

AmeriCorps Program Design and Management



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Material adapted from a webinar presented by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Objectives

- To review the purpose of AmeriCorps funding
- To understand the basic responsibilities and requirements for grant recipients
- To understand the AmeriCorps program management structure
- To understand AmeriCorps program design components



AmeriCorps Grants

Purpose of Funding

- AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations proposing to engage AmeriCorps Members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities.
- The AmeriCorps grant:
 - Provides partial funding to support AmeriCorps programs. Grant recipients must contribute cash or in-kind match funds;
 - Is solely for program-related expenses; not for general organizational expenses; and
 - Includes an allotment of AmeriCorps Member positions and funds directly tied to the number of AmeriCorps Members.



AmeriCorps Grants

Purpose of Funding

- Appropriate uses of AmeriCorps resources:
 - To make an existing program more effective
 - To reach previously underserved or unserved communities
 - To expand activities beyond what the organization is able to do without AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps funds **may not** duplicate, displace, or supplant resources that currently exist in a community.

AmeriCorps Members **may not** be used to take the place of staff, current volunteers, or existing funding.



AmeriCorps Grants

Recipient Responsibilities & Requirements

Grants Management Experience:

The grant recipient must be capable of effectively and efficiently managing federal funds.

Organizational Capability:

The grant recipient must be capable of managing and overseeing the grant and all of its components.

Qualified Personnel:

The grant recipient must have staff skilled in training, supervision, and oversight.

Community Partners and/or Support:

The grant recipient must have or develop strong partners in the community and in your focus area.

It takes more than just a "good idea" for a program.



AmeriCorps Grants

Recipient Responsibilities & Requirements

The grant recipient must:

1. Employ strong fiscal and program management systems;
2. Monitor financial management, program performance, and AmeriCorps Member activities;
3. Train and provide technical assistance to service site (site supervisor) staff and AmeriCorps Members;
4. Ensure the recruitment, orientation, and training of AmeriCorps Members;
5. Track and ensure the accuracy of Member hours and activities;
6. Track progress toward meeting approved performance measures; and
7. Act as a liaison between the Missouri Community Service Commission and other components of the program.



Program Management Structure

Prime Grantee: Missouri Community Service Commission (MCSC)

MCSC is the Governor-designated administrator for AmeriCorps State funding in Missouri. MCSC has overall legal, administrative, and fiscal responsibility for all sub-grantee organizations in Missouri.

Sub-grantee: Grant Recipient Organization

The sub-grantee is the organization that receives an AmeriCorps grant from MCSC and implements the AmeriCorps program. The sub-grantee has full fiscal and programmatic responsibility for managing all aspects of the grant and grant-supported activities. The sub-grantee is accountable to MCSC and subject to oversight by MCSC.

Service Site Location(s)

The service site location is where AmeriCorps Members perform their service activities (e.g. school, food bank, community park or center, etc.). The service site typically has limited fiscal and programmatic responsibility as outlined by the sub-grantee (e.g. on-site Member supervision). The grant-supported aspects of the service site are subject to oversight by the sub-grantee (ongoing basis) and MCSC (episodic basis).



Program Management Structure

- The following are considerations as you're designing the program management structure:
 - Where will service activities take place? In one community or several communities across Missouri?
 - Will services be based out of your main location, a partner organization, or in scattered sites?
 - Where will your organization acquire match funds? Will the match be cash or in-kind? Will the match be from public (state/local) sources or private sources (charitable foundations, individual donors)?
 - What is the capacity of your partner organization(s) to provide programmatic or fiscal support for the AmeriCorps program?
(Organizations must have a MOU or MOA with partner organizations.)

AmeriCorps Members can be placed at service locations individually or in teams; they can be based out of one organization or distributed across the community.



Program Design

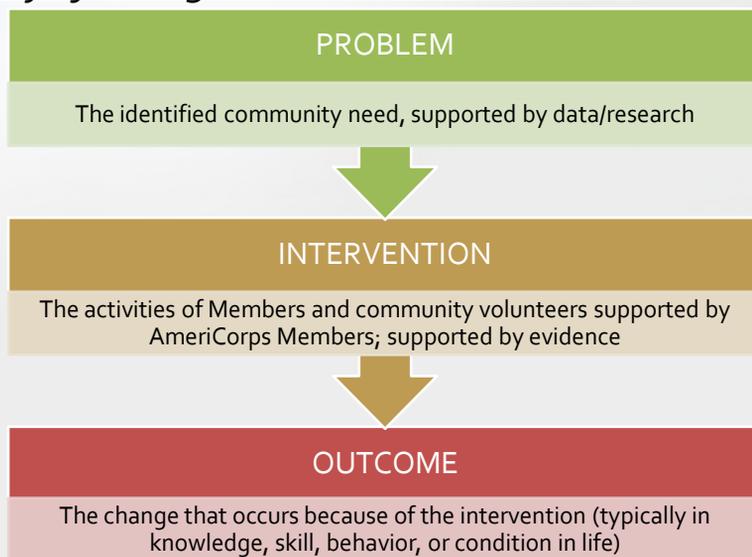
Theory of Change

- The program design should be based on a Theory of Change.
- The Theory of Change:
 - Demonstrates the relationship between the community problem, the interventions (service activities), and the anticipated outcomes.
 - Defines the cause and effect relationship between a specific intervention and an intended outcome.
 - Should be supported by evidence to demonstrate the likelihood that the intervention will lead to the intended outcome.
- Key Questions:
 - What needs to change?
 - How do I plan to create that change?
 - Why do I think these particular activities will create the desired change?
 - What specific change do I expect to see?



Program Design

Theory of Change



Program Design

Documenting the Problem/Need

- The community problem/need the proposed program will address must be documented using relevant data.
- The data should answer the following questions:
 - **Scope of problem:** Who is affected by the problem? How many are directly affected? How severe is the problem? (*documented at the local level where Members will serve*)
 - **Relevance of problem:** What makes this a compelling problem? Is it likely to become worse?
 - **Causes of problem:** Why does the problem exist? How is it perpetuated?

"Community" can be a geographic region, a specific population of people, or a combination of both.



Program Design

Evidence Basis for Interventions

- The proposed interventions should:
 - Address the identified community problem and need;
 - Include the frequency, intensity, and duration of the proposed intervention; and
 - Be supported by evidence (be evidence-informed or evidence-based).
- Evidence should demonstrate the likelihood that the proposed intervention will solve the identified problem and lead to the intended outcome.

Example (Frequency, Intensity, Duration):
 Students in grades K-3rd will receive one-on-one tutoring three times per week, for 90 minutes per week (30 minutes per session), for 10 months.



Program Design

Evidence Basis for Interventions

- Sources of evidence include:
 - The results of impact evaluation(s) of the proposed program or of similar programs;
 - Experimental or quasi-experimental research studies that document the effectiveness of the proposed program or similar programs; or
 - Past performance measurement data showing the outcomes of the proposed program.

Data that supports the problem/need and the proposed intervention should be:
 Relevant
 Compelling
 Up-to-date (*preferably within the last 6 years*)
 From reliable and objective sources



Program Design

Outcomes

- **Definition:** A change in knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition that results from the proposed intervention.
- Outcomes:
 - May reflect changes in individuals, organizations, communities, and the environment;
 - Must be measurable (preferably within one year); and
 - Must align with the identified problem and proposed intervention.

All applicants must propose performance measures that align with interventions.
 A performance measure includes an:
Output: The amount of people served, products created, or program developed.
AND
Outcome: The change or benefits experienced by beneficiaries, including changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition.



Program Design

Additional Components

- The program design is not complete until additional AmeriCorps components are incorporated.



Program Design

Additional Components

- Your program design must describe:
 - Why AmeriCorps Members are a highly effective means to solving the identified community problem;
 - How you plan to recruit, train, and supervise AmeriCorps Members;
 - How the proposed program will provide a meaningful service experience for AmeriCorps Members;
 - How community volunteers, if applicable, will be engaged to support service activities;
 - How the organization will commit to identifying itself as an AmeriCorps program and its Members as AmeriCorps Members.

Refer to the Missouri Notice of Funding Opportunity for additional guidelines. The notice is available at:
<http://movolunteers.org/grants.htm>.



Technical Assistance

Review the grant materials available on the MCSC Grants Page:

<http://movolunteers.org/grants.htm>

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