AmeriCorps Tennessee Planning Grant

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY AND INSTRUCTIONS | 2024-2025

Announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity

Commission Name: Volunteer Tennessee, Tennessee Commission on Volunteerism and Service
Federal Agency: Corporation for National and Community Service (dba AmeriCorps)
CFDA Number: 94.006

AmeriCorps is a national service program designed to improve lives and foster civic engagement utilizing **AmeriCorps Members** in full- or part-time terms of service. Members commit their time to address critical community needs like increasing academic achievement, mentoring youth, fighting poverty, sustaining national parks, preparing for disasters, and more.

This *Notice* is for **AmeriCorps Tennessee Planning Grants**. A planning grant provides financial support to organizations that will be developing an AmeriCorps program that will place AmeriCorps members in service solely within Tennessee. Grant recipients are awarded up to **$75,000** for a **12-month planning period to start no earlier than August 1, 2024** and are expected to be better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle, 2025-2026. A planning grant will not be used to support AmeriCorps members.

Applications will discuss bringing the AmeriCorps program to an organization for the first time or expand existing programs and to prepare the organization to administer an AmeriCorps State program in the future (with priority given to organizations seeking to focus on development of internal controls, hiring and training new staff, re-focusing and training existing staff, developing AmeriCorps specific policies and procedures, training in the areas of AmeriCorps Member Recruitment, Enrollment, Data Collection Systems, Member Supervision, or Cost Reimbursement Grant management, etc.)

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee's legal authority to award these grants is found in the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, (NCSA) (42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.).

Disclosure: Publication of this Notice does not obligate Volunteer Tennessee to award any specific number of grants or to obligate any particular amount of funding.

Important Dates

- **January 10, 2024 – Planning Grant Notice of Intent to Apply:** All interested applicants are required to submit the Notice of Intent to Apply to Latiyfa Fields at Latiyfa.Fields@tn.gov by 3:00 p.m. CST.

- **February 13, 2024 – Planning Grant Application Deadline:** Planning Grant applications are due in eGrants by 3:00 p.m. CST. Late applications in whole or in part will not be accepted. This includes:

    o   Pre-Award Risk Assessment information due from new AmeriCorps Applicants

    o   Verification of SAM/CCR registration due from all AmeriCorps Applicants

- **May 6, 2024 – Application Notification:** Successful applicants will be notified no later than May 6, 2024.

- **August 1, 2024 –** Start date for Planning Grant activities.

Please visit www.volunteertennessee.net for the comprehensive timeline - Planning grants will follow the formula grants timeline.

Program Design

AmeriCorps planning grants are awarded for the purpose of allowing an organization to plan and prepare for applying for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle, in this case 2025-2026. **AmeriCorps members are not included in a planning grant award.**

All planning grants must propose a program design that aligns with one of the six AmeriCorps identified focus areas:

- Disaster Services. Grant activities will provide support to increase the preparedness of individuals for disasters, improve individuals' readiness to respond to disasters, help individuals recover from disasters, and/or help individuals mitigate disasters.

- Economic Opportunity. Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people; help economically disadvantaged people to have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy; transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing; and/or have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed.

- Education. Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged children; improved school readiness for economically disadvantaged young children; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low- achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or support economically disadvantaged students prepare for success in post-secondary educational institutions.

- Environmental Stewardship. Grants will support responsible stewardship of the environment, while preparing communities for challenging circumstances and helping Americans respond to and recover from disruptive life events: programs that conserve natural habitats; protect clean air and water; maintain public lands; support wildland fire mitigation; cultivate individual and community self-sufficiency; provide reforestation services after floods or fires.

- Healthy Futures. Grants will provide support for activities that will address the opioid crisis; increase seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible; and/or increase physical activity and improve nutrition with the purpose of reducing obesity.

- Veterans and Military Families. Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength; increase the number of veterans, wounded warriors, military service members, and their families served by AmeriCorps-supported programs; and/or increase the number of veterans and military family members engaged in service through AmeriCorps-supported programs.

Eligibility Information

To be considered for this Planning Grant funding, an applicant must meet all criteria under *Eligibility Information.*

- Applicants must propose AmeriCorps program designs that will operate solely within the state of Tennessee.

- Applications must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an Employer Identification Number. The UEI does not replace an Employer Identification Number. A UEI may be obtained at no cost online with the System for Award Management (SAM).

- All applicants must register with the System for Award Management (SAM) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete and, if a grant is awarded, throughout the life of the award. SAM registration must be renewed annually. **Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and address on all grant applications to Volunteer Tennessee**.

- The following Non-Federal Entities (as defined in 2 CFR §200.69) who have a UEI and are registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) are eligible to apply:

  o Indian Tribes (2 CFR §200.54)

  o Institutions of Higher Education (2 CFR §200.54)

  o Local Governments (2 CFR §200.64)

  o Nonprofit Organizations (2 CFR §200.70)

- The applicant organization will have and submit at the time of application submission, a Single Audit or an Independent Financial Audit from its most recently audited fiscal year.

- Under section 132A(b) of the NCSA, organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this *Notice*.

- Note that under section 745 of Title VII, Division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, if AmeriCorps is aware that any corporation has any unpaid Federal tax liability which 1) has been assessed, 2) for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and 3) that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant

to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, that corporation is not eligible for an award under this *Notice[1]*.

- Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 USC 501(c)(4) that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for AmeriCorps funding.

Award Information

Applicants may apply for up to a maximum of $75,000 to support planning grant activities.

The project period for these grants is up to one year (12 months). The project start date will be August 1, 2024 or later.

Applicants must provide **24% of the total project costs in match**. Match may be cash or in-kind. Section 121(e)(5) of NCSA (42 USC 12571(e)) requires programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant to report the amount and source of these funds to Volunteer Tennessee on an AmeriCorps Financial Report. Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout.

Application and Submission Information

All applicants are required to apply using eGrants, AmeriCorps' online application system. The eGrants system can only be accessed from the AmeriCorps website (https://egrants.cns.gov/). Instructions for creating an eGrants account can be accessed here.

Contact the National Service Hotline at 800-942-2677 or https://americorps.gov/contact if a problem arises while creating an account, preparing, or submitting an application. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the funding opportunity to which your organization is applying.

In eGrants:

- At the bottom of the home page, click on **Start a New Application**

- Select **AmeriCorps** for your program area

- Select the following NOFA: **FY 2024 AmeriCorps State and Territory Commission (New and Continuations)**

- The next page will prompt you to select the state in which you are applying, select **Tennessee**

- Select the following Prime Application ID: 24AC261916

- When choosing a Program Name, choose a title such as: "**[YOUR PROGRAM NAME] – AmeriCorps Planning Grant**"

Additional documents: Applicants are required to submit the following additional documents by the application submission deadline. Additional Documents must be emailed to volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov with the following subject line: Planning Grant Applicant - [Legal Applicant Name]- [Application ID number]. Emails should include the following information:

- The legal applicant name and point of contact information

- The application ID number

- A list of documents that are attached to the email

- Individually saved files that are clearly labeled.

- Files that include the legal applicant's name and application ID number in the body of each document. Documents to be submitted include via email:

- Current indirect cost rate agreement, if used to claim administrative/indirect costs.

- Organizational Chart - The Organizational Chart that is submitted must clearly show where the AmeriCorps program would be within the Organization.

- Independent Financial Statement Audit from the most recently audited fiscal year or

- Single Audit from the most recently audited fiscal year (*if applicable*)

Do not submit other items not requested in this *Notice*. Volunteer Tennessee will not review or return them.

Application Criteria

Each applicant must describe a plan to develop a project that will deploy AmeriCorps members to solve a systemic community problem. Volunteer Tennessee urges applicants to submit high quality applications that carefully follow the guidance in this *Notice.* The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization receives funding. Applications will only be considered for review if each section is complete.

I. Applicant Info

II. Application Info

III. Narratives

IV. Performance Measures

V. Program Information

VI. Documents

VII. Funding/Demographics

VIII. Budget

IX. Review, Authorize, and Submit

I. APPLICANT INFO

Information entered in the Applicant Info, Application Info and Budget sections in eGrants will populate the SF-424 Facesheet. Select "New" since this will be a new application type. Enter or update the requested information in the fields that appear. The contact person needs to be the person who can answer questions about the application.

II. APPLICATION INFO

Enter information specific to the legal applicant organization and the proposed AmeriCorps program as follows:

- Areas affected by your proposed program. For city or county information, please follow each one with the two-letter capitalized state abbreviation TN.

- Requested project period start and end dates. You may request a start date of August 1, 2024. Exceptions to the start dates may be considered in exceptional circumstances. The project period is for one year, if you select August 1, 2024 as your start date, then your end date would be July 31, 2025.

- State Application Identifier: Enter N/A

- Indicate Yes or No if you are delinquent on any federal debt. If yes, send explanation to volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov.

- Leave the box for "Program Initiative" blank.

III. NARRATIVE

Respond to each of the following in the order in which the item is presented. The eGrants narrative must not exceed **10 pages**. Volunteer Tennessee will consider the number of pages only as they print out from the "Review" tab in eGrants (where you will see the "View/Print your application" heading) when determining compliance for page limits. Volunteer Tennessee will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods in determining whether an application complies with the applicable page limits. Volunteer Tennessee strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the "Review" tab prior to submission to check that the application does not exceed the page limit.

Executive Summary

Fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary. Do not deviate from the template. The [Name of the organization] proposes to develop an AmeriCorps program serving in [the location(s) the AmeriCorps program will serve] that will focus on the AmeriCorps focus area(s) of [Focus Area(s)]. The AmeriCorps investment of $[amount of request] will be matched with $[amount of projected match],

$[amount of local, state, tribal, and federal funds] in public funding and $[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding. No AmeriCorps members will be needed to execute this plan.

Program Design (50 points) Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the following criteria below.

Describe why you are applying for a planning grant and what you hope to achieve during the one- year planning period, including but not limited to:

- The systemic community problem you plan to solve with your AmeriCorps program.

- Evidence that the need exits.

- Why AmeriCorps members are well suited to address the need.

- How you will determine the most appropriate AmeriCorps member activities to address the identified need.

- The target community(ies) the program would serve.

- Creation of a process for selecting operating and service sites (if applicable).

- Describe a clear and logical planning process, including:

    o A detailed description of the planning process and which staff are leading it.

    o A well-developed timeline for planning activities.

    o A clear description of how the planning period will be used to develop the necessary components to effectively manage an AmeriCorps program in the future.

Organizational Capability (25 points) Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the following criteria below.

- Identify the primary program and fiscal contacts for the grant application and include secondary contacts, if applicable.

    o Describe the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan the proposed program.

    o Describe any prior experience in the proposed area of programming.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 points) This criterion will be assessed based on the budget submitted. No narrative should be entered in the narrative box except for "See Budget."

- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors and proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award.

    o Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.

- o   is in compliance with the budget instructions.

- o   24% Match is submitted with adequate information included in the "Source of Funds" section to support the amount written in the budget.

- o   The submitted request is equal to or less than the maximum allowed for a planning grant, $75,000.

Applicants must complete the budget and ensure the following information is in the budget section in eGrants:

- o   Current indirect cost rate if used to claim indirect/administrative costs.

- o   Identify the non-AmeriCorps funding and resources necessary to support the project.

- o   Indicate the amount of non-AmeriCorps resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash), the sources of these commitments, and if the commitments are "secured" or "proposed".

Evaluation Summary or Plan (0 points). Enter N/A.

Amendment Justification (0 points). Enter N/A.

Clarification Information (0 points). Enter N/A.

Continuation Changes (0 points). Enter N/A.

IV.   PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The eGrants system requires that all applicants submit a placeholder performance measure with their planning grant application. The placeholder performance measure should reflect program outputs and outcomes that could be achieved if the planned AmeriCorps program were to be implemented. The placeholder performance measure is an estimate only and will not be scored.

Applicants should use the AmeriCorps' Performance Measure Instructions for developing the placeholder Performance Measure. See *Appendix I* for instructions on entering Performance Measures into the eGrants Performance Measures Section.

V.   PROGRAM INFORMATION

For each item, select either Yes or No from the drop-down menu.

VI.   DOCUMENTS

In addition to the application submitted in eGrants, you are required to submit the Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS) and your federally approved indirect cost agreement.

(if applicable and as indicated in this *Notice*), as part of your complete application.

- **Evaluation:** Select "Not Applicable".

- **Federally Approved Indirect Cost Agreement:** Applicants that include a federally-approved indirect cost rate amount in their budget must submit the approved indirect cost rate agreement to Volunteer Tennessee at **volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov** at the same time they submit their application.

- **Labor Union Concurrence:** Select "Not Applicable".

- **Other Documents:** Select "Sent". Applicants must submit the Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS) to Volunteer Tennessee at volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov at the same time they submit their application. The OFMS is intended to collect information about the capacity of applicants to manage federal grant funds.

VII.   FUNDING/DEMOGRAPHICS

Enter 0 or N/A for all fields.

VIII.   BUDGET

The proposed budget should be sufficient to allow you to perform the tasks described in your narrative. Reviewers will consider the information you provide in this section in their assessment of the Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy selection criteria. As detailed budget information is entered, eGrants will automatically populate a budget summary and budget narrative report. eGrants will perform a limited compliance check to validate the budget. If it finds any compliance issues you will receive a warning and/or error message. All errors must be resolved before the budget can be submitted.

As you prepare your budget:
- All the amounts you request must be defined for a particular purpose. Do not include miscellaneous, contingency, or other undefined budget amounts.
- Itemize each cost and present the basis for all calculations in the form of an equation.
- Do not include unallowable expenses, e.g., entertainment costs (which include food and beverage costs) unless they are justified as an essential component of an activity.
- Do not include fractional amounts (cents).

Section I. Program Operating Costs

A.   Personnel Expenses

Under "Position/Title Description," list each staff position separately and provide salary and percentage of effort as percentage of FTE devoted to this award. Each staff person's role listed in the budget must be described in the application narrative and each staff person mentioned in the narrative must be listed in the budget as either AmeriCorps (federal) or Grantee (match) share. Because the purpose of this grant is to enable and stimulate volunteer community service, do not include the value of direct community services performed by volunteers. However, you may include the value of volunteer services contributed to the organization for

organizational functions such as accounting, audit work, or training of staff.

Volunteer Tennessee **requires** that new programs include the cost for a staff person who will be the Primary Program contact for a future AmeriCorps State grant. This person may be a Program Manager, Program Director, etc. The expectation is that this person would spend at least 75% of their time on the Planning Grant and 100% of their time on a future AmeriCorps state grant.

B. *Personnel Fringe Benefits*

Under "Purpose/Description" identify the types of fringe benefits to be covered and the costs of benefit(s) for each staff position. Allowable fringe benefits typically include FICA, Worker's Compensation, Retirement, State Unemployment Tax Act (SUTA), Health and Life Insurance, IRA, and 401K. You may provide a calculation for total benefits as a percentage of the salaries to which they apply or list each benefit as a separate item. If a fringe benefit amount is over 30%, please list covered items separately and justify the high cost. Holidays, leave, and other similar vacation benefits are not included in the fringe benefit rates but are absorbed into the personnel expenses (salary) budget line item.

C. *1. Staff Travel*

All travel expenses must adhere to the State's Comprehensive Travel Regulations available here https://www.tn.gov/finance/rd-doa/fa-travel.html.

Describe the purpose for which program staff will travel. Provide a calculation that includes itemized costs for airfare, transportation, lodging, per diem, and other travel-related expenses, multiplied by the number of trips/ staff. Where applicable, identify the current standard reimbursement rate(s) of the organization for mileage, daily per diem, and similar supporting information. Reimbursement should not exceed the federal mileage rate unless a result of applicant policy and justified in the budget narrative. Only domestic travel is allowable.

Volunteer Tennessee **requires** all applicants to include funds to send Primary Program and Primary Fiscal staff members to up to three required Commission sponsored meetings. These may include the Tennessee Conference on Volunteerism and Service-Learning (TCVSL) and New AmeriCorps Staff Training. These events are typically held in Middle Tennessee and are typically two days in length. The required budget component above should be entered as "Commission Sponsored Meetings" and should be itemized. For example: Two staff members will attend TCVSL in Franklin, TN. 300 miles (roundtrip) @$0.655 + 2 days x $150 lodging x 2 staff+ $35 per diem x 2 staff = $866.50.

C. *2. Member Travel*

Do not enter costs in this line.

D. *Equipment*

Do not enter costs in this line.

E. *Supplies*

Include the amount of funds to purchase consumable supplies and materials. You must individually list any single item costing $1,000 or more.

F. *Contractual and Consultant Services*

Include costs for consultants related to the project's operations, except training consultants, who will be listed in Section G., below. There is not a maximum daily rate.

Volunteer Tennessee recommends that applicants consider utilizing consultants during the planning process to assist with areas such as developing or reviewing internal controls, data collection systems, etc.

G. *1. Staff Training*

Include the costs associated with training staff on project requirements and training to enhance the skills staff need for effective project implementation, i.e., project or financial management, data systems, etc. If using a consultant(s) for training, indicate the estimated daily rate. There is not a maximum daily rate.

G. *2. Member Training*

Do not enter costs in this line.

H. *Evaluation*

Do not enter costs in this line.

I. *Other Operating Costs*

Allowable costs in this budget category should include when applicable:

a. Three-part National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHCs) (including FBI fingerprint checks) for all employees or other individuals who receive a salary, or stipend or similar payment from the grant (federal or non-federal share).

b. Office space rental for projects operating without an approved indirect cost rate agreement that covers office space. If space is budgeted and it is shared with other projects or activities, the costs must be equitably pro-rated and allocated between the activities or projects.

c. Utilities, telephone, internet, and similar expenses that are specifically used for AmeriCorps project staff and are not part of the organizations indirect cost allocation pool. If such expenses are budgeted and shared with other projects or activities, the costs must be equitably pro-rated and allocated between the activities or projects.

d. Gifts and/or food in an entertainment/event setting are not allowable costs as either AmeriCorps or Grantee share.

Section II. Member Costs

Do not enter costs into Section II.

Section III: Administrative/Indirect Costs

Administrative costs are general or centralized expenses of the overall administration of an organization that receives AmeriCorps funds and do not include particular project costs. These costs may include administrative staff positions. For organizations that have an established indirect cost rate for federal awards, administrative costs mean those costs that are included in the organization's indirect cost rate agreement. Such costs are generally identified with the organization's overall operation and are further described in the Uniform Guidance.

Options for Calculating Administrative/Indirect Costs (choose A, B, OR C)

Applicants can choose to use one of three methods to calculate allowable administrative costs – (1) a CNCS fixed percentage rate method or (2) a state or federally approved indirect cost rate method, or (3) a de minimis method. Regardless of the option chosen, the CNCS (federal) share of administrative costs is limited to 5% of the total CNCS funds **actually expended** under this grant. Do not create additional lines in this category.

Applicants using a state or federally approved indirect cost rate are required to enter information about the rate into eGrants. Use the IDCR eGrants Instructions for guidance on how to enter this information.

A. CNCS-Fixed Percentage Method

Five/Ten Percent Fixed Administrative Costs Option

The CNCS-fixed percentage rate method allows you to charge administrative costs up to a cap without a federally approved indirect cost rate and without documentation supporting the allocation. If you choose the CNCS-fixed percentage rate method (Section IIIA in eGrants), you may charge, for administrative costs, a fixed 5% of the total of the CNCS funds expended. In order to charge this fixed 5%, the grantee match for administrative costs may not exceed 10% of all direct cost expenditures.

1. To determine the maximum CNCS share for Section III: Multiply the sum of the CNCS funding shares of Sections I and II by 0.0526. This is the maximum amount you can request as Corporation share. The factor 0.0526 is used to calculate the 5% maximum amount of federal funds that may be budgeted for administrative (indirect) costs, rather than 0.0500, as a way to mathematically compensate for determining Section III costs when the total budget (Sections I + II + III) is not yet established. Enter this amount as the CNCS share for Section III A.

2. To determine the Grantee share for Section III: Multiply the total (both CNCS and grantee share) of Sections I and II by 10% (0.10) and enter this amount as the grantee share for Section III A.

3. Enter the sum of the CNCS and grantee shares under Total Amount.

Volunteer Tennessee requires sub-grantees to allocate 1% of Administrative/Indirect Costs to Volunteer Tennessee to cover Commission-level administrative costs. All applicants must include

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this 1% Commission Administrative cost in their budgets even if the applicant decides not to request Administrative/Indirect Costs for its own use. To calculate these fractional shares, within Section III of the subgrant budget, **one-fifth (20%) of the federal dollars budgeted for administrative costs is allocated to the Commission's share and four-fifths (80%) of the federal dollars budgeted for administrative costs are allocated to the program's share. The allocation between Commission and subgrantee/program shares would be calculated as follows:**

([Section I] + [Section II] x 0.0526) x (0.20) = Commission Share (in the CNCS/AmeriCorps column)

([Section I] + [Section II] x 0.0526) x (0.80) = Subgrantee Share (in the CNCS/AmeriCorps column)

B. Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate

If you have a federally approved indirect cost rate, this method must be used, and the rate will constitute documentation of your administrative costs, not to exceed the 5% maximum federal share payable by AmeriCorps. Specify the Cost Type for which your organization has current documentation on file, i.e., Provisional, Predetermined, Fixed, or Final indirect cost (IDC) rate. Supply your approved IDC rate (percentage) and the base upon which this rate is calculated (direct salaries, salaries and fringe benefits, etc.). AmeriCorps does not restrict the overall indirect cost rate claimed. It is at your discretion whether or not to claim your entire IDC rate to calculate administrative costs. If you choose to claim a lower rate, please include this rate in the Rate Claimed field.

1. Determine the base amount of direct costs to which you will apply the IDC rate, including both the CNCS and Grantee shares, as prescribed by your established rate agreement (i.e., based on salaries and benefits, total direct costs, or other).

2. 2. To determine the CNCS share: Multiply the sum of the CNCS funding share in Sections I and II by 0.0526. This is the maximum amount you can claim as the CNCS share of indirect costs.

3. If a Commission elects to retain a share of the 5% of federal funds available, please note the percentage or amount in the text. There is no separate line item to show this calculation.

4. 3. To determine the Grantee share: Subtract the amount calculated in step 2 (the CNCS share) from the amount calculated in step 1 (the Indirect Cost total). This is the amount the applicant can claim as grantee share for administrative costs.

C. De Minimis Rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs

Organizations who do not currently have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate (except for those non-federal entities described in Appendix VII to Part 200—States and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, paragraph (d)(1)(B)) and who receive less than $35 million in direct federal funding may indefinitely use a de minimus rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). Additional information regarding what is included in MTDC and use of this option can be found at 2 CFR 200.414(f) and 200.68. If you elect to use this option, you must use it consistently across all federal awards.

1. Determine the base amount of direct costs to which you will apply the de minimis rate, including both the CNCS and Grantee shares. MTDC includes all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award).

MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of $25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs. Once you determine the base, multiply the appropriate costs by 0.10. This will determine the total amount of costs allowable in this section.

2. To determine the CNCS share: Multiply the sum of the CNCS funding share in Sections I and II by 0.0526. This is the maximum amount you can claim as the CNCS share of indirect/administrative costs. Volunteer Tennessee elects to retain 1% of federal funds available, so please note the percentage or amount in the text. There is no separate line item to show this calculation.

3. To determine the Grantee share: Subtract the amount calculated in step 2 (the CNCS share) from the amount calculated in step 1 (the total Indirect Costs allowed). This is the amount the applicant can claim as grantee share for indirect/administrative costs.

Source of Funds

AmeriCorps Planning Grants are required to include match/cost share at 24% of total program costs. The acceptable sources of matching funds are federal, state, local, private sector, and/or other funds in accordance with applicable AmeriCorps requirements.

AmeriCorps legislation permits the use of non-AmeriCorps federal funds as match for the grantee share of the budget. Please discuss your intention of using federal funds to match an AmeriCorps grant with the other agency prior to submitting your application. Section 121(e)(5) of the National Community Service Act requires that grantees that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant report the amount and source of these funds to AmeriCorps. If you use other federal funds as match, you must ensure you can meet the requirements and purpose of both grants. Grantees that use federal funds as match will be required to report the sources and amounts on the AmeriCorps Financial Status Report (FSR).

In the "Source of Funds" field that appears at the end of Budget Section III, enter a brief description of the match. Identify each match source separately. Applicants are **required** to identify if each source of match is "secured" or "proposed". Include dollar amount, the match classification (cash or in-kind), and the source type (Private, State/Local, or Federal) **for your entire match**. Define all acronyms the first time they are used. The total amount of Source of Match **must equal exactly** the total Grantee Share amount from the budget narrative as well as the total amount reported in the Executive Summary.

IX.   REVIEW, AUTHORIZE, AND SUBMIT

eGrants requires that you review and verify your entire application before submitting. Read the Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications carefully. The person who authorizes the application must be the applicant's Authorized Representative or his/her designee and must have an active eGrants account to sign these documents electronically. An Authorized Representative is the person in your organization authorized to accept and commit funds on behalf of the organization. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Be sure to check your entire application to ensure that there are no errors before submitting. eGrants will also generate a list of errors if there are sections that need to be corrected prior to submission when you verify the application. If someone else is acting in the role of the applicant's authorized representative, that person must log into his/her eGrants account and proceed with Authorize and Submit. After signing off on the Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications, his/her name will override any previous signatory that may appear and show on the application as the Authorized Representative.

Note: Anyone within your organization who will be entering information in the application at any point during application preparation and submission in the eGrants system **must have their own eGrants account**.

Individuals may establish an eGrants account by accessing this link: https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp and selecting "Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account."

Review and Selection Criteria

Criteria: The assessment of applications involves a wide range of factors and considerations. Volunteer Tennessee reviewers and staff will apply their experience and expertise in evaluating applications. The review and selection process will produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and selection factors described in this Notice.

Eligibility Review: Volunteer Tennessee staff will review all submitted applications to determine compliance with eligibility, deadline, and completeness requirements. Applicants will be notified of initial intake eligibility within 24 hours of submission of an application.

Review: Volunteer Tennessee reviewers and staff will assess the entire application. Some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information and/or make changes to their application including changes to the budget. Applications may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked clarification questions. A request for clarification does not guarantee a grant award. Failure to respond to requests for additional information in a timely manner may result in the removal of an application from consideration.

Prioritization: Volunteer Tennessee will give special consideration to ensure geographic, demographic, and programmatic diversity across the AmeriCorps Tennessee portfolio, and those that meet the stated priority areas in the 2024 AmeriCorps Tennessee Notice of Funding Opportunity. Applicants proposing programs that receive priority consideration are not guaranteed funding.

Risk Assessment Evaluation: Volunteer Tennessee staff and Commission will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant, including conducting due diligence to ensure an applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding or the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If Volunteer Tennessee determines that an award will be made, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed may be applied to the award. In evaluating risk, Volunteer Tennessee may consider the following:

- Financial stability;

- Quality of financial management systems and ability to meet the administrative standards prescribed in applicable OMB guidance;

- History of performance as reflected in the applicant's record in managing previous Volunteer Tennessee
  awards (if applicable), including:

  - Timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements, and

  - If applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards;

- Information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualifications or financial integrity information, such as System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

- Reports and findings from single audits performed under 2 CFR 200 Subpart F (Single Audit) and findings of any other available audits;

- IRS Tax Form 990;

- An applicant organization's annual report;

- Publicly available information including information from an applicant organization's website; and

- The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

Selection for Funding: With a goal of a diversified portfolio based on the *Notice* priorities and strategic considerations, the staff will provide a recommended portfolio for consideration by the Volunteer Tennessee Commission. Volunteer Tennessee will make funding decisions based on the availability of formula dollars.

Feedback to Applicants: Each applicant will receive the results of the review pertaining to their application. Feedback will be based on the review of the original application and will not reflect any information that may have been provided in response to clarification questions, if any.

Federal Adward Administration Information

A. **AmeriCorps Regulations**

The Grant Award (contract) incorporates the approved application as part of the binding commitments under the grant award, as well as the requirements of applicable sections of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 and other applicable statutes. The full regulations are available online at www.ecfr.gov. In addition to being thoroughly familiar with the regulations, applicants should read application guidelines carefully as well as the regulations published in the Federal Register (45 C.F.R. §§ 2520-2550). As with all federally funded programs, it is the responsibility of each AmeriCorps recipient to ensure appropriate stewardship of federal funds entrusted to them.

It is important to make sure that all staff, sites, and partners are familiar with the rules and

regulations. The most recent Terms and Conditions can be found here:

    a.   [General Terms and Conditions](#)

    b.   [Specific Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State](#)

B. Federal Award Notices

Volunteer Tennessee anticipates announcing the results of the Formula Planning Grant competition by notifying applicants by May 6, 2024. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions via email. Notification will be sent to the individual listed in the eGrants Application Face Sheet as the person with whom communication regarding this application may be shared. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The Grant Award (contract) is the authorizing document for beginning grant activities. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification that their application was not approved for funding.

An awardee may not expend federal funds until the start of the Budget Period identified on the Grant Award.

C. Point of Contact

Volunteer Tennessee requires that all recipients designate appropriate staff members to serve as the primary and secondary program and fiscal staff contacts. The primary contacts will have the primary responsibility to manage the AmeriCorps program from both a programmatic and fiscal perspective. These people will serve as the primary contacts between the organization and Volunteer Tennessee throughout the duration of the AmeriCorps planning grant. Grant funds can be utilized for personnel expenses. Timely responsiveness throughout the project period is tracked as a grant performance criterion.

D. Requests for Improper Payment Information

AmeriCorps may, from time to time, request documentation from recipients in order to monitor the award or to comply with other legal requirements, such as the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2020, as amended. Failure to make timely responses to these requests may result in award funds being placed on temporary manual hold, reimbursement only, or other remedies as appropriate. In addition, Volunteer Tennessee and AmeriCorps may, in appropriate circumstances, consider in its funding decisions any previous failures to make timely responses.

E. Use of Materials

To ensure that materials generated with AmeriCorps funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, AmeriCorps reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so (2 CFR §200.315(b)).

F. Reporting

Recipients are required to submit a variety of reports which are due at specific times during the life cycle of a grant. All reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time.

Recipients are required to provide mid-year and end-of-year progress reports and quarterly financial reports. Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the recipient's ability to secure future AmeriCorps funding.

G. **Records Retention**

All financial records, supporting documentation, statistical records, evaluation and performance data, and personnel records must be retained for three years after the close of Volunteer Tennessee's AmeriCorps grant under which your organization's application is funded.

Contact Information

For questions regarding AmeriCorps Tennessee Planning applications, contact Latiyfa Fields, latiyfa.fields@tn.gov.

All emails and phone calls will be returned within a reasonable amount of time. Applicants are encouraged to submit their questions well in advance of the deadline as Volunteer Tennessee is not obligated to respond to questions that are received 48 hours prior to the due date.

APPENDIX I: Performance Measure Entry Instructions (eGrants Performance Measures Section)

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eGrants Performance Measures Module Instructions

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About the Performance Measures Module
In the performance measures module, you will:
- Provide information about your program's connection to AmeriCorps focus areas and objectives.
- Show MSY and member allocations.
- Create the required performance measure(s) as specified in the Performance Measure Instructions
- Set targets and describe data collection instruments and strategies for your performance measures.

Home Page
To start the module, click the "Begin" button on the Home Page.

As you proceed through the module, the Home Page will summarize your work and provide links to edit the parts of the module you have completed. You may also navigate sections of the module using the tab feature at the top of each page. Do not use the back and forward buttons on your internet browser.

Once you have started the module, click "Continue Working" to return to the tab you were on when you last closed the module.

To edit the interventions, objectives, MSY, and member allocations for your application, click the "Edit Objectives/MSYs/Members" button.

After you have created at least one performance measure, the Home Page will display a chart summarizing your measures. To edit a performance measure, click the "Edit" button. To delete a measure, click "Delete." To create a new performance measure, click the "Add New Performance Measure" button.

Objectives Tab
On the Objectives tab, applicants will account for the full range of their program activity. Applicants are not expected to create performance measures for every focus area, objective, or intervention they select on this tab.

An expandable list of AmeriCorps focus areas appears on this tab. When you click on a focus area, a list of objectives appears. A list of common interventions appears under each objective.

First click on a focus area. Then click on an objective. Only the performance measures that correspond to the objectives you select on this tab will be available for selection as you continue through this module. To see which performance measures correspond to which objective, refer to the Performance Measure Instructions.

Next, select all interventions that are part of your program design. Interventions are the activities that members and/or volunteers will carry out to address the problem(s) identified in the application. Select "other" if one of your program's interventions does not appear on the list. Repeat these actions for each

of your program's focus areas. Select "other" for your focus area and/or objective if your program activities do not fall within one of the AmeriCorps focus areas or objectives.

Choose your program's primary focus area from the drop-down list. Only the focus areas that correspond to the objectives you selected above appear in the list. Next, select the primary intervention within your primary focus area. You will be required to create an aligned performance measure (output paired with outcome) that contains your primary intervention. Note that your primary intervention and the performance measure associated with your primary intervention must be focused on the community impact of the program, not on AmeriCorps member development.

You may select a secondary focus area and a secondary intervention. The primary and secondary focus areas may be the same if you have more than one intervention within the focus areas.

MSYs/Members Tab

On this tab, you will enter information about the allocation of MSYs and members across the focus areas and objectives you have selected. You must allocate 100% of your program's MSYs to focus areas and objectives. When you create your performance measures, you will be asked to allocate MSYs to each performance measure; however, you will not be required to assign 100% of your total MSYs to performance measures.

Begin by entering the total MSYs for your program. This must match the total MSYs in your budget. Please double-check your budget to make sure that the total MSY values match.

Next, enter the number of MSYs your program will allocate to each objective. Only the objectives that were selected on the previous tab appear in the MSY chart. If some of your program's objectives are not represented in the chart, return to the previous tab and select additional objectives. The MSY chart must show how all your program's resources are allocated. If the only activity in an objective that you have selected is focused on AmeriCorps member development rather than beneficiary impact, enter 0 MSYs for that objective.

As you enter MSYs into the MSY column of the chart, the corresponding percentage of MSYs will calculate automatically. When you have finished entering your MSYs, the total percentage of MSYs in the chart must be 100%. The total number of MSYs in the chart must equal the number of MSYs in your budget.

In the members column, enter the number of members you will assign to each objective. Some members may perform services across more than one objective. If this is the case, allocate these members to all applicable objectives. For example, if one member performs service in both school readiness and K-12 success, allocate one member to each of these objectives. It is acceptable for the total number of members in this table to exceed total slots requested in the application due to counting members' service across multiple objectives. If the only activity in an objective that you have selected is focused on AmeriCorps member development rather than beneficiary impact, enter 0 members for that objective.

To ensure that information is entered accurately, please refer to additional instructions in Appendix 1 of the Performance Measure Entry Instructions on calculating and entering MSY and member allocations.

Performance Measure Tab

This tab allows you to create performance measures for all the grant activities you intend to measure.

Begin by creating the aligned performance measure for your primary intervention. After creating your required performance measure, you will be able to create additional performance measures if desired.

To create a performance measure, begin by selecting an objective. The list of objectives includes those you selected on the Objectives tab. Note that programs may not create performance measures for the Find Opportunity, Teacher Corps, Green Jobs, or Access & Attract objectives since these are member-focused objectives. Member-focused outputs and outcomes related to these objectives may be reported as Performance Data Elements on grantee progress reports.

Provide a short, descriptive title for your performance measure.

Briefly describe the problem your program will address in this performance measure.

Select the intervention(s) to be delivered by members and/or member-supported volunteers. The list of interventions includes the ones you selected previously for this objective. Select only the interventions that will lead to the outputs (plus outcomes, if applicable) of the performance measure and that are applicable to all beneficiaries counted under the measure. If you selected "other" as an intervention and wish to include an applicant-determined intervention in your aligned performance measure, click "add user intervention" and enter a one- or two-word description of the intervention. Do not add an applicant-determined intervention that duplicates an intervention already available in the system.

Select output(s) for your performance measure. The output list includes only the National Performance Measure outputs that correspond to the objectives you have selected. If you do not wish to select National Performance Measures and if the objective you have selected permits applicant-determined outputs, you may create an applicant-determined output by clicking in the checkbox next to the empty output text box and entering the text of your output indicator. You may create additional applicant-determined outputs for the performance measure by clicking "Add User Output." (Note: you are not permitted to create an applicant-determined output that duplicates a National Performance Measure output. If you do not see the National Performance Measure output that you wish to use, check the Selection Rules in the Performance Measure Instructions to make sure you selected the correct objective associated with that National Performance Measure output.)

Select outcome(s). If you have selected a National Performance Measures output that has corresponding National Performance Measures outcome(s), these outcomes will be available to select. If you do not wish to select a National Performance Measure outcome, you may create an applicant-determined outcome by clicking in the checkbox next to the empty outcome text box and entering the text of your outcome indicator. If you do not wish to select any outcome for your National Performance Measure output, click in the checkbox next to the empty outcome text box and enter "NA" in the outcome indicator text box.

If you have not selected a National Performance Measure output or if there is no corresponding National Performance Measure outcome, create an applicant-determined outcome by clicking "Add User Outcome." All applicant-determined outputs must be paired with an applicant-determined outcome.

Enter the number of MSYs and members your program will allocate to achieving the outcomes and/or outputs you have selected in this performance measure. Since programs are not required to measure all grant activities, the number you enter does not have to correspond to the MSY chart you created on the

MSY/Members tab; however, the total number of MSYs across all performance measures within a single objective cannot exceed the total number of MSYs previously allocated to that objective. Members may be double counted across performance measures, but MSYs may not.

Click "next" to proceed to the data collection tab. Later you can return to this tab to create additional performance measures.

Data Collection Tab

On this tab, you will provide additional information about your interventions, instruments, and plan for data collection.

Describe the design and dosage (frequency, intensity, duration) of the interventions you have selected. Frequency refers to how often an intervention occurs (for example, number of sessions per week), intensity refers to the length of time devoted to the intervention (for example, number of minutes per session), and duration refers to the period of time over which the intervention occurs (for example, how many total weeks of sessions).

Expand each output and outcome and enter data collection information.

Select the data collection method you will use to measure the output or outcome. To select more than one method, click the "Add new method" button. To de-select a method, click the first (blank) line in the method drop-down.

Describe the specific instrument(s) you will use to measure the output or outcome. Include the title of the instrument(s), a brief description of what it measures and how you will administer the instrument, and details about its reliability and validity if applicable. For outcomes, specify how much improvement in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition is required to be counted as having improved and clearly explain how the instrument measures this.

Enter the target number for your output or outcome. Targets must be numbers, not percentages.

For applicant-determined outputs and outcomes, enter the unit of measure for your target. The unit of measure should describe the beneficiary population you intend to count (children, miles, etc.). Do not enter percentages or member service hours as units of measure. In most cases, the unit of measure should be the same for the outputs and outcomes in an aligned performance measure.

For output-only performance measures, eGrants will require text in the outcome data collection fields. If you do not wish to have an outcome for your National Performance Measure output, enter the following:

- Method: Select "other"
- Instrument Description: Enter "NA"
- Target: Enter "1"
- Unit of Measure: Enter "NA"

After entering data collection information for all outputs and outcomes, click "Mark Complete." You will return to the Performance Measure tab. If you wish to create another performance measure, repeat the process. If you would like to continue to the next step of the module, click "Next."

Summary Tab:
- The Summary tab shows all of the information you have entered in the module.
- To print a summary of all performance measures, click "Print PDF for all Performance Measures."
- To print one performance measure, expand the measure and click "Print This Measure."
- Click "Edit Performance Measure" to return to the Performance Measure tab.
- Click "Edit Data Collection" to return to the Data Collection tab.

Click "Validate Performance Measures" to validate this module prior to submitting your application. You should also use the Performance Measures Checklist in Appendix B of the Performance Measure Instructions to self-assess your measure(s) prior to submission.