

## NC COMMISSION ON VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

### AmeriCorps Readiness Assessment (Is My Organization Ready For An AmeriCorps Grant?)

This AmeriCorps Readiness Assessment will help organizations assess their capacity to operate and manage a high quality government-funded national service program. It is also useful for organizations seeking funding from other government agencies, foundations, or individuals. While several questions are specific to private funding, most questions would be asked by any funder that might consider making a significant investment in the organization.

This assessment is intended to be used only as a general guide to determine if the organization could be a good candidate for an AmeriCorps grant. Successful completion of the assessment and/or achieving a high score does not guarantee grant funding from the NC Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service or any other state or federal government agency.

This assessment asks the reader to select the answer that best describes the organization's current status or performance. At the conclusion of the assessment, the reader will have scored the organization on elements necessary to run a high quality government-funded national service program. **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 in meetings, annual strategic planning, etc.?  
 Yes                       No                       Unsure

#### Strategic Planning and Operations

5. Does the organization have a clear and coherent written long-term strategic plan for the future? *(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 the strategic plan used consistently 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? (i.e. annual report)

Yes  No  Unsure

### **Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

22. Does the organization conduct regular assessments of existing programs' effectiveness in meeting recipient needs AND identify areas for improvement?  
 Yes                       No                       Unsure
23. Does the organization conduct continual assessments 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 email capabilities?  
 Yes                       No                       Unsure
27. Are all staff competent and comfortable using their computers and submitting fiscal and programmatic reports electronically?  
 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 create 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 government rarely, if ever, pay grant money in advance. Payments are made 30-60 days after submission of invoices for reimbursement.)*  
 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 plan in place for fundraising?  
 Yes                       No                       Unsure
38. Does the organization have specific plans to meet any cash and/or in-kind match required by the grant?  
 Yes                       No                       Unsure

**Human Resources**

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

**Partnership and 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, community-based and/or faith-based organizations?  
 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 and 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 provide the necessary resources to carry out duties appropriately?

Yes

No

Unsure

51. Does the organization have written policies and procedures (including conflict of interest, workplace harassment, and discrimination) for employees and directors?

Yes

No

Unsure

## ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### Score: 45 points or more

Based on your self-assessment, the organization has the potential capacity to successfully operate a government-funded project or program.

### Score: 35-44 points

Based on your self-assessment, the organization may need to make a few improvements in their capacity and planning efforts to successfully operate a government-funded project or program.

### Score: Less than 35 points

Based on your self-assessment, the organization may have a significant need to build its capacity. Applying for state or federal funds may not be a suitable option for the organization at this time.

## NEXT STEPS

The North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service is ready to assist organizations in the state. We publish an annual AmeriCorps Notification of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and Grant Application Instructions. In addition, we host a series of statewide AmeriCorps training and technical assistance sessions specifically designed to explain the grant application process. Please visit [www.volunteernc.org](http://www.volunteernc.org) to view the Commission's 2017-2018 AmeriCorps NOFO and Grant Application Instructions (available in September 2016).