



## AmeriCorps\*State Readiness Assessment

### Is my organization ready for an AmeriCorps\*State Grant?

This Readiness Assessment Questionnaire will help organizations to assess their capacity to operate a high quality AmeriCorps\*State program.

The questionnaire is also useful for organizations seeking funding from other government agencies, foundations, or individuals. While a few questions are specific to AmeriCorps\*State programs, most would be asked by any funder considering making a significant investment in the organization.

This questionnaire asks the reader to score the organization on elements necessary to run a high quality program, by selecting the answer that best describes the organization's current status or performance.

**EACH "YES" ANSWER IS WORTH ONE POINT**

#### **Organization Mission**

1. Does the organization have a written mission statement? (if no, skip to question 5)

Yes      No      Unsure

2. Does the mission statement provide a clear expression of the organization's reason for existence?

Yes      No      Unsure

3. Is the mission understood by ALL stakeholders within the organization?

Yes      No      Unsure

4. Is the mission frequently referred to (e.g. in meetings, in annual planning)?

Yes      No      Unsure

#### **Strategic Planning and Operations**

5. Does the organization have a clear and coherent written plan for the future (i.e. 3-10 year strategic plan)? (if no, skip to question #11)

Yes      No      Unsure

6. Does the strategic plan have well defined goals and action steps with timeframes and are the goals measurable and achievable?

Yes      No      Unsure

7. Is the strategic plan linked to the overall mission, vision, and overarching goals of the organization?

Yes      No      Unsure

8. Is the strategic plan well known and understood by the staff and board?

Yes      No      Unsure

9. Has the strategic plan been supported with a realistic and detailed annual plan that outlines the specific work to be accomplished?

Yes No Unsure

10. Is this annual plan consistently used at all levels of the organization to direct operations?

Yes No Unsure

### **Needs Assessment, Program Design and Implementation**

11. Does the organization conduct frequent assessments of the community need?

Yes No Unsure

12. Does the organization analyze the results of needs assessments and implement changes?

Yes No Unsure

13. Does the organization have the ability to grow and/or create new and innovative programs to meet the needs of the community?

Yes No Unsure

14. Does the organization have the ability to close a program that is no longer needed or relevant?

Yes No Unsure

15. Does the organization have a track record of success with its programs?

Yes No Unsure

### **Program Alignment**

16. Are the organization's programs and services well defined?

Yes No Unsure

17. Are the programs fully aligned with the organization's mission, goals, and overall strategy?

Yes No Unsure

18. Does your organization say no to opportunities, which are good, but which are not part of the overall strategy?

Yes No Unsure

### **Performance Measurement**

19. Does the organization have a well-developed and comprehensive evaluation system used to measure the social impact of its programs and services?

Yes No Unsure

20. Does the organization collect data to measure performance and progress on a continual basis?

Yes No Unsure

21. Is the data analyzed and communicated to stakeholders on a regular basis? (e.g. annual report)

Yes No Unsure

### **Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

22. Does the organization conduct frequent assessments of existing programs' effectiveness in meeting recipient needs and identify areas for improvement?

Yes No Unsure

23. Does the organization conduct continual assessment of internal operations to assess efficiency and effectiveness?

Yes No Unsure

### **Use of Technology**

24. Does the organization have networked computers with up to date software?

Yes No Unsure

25. Does every key staff member have access to a computer with up-to-date software?

Yes No Unsure

26. Does every key staff member have internet access and e-mail capabilities?

Yes No Unsure

27. Are all staff competent and comfortable using their computers?

Yes No Unsure

## Financial Management

28. Has the organization previously managed a federal or state grant?

Yes No Unsure

29. Does the organization have a computerized accounting system?

Yes No Unsure

30. Does the organization produce and review financial statements regularly?

Yes No Unsure

31. Are there formal internal controls governing all financial operations?

Yes No Unsure

32. Does the organization have adequate cash flow for normal operations?

Yes No Unsure

33. Does your organization have sufficient cash flow to operate a grant on an arrears basis? Both the Federal and State governments rarely, if ever, pay grant money in advance. Payments are made 30-60 days after submission of invoices by programs.

Yes No Unsure

34. Are financial operations of the organization audited annually by an independent auditor?

Yes No Unsure

35. Does the organization utilize a strategic budgeting process that reflects the organizational needs and objectives?

Yes No Unsure

36. Is the budget closely and regularly monitored?

Yes No Unsure

37. Does the organization have a fundraising plan in place?

Yes No Unsure

38. Does the organization have specific plans to meet any cash and in-kind matches required by the grant?

Yes No Unsure

## Human Resources

39. Does the organization have a well-planned process to recruit, develop, and retain employees?

Yes No Unsure

40. Does the organization provide relevant and regular training for staff and board members?

Yes No Unsure

41. Are employee performance appraisals conducted on a consistent and fair basis?

Yes No Unsure

42. Does the organization have a commitment to recruiting the best employees?

Yes No Unsure

43. Does the organization have a well-planned process to recruit, develop, and retain volunteers?  
Yes      No      Unsure

### Partnership/Collaboration

44. Does the organization participate in partnerships with other groups?  
Yes      No      Unsure

45. Does the organization regularly communicate or cooperate with government agencies, private foundations or faith-based institutions?  
Yes      No      Unsure

46. Have these relationships led to mutually beneficial collaboration?  
Yes      No      Unsure

### Sustainability

47. Does the organization have diversified funding from multiple sources?  
Yes      No      Unsure

48. Does the organization have a group of dedicated people that believe in the mission and are willing to provide financial support and volunteer their time?  
Yes      No      Unsure

### Governance & Operations

49. Does your organization have an active and independent board of directors and/or other governing body? (Independent is defined as a majority of board members who are neither employees of the organization nor family members of employees or other board members.)  
Yes      No      Unsure

50. Does the organization provide staff and volunteers with written job descriptions and the necessary resources to carry out duties appropriately?  
Yes      No      Unsure

51. Does the organization have written policies and procedures, including a conflict of interest policy for employees and directors?  
Yes      No      Unsure

### RESULTS

- *45 points or more: Based on your self-assessment, the organization likely has the capacity to successfully operate an AmeriCorps\*State project or other government program.*
- *35-44 points: Based on your self-assessment, the organization may need to make a few improvements in your capacity and planning to succeed.*
- *Less than 35 points: Based on your self-assessment, the organization may have a significant need to build its capacity. Applying for AmeriCorps\*State or other competitive funds may not be a suitable option for you at this time.*

**This assessment is intended only as a general guide. Successful completion of the assessment does not guarantee funding from GCCS or any other organization.**

### AmeriCorps\*State Specific

Does the organization have the ability to effectively utilize at least ten full time equivalent AmeriCorps members?

Does the organization have sufficient workspace and equipment for the AmeriCorps members?

Does the organization have non-AmeriCorps revenue of over \$200,000 per year?

*If the answer to any of these questions is no, consideration should be given to becoming part of an AmeriCorps consortium. Serving as an AmeriCorps host site, rather than as a primary grant applicant is often a better choice for smaller organizations.*

### **For Faith-Based Organizations seeking to operate government funded programs**

Participation in government-funded programs will be open to all who qualify, without regard to religious beliefs.

No participant in a government-funded program will be required to participate in inherently religious activities.

Government funded programs will be held in a separate place or time from religious activities.

*If these conditions are not acceptable to an organization, government funding is probably not a good option.*

### **Next Steps**

The Governor's Commission on Community Service is ready to assist organizations in the State of Colorado. For more information please visit our website, <http://www.colorado.gov/gccs> or call 303 866-6426.