

## Serve Kentucky Request for Proposals Guidance 2021-22 AmeriCorps State Grants – COMPETITIVE

*Released October 1, 2020*

### 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 Statues (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 8, 2020	Intent to Apply due to Serve Kentucky via <a href="#">online survey</a>
November 10, 2020	Grant applications due to Serve Kentucky via <a href="#">eGrants</a> by 5 p.m.
November 10, 2020	Additional documents due to Serve Kentucky via <a href="#">email</a> by 5 p.m.
December 10, 2020	Grant review feedback provided, applications returned via eGrants for revisions
December 14, 2020	Revised competitive grant applications due to Serve Kentucky via eGrants by 5 p.m.
December 15-21, 2020	Serve Kentucky Clarification period
December 18, 2020	Notification of Commission decision to submit applications to the CNCS competition
December 22-30, 2020	Serve Kentucky Resolution period
January 4, 2021	Kentucky competitive applications submitted to CNCS via eGrants by 5 p.m.

### Required Resources

Applicants are **required** to 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](#)

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 documents must be submitted via email to [AmeriCorps@ky.gov](mailto:AmeriCorps@ky.gov).

- **All applicants:** Evaluation briefs, reports, studies. Please refer to the *Evidence Base* section of the NOFO and Mandatory Supplemental Instructions 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:** [Operational and Financial Management Survey \(OFMS\)](#) as a Word document (PDF will not be accepted).
- **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 recompute subgrantees should apply for competitive funds**, regardless of their current funding stream. However, Serve Kentucky retains the right to allow an exemption – **if requested and approved in advance of 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.

Exemption requests must be submitted via [email](#) by 5 p.m. EST on **October 8, 2020**.

*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 2021.*

## 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, 2021 and ending July 31, 2022 or beginning September 1, 2021 and ending August 31, 2022.
- 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.
- Minimum living allowance for full-time members is **\$15,100** – please refer to the Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance table on pages 11-12 of the 2021 NOFO.
- Maximum allowable federal reimbursement is **\$16,300** per member service year (MSY). For Professional Corps and Education Award Programs, refer to the table on page 12 of the 2021 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 7 of the 2021 NOFO and 45 CFR §2521.60.

- Applicants are required to meet the CNCS evaluation requirements as identified in the 2021 NOFO and 2021 Mandatory Supplemental Instructions.
- Continuation applicants may request to increase or reduce funding and/or slots. Please note that expansions requests are seldom approved.

## 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 one full- or part-time member coordinator.
- Administrative/indirect costs up to **2% 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 all members and non-members in a “covered position” (program/organization staff that receives all or part of their salary through the grant and/or site supervisors listed as in-kind on the budget narrative).
  - Serve Kentucky recommends budgeting \$100 per member or non-members in a covered position. 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 CNCS-contracted vendors to conduct the required NSCHC processes: [Fieldprint and Truescreen](#).
  - Failure to conduct compliant NSCHC may result in significant disallowed costs.
- 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.
- Member gear: AmeriCorps members must wear an AmeriCorps logo on a daily basis – preferably clothing with the AmeriCorps logo. Items with the AmeriCorps logo are a required budget expense.

*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.*

*Please note: 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.*

## 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 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

Serve Kentucky Commissioners and an external Grant Review Panel will review applications. The panel is comprised of current and former commissioners, individuals familiar with CNCS 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 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, geographical and target populations. For more information, refer to the grant review tools posted on the Serve Kentucky website.