

Appalachian Forest Heritage Area – Conserving Forests & Communities AmeriCorps Sub-Sponsor Request for Proposals -- 2010-2011 Program Year

The Appalachian Forest Heritage Area (AFHA) expects to have 20 AmeriCorps members starting September 13, 2010 for our fourth one-year program to work on hands-on projects that enhance community, natural, and historic assets to benefit communities by developing heritage tourism.

AFHA is seeking partner organizations as sub-sponsors for AmeriCorps project work. Sub-sponsors will identify their own project(s) that fit the program goals. Sub-sponsors will be responsible for supervision, facilities, and cash match for the AmeriCorps work on your project(s).

The **program areas** are:

Heritage Development – Assignments may include interpretation and development of heritage or cultural assets, heritage tourism development and promotion including visitor services, heritage business development, and/or heritage education. It could also include other community development and/or youth leadership – especially if some part of the project had a heritage “twist”.

Conservation – Assignments may relate to conservation, natural resources, environmental improvement, forestry, wildlife, invasive species control, appropriate trails or outdoor recreation projects, community landscaping, forestry education, and environmental awareness. These can be for a member stationed at your site or organization year-round, or it can be shorter term assignments, or specific work projects, for an individual or a team.

Historic Preservation – Team can work on restoration and rehabilitation projects including tasks such as project planning, cleanup, basic construction, painting, window restoration, plaster repair, and masonry repointing. Other skills might be available depending on the individual skills of the members. Preservation training for members and community volunteers in skills such as windows, plaster, and masonry are possible. Appropriate buildings for projects should be historic, either owned by or in partnership with a non-profit organization, and preferably for a use that will benefit heritage tourism or downtown revitalization.

Subsponsor assignments -- AmeriCorps members may be assigned to a subsponsor in one or more of the following ways:

Full-time: One member is assigned to you for their term. Your organization provides their direct supervisor. The member should have one major project that they are responsible for developing and carrying out (either assigned initially, or developed by the member and you working together) but they may also work on several smaller projects for you, and can assist with additional tasks that are appropriate. You will provide office space, computer and any other supplies/equipment, travel allowance or training as needed, supervision, and \$3300 cash match toward their living stipend. The member will spend at least 1200 hours on your work. In most cases, the member will live in your community, but will have some travel for trainings and team meetings.

Full-time shared: Two or three organizations in the same locality can share one full-time member, either sharing some days per week, or each for a period of months. The organizations will be responsible for negotiating clear time commitments and supervision so there is not a conflict for the member. This member will live in or near your community, with your responsibilities as described above.

Part-time individual: One member can be assigned to your project for a period of time depending on the needs of your project. Again, you will be responsible for office space, computer and any other supplies/equipment, travel costs for projects including commuting if needed, and supervision. Match will be \$110 per 40 hour week. (\$2.75 per hour).

Part-time team: A team of 2 or more members can come to your site to complete a specific hands-on project. You will be responsible for supplies/equipment/tools, travel costs and lodging, and supervision. Match will be \$2.75 per hour per person.

In some cases you may wish to combine part-time work -- for example one member spends time preparing for the project, then brings in a team for a couple of weeks to implement it.

If your project is located in a different community than where the part-time member or team members live, you will need to help arrange and pay for lodging there and/or transportation costs to your community for them. Members living stipends are NOT sufficient for them to pay for temporary lodging on top of their regular apartment, or for them to pay for extensive commuting costs. Home visits, group lodging such as a 4-H camp, or camping for short term projects in warm weather may be acceptable.

AFHA AmeriCorps service year is September 13, 2010 – August 26, 2011. Any members who do not complete their hours during this time, may extend to Sept 12 to finish.

Scope of project work:

- Members should perform “direct service”.
- Projects should be something that would not happen without the AmeriCorps assistance. AmeriCorps members are not allowed to replace a regular staff position. They may do some amount of “routine” work for the organization, but should also have scope to do a project that is creative or provides extra benefits beyond the routine.
- For the proposal we need an idea of the type and scope of work for the AmeriCorps member. Once projects are defined with the member, they will need to be distinct, with clear goals and objectives, and will reach a measurable conclusion.
- Members may assist with some capacity building for an organization or community and are encouraged to help with volunteer recruitment, management, and tracking.
- Some measurement / evaluation component should be included in the projects. Members can prepare and administer surveys or evaluation forms, or assist with other assessment tasks.
- Projects should relate to at least one of the program areas – heritage development, historic preservation, and/or conservation.
- Members must be based in one of the 16 AFHA West Virginia counties, and the bulk of their project work should be related to that geographic area. Some related project work that overlaps other counties may be allowable, as long as the connection to AFHA is clear.
- Projects should be compatible with AFHA Core Values. Any organizations that do substantial lobbying work, or advocate for positions or issues that may be controversial to some of the AFHA partners, should discuss with us your project scope and products to ensure that your AmeriCorps project is appropriate for AFHA AmeriCorps.
- Shared credit for project results should be given to AFHA and to AmeriCorps. In some cases, AFHA review and approval will be required before public presentation or publication.

Project work should NOT include:

- Any lobbying, work towards specific legislation, or partisan politics.
- Advocacy for policies that may be controversial unless approved by AFHA board.
- Any religious activities.
- Extensive grantwriting or substantive fundraising. (work on a related project that incidentally supports fundraising, or some fundraising for a specific project can be allowed, but not fundraising for the organization as a whole or their own position). If you need primarily grantwriting – investigate a VISTA.
- Any work that displaces or substitutes for an existing employee.

Recruitment for this program encourages diversity and will not discriminate based upon race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service. The program will provide reasonable accommodation to qualified persons with disabilities.

As a Subsponsor you should know:

AmeriCorps is a national service program. Members serve to benefit communities and gain experience. They are paid only a basic living allowance, with an educational award at the end of the year. They are responsible for completing all work in a professional manner and following all rules. But they are not employees, and should be treated with respect for their service.

In addition to their direct service project work, all AmeriCorps members will have approximately 25% of their time committed to training, team meetings, community service projects, and AFHA meetings and activities. This time is in addition to their commitment to you as stated above. You are not responsible for them during these additional activities. Including both training and AFHA/service work, and the direct service to subsponsors, each member will work at least 1700 hours.

We should have a team of good people, with commitment and a variety of skills. Most of the individuals will be either college graduates seeking experience, or mature individuals with a variety of work and life experience. We will do our best to place the most appropriate person with you, and you will have the chance to choose and/or approve your people. Realize, however, that many of them are young and have limited workplace experience. Please help pass on the information if you know of any individuals who may be interested. Potential sponsors of full-time members are encouraged to recruit within your own community.

You are responsible for supervising the AmeriCorps member at your site. Once they are established, many of them can work fairly independently, depending on the tasks and work situation. If you have discipline or performance problems with any member assigned to you, we will work with the member and with you to resolve the problems satisfactorily. For construction projects, our AmeriCorps team does not provide a licensed contractor. If a licensed contractor is required for your work project, that is your responsibility.

Each subsponsor supervisor should be available for needed AmeriCorps program trainings and supervision meetings. We ask each major sponsor to send a supervisor to at least one initial training session. We will do most of the remaining communications by email or phone calls, and we may come visit your site. We also ask you to send a representative to AFHA stakeholder meetings twice a year, or otherwise to participate in AFHA activities, if at all possible.

Cash Match – Your cash match as subsponsors enables us to make this project work. This is \$3300 full time, with a guarantee of 1200 hours of service for your organization completed. Most part-time projects are matched for hours of work completed, at \$110 by the week, or \$2.75 per hour. We will work with you before your project begins to clarify expense costs such as for travel or training (see travel section below). AFHA is covering the administration, travel and match for AmeriCorps leadership training and community service projects.

Note on Federal Funds: A new ruling starting Oct 2008 allows use of some federal funds for cash match. In order to be allowable, we need a signed letter from the federal agency providing the funds that they allow their funds to be used to match AmeriCorps funds. With this letter, such funds are allowable, even for member match. Funds used to match other federal funds are generally not eligible.

Sub-sponsor match payments will generally be invoiced as follows:

- For full-time projects: ½ before season begins, ½ at 6 months, remaining expenses at end
- For part-time projects: ½ - 2/3 of expected match in advance, remaining balance of actual when project is complete.
- If this presents a hardship for your organization we can discuss alternatives – but AFHA has to show the match is covered and pay members in advance of our grant reimbursement.
- For agencies that do not allow for advance payments, we can often arrange for quarterly billing at the end of each quarter.

Additional match – By all means track any additional match your organization provides, including both cash for expenses and in-kind. We will report that as additional support. If you need to report it to match some other grant, we will report it as funds leveraged but not as match.

Match you can report – if it would be helpful for grants you report on, the value in federal funds of your assigned member time is about three times the amount you are paying. We can provide you with documentation of this value.

Travel Funds –

- Any travel cost that is a part of your project assignment is your responsibility. You can reimburse the member directly, or we can reimburse them and will bill you.
- If you are sponsoring an AmeriCorps member living and working in your community outside of the Elkins area, we ask you to provide travel funds for the member to attend AFHA team meetings once a month. We will cover their travel to trainings.
- If a member is traveling to your site from residence/assignment elsewhere, you will need to provide travel funds to your site. (If you are their primary site you are not responsible for their commuting costs)
- If a member is staying at your site for a project but lives elsewhere, you can either provide lodging for them, or you can pay for their lodging costs. (short-term in-home stays or camping in appropriate weather may be acceptable)
- We will pay members for their travel costs (approved mileage rate + actual costs for other expenses) and then invoice to you those costs that are due to your project. Our preference is to estimate ½ the costs included in your first invoice, then bill the actual remaining with your final invoice. If you would rather reimburse them directly, that is also allowable.

Project expenses – Any expenses needed to actually do your project are your responsibility. This will usually include project specific training, tools, and supplies and materials. Members will bring appropriate tools if we have them – but we can't purchase tools specifically for your project.

Training – All members participate in start service training in Elkins for the first week of service, which includes training in AmeriCorps rules and expectations, reporting requirements, and introduction to all three service areas. As a program we will arrange opportunities for additional training related to specific service areas through the year – these are generally required for members in that service area, and made available to all members who are interested. Please let us know the types of training that would be useful or needed for your members, and we'll work together to provide it. However, you are responsible for required trainings needed for your project work.

All members also participate in Mountain State Leaders training – which is a Leadership Plenty training specifically for AmeriCorps members. This includes 3 days in October (including swearing-in ceremony), and about 6 additional training days through the year. Members will carry out a small group project related to their MSL training. You will be expected to release your members to attend these trainings and allow them unsponsored time to work on their project, but none of this time, or expenses,

is counted to their sub-sponsor. Members also participate in several national service days such as Make a Difference Day and Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and will occasionally participate in AFHA events or meetings. These all count as unsponsored time, not part of their sponsored hours.

Submitting a Proposal:

Please submit an emailed proposal (Word or text document attachment preferred) using the proposal application info starting on page 6. If email does not work for you, you may mail or fax to us. Feel free to email or call to discuss this at any stage in the process. We will try to include all of the projects that fit criteria and that we can make work as practical for our AmeriCorps members. If we have more applicants than we have member time available, we will prioritize projects that are closely related to AFHA priorities, organizations with a history of AFHA involvement, clear commitment of match, and projects that would not happen without AmeriCorps assistance.

Proposals are requested by May 1, or as soon thereafter as possible. It helps us recruit the best members if we know ahead of time what our assignments and projects will be. We must have sub-sponsor commitment by June to recruit members to live in communities outside Elkins, so the members can make their living arrangements. Late proposals will be accepted only if there is uncommitted member time available.

PLEASE EMAIL OR CALL US IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING A PROPOSAL. If you are interested, but can not make a firm commitment yet due to budget cycles or other factors, please talk to us so we can try to include your project. Some proposals may be subject to negotiation or suggestions for changes to workplan, and others may be dependent on availability of appropriate skills and/or location for members. You can approve the member assigned to you before confirming your contract. We will work with you to resolve problems and to include as many projects as possible.

Contact info for questions or discussion of projects, or to send proposals:

Phyllis Baxter
Executive Director /AmeriCorps Program Director
(304) 636-2467 home
phyllisb@meer.net

Appalachian Forest Heritage Area
PO Box 1206
Elkins, WV 26241
(304) 636-6182 office (304) 636-6432 fax
www.appalachianforest.us

PROPOSAL APPLICATION:

Please include the following information in your proposal:

Basic information:

Subsponsor organization:

contact information (for organization)

responsible party / contact person (name & title)

contact information (for contact person if different than organization. Include email and phone to reach the person who can answer questions)

county:

type of organization (501c3? other non-profit? Government? For-profit business not eligible)

One paragraph summary of project.

Which program area(s) does this fit in to?

Heritage development

Conservation

Historic Preservation

Organizational information:

Please give a summary of who your organization is such as mission, history, capacity, and current responsibilities. If this is a partnership proposal, give info also for additional **active** partners (those who will be actively responsible for projects and funding, not just supporters). You can keep this short and sweet, especially if we are already familiar with you. Include your history of involvement with AFHA, or if you have not previously been involved, how you intend to be active with AFHA in the future.

Project proposal:

What would you like to get done? What will your Americorps member(s) be working on? This may or may not be a complete project outline and goal at this stage – in some cases you may want to wait until the member is on board and let them help design their own project. In that case give some parameters, or possible examples, that they might work on. Give a brief scope of work and responsibilities. Will your project include capacity building? Working with volunteers? Impact assessment? How will success be measured?

Skills needed:

Are there specific talents, skills, or experience that your member(s) need for your project? What training will they need? Is there training you can provide?

Service time requested:

How much time do you want from AmeriCorps? Full time (1200 hours)? Or how many days or weeks? One person or a team?

Timeline:

What is the timeline for your project? Does season of year matter? If so, when?

Funding:

Do you have the match money available or pledged? What is the source of the funds? If you are raising it, what is your plan? (AmeriCorps members can not be responsible for raising their own match funds.) If funds have Federal source, we must have signed confirmation that they are allowed to be used to match federal CNCS funds.

Location:

Where will your member(s) be working? If you are located away from our project hub of Elkins area, what is your plan to support your AmeriCorps members(s) for travel / lodging for your project? If you want a full-time member resident in your community, can you support them for occasional travel to Elkins for team meetings?

Working situation:

What is your plan for office or working situation, equipment, expenses, supplies, etc?
Who will be the supervisor? How much will the supervisor be available?

Other considerations?

Any other considerations that will affect getting your project done, or to help us place the most suitable member(s) for your project?

Applications Due:

Applications are requested by May 1 and should be no later than June 1 to confirm for 2010-2011 projects. Applications will be considered after that as space allows.

email completed form to phyllisb@meer.net, or
mail to AFHA, PO Box 1206, Elkins WV 26241 or
fax to 304-636-6432