



## Serve Kentucky Request for Applications Guidance 2023-24 AmeriCorps State Grants – **COMPETITIVE**

### 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). The process for federal funding as outlined in this document is established as a requirement by the federal awarding agency for disbursement of AmeriCorps federal funds and does not conflict with the state procurement process outlined in KRS 45A.085 Competitive negotiation.

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 RFA Timeline

Aug. 22, 2022	Serve Kentucky RFA Guidance released
Sept. 16, 2022	Intent to Apply due to Serve Kentucky via <a href="#">online survey</a>
Oct. 14, 2022	Grant application, additional documents, and <a href="#">match waiver requests</a> due to Serve Kentucky
Oct. 17-Nov. 18, 2022	Internal and External Grant Review
Nov. 21-Dec. 1, 2022	Feedback from grant review compiled; clarifications requested
Dec. 2, 2022	Grant review feedback provided to applicants
Dec. 9, 2022	Revised competitive grant applications due to Serve Kentucky
Dec. 15, 2022	Notification of Commission decision to submit applications to the AmeriCorps competition
Dec. 16-22, 2022	Serve Kentucky Resolution period
Jan. 3-4, 2023	Kentucky competitive applications submitted to AmeriCorps via eGrants

### Required Resources

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

- [2023 AmeriCorps State and National Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) (NOFO or Notice)
- [2023 Mandatory Supplemental Information](#)
- [2023 Application Instructions](#)
- [2023 Performance Measure Instructions](#)

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 applicants contact AmeriCorps 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 Information for detailed instructions by Evidence Tier.
- **All applicants:** [Operational and Financial Management Survey \(OFMS\)](#) as a Word document (PDF will not be accepted).
- **Recompeting applicants:** Evaluation plan or report, as required. Please see the Evidence Tiers definitions in the [MSI](#) and Section E.1.e. *Evaluation Plan* of the NOFO for further information.
- **New Kentucky applicants:** [Online Serve Kentucky Organization Readiness Assessment](#)

*Note: Do not send additional documents to the AmeriCorps inbox referenced in the NOFO; it is for State Commission (Serve Kentucky) 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.), being unable to meet current evaluation requirements, and/or anticipation of or planning for significant program design changes.

Exemption requests must be submitted via [email](#) by 5 p.m. EST on **September 16, 2022**.

*Note: Both applications not approved by the Serve Kentucky Commission for submission to the national competition, and applications that do not make it through the competitive process may apply for formula funding in Spring 2022.*

## Application

Please refer to the [Mandatory Supplemental Information \(MSI\)](#) for definitions of AmeriCorps terms.

- 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, 2023 and ending July 31, 2024 or beginning September 1, 2023 and ending August 31, 2024.
- 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 **\$17,600** – please refer to the Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance table on page 15 of the 2023 NOFO.
- Maximum allowable federal reimbursement is **\$23,000** per member service year (MSY). For Professional Corps and Education Award Programs, refer to the table on page 7 of the 2023 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 10 of the 2023 NOFO and 45 CFR §2521.60.
  - Individual programs may request a match waiver if specific conditions apply. Contact Serve Kentucky for additional information.
- Applicants are required to meet the AmeriCorps evaluation requirements as identified in the 2023 NOFO and 2023 Mandatory Supplemental Information.
- Continuation applicants may request to increase or reduce funding and/or slots. Please note that expansions requests may not be 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 federal 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 part-time member coordinator.
  - For programs with more than 30 members, you must budget for one full-time program director and one full-time member coordinator.
  - For programs with more than 40 members, you must provide a chart via email with staff organization and roles for managing members.
- Administrative/indirect costs up to **1% for Serve Kentucky** (see budget instructions for details).
- AmeriCorps-compliant member management and reporting system, such as [America Learns’](#) AmeriCorps Impact Suite or [OnCorps Reports](#).
  - Any other system requires approval from Serve Kentucky before use.
- 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 \$80 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 AmeriCorps-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 while serving** – 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: AmeriCorps and Serve Kentucky reserves the right to re-open the RFA 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 20-27 of the 2023 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 AmeriCorps 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 recomplete 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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*Updated 8/19/22*