AmeriCorps Mississippi

Planning Grant Application Instructions

AmeriCorps State 2027-2028

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

These application instructions conform to the America Learns Grant Gateway. All funding announcements by AmeriCorps are posted on www.americorps.gov and www.grants.gov. All funding announcements by Volunteer Mississippi are posted on https://volunteermississippi.org/funding-opportunities/.

Public Burden Statement:

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 80 hours per submission, including reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data needed, and completing forms. Comments on the burden or content of this instrument may be sent to AmeriCorps, Attn: Arminda Pappas, 250 E Street, SW Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20525. AmeriCorps informs people who may respond to this collection of information that they are not required to respond to the collection of information unless the OMB control number and expiration date displayed on page one are current and valid. (see 5 CFR1320.5(b)(2)(i).

Privacy Act Notice:

The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. §552a) requires that the following notice be provided to you: The information requested on the AmeriCorps Application Instructions is collected pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§12581-12585 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended, and 42 U.S.C. §4953 of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 as amended. Purposes and uses – The information requested is collected for the purposes of reviewing grant applications and granting funding requests. Routine Uses – Routine uses may include disclosure of the information to federal, state, or local agencies pursuant to lawfully authorized requests. In some programs, the information may also be provided to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to determine the existence of any prior criminal convictions. The information may also be provided to appropriate federal agencies and the Department contractors that have a need to know the information for the purpose of assisting the Department's efforts to respond to a suspected or confirmed breach of the security or confidentiality or information maintained in this system of records, and the information disclosed is relevant and unnecessary for the assistance. Executive Summaries of all compliant applications received and applications of successful applicants will be published on the AMERICORPS website as part of ongoing efforts to increase transparency in grantmaking. This is described in more detail in the *Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity*. The information will not otherwise be disclosed to entities outside of AmeriCorps and AMERICORPS without prior written permission. Effects of Nondisclosure – The information requested is mandatory to receive benefits.

Indirect Cost Rates:

AMERICORPS allows applicants to include indirect costs in application budgets. Based on qualifying factors, applicants have the option of using a federally approved indirect cost rate, a 10% *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs or may claim certain costs directly as outlined in 2 CFR §200.413 Direct costs. Applicants who hold a state or federal negotiated indirect cost rate or will be using the 10% *de minimis* rate must enter that information in the Budget Section.

Universal Identifier:

Applications must include a Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and register with the System for Award Management (SAM). All grant recipients are required to maintain a valid registration (renewed annually.)

APPLICATION RESOURCES

Please use these application instructions if you are a Planning Grant applicant that has made it to the next stage of the application process after review of your initial concept paper submission. Use these instructions in conjunction with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520-2550. The AmeriCorps regulations include pertinent information (see Table 1, below).

The full regulations are available online at https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionCfr.action?collectionCode=CFR.

Table 1: Requirements in the AmeriCorps Regulations

Topics	Citation in the AmeriCorps Regulations
Member Service Activities	§2520.20 – §2520.55
Prohibited Activities	§2520.65
Tutoring Programs	§2522.900 – §2522.950
Matching Funds	§2521.35 – §2521.90
Member Benefits	§2522.240 – §2522.250
Calculating Cost Per Member Service Year (MSY)	§2522.485
Performance Measures	§2522.500 – §2522.650
Evaluation	§2522.500 – §2522.540 and §2522.700 – §2522.740
Selection Criteria and Selection Process	§2522.400 – §2522.475

If there is any inconsistency between the AmeriCorps regulations, Notice, and Application Instructions, the order of precedence is:

1. AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR §§ 2520-2550 take precedence over the;
2. Application Instructions take precedence over the;
3. Concept Paper Instructions.

VOLUNTEER MISSISSIPPI GRANT TERMS AND REQUIREMENTS

Grant Compliance

The specific requirements for AmeriCorps recipients are set forth in regulations, provisions, application guidelines, and the Notice of Grant Award and Terms and Conditions. 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 on July 8, 2005 (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 2024-2025 Terms and Conditions can be found here:

- General Terms and Conditions
- Specific Terms and Conditions for AmeriCorps State

Allowable Costs

For any cost to be allowable under a grant award based on an application for AmeriCorps program funding, the cost must be accorded consistent treatment using policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both the federal grant funded activities and to all other activities of the applicant.

Point of Contact

Volunteer Mississippi requires that all recipients designate appropriate staff members to serve as primary and secondary program and fiscal staff contacts. The primary contacts have 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 Mississippi throughout the duration of the AmeriCorps program. Grant funds can be utilized for personnel expenses. Timely responsiveness throughout the project period is tracked as a grant performance criterion.

Records Retention

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

Volunteer Mississippi Sponsored Training Events

Each year, Volunteer Mississippi hosts two mandated AmeriCorps training events to provide tools and resources, as well as review program requirements or updates. Recipients are required to send appropriate individuals associated with the program to each training (Program Director, Program Assistant, Site Supervisors, Fiscal Staff, etc.). Recipients must include funds in the budget to attend these required training events. See the budget instructions for more information.

VOLUNTEER MISSISSIPPI RIGHTS AND DISCLAIMER

Interpretive Conventions

Whenever the terms "shall", "must", "will" or "is required" are used in these instructions in conjunction with a specification or performance requirement, the specification or requirement is mandatory. Failure to address or meet any mandatory requirement in a proposal may be cause for Volunteer Mississippi's rejection of an application.

Whenever the terms, "can", "may", "should" or "recommended" are used in these instructions in conjunction with a specification or performance requirement, the specification or requirement is desirable, but not mandatory. Accordingly, failure to address or provide any items so referred to will not be the cause for rejection of the proposal but could result in a less favorable evaluation.

Cancellation/Partial Award/Non-Award

Publication of these instructions does not obligate Volunteer Mississippi to award any specific number of grants. Volunteer Mississippi reserves the right to cancel this funding opportunity, to make a partial award, or to make no award if it determines that such action is in the best interest of the State of Mississippi.

Right to Reject Proposals or Portions of Proposals

Volunteer Mississippi may, in its discretion, reject any and all proposals or portions thereof.

IMPORTANT DATES

Important Dates – Planning Grants

January 15, 2027	Planning Grant Application Due
Week of February 1, 2027	Review and Clarification Time Period
February 12, 2027	Application Revisions Due
Marcy 5, 2027	Final Submission of Planning Grant Application Due
September 1, 2027	Anticipated Program Start Date

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Volunteer Mississippi requires all Formula applicants to use the ***America Learns Grant Gateway account***.

New applicants should establish an AmeriCorps Grants Gateway account by accessing this link: https://grants.americalearns.net/.

1. Starting the Application:
    - Log in and select the competition under "open competitions".
    - Planning Grant
    - When choosing a Program Name, choose a title such as: "**[YOUR PROGRAM NAME] – AmeriCorps Planning Grant**"

Instructions for ***eGrants data entry will be provided at a later date. Volunteer Mississippi will notify all programs once the system is open and ready to use. In the meantime, please establish an eGrants account to ensure you are prepared for the upcoming application process.

New applicants need to 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."

Your application consists of the following components. You must complete each section, as detailed later.

I. Applicant Info
II. Application Info
III. Narratives
IV. Program Information
V. Funding/Demographics
VI. Review, Verify, and Submit

Via America Learns:
Applicants are required to submit the following additional documents by the application submission deadline. Additional Documents must be uploaded to the America Learns Grant Gateway.

Documents to be submitted via America Learns (do not submit items *not* listed below – Volunteer MS will not review or return):

- Current indirect cost rate agreement, if used to claim administrative/indirect costs.
- Federal and State Award Schedule (*do not submit if you are submitting a Single Audit*)
- 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 **2026 or 2027** (*submit the most recently completed*) - Not required for Colleges and Universities

- Single Audit from **2026 or 2027** (*submit the most recently completed*) (*if applicable*) - Not required for Colleges, Universities, or School Districts

I. APPLICANT INFO

Enter the Applicant Info in the FACE sheet.

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

In the Application Info Section enter:

- Areas affected by your proposed program. For city or county information, please follow each one with the two-letter capitalized state abbreviation MS.
- Requested project period start and end dates. You may request a start date of **September 1, 2027**. Exceptions to the start dates may be considered in exceptional circumstances.
  - If you select **September 1, 2027**, as the start date, then you must select **August 31, 2028**, as the end date.
- The Application is Subject to Review by State Executive Order 12372 Process.
- Indicate Yes or No if you are delinquent on any federal debt. If yes, provide an explanation.

III. NARRATIVE

All applicants must submit a narrative with their application.

Respond to each of the following in the order in which the item is presented. The narrative must not exceed **10 pages**. Volunteer Mississippi will consider the number of pages only as they print out from the "Review" tab when determining compliance for page limits. Volunteer Mississippi will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods in determining whether an application complies with the applicable page limits. Volunteer Mississippi 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.

A. 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.*

B. Rationale and Approach/Program Design

Please copy and paste the narrative for this section approved in final clarifications of your concept paper.

C. Organizational Capability

Please copy and paste the narrative for this section approved in final clarifications of your concept paper.

D. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

Please write "see budget"

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

F. Amendment Justification (0 percent). Enter N/A.

G. Clarification Information (0 percent). Enter N/A.

H. Continuation Changes (0 percent). Enter N/A.

IV. LOGIC MODEL

All applicants must submit a logic model with their application.

A thorough template has been provided to you on the Volunteer Mississippi NOFO website: https://volunteermississippi.org/funding-opportunities/). Please use this template as a guide for your logic model.

- First, read the entire logic model to make sure you understand the commitment required and outputs and outcomes expected.
- Second, complete the items that are requested for you to insert which is only information requested in the problem column from which you can use some of your narrative from your concept paper. **Please make sure that whatever you insert does not make the logic model go over 8 pages as it prints out.**
- Third, make sure you do not edit or make any changes to any of the logic model elements that do not have the language "Insert". With the exception of the problem column, the remainder of the logic model is simply a copy and paste.
- To enter logic model, from your Grant Gateway application page select "Logic Model" in the left side navigation menu.

V. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

All applicants must submit performance measures with their application.

- First, read performance measure instructions all the way through (Appendix A)
- Second, follow each step in the performance measure instructions as detailed in Appendix A.

VI. PROGRAM INFORMATION

In the Program Information Section, applicants must check the relevant boxes in order to be considered for AMERICORPS's assessment of the strategic considerations and Special Initiatives. Applicants should only check the boxes for those characteristics that represent a significant part of the program.

AmeriCorps Funding Priorities.
Check any priority area(s) that apply to the proposed program. Only select Priorities that represent a significant part of the program focus, high quality program design and outcomes.

Grant Characteristics
Check any grant characteristics that are a significant part of the proposed program:

- Faith-based organizations
- Professional Corps
- STEM Program
- Geographic Focus – Urban
- Geographic Focus – Rural
- None of the above grant characteristics

VII. DOCUMENTS

In the documents section, please follow the selections outlined below:

- **Evaluation:** Select "Not Applicable"
- **Federally Approved Indirect Cost Agreement:**
  Option 1: Applicants that include a federally-approved indirect cost rate amount in their budget must upload the approved indirect cost rate agreement under 'attachments' prior to submitting the application.
  Option 2: Applicants that do not have a federally-approved indirect cost rate, attach any applicable documents under "other documents"
- **Labor Union Concurrence:** "Not Applicable"

VIII. BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS

A. Preparing Your Budget

The proposed budget should be sufficient to allow you to perform the tasks described in the logic model. As detailed budget information is entered, Grant Gateway will automatically populate a budget summary and budget narrative report. Prior to submission, review Budget Checklist (Appendix B) to ensure budget is compliant. Grant Gateway will perform a limited compliance check to validate budget. If any compliance issues are detected, you will receive a warning and/or error message. You must resolve all errors before you can submit your application.

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).
- **Please add cost of the NSOPW, state check and/or FBI check for criminal history checks for each covered position in CNCS share of budget. If funds are not budgeted, an explanation for how costs will be covered must be noted in budget.**

Programs must comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and the requirements of the Uniform Guidance. Please refer to the Uniform Grants Guidance (UGG) (2 CFR Part 200) for allowable, allocable, and reasonable cost information, as well as audit requirements. The UGG can be found online at http://www.ecfr.gov/.

Section I: Program Operating Costs

Complete Section I, Program Operating Costs, of the Budget Worksheet by entering the "Total Amount", "CNCS Share", and "Grantee Share" for Parts A - I, for the **2027-2028** grant year, as follows:

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 CNCS or Grantee 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 and AmeriCorps members.

Volunteer Mississippi requires that new programs include 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, 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

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. If there is a training registration fee it should be included in the Staff Training line item. Only domestic travel is allowable.

Applicants may include funds in this line item for travel for staff to attend AMERICORPS-sponsored technical assistance meetings. There are two to three such opportunities per year, including, but not limited to the National Conference on Service and Volunteering and the National Service Regional Training Conference. It is strongly suggested that applicants budget funds in this line item for travel to the America's Service Commissions Regional Training Conference in **Spring 2027** at a location to be determined.

Volunteer Mississippi requires applicants to budget for the following staff travel:

- Program/Fiscal staff orientation – 1-2 days for training in Jackson in **July 2027** that the program director and one fiscal staff person are **required to attend**. Applicants should include mileage along with lodging and meals if an overnight stay is necessary due to distance.
- AmeriCorps Staff Training – This training will be in Jackson and will most likely be two days. The program director is required to attend; other program staff are encouraged to attend. Applicants should include mileage along with lodging and meals if an overnight stay is necessary due to distance.
- Spring Program Staff Training – Two day training to be held in a location and at a date to be determined. The program director is required to attend; other program staff are encouraged to attend. Applicants should include approximately 100 miles round trip.

All travel costs must be itemized. For example: Travel to VM AmeriCorps Staff Training for 2 staff: Lodging - $110/night x 1 night x 2 staff = $220; Mileage – 300 miles roundtrip x $0.76/mile = $228; Meals - $68/day x 2 days x 2 staff = $272 = $720.

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 Sections G. below. There is not a maximum daily rate.

Volunteer Mississippi requires applicants to budget for the following contractual and consultant services:
AmeriCorps Coaching Service – estimate hours needed per week, as well as the daily rate for same. Planning Grant Programs will be required to work with an "AmeriCorps Coach" that will assist in building quality management practices, monitoring plans, performance measurement/evaluation, etc. Include approximately **$8,333** for this consultation service (approximately **83.33** hours of coaching at an average **hourly rate of $100**).

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, team building, etc. Training registration fees will be included in this section. If using a consultant(s) for training, indicate the estimated daily rate. There is not a maximum daily rate.

H. 2. Member Training

Do not enter costs in this line.

I. Evaluation

Do not enter costs in this line.

G. Other Operating Costs

Allowable costs in this budget category should include when applicable:

- 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.
- Utilities, telephone, internet and similar expenses that are specifically used for AmeriCorps members and 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.
- Gifts and/or food in an entertainment/event setting are not allowable costs as either CNCS or Grantee share.
- Volunteer Mississippi requires all applicants to include costs for online fiscal and progress reporting and monitoring. Specifically, applicants should budget for the use of the **Grants Management System** (America Learns) for $750. This will enable your organization to manage fiscal oversight and reporting of the grant in a centralized way.

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 Office of Management and Budget Omni Circulars.

For organizations that do not have an established state or federal indirect cost rate, **administrative costs include**:

- Costs for financial, accounting, auditing, contracting or general legal services, except in unusual cases where they are specifically approved in writing by AMERICORPS as project costs.
- Costs for internal evaluation, including the organization's overall management improvement costs (except for independent evaluations and internal evaluations of a program or project).
- Costs for general liability insurance that protects the organization(s) responsible for operating a program or project, other than insurance costs solely attributable to the project.
- Costs of space, base utilities, and communication (telephone, fax, and Internet) supporting administrative personnel.
- Administrative costs may also include portion of salaries and benefits of project director and other administrative staff not attributable to time spent in support of a specific project. Principles that pertain to allocation and documentation of personnel costs are stated in OMB circulars incorporated in AMERICORPS regulations [45 CFR 2541.220(b)].

Administrative costs do not include the following allowable expenses directly related to a project (including their operations and objectives), such as:

- Costs for staff (including salary, benefits, training and travel) who recruit, train, place or supervise members or who develop materials used in such activities, if the purpose is for a specific project objective.

- Costs for independent evaluations and any internal evaluations to the extent that the evaluations cover only the funded program or project.
- Costs, excluding those already covered in an organization's indirect cost rate, attributable to staff that work in a direct program or project support, operational, or oversight capacity, including, but not limited to: support staff whose functions directly support program or project activities; and staff who review, disseminate and implement AMERICORPS guidance and policies directly relating to a project.
- Space, facility and communications costs for program operations, and other costs that primarily support program operations, and are specifically allocable thereto, excluding costs are already covered by the indirect costs rate.
- Other allowable costs, excluding those costs that are already covered by an organization's indirect cost rate, specifically approved by AMERICORPS as directly attributable to a program or project.

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

Applicants choose one of three methods to calculate allowable administrative costs – 1) a CNCS fixed percentage rate method, 2) a federally approved indirect cost rate method, or 3) a de minimis method. Regardless of the option chosen, the CNCS share of administrative costs is limited to 5% of the total AMERICORPS 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 the budget.

The Commission fixed share of 2% is required.

A. CNCS-Fixed Percentage Method

Five Percent Fixed Administrative Cost 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, you may charge, for administrative costs, a fixed 5.26% of the total of the CNCS funds expended. In order to charge this fixed 5.26%, the grantee match for administrative costs may not exceed 10% of all direct cost expenditures. ***The Commission fixed share of 2% is required.***

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 CNCS 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.

   CNCS Share: ([CNCS share of Section I] + [CNCS share of Section II] x 0.0526 = Maximum Amount 5%

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.

   Grantee Share: (Total of Section I + Total of Section II) x .1 = Maximum Amount 10%

3. Enter the sums of the CNCS and grantee shares under Total Amount.
4. Commission fixed share 2%: 40% x total indirect cost.

B. State or Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate

If you have a Federally Approved Indirect Cost (IDC) 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 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 overall indirect cost rate claimed. It is at your discretion to claim your entire IDC rate to calculate administrative costs. If you choose to claim a lower rate, please include this rate under the Rate Claimed field. ***The***

Commission fixed share of 2% is required.

1. **Indirect Cost Total**: Determine the base amount of direct costs to which you will apply the IDC rate, including both the AMERICORPS and Grantee shares, as prescribed by your established rate agreement (i.e., based on salaries and benefits, total direct costs, or other). Then multiply the appropriate direct costs by the rate being claimed. This will determine the total amount of indirect costs allowable under the grant.
2. To determine the AMERICORPS share: Multiple 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.

   CNCS Share: ([CNCS share of Section I] + [CNCS share of Section II] x .0526) x (.60) = CNCS Share

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.

   Grantee Share: Indirect Cost Total – Total CNCS Share = Grantee Share

4. Commission fixed share 2%: 40% x total indirect cost.

C. De Minimis Rate of 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs

Organizations who have **never**, at any point in time, held 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 minimis* rate of 15% 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 this option is elected, it must be used consistently across all federal awards. ***The Commission fixed share of 2% is required.***

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 $50,000 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 $50,000. AmeriCorps member living allowance and other member costs are not considered "participant support costs" subject to exclusion from the MTDC. 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 15% (0.15). 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. 28 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. 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.

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 the match is "secured" or "proposed" by typing "secured" or "proposed" next to each description. 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. FUNDING DEMOGRAPHICS

In the Funding/Demographics Section enter:

- **Other Revenue funds**: Enter the amount of funds that your program uses to run the program that are not identified on the application budget as CNCS share or grantee share (match). Note: Programs should not enter the total operating budget for their organization unless the entire operating budget supports the AmeriCorps program. Programs that have additional revenue sources not included in the matching funds section of the budget should provide the amount of this additional revenue that supports the program. This amount should not include the CNCS or grantee share amounts in the budget.

All other fields in this section should be listed as zero.

X. REVIEW, VERIFY, AND SUBMIT

Review and verify your entire application before submitting. The person who authorizes the application must be the applicant's Authorized Representative or his/her designee. 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 it. Grant Gateway 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 Grant Gateway 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: Everyone 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."

APPENDIX A: PERFORMANCE MEASURE INSTRUCTIONS

Performance Measure Module Instructions

In the performance measures module, you will create a performance measure for your planning grant

Home Page

- To start the module, click the Performance Measure tab.
- 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.
- Once you have started the module, clicking "Continue Working" will return you to the tab you were on when you last closed the module.
- To edit the interventions, objectives, MSYs and member allocations for your application, click the "Edit Objectives/MSYs/Members" button.
- After you have created at least one aligned 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".

Objectives Tab

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

1. Click on "Capacity Building" and click on "Capacity Building & Leverage".
2. Select "systems development" and "training" as the interventions.
3. Select "Capacity Building" as the primary focus area and "Capacity Building & Leverage: Systems Development" as the primary intervention.
4. Click "Next" to continue.

MSYs/Members Tab

On this tab, you must enter a numerical value of "1" in all MSY and slot fields in order to submit your application. Then click the next button to continue.

Performance Measure Tab

This tab allows you to create performance measures for the planning grant activities that will be entered..

- **Objective:** Select "Capacity Building and Leverage"
- **Title:** Planning Grant
- **Problem Statement:** N/A
- **Selected Interventions:** Select both systems development and training.
- **Outputs:** Select G3-3.4: Number of organization that received capacity building services.
- **Outcomes:** Select the blank box and then type "App. Determined Outcome: 1 org. that improved their capacity to implement an AmeriCorps program"
- **Capacity Building End Outcomes:** Do not select anything in this section.
- **Enter # of MSYs:** Enter 1
- **Enter # of Members:** Enter 1
- Click next to continue.

Data Collection Tab

- **Description of Interventions:** Type "Conduct a planning grant process, participate in training and learning opportunities and meet regularly with Volunteer Mississippi staff and consultants".

Output: G3-3.4: Number of organizations that received capacity building services

- **Select Method:** Other
- **Enter Instrument Description:** N/A
- **Enter Target Number:** 1

Outcome: App. Determined Outcome: 1 org. that improved their capacity to implement an AmeriCorps program

- **Select Method:** Other
- **Enter Instrument Description:** Type "Improved will be defined as completing and submitting at least five elements from the output column in the logic model."
- **Enter Target Number:** 1
- **Unit of Measure:** Organization
- Click "mark complete" to continue.
- Click "next" to continue.

APPENDIX B: BUDGET CHECKLIST

Below is a checklist to help you make certain that you submit an accurate budget narrative that meets AmeriCorps requirements. Note: This does not apply to Fixed-amount grants.

SECTION I. PROGRAM OPERATING COSTS

In Compliance?		
Yes ☐	No ☐	Costs charged under the Personnel line item directly relate to the operation of the AmeriCorps project. Examples include costs for staff that manage the project.
Yes ☐	No ☐	Staff indirectly involved in management or operation of applicant organization is funded through administrative cost section (Section III) of budget. Costs include central management and support.
Yes ☐	No ☐	Staff fundraising expenses are not charged to CNCS or Grantee share of grant. You may not charge AmeriCorps staff members' time and related expenses for fundraising to CNCS or Grantee share of grant. Expenses incurred to raise funds must be paid out of the funds raised. Development officers and fundraising staff are not allowable expenses.
Yes ☐	No ☐	The types of fringe benefits covered and the costs of benefit(s) for each staff position described. Allowable fringe benefits include FICA, Worker's Compensation, Retirement, SUTA, Health and Life Insurance, IRA, and 401K. Provide calculation for total benefits as a percentage of salaries to which they apply or list each benefit as separate item. If fringe amount is over 30%, please list separately.
Yes ☐	No ☐	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.
Yes ☐	No ☐	The purpose for all staff travel is clearly identified.
Yes ☐	No ☐	You have included funds in Staff Travel for Volunteer Mississippi sponsored events.
Yes ☐	No ☐	All single supply items over $1,000 per unit are specifically listed and explained in budget narrative.
Yes ☐	No ☐	You have budgeted the cost of the NSOPW, FBI, and state check in the CNCS share for criminal history checks of grant-funded staff that are in covered positions per 45 CFR 2522.205? If not, there is an explanation provided in the narrative of how the program will be covering the costs.
Yes ☐	No ☐	All items in the budget narrative itemized and the purpose of the funds justified.

SECTION III. ADMINISTRATIVE/INDIRECT COSTS

In Compliance?		
Yes ☐	No ☐	Applicant has chosen to use the CNCS fixed percentage method and the maximum federal share of administrative costs does not exceed 5% of the total federal funds budgeted?
Yes ☐	No ☐	Applicant has chosen to use CNCS fixed percentage method and the maximum grantee share is at 10% or less of total budgeted funds?
Yes ☐	No ☐	Applicant has a current approved federal indirect cost rate – The maximum grantee share does not exceed the federally approved rate, less the 5% CNCS share?
Yes ☐	No ☐	Applicant has a current approved federal indirect cost rate-the type of rate, the IDC rate percentage, the rate claimed and the base to which the rate is applied has been specified?
Yes ☐	No ☐	Applicant has a copy of the current approved federal indirect cost rate agreement which has been submitted to acms@ihl.state.ms.us.
Yes ☐	No ☐	Applicant has never had a federally approved indirect cost rate and is choosing to use a *de minimis* rate of 10% of modified total direct costs has been budgeted?

Yes ☐	No ☐	Applicant included ***the Commission's fixed share of 2%.***

SOURCE OF FUNDS

In Compliance?		
Yes ☐	No ☐	Is the overall match being met at the required level, based on the year of funding?
Yes ☐	No ☐	For all matching funds, proposed vs secured, the source(s) [private, state and local, and federal], the type of contribution (cash or in-kind), and the amount of match, are clearly identified in the budget narrative and the Source of Match fields in Grant Gateway.
Yes ☐	No ☐	The amount of match is for the entire amount in the budget narrative? (The total amount of match equals the amount in the budget?)

APPENDIX C: MATCH WAIVER REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS

Grantees are required to meet an overall matching rate that increases over time. You have the flexibility to meet the overall match requirements in any of the three budget areas, as long as the minimum match of 24% for the first three years, and the increasing minimums in years thereafter, are maintained. See 45 FCR §§ 2521.35-2521.90.

Following the ASN Rule Change in 2025 which reduces the match requirement starting in the fourth year and peaks at 30% in the tenth year of the match schedule, Alternative Match Schedules were phased out in FY2025.

Match Waiver: In accordance with 45 CFR §§ 2521.70 and 45 CFR § 2521.60(b), applicants may request a full or partial waiver of match requirements. Information on how to submit a match waiver request is on the AmeriCorps Manage your grant webpage.

Criteria for match waiver eligibility include any of the following:

- Initial difficulties in the development of local funding sources during the first three years of operations; or
- An economic downturn, the occurrence of a natural disaster, or similar events in the service area that severely restrict or reduce sources of local funding support; or
- The unexpected discontinuation of local support from one or more sources that a project has relied on for a period of years; or
- Organizational revenue of less than $500,000.

Special Eligibility for a Match waiver: Under certain circumstances, applicants may also qualify for a match waiver as specified in the regulations at §2521.60(b). To qualify, you must demonstrate that your program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined below.

A. Rural County: In determining whether a program is rural, AMERICORPS will consider the most recent Beale code rating published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the county in which the program is located. Any program located in a county with a Beale code of 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 is eligible to apply for the alternative match requirement. See Appendix D for the Table of Beale codes.

B. Severely Economically Distressed County: In determining whether a program is located in a severely economically distressed county, AMERICORPS will consider the following list of county-level characteristics. See Appendix F for a list of website addresses where this publicly available information can be found.

- The county-level per capita income is less than or equal to 75 percent of the national average for all counties using the most recent census data or Bureau of Economic Analysis data;
- The county-level poverty rate is equal to or greater than 125 percent of the national average for all counties using the most recent census data; **and**
- The county-level unemployment is above the national average for all counties for the previous 12 months using the most recently available Bureau of Labor Statistics data.
- The areas served by the program lack basic infrastructure such as water or electricity.

C. Program Location: Except when approved otherwise, AMERICORPS will determine the location of your program based on the legal applicant's address. If you believe that the legal applicant's address is not the appropriate way to consider the location of your program, you must provide relevant facts about your program location in your request. AMERICORPS will, in its sole discretion, determine whether some other address is more appropriate for determining a program's location.

If your program is located in one of these areas, see the instructions below for applying for this alternative match schedule. Volunteer Mississippi and AMERICORPS will review your request and notify you within 30 days if you qualify for the alternative schedule and provide instructions.

If approved for the alternative schedules, programs will base their budget in the upcoming application on the approved alternative match. The alternative match requirement will be in effect for whatever portion of the

project period remains or if applying as a new grantee, for the upcoming three-year grant cycle.

D. Instructions for the Match Waiver: Programs must send their requests to Volunteer Mississippi via email to acms@ihl.state.ms.us for review and approval. If approved by Volunteer Mississippi, it will then be forwarded to AMERICORPS for consideration.

E-mail subject line: AmeriCorps Alternative Match Request

Send your request in memo format. You must respond to each question below. Please include both the question and your response in your request.

1. **Basis of Request**
    a. Identify the basis for your request as either a rural county or a severely economically distressed community as described above.
2. Describe where your program operates and include the address of the legal applicant.
3. Rural Counties
    a. Describe the economic conditions.
    b. Confirm that your county has a Beale code of 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9.
4. **Economically Distressed Counties**
    a. Provide your county per-capita income, poverty and unemployment levels.
    b. Demonstrate that your county per-capita income, poverty, and unemployment levels are above or below the national averages. Identify the data source(s) used to make your determination.
    c. Provide any other statistics you deem relevant to demonstrate your county is economically distressed.
5. **Program Location:** If you believe the location of your program should not be based on the address of the legal applicant, describe your justification for requesting an alternative location(s).

APPENDIX D: BEALE CODES AND COUNTY-LEVEL ECONOMIC DATA

Rural Community

Beale codes are published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and are used to classify counties as being more urban or more rural. Counties are designated on a scale from one to nine according to the following descriptions:

2003 Beale Codes		
Code#	**Metropolitan Type**	**Description**
1	Metropolitan	Counties in metro areas of 1 million population or more
2	Metropolitan	Counties in metro areas of 250,000 to 1 million
3	Metropolitan	Counties in metro areas of fewer than 250,000
4	Non-metro	Urban population of 20,000 or more, adjacent to a metropolitan area
5	Non-metro	Urban population of 20,000 or more, not adjacent to a metropolitan area
6	Non-metro	Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, adjacent to a metropolitan area
7	Non-metro	Urban population of 2,500 to 19,999, not adjacent to a metropolitan area
8	Non-metro	Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, adjacent to a metropolitan area
9	Non-metro	Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, not adjacent to a metropolitan area

Any program located in a county with a Beale code of 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 is eligible to *apply* for the alternative match.

Severely Economically Distressed Community

The following table provides the website addresses where the publicly available information on county-level economic data including per capita income, poverty rate, and unemployment levels can be found.

WEBSITE ADDRESS	EXPLANATION
http://www.bea.gov/regional/	**Bureau of Economic Analysis' Regional Economic Information System (REIS):** Provides data on per capita income by county for all states except Puerto Rico.
https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml	**Census Bureau's American Fact-finder**: Provides census data including estimates on poverty, per capita income and unemployment by counties, states, and metro areas including Puerto Rico.
www.bls.gov	**Bureau of Labor Statistics' Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS):** Provides data on annual and monthly employment and unemployment by counties for all states including Puerto Rico.
https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-continuum-codes.aspx	**US Department of Agriculture's Rural-Urban Continuum Codes (Beale codes):** Provides urban rural code for all counties in US.