

AmeriCorps Competitive Grant Review FAQ



Thank you for your interest in being a Community Grant Reviewer with MSA! You can learn more about the review process by watching a recording [HERE](#)- use passcode **6?1Q0ngJ** when prompted. Our most frequently asked questions are listed below.

1. What are AmeriCorps Competitive grants?

Each year, the AmeriCorps Agency releases a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NoFO) for organizations interested in hosting an AmeriCorps program. Successful applicants are awarded 3 year grants to host members and conduct service activities in local communities. Grants tend to be between \$250,000 and \$1 million per year, but can be larger. Programs commit to abiding by AmeriCorps terms of service and matching a specified % of the funds they receive. Learn more about the AmeriCorps Agency [HERE](#).

2. What role do Community Reviewers play in the grants process?

Community reviewers play several critical roles in MSA's grants process:

- a) Reviewers provide critical feedback on both the relevance of new programs (does Massachusetts need this?) and on the feasibility of their proposal (will they succeed). Community voices provide a broader set of viewpoints, identify needs across the commonwealth, and help MSA avoid settling into its own priority bubbles.
- b) Reviewer feedback helps programs improve their applications and program design.
- c) Reviewers determine which applicants will move on to the national competition.

3. What will I do as a reviewer?

Reviewers typically read and score between 2 and 4 applications from organizations looking to start new programs. The final number will depend on how many applications we receive. Applications are roughly 10-12 pages long and take 1-1.5 hours to read and assess. After submitting their recommendations, reviewers meet for roughly 1.5 hours on Zoom to discuss their feedback and provide a final vote on the application.

4. Will my vote determine the outcome of the process?

Multiple reviewers read each application. In most cases, MSA follows the majority vote of community reviewers taken at the end of live discussion sessions. Reviewers are encouraged not to worry about the ultimate impact of their vote and to focus on whether they believe the

program will benefit the Commonwealth. MSA will occasionally reach out to applicants to clarify significant points in the application. Applications approved by MSA are submitted to the national competition for consideration.

5. What criteria will I use to assess applications?

Reviewers will use a score sheet designed to mirror the application. Training will be provided for selected reviewers.

6. What is MSA looking for in Reviewers?

A list of desired qualifications is found in the Community Reviewer Position Description. In general, MSA's first priority is to build reviewer groups that effectively represent the Commonwealth and provide a diverse range of backgrounds and lived experiences. Depending on the final applicant pool, we often target expertise or experience related to common program themes.

7. I can't make the live session on October 20th, can I still participate?

All reviewers will need to attend the live session. MSA will have more grant review opportunities throughout the year that may better fit your schedule.

8. What is the timeline of the selection and review process?

Reviewers will be notified of their selection by September 30th. Review materials will be sent out no later than October 11 for the October 20th review. MSA will provide additional training and guidance to all selected reviewers.

9. I still have questions. Who can I contact?

Please send questions to ACQuestions@Mass-service.org