2020 NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Proposals Due: Friday, January 10, 2020

ISSUED BY THE MASSACHUSETTS SERVICE ALLIANCE WITH SUPPORT FROM THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

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National Volunteer Week

The Massachusetts Service Alliance (MSA) is pleased to release a Request for Proposals for the 2020 National Volunteer Week. MSA seeks to award matching grants of up to $3,500.00 to support volunteer service projects and capacity-building initiatives taking place during National Volunteer Week (April 19-25 2020) or the week prior (April 12-18 2020).

Established in 1974, National Volunteer Week is an annual initiative that has grown across the country each year. It is about inspiring and encouraging people to find ways to engage in their communities to meet tough challenges and accomplish goals. National Volunteer Week embodies the energy and power that volunteers evoke on a daily basis as they lead by example—not only by encouraging the people they help, but by motivating others to serve as well. In the spirit of National Volunteer Week, MSA is excited to offer this grant to expand volunteer service opportunities while meeting community needs for people of all ages in Massachusetts.

Grant funding is contingent on the availability of funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service. In the interest of funding high quality projects/initiatives, the total amount of funds to be granted has not been set in advance. Grant payments will be disbursed on a one-time reimbursement basis at the end of the grant period. Requests for reimbursement must be accompanied by all documentation required by MSA, in compliance with the rules for the administration of funds.

The Massachusetts Service Alliance

The Massachusetts Service Alliance (MSA), established in 1991, is a private, nonprofit organization. As the state commission on volunteerism and service, we generate collaboration and public-private partnerships at the local, state and federal level to grow volunteerism and service initiatives in Massachusetts. Our strong partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies allow us to mobilize funding to advance service and volunteerism through the AmeriCorps, Commonwealth Corps, and Volunteer Generation Initiatives programs. We have a 28-year proven track record of bringing volunteerism and service resources to hundreds of organizations from Pittsfield to New Bedford and Springfield to Lowell. We believe in the power of volunteerism and service to improve the quality of life of all residents of the Commonwealth, and we seek to understand and address the changing needs of Massachusetts and allocate resources to the strongest effect.

The Corporation for National and Community Service

The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. Through its multitude of programs, CNCS has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action. Through Volunteer Generation Fund grants, CNCS seeks to fund effective approaches that expand volunteering, strengthen the capacity of volunteer connector organizations to recruit and retain skill-based volunteers, and develop strategies to effectively use volunteers to solve problems. Administered by MSA, the National Volunteer Week grant is funded by the Volunteer Generation Fund.
Project Scope

MSA is offering National Volunteer Week grants to organizations that either:

1) **Engage volunteers in a service project.** Service projects should:
   a) Be based in Massachusetts and engage Massachusetts residents as volunteers;
   b) Include meaningful service that addresses an identified community need;
   c) Occur during National Volunteer Week (**April 19-25 2020**) or the week prior (**April 12-18 2020**);
   d) Recruit a diverse cross-section of the community as volunteers, and be open to volunteers from the general public;
   e) Engage volunteers in a **minimum of 3 hours of service**; and
   f) Provide volunteers with opportunities for sustained service and ongoing community involvement.

OR

2) **Conduct a capacity-building initiative to enhance volunteer programming.** Initiatives can include activities that will help the agency attain new volunteers for current or future programming as well as efforts that will increase efficiencies of the current internal volunteer program structure.

   Examples of acceptable initiatives include:
   - Volunteer fairs
   - Volunteer software or database implementation, and/or
   - Marketing and recruitment initiatives.

In addition, capacity-building initiatives should:
   a) Be based in Massachusetts and target Massachusetts residents as volunteers;
   b) Provide a clearly identified solution to a need within the organization’s volunteer programming;
   c) Kick off or culminate during National Volunteer Week (**April 19-25, 2020**) or the week prior (**April 12-18 2020**);
   d) Ensure an effective volunteer engagement strategy and best practices aimed at retaining volunteers for future community service events and programs.
Funding priority will be given to:

1) Organizations that will engage volunteers in youth development service projects/initiatives or within a program that serves at-risk youth;

2) Organizations that will provide youth, family or intergenerational volunteer opportunities to community members (these service projects/initiatives intentionally engage volunteers who are family members and/or represent a diverse age range); and

3) Volunteer connector agencies across the state (volunteer connectors include agencies that connect individuals with volunteer opportunities and support organizations in effectively using those volunteers to create meaningful change in local communities).

Timeline

Proposals must be received no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, January 10, 2020. Your application must be submitted through MSA’s online grant system, which may be accessed here. Applicants will be notified of the status of their grant proposal by the end of January 2020.

The grant period will begin February 17, 2020 and end on May 15, 2020. Grant funds are distributed and processed on a reimbursement basis. Only expenditures that occur within the grant period are eligible for reimbursement. Expenditures occurring outside the grant period will not be eligible for reimbursement or as a source of match unless the grantee has received prior approval from MSA.

Grantees are required to submit a final report, including project/initiative outcomes, by May 31, 2020. Organizations completing capacity-building initiatives will also submit a follow-up report in September, 2020.

Eligibility

Eligibility

Funding for this proposal are made available to the following organizations:

• Nonprofit organizations (incorporated with 501(c)(3) status) that have been in existence for at least one year prior to the date on which the organization submits an application;

• State, municipal, and county governments, including departments and agencies therein; and

• Native American tribes.

Restrictions

Organizations may not replace staff time or other expenses already being covered by existing MSA grant funding with funds to be provided through the grant described in this RFP. Additionally, MSA will not fund activities that engage in the following:

• Provide religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any form of proselytizing;
• Assist, promote, or deter union organizing;
• Finance, directly or indirectly, any activity designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office; or impair existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
• Displace staff positions with volunteers, and
• Charge volunteers to participate in service projects/initiatives or National Volunteer Week programming.

**Administrative Requirements**

**General Requirements**

Organizations receiving these funds are required to:

• **Provide a bottom-line, dollar-for-dollar match** to support the project/initiative. All grantees will be required to report the resources used to match grant funds. Matching funds can be a combination of cash and in-kind resources. **Please note:** Volunteer and/or service member time is not an appropriate source of match.

• **Participate in a grantee compliance webinar prior to the start of the grant period.** Date and time TBD.

• Register volunteer activities on Connect & Serve (MSA’s statewide volunteer web portal that connects individuals with volunteer opportunities).

• Include the MSA, CNCS, and National Volunteer Week logos on all marketing materials related to the funded program.

• Submit a final project report, including project/initiative outcomes, by May 31, 2020.

• Submit a final financial report, with all required documentation of expenditures, by May 31, 2020. Only expenses for which proper documentation has been received will be reimbursed.

• **Capacity Building Projects only:** Submit a follow up report no later than September 30, 2020.

**Criminal History Checks**

As stated by the Corporation for National and Community Service, organizations that are awarded the 2020 National Volunteer Week grant **must conduct CORI and NSOPW checks on all staff members listed in the grant budget** (under either requested or matching funds). Staff listed on the grant budget who live outside of MA are required to undergo their state’s criminal record check in addition to the CORI. Also, in accordance with these standards, all staff members listed in the grant budget that will have recurring access to vulnerable populations (youth under the age of 18, individuals with disabilities, or adults over the age of 65) will need to undergo an FBI criminal history check in addition to the CORI and NSOPW checks.

Expenses connected with the CORI, NSOPW, and FBI criminal history checks are considered an allowable use of grant funds, to the extent that they are required for the activities to comply with applicable laws.
**Reporting**

Organizations should be prepared to track the following during the full grant period (February 17 – May 15, 2020), to be submitted in the final project report:

- Number of project/initiative volunteers managed during the grant period
- Number of total hours served by all project/initiative volunteers
- Number of new volunteers recruited
- Number of total hours served by new volunteers ONLY
- Number of youth engaged as volunteers
- Number of at-risk youth served through the service project/initiative*
- Number of community partners and service sites
- Measurable outcomes defined in applicant’s proposal narrative (ie: Number of meals served, health kits assembled etc.)

*If at-risk youth will be impacted*, grantees are expected to provide parameters for their classification of “at-risk youth” within the application narrative as well as document the number of at-risk youth impacted by the grant funding and volunteer efforts provided. Grantees will provide the tracking method and tools used to determine the number of youth from their program who are categorized as at-risk.

**Please note:** Organizations completing capacity-building initiatives will be required to submit a follow-up report on the same data points listed above by September 30, 2020.

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**Match Overview and Usage of Funds**

**Match Overview**

The Massachusetts Service Alliance anticipates awarding grantees up to $3,500.00 depending on the size and scope of the proposed project/initiative. Grantees will be required to provide a bottom-line, dollar-for-dollar match of the requested budget to support the project/initiative. Matching funds can be a combination of cash and in-kind match. Grantees are responsible for maintaining accurate in-kind documentation for this initiative. All programs receiving support will be required to report the resources utilized to match grant funds.

**Usage of Funds**

Funds are intended for service project/initiative development and implementation, including:

- Coordination and staff time contributed to National Volunteer Week planning and activities;
  - Staff time is only eligible for grant funding and as a source of match if the staff salary is paid by private, state, or local dollars. **Salaries paid by federal monies are ineligible for funding and as a source of match.**
- Costs for supplies, materials, etc. directly related to the implementation of activities;
  - MSA will not award more than $500 for the purchase of food and refreshments.
- Volunteer recruitment, screening, orientation and training, recognition, and reward;
• **MSA will not award more than $700 for the purchase of volunteer appreciation items.**

  • Costs associated with transportation and other reasonable out-of-pocket expenses directly related to development and implementation of the project/initiative;
  
  • Record-keeping or other activities to assist organizations in connecting National Volunteer Week volunteers to future volunteer opportunities; and
  
  • Communication materials and activities designed to share project/initiative results with the community.

**Prohibited Usage of Funds**

  • Volunteer or service member payments or stipends (also an unallowable source of match)
  
  • The purchase of equipment.
    
    • **Equipment, defined as tangible, non-expendable personal property having a useful life of more than one year and/or acquisition cost of $1,000 or more per unit.**
    
  • The purchase of gift cards/certificates (purchased and donated gift cards/certificates are also an unallowable source of match)
  
  • Indirect costs as its own line item (costs related to occupancy and communication are permissible)
Application Instructions

Your application will be submitted online through our grants system. Please make sure to complete and submit each of the following components. Please note that all attachments will be uploaded as part of your application.

Online Application Checklist

☐ Application Cover Page (provided in online system)
☐ Project/Initiative Proposal Narrative
☐ Uploaded: Budget
☐ Uploaded: Most recent audit or 990
☐ Uploaded: 501(c)3 letter or MA Certificate of Tax Exemption (ST-2 or ST-5)

Chick here to access MSA’s Online Grants System and Submit your Application

Submission Deadline
5:00pm, Friday, January 10, 2020
Faxed, emailed, or hard copy transmissions will NOT be accepted. Any application that is not complete and/or does not comply with all submission requirements may not be reviewed.

Technical Assistance related to this RFP should be directed to
Christopher Woods, Coordinator for Volunteer Initiatives
617.542.2544  x214
cwoods@mass-service.org
Volunteer Service Project Proposal Narrative Instructions

Please follow the instructions below when completing your online application. Please ensure that all sections of this RFP are completed in their entirety. Each proposal should be comprised of the following:

**Executive Summary (150 word limit)**
- Briefly provide an overview of project and anticipated outcomes.

**Background/History of Organization (300 word limit)**
- Briefly describe the organization’s history, mission, overall goals and/or objectives.
- Describe the organization’s experience with planning volunteer service projects, including recruiting and managing volunteers.
- Describe the organization’s experience with managing grants, particularly federal grants.

**Project Design (1000 word limit)**
- Describe the identified community need(s) to be addressed and a strategy to impact them through the National Volunteer Week volunteer service project.
- Provide a description of the project, including the objective(s), projects date(s) and location, description of activities, general event schedule for volunteers, and inclement weather plan.
- Describe how the organization will recruit and engage a diverse pool of community volunteers, especially new volunteers not previously involved with the organization.
- Provide a definition of at-risk youth (if applicable), and how this initiative will address the needs of this specified population.
- Describe how the organization will publicize the event to potential sponsors, community partners, and the media to increase volunteerism in Massachusetts.
- Describe how the organization will partner with other agencies or groups in the local community to assist with project development and/or volunteer recruitment.
- Explain how the organization plans to maintain contact with volunteers recruited for National Volunteer Week and continue to engage them after the project has been completed.
- **Recurring National Volunteer Week grantees:** Please describe how you will enhance your project from last year in at least one of the following areas: volunteer activities, recruitment process, an overall increase in number of project volunteers engaged throughout the week, or new/specialized partnerships.

**Project Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes (400 word limit)**
- State at least one clear and measurable goal for each of the following:
  - Desired outcome (change or benefit) for the community being served
  - Desired outcome (change or benefit) for the engaged volunteers
- Describe how success will be measured and the specific methods/tools used for project evaluation, which includes collecting data on specific outputs and analyzing results.
- Describe how the project addresses the community need in a sustainable way.
Capacity-building Initiative Proposal Narrative Instructions

Please follow the instructions below when completing your online application. Please ensure that all sections of this RFP are completed in their entirety.

Executive Summary (150 word limit)
- Briefly provide an overview of project and anticipated outcomes.

Background / History of Organization (300 word limit)
- Briefly describe the organization’s history, mission, overall goals and/or objectives.
- Describe the organization’s experience with planning volunteer service projects, including recruiting and managing volunteers.
- Describe the organization’s experience with managing grants, particularly federal grants.

Project Design (1000 word limit)
- Describe the organization’s current engagement of volunteers and roles that they play.
- Describe the clearly identified need for volunteer program enhancement.
- Provide a description of the capacity-building initiative, including
  o the overall objective,
  o proposed activities to increase or enhance the organization’s volunteer program,
  o timeline and benchmarks of activities taking place during National Volunteer Week
  o location(s), inclement weather plan (if applicable), and
  o anticipated number of new volunteers obtained and/or impacted through proposed capacity-building efforts.
- Describe how capacity-building efforts will increase the organization’s impact on the community.
- Describe how the organization will partner with other agencies or groups in the local community to assist with project development and/or volunteer recruitment.
- Recurring National Volunteer Week grantees: Please describe how you will enhance your project from last year in at least one of the following areas: volunteer activities, the recruitment process, an overall increase in number of project volunteers engaged throughout the week, or new/specialized partnerships.

Project Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes (400 word limit)
- State at least one clear and measurable goal for each of the following:
  o Desired outcome (change or benefit) for the community being served
  o Desired outcome (change or benefit) for the engaged volunteers
- Describe how success will be measured and the specific methods/tools used for project evaluation, which includes collecting data on specific outputs and analyzing results.
- Describe how the project addresses the community need in a sustainable way.
Budget Instructions
You may download the budget form here. This file will be uploaded as part of your online application. A sample budget with acceptable calculations and descriptions can be accessed here.

Budget Summary (Tab 1)
- **Request (Column A)** – The dollar amount by line item category for which you are applying. This total amount cannot exceed the maximum award amount of $3,500.00.
- **Match (Column B)** – The dollar amount by line item category that you are contributing to the project. Please note that your total match amount must meet or exceed your total request.
- **Total (Column C)** – The total budget amount by line item category of the project.

Budget Narrative (Tab 2)
1) **Staff**
   a. **Definition:** Professional staff that provide direct services to the project.
   b. **Description Column:** Include each individual staff’s full-year salary and FTE rate (the percentage of time individual staff will directly work on the project) OR hourly rate as well as the number of hours per week and number of weeks assigned to this project. Each staff salary should be pro-rated to reflect the grant period (February 17 – May 15, 2020).
   c. **Considerations:**
      i. Organizations may not replace staff time already being covered by existing MSA grant funding with funds to be provided through the grant described in this RFP.
      ii. Staff time is only eligible for grant funding and as a source of match if the staff salary is paid by private, state, or local dollars. Salaries paid by federal monies are ineligible for funding and as match.
      iii. Funds may not be used to pay volunteers and/or additional AmeriCorps and Commonwealth Corps member stipends for service performed in connection with National Volunteer Week projects/initiatives (nor are volunteer or service member hours an appropriate source of match). Any staff listed in the budget (request or match) will be required to undergo the appropriate criminal history checks.

2) **Fringe Benefits**
   a. **Definition:** Allowable fringe benefits typically include FICA, Worker’s Compensation, Retirement, SUTA, Health and Life Insurance, IRA, and 401K.
   b. **Description Column:** Provide a calculation or rate for total benefits as a percentage of the salaries to which they apply, or list each benefit as a separate item. If a fringe benefit rate is over 30%, please list each benefit separately.
   c. **Considerations:**
      i. Holidays, leave, and other vacation benefits are not included in the fringe benefit rate but rather are absorbed into the salary budget (staff line item)
3) **Consultants & Contractual Services**
   a. **Definition:** Services that cannot be provided by any employees of the organization.
   b. **Description Column:** Include description of services being provided as well as an hourly rate and the number of hours to be provided.

4) **Supplies and Materials**
   a. **Definition:** Project related supplies and materials.
   b. **Description Column:** Each supply and material expense must have its own line item and description. All line items over $500 require a detailed description of how amount was derived, including cost per unit (i.e., total amount / number of units = cost per unit).
   c. **Considerations:**
      i. MSA will not fund more than $500 for the purchase of food and refreshments.
      ii. MSA will not fund more than $700 for the purchase of volunteer appreciation items (e.g., t-shirts, mugs, etc.).
      iii. MSA will not fund the purchase of equipment (see page 8)

5) **Travel**
   a. **Definition:** Costs for any official business travel related to the project (e.g., delivery services, fuel expended, taxi services).
   b. **Description Column:** Each travel expense must have its own line item and description. Please include per mile costs.
   c. **Considerations:**
      i. MSA cannot reimburse above the federally approved mileage reimbursement rate. This rate is currently .545 cents/mile. If the federal rate changes in 2020, grantees may use the updated rate.

6) **Occupancy**
   a. **Definition:** Costs of space for staff, meetings, etc. used directly for project planning and implementation.
   b. **Description Column:** Each occupancy expense must have its own line item and description. For each expense, provide a pro-rated cost allocation calculation

7) **Communication**
   a. **Definition:** Postage, advertisement, delivery costs, etc. needed for the project.
   b. **Description Column:** Each expense must have its own line item and description.

8) **Other**
   a. **Definition:** Special costs related to the individual project. Costs not listed in any of the above categories.
   b. **Description Column:** Provide a detailed description of each line item.