**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFP AMENDMENT #2 AND**

**RFP SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFP NUMBER AND TITLE:** | RFA# 202407141 - Maine Rural State AmeriCorps Grants |
| **RFP ISSUED BY:** | Volunteer Maine |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | August 19, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **LINK TO RECORDED INFORMATIONAL SESSION:**  | <https://youtu.be/HXizNaGxjhM>  |
| **AMENDMENT AND QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | August 21, 2024 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | August 29, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time ***(As Amended)*** |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | proposals@maine.gov |
| **Unless specifically addressed below, all other provisions and clauses of the RFP remain unchanged.** |
| **DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES IN RFP (if any):** 1. All references to the RFA Submission Deadline of August 28, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time, are amended to ***August 29, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time***.
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**Provided below are submitted written questions received and the Department’s answer.**

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| **1** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III, p.15 | We are still in the process of determining how many sites members will be placed at. Can we indicate a range (ie. from 1 to 3 sites) or do we need to specify a specific number? |
| **Answer** |
| In general, the more specific you can be about your plans, the better. However, there is no specific requirement that you have a complete list of the number of places your members will provide service. It is important to also note, however, that service “sites” cannot be entirely separate in Rural State grants.P.15 of the NOFA includes “*AmeriCorps members serve with a single organization*” and the following page gives some additional clarification:“*AmeriCorps direct service may occur at the grantee organization’s site or it may occur out in the community. For instance, a program for diabetics that combines meal planning, nutrition education, and exercise may occur at sites where participants can conveniently gather. Still, the* ***members are directed in their work by the grantee and the program is tightly identified as “belonging” to the grantee****. In another example, a school district may decide to formalize and strengthen how it brings volunteers into schools to assist. The AmeriCorps members might work with staff in several locations to identify volunteer roles, describe positions, recruit new people, and set up other systems. Even though the AmeriCorps members help staff in several school buildings, they are still serving in one district, under one supervisor, with one work plan*.”In this competition, you can’t have a fully dispersed site model where a Member reports to a separate agency and is supervised entirely by someone at that agency.  For Rural State grants, the program is applicant’s, and the team of members is ultimately supervised by someone from the applicant agency – though this can be done in collaboration with people at individual service locations since a single supervisor can’t be everywhere at once and the team isn’t all in one place or serving as a group every day.   |

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| **2** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I.II, p.13 | We were thinking about this statewide. Is this grant limited to certain counties? |
| **Answer** |
| See previous answerRural State grants have preference points for certain of Maine’s most rural counties (p.13), but programs cannot operate a dispersed site model with members serving in multiple counties, as noted above. |

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| **3** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III, p.15 | How small in the number of members could a program be and still run? |
| **Answer** |
| Rural grants must have between 2 and 5 Member Service Years (MSY’s)*“The team of AmeriCorps members will be no fewer than 2 people serving 1700-hour terms or one Member Service year each. A Member Service Year (MSY) is to the AmeriCorps world what a Fulltime Equivalent (FTE) is to the employment world. MSYs can be divided into multiple positions.”*The minimum size is the equivalent of two 1700-hour people. If the positions are part time, they need to add up to at least 2 MSY. See examples belowTWO @ 1700 hours = 2 MSY [2 x 1msy = 2 msy]FOUR @ 900 hours = 2 MSY [4 x 0.5msy = 2 msy]THREE @ 1200 hours = 2.1 MSY [3 x 0.7msy = 2.1 msy] |

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| **4** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III, p.16 | Can AmeriCorps Members write Grants? |
| **Answer** |
| There are certain restrictions specific to fundraising that AmeriCorps members must follow.a) Members can only raise funds for the operation of the AmeriCorps program they serve and cannot raise operating funds for the funded organization or service site. Thus, a member For example, in an AmeriCorps tutoring program that's hosted by the boys and Girls Club, a member could ask for donations of books or money to buy backpacks for the kids to organize their homework in, or for food to make sure that the kids have snacks while they're being tutored because that's something the program needs to be successful. But they can't be part of the fundraising for the Boys and Girls Club that goes into their general operating fund.b) Members can individually devote no more than 10% of their service time to fundraising activities for the program.c) AmeriCorps members of any type, whether they're VISTA, or State & National, cannot write Federal grants. |

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| **5** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | How difficult has it been to recruit members in the last few years? |
| **Answer** |
| It was very strong in the 1st year of Covid and then very weak, nationally, during the next 2 years of Covid. Last year, and this year it has been bouncing back; our programs went from filling, at the worst, only about 40% of their positions. Currently they're filling over 90%. |

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| **6** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.VII, p.32 | Does the data collection for this grant need to be done by a third party? |
| **Answer** |
| Data collection for initial grants is primarily limited to performance measure data, collected in the manner specified in your application’s submitted performance measures – usually a count of the beneficiaries served (the output) and the number of that group that “improved” because of the service (the outcome). Outputs are unduplicated counts of individuals and the change in the beneficiaries is typically determined by some sort of survey or other tool that measures change resulting form the service delivered.There are Evaluation requirements in later grant cycles, but initial applicants enter N/A in the Evaluation Plan field. (p.45) |

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| **7** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | When would we hear back [about the award decision] and when would the year of service start? |
| **Answer** |
| The application review process will be completed prior to the September Commission meeting so that votes on funding can be taken at that meeting. Awardees will know at them time if their application was successful, so no later than October 1stThe awards are then submitted to the AmeriCorps federal agency. Funding agreements will be issued when the federal awards are made, sometime in the mid to late fall. Selected awardees need to participate in “New Grantee Training” and the target date for program start is January first.Applicants should select a start date of Jan 1, 2025. |