



**California Endowment Building Healthy Communities Initiative  
FAQ – March 5, 2010**

**Background:** AmeriCorps is known as the "domestic Peace Corps." Participants - known as AmeriCorps members - perform a year of service with a program focused on meeting local community needs. AmeriCorps programs can focus on issues such as education, health, and economic opportunity/development. Individual programs recruit and train their own members with funding from an AmeriCorps grant. The AmeriCorps grant provides federal funding for expenses such as member living allowances, health benefits, childcare (for eligible members), AmeriCorps program staff, training, evaluation and other program operating costs. Members also receive an education award directly from the Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation), the federal government agency that oversees AmeriCorps. In each state, the Corporation designates a national service commission that is responsible for stewarding AmeriCorps funds and distributing them as grants to public and private nonprofit organizations. In our state, CaliforniaVolunteers is the Corporation's designated national service commission.

***1) When does the planning grant officially begin?***

August 2010. Prior to this time, places interested in participating in this partnership will need to attend an AmeriCorps planning workshop (spring 2010) with travel costs sponsored by TCE, submit a concept paper for the planning process (June 1), and attend a June 22 meeting convened by CaliforniaVolunteers.

***2) How much money do I receive upfront?***

Sites will have \$12,000 upfront. Each site will have a total of \$62,000 for the planning process to bring stakeholders together to develop a plan best suited for their site within the context of the Building Healthy Communities framework. The California Endowment will provide each site with \$12,000, which sites may begin spending on August 1. The remaining \$50,000 will come from an AmeriCorps planning grant provided by CaliforniaVolunteers. CaliforniaVolunteers, like other state and federal agencies, provides reimbursements for services rendered. Sites may seek reimbursement payments from CaliforniaVolunteers once they have entered into a contract with the State of California. CaliforniaVolunteers expects contracts to be in place by August or September.

***3) How many AmeriCorps members will we have?***

Most likely, the number will range from 5-12 volunteers per site. The number of AmeriCorps members will depend on a community's needs, the type of activities that will address this need, and any additional resources available to the site.

CaliforniaVolunteers and The California Endowment's intermediary (Bay Area Community Resources) for the initiative will provide technical assistance to ensure that a reasonable plan can be developed that includes the total number of AmeriCorps members a site should request.

***4) What is the timeline for the AmeriCorps initiative? Does the implementation phase start right after I complete the planning phase?***

The AmeriCorps initiative is a unique partnership between The California Endowment and CaliforniaVolunteers. CaliforniaVolunteers has committed to providing three years of AmeriCorps funding for Building Healthy Communities places: A planning grant will support approximately ten months of planning (August 2010 to June 30, 2011), to be followed by implementation grants that will support programs operating in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. An AmeriCorps intermediary organization, Bay Area Community Resources, will provide technical assistance during the planning period, as well as administrative and management support in the implementation period. The California Endowment will provide funding to support sites in both planning and implementation.

The initiative also provides an opportunity to participate in a competitive process that may result in additional AmeriCorps funding. The Corporation will be administering a national AmeriCorps competition, with an anticipated application due date in December 2010. With assistance from CaliforniaVolunteers, Bay Area Community Resources will be submitting a single application on behalf of all Building Healthy Communities sites that have developed high-quality plans during the planning period. If the application is successful, the Corporation will provide a three-year implementation grant for years 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14. If this effort is unsuccessful, CaliforniaVolunteers will still honor its original commitment for implementation funding in 2011-12 and 2012-13.

***5) Is there a local matching grant component for the planning grant?***

The \$50,000 AmeriCorps planning grant has a 24 percent (\$12,000) matching requirement. This cost will be covered by The California Endowment's \$12,000 contribution toward each site's planning efforts.

***6) Is there a local matching grant component for the implementation phase?***

The amount of matching funds needed in the implementation phase will depend on your local site's plan. More information on this will be provided at the initial AmeriCorps workshop this spring.

***7) Is my site obligated to participate for a full 3 years?***

No. The purpose of the planning phase is to ensure that your site has the capacity and interest in pursuing a two-year implementation grant. If at the end of the planning grant, your community is not ready there is no penalty. You may re-consider the opportunity in the future and apply for AmeriCorps on your own.