

Serve Kentucky ARP Formula Request Instructions: Guidance for New Planning Grants

American Rescue Plan Information

Serve Kentucky has received American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act funds in one large allocation, which we will be strategically awarding over the next three years in accordance with AmeriCorps federal guidance. The following instructions are for the FY21 (2021-2022) program year request.

As per AmeriCorps guidance, ARP funds can be used for the purposes of:

1. Increasing the living allowance (programs can request up-to the new minimum living allowance of \$16,000 for full-time members, with prorated amounts for less-than-full-time members);
2. providing cash match replacement funds (for cash match that is not already secured); and/or
3. Expanding national service to new communities.

This guidance is specifically for new planning grant applicants. This ARP 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.

Application documents should be emailed to AmeriCorps@ky.gov by **Tuesday, October 12, 2021.**

Once approved by Serve Kentucky, the commission will submit a request to the AmeriCorps federal agency reopen Kentucky's FY21 formula prime to allow applicants to submit in eGrants. The AmeriCorps federal agency has not yet released the timeline for awards.

Application Document Checklist

1. [Formula Application Template for Planning Grants](#)
2. [Budget Narrative Worksheet for Planning Grants](#)

General Information

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

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.

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](#).

Serve Kentucky Requirements

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.
 - Please note, there is a match waiver in place for FY21 programs. An applicant will still need to provide some match, as costs must be incurred before reimbursement can be requested. Please reach out to Serve Kentucky staff with questions about match.

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 “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).
- 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.
 - Serve Kentucky strongly recommends grantees utilize the two AmeriCorps-contracted vendors to conduct the required NSCHC processes: [Fieldprint and Truescreen](#).
 - Failure to conduct compliant NSCHC may result in significant disallowed costs.
- Serve Kentucky reserves the right to deny ARP requests or to fund them at a level lower than requested.
- By submitting an ARP Funding request to Serve Kentucky, you are certifying your intention to use the funds in their entirety for the goals outlined above by AmeriCorps and Serve Kentucky under the American Rescue Plan Act.

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.

National Guidance Documents

Applicants should complete applications for funding in accordance with:

- [2021 AmeriCorps State and National Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO or Notice\)](#)
- [2021 Mandatory Supplemental Information](#)
- [2021 Application Instructions](#)
- [2021 Performance Measure Instructions](#)

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.

Application Review Information

Serve Kentucky's internal and external application review will align with the application review information criteria published on pages 17-25 of the 2021 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 recompetite 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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