



# AmeriCorps State and National Update

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Address your comments to [aborgstrom@cns.gov](mailto:aborgstrom@cns.gov)

## Message from Acting Director Lois Nembhard



I hope that those of you who attended had a productive experience at the AmeriCorps State and National 2009 Grantee Meeting and other events. From the Commissioner Institute, to training for trainers, the Program Start-Up Institute, the new Commissioner and Executive Director Orientation, and the Grantee Meeting, these events were carefully designed with your input, to maximize the opportunity for information sharing, collaboration, and skill development.

As we have probably all said at some point in the last few months, this is an exciting time for the service world. I hope that you will find the activities and meetings of this week instructive and energizing, and that you will leave feeling better prepared to take advantage of this pivotal time for national service.

## 2010 Grant Competition

The *2010 Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity* has been published and is available online. Application Instructions, and notification that eGrants is open for applications will follow in the next few weeks. The *Notice* includes new elements we are piloting this year in preparation for full implementation of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act (SAA) in the coming years.

This year applicants will indicate whether they plan to focus on one of the five priority areas identified in the SAA (Education, Healthy Futures, Clean Energy/Environment, Veterans, Opportunity). If so, applicants are also asked whether they plan to select from a set of national performance measures during the clarification period. Priority consideration will be provided to applications for programs that address the priority areas. Priority consideration will also be provided to applications for programs that intend to use the national measures.

We have also added information regarding the fixed-amount option for programs enrolling full-time members only to the *Notice* and the *Instructions*. Maximum cost per MSY for these programs, and the national performance measures will be available later this fall.

The *Notice* also includes a target for the funding of Encore programs, defined as a program, carried out by an eligible entity, that involves a significant number of participants age 55 or older in the program and that takes advantage of the skills and experience that such participants offer in the design and implementation of the program.

Multi-state applicants will be required to describe the manner and extent to which they consulted with State Commissions in the states in which they plan to operate this year. We will provide additional guidance after the deadline on how State Commissions can provide input on national applications in their states. The *Notice* and *Application Instructions* reflect the new single application process for State Competitive and National applicants.

Maximum cost per MSY has increased from \$12,600 to \$13,000 this year for most programs. Education Award Programs may apply for up to \$800 per MSY. The maximum full-time living allowance is \$23,600 and the minimum living allowance is \$11,800.

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## 2010 Admin-PDAT-Disability Deadline and Reminders

2010 Admin-PDAT-Disability Applications will be due Tuesday, November 3 at 5:00 Eastern Time. As you know, this is the year that State Commissions will be submitting answers to the questions that relate to state service plans in the grant application, including questions related to the Supplemental State Plan for Adults Age 55 and Older, described in the SAA and the Interim Final Rule.

The Serve America Act expands the purpose for PDAT and Disability funds effective upon enactment of the 2010 appropriations. These funds will be able to be used to provide training and/or reasonable accommodation to Senior Corps and Learn and Serve America participants as well as AmeriCorps State and National members.

The Application Instructions will soon begin the 30-day comment period before final clearance with OMB. We expect to release the Instructions later in the fall. You may use [last year's Instructions](#) and the [Interim Final Rule](#) as a guide to start drafting your application. If there are substantive delays in the clearance process, the deadline may shift.

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## My AmeriCorps Frequently Asked Questions

We have been collecting your questions and issues since the My AmeriCorps Release 3 launched and continue to develop the [training resource page](#) with answers to your questions. You will find additional FAQs there. In addition, a number of policy issues have been raised. These are addressed below. We will update these FAQs as we work through the issues that arise. Please share this information with your subgrantees and operating sites.

### **1. The My AmeriCorps portal requires a whole number on total hours served upon exit, rather than a fraction. Should the fractional number be rounded up or down?**

Use standard rounding rules to round a fractional number of hours either up or down, depending on the number. But please keep in mind that timesheets must demonstrate that each member has served the minimum number of hours to receive the education award. In other words, do not allow a member to exit with a fraction below the minimum even if you would round up to the minimum in the exit field for total hours.

### **2. How do we make the determination that a member has performed satisfactorily as requested on the exit form?**

Base your assessment of satisfactory service on your own performance evaluation standards.

**3. Are we still required to retain paper copies of eligibility documentation?**

Yes, you are still required to retain eligibility documentation even though the screen in the portal implies otherwise. This screen describes the rule for VISTA rather than AmeriCorps State and National. This error will be corrected in a future release.

**4. Are we still required to retain paper copies of the enrollment and exit form?**

If both the member and the program certify an enrollment or exit form in the portal, you are not required to retain paper copies of the enrollment and exit form. The My AmeriCorps portal serves as the system of record for enrollment and exit forms certified by member and program. If the program certifies on behalf of the member, you should retain a paper copy of the paper form signed by the member.

**5. What is the definition of required completion date?**

The required completion date is the maximum amount of time members may take to complete their terms—one year from their start date in most cases or two years from their start date for two-year part-time members. The required completion date is not equivalent to the term end date specified in the member contract. For example, for a corps serving over a nine-month school year only, the members could all complete their terms prior to the required completion date.

**6. What is the definition of early exit?**

An early exit is one in which the member is exited more than 30 days prior to the required completion date. Members that exit early can be exited with full award, partial award, or without award depending on whether they served the minimum hours, fulfilled program requirements, experienced a compelling personal circumstance, etc. Early exit is not synonymous with an exit for cause/without award.

**7. What is the definition of member enrollment period?**

Member enrollment period is the entire period of time in which you may enroll members during your project period.

**8. What is the definition of Trust Eligible that I used on the exit form?**

A member is Trust Eligible if they are [eligible to earn an education award when the member enrolls](#).

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## Dates to Remember

<b>October 19, 2009</b>	National Direct and Indian Tribe Planning Grant Application Deadline
<b>November 3, 2009</b>	Admin-PDAT-Disability deadline
<b>November 17-19, 2009</b>	<a href="#">AmeriCorps Financial Management Institute</a>
<b>January 26, 2010</b>	State and National competitive deadline
<b>Late January, 2010</b>	Award National Planning-Indian Tribe Planning
<b>Late May, 2010</b>	Award State and National grants
<b>July 6, 2010</b>	Latest date for State Formula submissions

