, 2019	Additional documents due to Serve Kentucky via email by 5 p.m. Eastern
December 10, 2019	Grant review feedback provided, applications returned via eGrants for revisions
December 16, 2019	Revised competitive grant applications due to Serve Kentucky via eGrants by 5 p.m. Eastern
December 16-20, 2019	Serve Kentucky Resolution/Clarification period
December 20, 2019	Notification of Commission decision to send applications forward to the CNCS competition
January 3, 2020	Kentucky competitive applications submitted to CNCS via eGrants by 5 p.m. Eastern

Required Resources

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

- [2020 AmeriCorps State and National Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO or Notice\)](#)
- [2020 Mandatory Supplemental Guidance \(MSG\)](#)
- [2020 Application Instructions](#)
- [2020 Performance Measure Instructions](#)

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

Submitting Additional Documents:

- **All applicants:** Evaluation briefs, reports, studies. Please refer to the *Evidence Base* section of the NOFO and Mandatory Supplemental Guidance (MSG) for detailed instructions by evidence tier.
- **Recompeting applications:** Evaluation report, if required. Please see the Evidence Tiers definitions in the MSG and Section E. *Evaluation Plan* of the NOFO for further information.
- **New and Recompeting applications:** [CNCS Financial Management Survey](#)
- **New applicants:** [Serve Kentucky Organization Readiness Assessment](#)

Note: Do not send additional documents to the CNCS inbox referenced in the NOFO; it is for State Commission use only.

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

All current subgrantees should apply for competitive funds, regardless of their current funding stream or year in their current grant cycle. However, Serve Kentucky retains the right to allow an exemption – **if requested and approved in advance of the grant application deadline**. Exemption requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by Serve Kentucky staff. Examples of reasonable exemption requests include, but are not limited to, the probability of significant staff change, lack of staff or leave of absences (retirement, maternity leave, staff position not filled, etc.), and/or anticipation of or planning for significant program design changes. Programs funded less than 3 years should contact Serve Kentucky to discuss if an exemption is appropriate.

Exemption requests must be submitted via [email](#) by 5 p.m. EST on **October 18, 2019**.

Note: Applications not approved by the Serve Kentucky Commission to be submitted to the national competition and any application submitted but not awarded a competitive grant may apply for formula funding in early Spring 2020.

Application

- All applicants must propose program designs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. Applicants assessed as lower than the Preliminary evidence tier (i.e., Pre-Preliminary) must provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality review criteria in order to be considered for funding.
- The grant period is a twelve-month period, beginning August 1, 2020 and ending July 31, 2021.
- New applicants are eligible for cost reimbursement grants only. Recompeting and continuation applicants are eligible for fixed amount or cost reimbursement, pending Serve Kentucky approval. Continuation applicants must submit a new application to be considered for the fixed amount grant.
- Maximum allowable federal reimbursement is \$15,479 per member service year (MSY).
- Minimum living allowance for full-time members is \$14,279 – please refer to the Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance table on page 11 of the 2020 NOFO.
- A first-time successful applicant is required to provide match funding at 24% of the total budget amount during the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50% by year ten, according to the cost reimbursement grants match requirements chart found on page 6 of the 2020 NOFO and 45 CFR §2521.60.
- Applicants are required to meet the CNCS evaluation requirements as identified in the 2020 NOFO.
- Continuation applicants may request to increase or reduce funding and/or slots.

Budget

In addition to the general requirements in the Application Instructions, Kentucky applicants must budget for:

- Travel costs (lodging, meals, mileage, etc.) for members and staff to attend “Launch,” 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 mid-October).
 - Recommended: travel costs for member mid-year training event (typically a two-day event held in two regional locations during mid-April).
- 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 CNCS share, grantee share or a split.)
 - For programs with 20 or less members, you must budget for 100% usage of a full-time program director, or the equivalent of 100% split between no more than two individuals, such as a program director and member coordinator.
 - For programs with more than 20 members, you must budget for one full-time program director and full- or part-time member coordinator.
- Administrative/indirect costs up to 1% for Serve Kentucky (see budget instructions for details).
- CNCS-compliant member management and reporting system, such as America Learns’ AmeriCorps Impact Suite or OnCorps Reports.
- The cost of conducting National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC) for members and non-members in a “covered position,” such as program staff, organization staff that receives part of their salary through the grant and/or site supervisors. CNCS strongly recommends the use of the two approved NSCHC vendors: Fieldprint and Truescreen.
- One Member Service Year (MSY) is equivalent to one 1,700-hour full-time AmeriCorps position. New or entry-level grant applications are encouraged to request the equivalent of eight full-time members (8 MSYs) to be cost-effective.
- CNCS and Serve Kentucky reserves the right to re-open the RFP and/or reallocate funding if member slots are not filled in a timely manner, or in the event of disaster or other compelling need for service.

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 on pages 16-24 of the 2020 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 CNCS 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

Applications will be reviewed by a grant review panel and the Commission Program Committee. The panel is comprised of current and former commissioners, individuals familiar with CNCS National Service programs, and volunteers with federal grant experience. The Program Committee is comprised of Serve Kentucky commissioners. 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 if a current subgrantee, continuation or recompetete 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, geography and target populations. For more information, refer to the grant review tools posted on the Serve Kentucky website.