

Customizing Your AmeriCorps Portfolio Formula Information

Understanding the funding categories formula, competitive, and education award programs is necessary to serve as the foundation for growing a portfolio. The formula has the most flexibility and more local say in setting priorities within service strategies. Local control is important for meeting needs identified within each State and formula funding can be used to focus the delivery system.

State Commission State capacity is a high priority when considering portfolio growth and should not be minimized due to the high performance demands of AmeriCorps. Wisconsin attempts to limit formula applicants to a maximum of \$252,000 which corresponds to roughly six formula programs. We also give a preference to 20 member Corps/programs to minimize the number of formula programs funded. These two items help us control the portfolio size and staffs capacity to effectively and efficiently manage the portfolio.

Wisconsin has always used the least restrictive method for setting priorities which allows local communities through non-profits, post-secondary, and government entities to determine their needs and services. We have never restricted the focus or services because we want all locally identified community needs to be addressed by AmeriCorps. Formula can be directed as the State Commission feels is necessary to meet the needs of the State as long as it fits within the national strategies.

Competitive funding can also be directed by the State Commission but doing so limits the applicants from a State. That is, choosing education as the States priority puts the competitive applications in the education services pool of applicants at the national level and eliminates programs from the State from competing in other the other service areas.

The law that created Serve Wisconsin includes a priority for youth corps programs and we normally fund six youth corps programs annually.

The Wisconsin's Commission annually reviews the results of the application process to continue to adjust the notice of application to fit any new focus areas at the federal level but just as important to ensure the process is accomplishing the Commissions funding strategy. One example is we like to make sure new applicants get a chance to be funded but we also want to fund the best programs in regards to getting results. Reviewing the process allows us to manage the program activities/services, member service site locations, costs per member, volunteer generation, etc.

The competitive application process has been most effective in Wisconsin when our application process requirements our aligned with the Corporations and applications are peer reviewed similar to the way the Corporation peer reviews are processed. This allows for correction actions before final submission to the national review process.

It is necessary to understand the Corporation's performance standards and expectations. We assess enrollment rates, retention rates, performance measure results, program operational performance and compliance.