



## 2014 AmeriCorps State Formula Grant Competition (Continuation and New Applicants) Summary of Serve DC Staff and Peer Review

### AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is a national service network that provides full- and less than full-time opportunities for participants, called members, to serve their communities and build the capacity of nonprofit organizations to meet economic opportunity, educational, environmental stewardship, disaster services, healthy futures, and veterans and family affairs, and capacity building needs. Within these seven issue areas, applicants may submit proposals that address specific problems of local communities.

### Competition Background

On March 20, 2014, Serve DC released a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) subject to the availability of appropriations for Fiscal Year 2014 for AmeriCorps State Formula applications. Serve DC will not receive the final funding amount until funds have been approved by Congress and announced by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Eligible applicants were local nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, and local units of government. Individuals were not eligible to apply. All applicants were required to attend one of the two mandatory technical assistance sessions organized by Serve DC (April 3 and April 7, 2014). Serve DC asked new applicants to submit a concept paper prior to application submission. Concept papers were reviewed by the Serve DC Commission. Following the Serve DC Commission's initial review of all concept papers, three programs were chosen to submit an application. Serve DC received five new or re-compete applications by May 28, 2014 deadline. Per a CNCS requirement, new applicants are to have at least 24% of their entire budget matched. The match level increases incrementally after the third year.

On March 31, 2014 Serve DC convened a technical assistance meeting for the four current AmeriCorps State Competitive Grantees that needed to complete a continuation application for a second or third year of funding in a three-year grant cycle. These sub-grantees were AARP Experience Corps, Higher Achievement, Latin American Youth Center and Playworks. These applications focused on current enrollment and



retention rates, programmatic and budget changes for the next grant year, and the progress and completion of the previous year's performance measures.

All programmatic applications (three year grants that are funded year to year that include members) were scored based on the three sections of the Request for Applications (RFA): Rationale and Approach, Organizational Capacity, and Budget Adequacy/Cost Effectiveness. Rationale and Approach represented 50% (or 50 points) of the overall cumulative score. This section included nine subsections: Program and Need (9 points), AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems Evidence Base and Measurable Community Impact (25 points), Member Training (8 points), Member Supervision (8 points), and Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification (0 points). Organizational Capacity represents 25% (or 25 points) of the overall cumulative score. This section includes three subsections: Organizational Background and Staffing (7 points/10 points for new applicants), Compliance and Accountability (11 points/15 points for new applicants), Past Performance For Current Grantees and Former Grantees Only (7 points for competing applicants and formula Grantees), and Continuous Improvement (0 points). Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy represents 25% (or 25 points) of the overall cumulative score. This section includes two subsections: Cost-Effectiveness (13 points) and Budget Adequacy (12 points). The total cumulative score possible for this competition was **100 points**.

**Grant Proposal Review Process #1**

The five new proposals underwent a two-tiered review process that included a peer review and a Serve DC staff review. The peer review panel included three community reviewers. Serve DC trained the peer review panel to familiarize them with the review process and related materials. The Peer Review Consensus Session was facilitated by Sarah Watkins, AmeriCorps Program Officer, Serve DC. The staff review panel included four Serve DC staff members and Serve DC Commissioner, Mat McCollough. Proposals were ranked separately by the peer and Serve DC staff reviewers. Based on the peer and staff review process, applicants are requested to make clarifications and adjustments to applications in the e-grants system. Recommendation options include to submit to CNCS for formula funding or rejection of an application.

*The results of the peer and staff reviews are as follows:*

Applicants and Description for <u>new</u> Formula Grants	Request	Average Peer Score	Average Staff Score	Serve DC Staff Recommendation
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<p><b>Kid Power</b></p> <p>Kid Power, Inc. will have 5 AmeriCorps members who will serve as (3) VeggieTime Community Directors and (2) Academic Curriculum Directors in the District of Columbia. At the end of the 1st program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for having expanded the capacity, developed curriculum, and deepened the impact of two of Kid Power's core programs. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 200 volunteers that will be engaged in program implementation and community engagement activities. This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education, Environmental Stewardship, and Healthy Futures.</p>	<p>Serve DC: \$64,400</p> <p>Grantee Match: \$77,376(55%)</p> <p>*24% match required</p>	<p>89.3</p>	<p>78.8</p>	<p><b>Recommended for Formula Funding</b></p>
<p><b>Groundswell</b></p> <p>Groundswell will have five full-time AmeriCorps members who will maximize its efforts to help DC residents understand complicated electricity options and how to access clean energy. At the end of Year 1 of the grant, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for mobilizing 100 institutions and 800 residents to pledge to clean energy as a group for a lower price than their own; thereby, expanding DC's clean energy economy and reducing the carbon footprint of energy consumption. They will empower 1,200 community residents through 40 education workshops on energy, and engage 200 volunteers in our communications and outreach activities. Groundswell's innovative AmeriCorps program aligns with the CNCS focus areas of capacity building and environmental stewardship.</p>	<p>Serve DC: \$66,500</p> <p>Grantee Match: \$167,250 (67%)</p> <p>*24% match required</p>	<p>84.3</p>	<p>65</p>	<p><b>Not Recommended for Formula Funding</b></p> <p>Notation: Organization's application did not display a clear intervention or build the case for need and program model. Reviewers identified concerns that organization was too based in advocacy.</p>

<p><b>Teens Run DC</b></p> <p>Teens Run DC will have seven full-time AmeriCorps members to strengthen its after-school mentoring and distance running program, build its capacity, and increase its positive impact on students' futures in Washington, DC. At the end of the 1st program year, AmeriCorps members will have engaged 10 to 20 students at each of its 10 partner schools participate in Teens Run DC. These students will benefit from 12 to 16 hours of physical activity, eight hours of individual mentoring, eight hours of social emotional learning and academic support, and four hours of community events and/or service-learning monthly. AmeriCorps members will also build Teen Run DC's capacity through mentor recruitment and coordination, and will help raise the organization's profile in Washington, DC. AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 120 volunteer mentors and 30 school faculty to engage in mentoring youth and other volunteer activities and will recruit an additional 240 students for once monthly school-wide community runs. Teens Run DC's AmeriCorps program aligns with two CNCS focus areas: Healthy Futures and Education.</p>	<p>Serve DC : \$93,100</p> <p>Grantee Match: \$75,130 (45%) *24% required</p>	<p>76.3</p>	<p>58.6</p>	<p>Not Recommended for Formula Funding</p> <p>Notation: Organization's application did not display strong program design, or performance measures. Reviewers identified concerns about staffing, growth and budget issues.</p>
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Applicants and Description for current Serve DC grantees who have finished their last year of a three year grant cycle and are re-competing as <u>new</u> Formula Grantees	Request	Average Peer Score	Average Staff Score	Serve DC Staff Recommendation
<p><b>Byte Back (currently a Serve DC grantee)</b></p> <p>The applicant seeks funding for 15 AmeriCorps members who will assist staff members, teach computer and job readiness skills and work directly with economically disadvantaged students at 15-20 locations in Washington DC.</p>	<p>Serve DC: \$199,500</p> <p>Grantee Match: \$109,157 (35%)</p> <p>*26% match required</p>	81.3	69.3	Recommended for Formula Funding (with a reduction to 8 slots)
<p><b>Center for Inspired Teaching (currently a Serve DC grantee)</b></p> <p>The applicant seeks funding for 30 AmeriCorps members who will work as Inspired Teaching Fellows at one of Inspired Teaching's residency partner sites.</p>	<p>Serve DC: \$89,783</p> <p>Grantee Match: \$909,735 (91%)</p> <p>*34% match required</p>	83.6	78	Recommended for Formula Funding (with a reduction of cost per MSY)

Applicants and Description for <u>continuation</u> Formula Grants	Request	Average Peer Score	Average Staff Score	Serve DC Staff Recommendation
<p><b>Higher Achievement (YR2 in funding cycle)</b></p> <p>The applicant seeks funding for 5 full-time members to provide services to middle school participants at the organization's five DC Achievement Centers, focusing their efforts around deepening school partnerships, expanding family communication, and individualized academic support.</p>	<p>Serve DC: \$66,500</p> <p>Grantee Match: \$148,385 (69%)</p> <p>*30% match required</p>	N/A	N/A	Recommended for Continuation Formula Funding



<p><b>AARP Experience Corps (YR3 in funding cycle)</b></p> <p>The applicant seeks funding for thirty minimum-time older adult AmeriCorps members to serve as tutors and mentors to students in grades K-3 who are struggling to read at two high-need DCPS schools.</p>	<p>Serve DC: \$84,445</p> <p>Grantee Match: \$39,013 (32%)</p> <p>*24% match required</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Recommended for Continuation Formula Funding</p>
<p><b>Playworks (YR3 in funding cycle)</b></p> <p>The applicant seeks funding for eleven full-time AmeriCorps Members who will implement a play-centered school improvement program that transforms school climate to improve academic, social and physical activity outcomes of low-income elementary students.</p>	<p>Serve DC: \$146,300</p> <p>Grantee Match: \$360,574 (71%)</p> <p>*26% match required</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Recommended for Continuation Formula Funding</p>
<p><b>LAYC (YR2 in funding cycle)</b></p> <p>The applicant seeks funding for eleven AmeriCorps members who will leverage 100 volunteers to support in-school and after-school academic and health education programs in DC Public School service sites.</p>	<p>Serve DC: \$126,313</p> <p>Grantee Match: \$195,907 (61%)</p> <p>*50% match required</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Recommended for Continuation Formula Funding (with a reduction to 5 slots)</p>

**Funding Recommendation for Formula AmeriCorps State**

*Kid Power: \$64,400*

Byte Back: \$106,400

Center for Inspired Teaching: **\$65,100**

Higher Achievement: \$66,500

AARP Experience Corps: \$84,445

Playworks: \$146,300

**LAYC: \$66,500**