

Volunteer Tennessee

2025-26 Grant Information Session Q&A

Should agencies apply for formula or competitive funding?

- **All new programs should apply as formula applicants.**
- **Only programs identified as competitive applicants by Volunteer Tennessee can apply for competitive funding.** Competitive applicants have already received notification from Volunteer Tennessee.

Should agencies apply as a fixed or cost-reimbursement applicant?

- **Ultimately, it is up to your agency whether or to apply for fixed or cost reimbursement funding.**
- Volunteer Tennessee recommends that new programs apply for cost reimbursement grants, as it offers more flexibility.
- Volunteer Tennessee also acknowledges that new-to-Tennessee programs that are affiliated with an agency that has received AmeriCorps State funding from another state commission may already be equipped to apply for fixed funding.

Is there a match requirement for fixed grants?

- **There is no match required for fixed grants.**

What should be included in performance measures?

- **For comprehensive instructions and a list of all National Performance Measures, check out the [AmeriCorps Performance Measures Instructions](#), linked on the VT AmeriCorps Funding Opportunities [webpage](#).**
- In short, performance measures must include an objective, at least one target output, at least one target outcome, and at least one proposed intervention.
- The same objective may be associated with multiple outputs, outcomes, and interventions.
- Remember, all National Performance Measure outputs may also be paired with an applicant-determined outcome instead or may be used without an associated outcome.
- Consider creating your own performance measures.
- Utilize examples assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence from the [AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange](#).
- To receive funding priority, include in your application narrative the ways that you used the AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange (focusing of Moderate or Strong evidence only) to inform your program design. You may also address funding priority while developing your performance measures, logic model, etc.

If our AmeriCorps program addresses multiple National and/or Tennessee funding priorities, do we have to choose between one or the other?

- **No, you do not have to choose between funding priorities. Programs may address multiple funding priorities.**
- However, to receive priority consideration, applicants must show the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes. That means, all priorities should be addressed in the narrative and in the performance

measures. (One way to do this is to have a performance measure related to each funding priority you address.)

Is there something that goes into more in depth on the performance measure Civic Bridge building?

- Yes, check out this [fact sheet](#)!

What should I do as an AmeriCorps State and National Continuation Applicant?

- **Review the Grant Terms:** Are there any updates or modifications to the terms for this new program year? Be sure to thoroughly review the new grant conditions to ensure your program stays compliant.
- **Submit Required Continuation Documentation:**
 - Application Narrative: Does your application reflect any changes in your program, such as staffing updates, service site shifts, or challenges you've faced? Even though you're not submitting a new proposal, it's crucial to update your narrative with relevant changes.
 - Performance Measures: Are you on track with your performance goals? Be prepared to report your progress and explain any variances in your performance data.
 - Budget Adjustments: Have there been changes to your program size, costs, or match contributions? Make sure to update your budget accordingly.
- **Keep VT Staff Informed:** Have you communicated any significant program changes like scaling up, adjusting members' roles, or leadership transitions? These changes should be noted in your continuation application and discussed with VT staff.

What shouldn't I do as a Continuation Applicant?

- **Don't Assume Past Performance Guarantees Funding:** Even if your program has been successful, remember that you still need to justify its ongoing impact. Are you clearly demonstrating why your program is still needed and valuable?
- **Avoid Significant Changes Without Approval:** Are you making major adjustments to your program design or member activities? Any big shifts should be cleared with AmeriCorps or VT before being implemented.
- **Don't Ignore Evaluation Data:** Are you effectively using your evaluation data? Don't skip this step! Evaluation helps to refine your program and demonstrate your impact.

What are some helpful Best Practices for continuation applicants?

- **Evaluate and Adapt:** Are you using evaluation feedback to refine your program? The continuation period is a great time to assess and make improvements.
- **Plan for Growth or Changes in Member Numbers:** Are you increasing or decreasing your members? Make sure this is reflected in your continuation application, along with necessary budget and staffing adjustments.

How do programs prepare for all the other components within your program?

- During the application stage, develop a manageable timeline that addresses recruitment, enrollment, service, and member exits.
 - Pay attention to whether or not the timeline will allow members in each slot type to meet the hourly requirement comfortably.

- Once notice of grant awards have been made, Volunteer Tennessee will connect with agencies to coordinate training and support. Training often occurs virtually, both synchronously and asynchronously. Programs are also paired with primary point of contact at Volunteer Tennessee to support their operations.

