**Planning Grant Narrative Guidance**

## Overview

The narrative is a required part of the AmeriCorps application. It is your opportunity to convey in writing important elements that demonstrate both the need for your program and your organization readiness.

For planning grants, the narrative is different from what will be required in the operational NOFO.

The following information that is outlined represents the eGrants categories in which text must be entered for the narrative module.

For the purpose of the AmeriCorps planning grant, we have provided the exact information you must either complete or respond to. For example, some items are a required set of sentences for which you will fill in the blanks and some items are a list of criteria for which you need to respond.

We strongly encourage that you work on your narrative in this word document and then once complete, copy and paste into eGrants.

**NOTE:** the narrative cannot exceed 7 pages as it prints out in eGrants, including the face sheet – reviewers will no review anything beyond that 7-page limit.

## Requirements

### A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (Required - 0 percent)
*Please fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary. Do not deviate from the template below.*

The [Name of the organization] proposes a planning grant to focus on (what the community interventions will be.) The proposed program will serve [the location(s) the AmeriCorps program will serve]. 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. PROGRAM DESIGN (50 PERCENT)
*To start this section, please fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the first paragraph of the program design section. Do not deviate from the template below.*

[Name of organization] has applied to Maryland Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism for funding consideration for the 2023-2024 AmeriCorps Maryland New Applicant Notice of Funding Opportunity. If selected for funding, the planning grant will begin September 15, 2023. This application is for an 11-month planning grant to ensure proper staffing is in place to support the launch of the operating grant, prepare program and fiscal pre-award risk assessment documents, attend required trainings, ensure necessary partnerships and member recruitment and support plans are in place, and other activities approved by the Maryland Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism to support the development and launch of a 2024-2025 operating grant.

*Next, please respond with narrative to the following criteria.*

- Describe the problem that exists and is prevalent in communities or environments where the program plans to serve for which you think members might be a good solution to address. Please use up to date, relevant, and local data, as available.
- Briefly describe the core activities you think members will implement or deliver if you were to become fully operational.
- Provide a clear explanation for why a planning grant is needed.
- Describe a clear and logical planning process that includes the details below:
  o The applicant describes a detailed description of who is leading the planning process.
  o The applicant describes how the planning period will be used to develop the necessary components to effectively manage an AmeriCorps program in the future along the following elements:
    ▪ Theory of Change/Logic Model
    ▪ Intervention and evidence base
    ▪ Performance measures and data collection
    ▪ Member outreach and recruitment, orientation and training, and supervision and reflection plans
    ▪ If applicable, partnership development, site outreach and recruitment, orientation and training, and monitoring and communication
    ▪ Program Compliance and Accountability
    ▪ Securing Match Support for the Program

## C. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY (25 PERCENT)
*Please respond with narrative to the following criteria.*

- Describe the organization's plan to hire or transition staff to support the planning grant. It is the Maryland Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism's expectation that a primary program staff

person is committed no less than 70% of their time during the planning grant period to prepare for the launch of an operating grant.
- Identify the primary program and primary fiscal contacts for the planning grant application include secondary contacts if applicable. Indicate if primary contacts would be new hires to the organization, or existing staff.
- Describe the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan the proposed program.
- Describe the organization's history, if any, with state or federal grants within the last seven years.
- Describe plans to engage community members and partner organizations in the planning process.

## D. COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (25 PERCENT)

*No narrative should be entered in this section except for "See budget"* in the "Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy" field of the Narrative. Any other text entered in this field will not be reviewed.

*Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below in the actual budget that will be submitted in eGrants.*

- Budget complies with the application instructions
- Budget meets match requirements.
- Applicant identifies sources of match in the Source of Funds section of the budget

## E. EVALUATION PLAN
*No narrative should be entered in this section except for* "N/A" in the "Evaluation Summary or Plan" field of the Narrative. Any other text entered in this field will not be reviewed.

## F. AMENDMENT JUSTIFICATION
*No narrative should be entered in this section except for* "N/A" in the "Amendment Justification" field of the Narrative. Any other text entered in this field will not be reviewed.

## G. CLARIFICATION INFORMATION
*No narrative should be entered in this section except for* "N/A" in the "Clarification Informaion" field of the Narrative. Any other text entered in this field will not be reviewed.

## H. CONTINUATION CHANGES

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*No narrative should be entered in this section except for* "N/A" in the "Continuation Changes" field of the Narrative. Any other text entered in this field will not be reviewed.