**The Governor’s Office of Volunteer Services**

**Is My Organization Ready for an AmeriCorps State Grant?**

AmeriCorps **Programmatic** Readiness Assessment

**APPLICANT INFORMATION**

**Legal Name:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Executive Director or Similar Senior Leadership:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Financial Director or Similar Senior Leadership:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Individual Completing this Assessment:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Title:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**INTRODUCTION:**

This assessment tool is designed to assist potential applicants in assessing their organizational readiness to administer and support a high-quality AmeriCorps State program. The list of questions in this form asks the reviewer(s) to score their organization/legal applicant on programmatic elements necessary to manage an AmeriCorps State program. It is recommended that the reviewer(s) be familiar with the organization’s mission, programs, strategy, and financial processes to more accurately answer the questions in this assessment.

Read each question carefully and answer honestly. The assessment functions as a general guide to help you plan for the implementation of an AmeriCorps State program.

Select an answer that best describes your organization’s current status or performance. To do so, you will click in the box and an “**X**” will appear, signifying your response. For responses that request short answers, please click in the box that says, “**Click or tap here to enter text**” to type your response in the box.

Please note that successful completion of the assessment does not guarantee funding through the Governor’s Office of Volunteer Services. It is merely a guide to assess the readiness of a potential applicant.

**Please return your completed Programmatic Readiness Assessment to** Info.AmeriCorps@ServeAlabama.gov **no later than Jan. 9, 2024.** If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Governor’s Office Volunteer Services at (334) 242-1549 or Info.AmeriCorps@ServeAlabama.gov. In the **subject line** of the email, please enter AmeriCorps Programmatic Readiness Assessment.

**Programmatic Readiness Assessment**

**FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS**

1. Is your organization a public or private nonprofit organization – including labor organization, faith-based and other community organizations; an institution of higher education; an educational institution; a government entity within Alabama; an Indian Tribe; or a partnership or consortia?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No

***If the answer to question 1 is “No”, then your organization is not eligible to receive an AmeriCorps grant or serve as a Host Site for AmeriCorps members. You are similarly ineligible if your organization is a 501 (c) (4) non-profit entity [under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501 (c)(4)] that engages in lobbying.***

1. Do your plans for utilizing AmeriCorps members call for members to provide services exclusively within Alabama?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

***If the answer to question 2 is “No” and the results to the remaining questions in this Assessment are favorable, then your organization may be interested in applying directly to the Corporation for National and Community Service for an AmeriCorps National grant. To apply for a AmeriCorps National grant, go to*** [*https://www.nationalservice.gov/grants-funding/funding-resources/cncs-funding-opportunities-resources*](https://www.nationalservice.gov/grants-funding/funding-resources/cncs-funding-opportunities-resources)

**ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTIONS**

1. Does your organization understand that the primary focus of AmeriCorps is AmeriCorps? AmeriCorps members support the host organizations’ mission and goals. **The program must always maintain a separate but partnered identity and philosophy of AmeriCorps.**

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No

1. Does your organization have the capacity to devote adequate staff to manage the implementation, regulatory oversight, program monitoring, program and fiscal reporting, and evaluation of the AmeriCorps program as well as regular supervision of AmeriCorps members including recruitment, national service criminal history checks, grievances, service projects, timesheet reviews and approvals, and other member support services?

It is highly recommended to have at least 1 full-time AmeriCorps Program Staff member to every 5 – 10 AmeriCorps members. The FTE should devote no less than 85% (100% is better) of their position to the AmeriCorps Program Director role for successful implementation.

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure **(If you are unsure, you need to really consider if this opportunity will be manageable)**

1. Has your organization previously managed a federal, state, or foundation grant?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No

**Number of years managing federal grants**: Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Has your organization managed any national service programs/projects (AmeriCorps State/Nat’l, VISTA, NCCC, Volunteer Generation Fund, Social Innovation Fund, Senior corps, etc.)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

**If yes, how many years did you manage the national service program/projects**: Click or tap here to enter text.

**How many years has it been since your organization managed the program/project?** Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Does your organization have a Human Resources and Legal department or staff , and will these departments/staff assist your AmeriCorps State program with developing and implementing policies and procedures for the program?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

***If you answered “No” to any of the above Administrative Questions, it is likely your organization would struggle to successfully administer an AmeriCorps grant. It is recommended that consideration be given to seeking a partnership with an existing AmeriCorps program or applicant to serve as a service site/partner. Serving as an AmeriCorps service/partner site, rather than a primary grant applicant/host organization, is often a better option for smaller organizations. Contact the Governor’s Office of Volunteer Services for details.***

**ORGANIZATIONAL QUESTIONS**

1. Does your organization have a clear written mission statement?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

1. Does your organization have an active and **independent** board of directors and/or other governing body?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

1. Has your organization had significant compliance findings pertaining to grant related activities and/or financial activities?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

**If yes, provide a brief description of those compliance issues**: Click or tap here to enter text.

**As a result of the compliance findings, was the organization issued a corrective action plan**? [ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

1. Does your organization have a written strategic plan for the future (i.e. 3-10-year strategic plan)?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

1. Does every key staff member, and will your AmeriCorps member(s), have access to a computer with up-to-date software, internet access, and email capabilities?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

1. Does your organization have data collection and reporting tools and systems in place?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

**Please explain in detail the data collection and reporting tools and systems your organization has in place**: Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Does your organization plan to use existing staff to manage the AmeriCorps program?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

**If yes, explain how the staff member will manage both positions and what will the percentage of time allocated to the AmeriCorps staff position.**

**Explanation**: Click or tap here to enter text.

**Percentage of time Allocated to the AmeriCorps staff position**: Click or tap here to enter text.

**Number of hours devoted to AmeriCorps position**: Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Does your organization conduct background checks on staff and volunteers?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

1. Does your agency maintain a personnel policy manual?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

1. Does your organization conduct regular assessments of community needs?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

Date Last Conducted: Click here to enter text.

1. Does your organization analyze and use the results of needs assessment to chart change?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

1. Are the organization’s programs and services well defined?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

1. Are the programs fully aligned with the organization’s mission, goals, and overall strategy?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

1. Does your organization have a proven track record of establishing measurable outcomes with its programs?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

1. Does your organization have a comprehensive well-developed evaluation system used to measure the impact of programs and services?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

1. Does your organization conduct regular assessments of existing programs’ effectiveness in meeting recipient needs and identifying needs for improvement?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

1. Is data analyzed and used in program redesign and communicated to stakeholders on a regular basis (e.g. annual reports)?

[ ]  Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Not Sure

***Things to Consider When Applying for An AmeriCorps Grant***

***Special Note for Faith-Based Organizations seeking to operate an AmeriCorps program:*** If the conditions below are not acceptable to your organization, hosting an AmeriCorps State program is not a good option.

* Participation in government funded programs must be open to all who qualify, without regard to religious beliefs.
* AmeriCorps members are disallowed from participating in inherently religious activities.
* AmeriCorps members are disallowed from proselytizing.
* AmeriCorps programs must be held in a separate place or at separate time from religious activities.

***Special Note for Organizations with an advocacy component seeking to operate an AmeriCorps program:*** If the conditions below are not acceptable to your organization, hosting an AmeriCorps State program is not a good option.

* AmeriCorps members are disallowed from attempting to influence legislation.
* AmeriCorps members are disallowed from organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes.
* AmeriCorps members are disallowed from engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office.
* AmeriCorps members are disallowed from participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials.
* AmeriCorps members are disallowed from conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation funds to conduct a voter registration drive.

***Special Note for ALL Organizations seeking to operate an AmeriCorps program:*** If the conditions below are not acceptable to your organization, hosting an AmeriCorps State program is not a good option.

* AmeriCorps funds cannot be used to replace state or local public funds that have been previously used to support a project. If your program has previously used public funds to support positions, they would not be eligible as AmeriCorps positions (*Supplementation*).
* AmeriCorps member programs cannot duplicate services that are already provided within the locality of the program by other state or local government agencies. (*Non-duplication*).
* AmeriCorps members are cheaper than paid staff – your placement site cannot choose to take on an AmeriCorps member instead of staff or reduce staff roles or benefits to save money (*Non-displacement*).
* Under what circumstances may AmeriCorps members in a program raise resources and how much time may members spend raising resources? (*Fundraising*).
	+ AmeriCorps members may raise funds directly in support of your AmeriCorps program's service activities.
	+ AmeriCorps members may not raise funds for living allowances, participation fees, or for an organization's general (as opposed to project/program) operating expenses or endowment.
	+ AmeriCorps members may not write a grant application to the Corporation or to any other Federal agency.
	+ An AmeriCorps member may spend no more than ten percent of his or her originally agreed-upon term of service, as reflected in the member enrollment in the National Service Trust, performing fundraising activities

**Key Things to Remember About AmeriCorps Grant Funding**

* Funding cannot [**Duplicate**, **Displace**, or **Supplant**](https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/12637) resources existing in the community.
* No AmeriCorps members may take the place of staff, volunteers, or existing funding.
* Grants are solely for program expenses and cannot be used for general organizational operating expenses.
* Grant recipients must contribute cash or in-kind match funding to support the project; grants provide partial funding to support AmeriCorps projects and programs.
* Grants include an allotment of member positions and associated funding. The funds awarded by AmeriCorps are directly tied to the specific number of members awarded.