

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Maine State Planning Office
Executive Department

JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI
Governor

MARTHA E. FREEMAN
Director

March 16, 2009

The Honorable Deborah L. Simpson, Co-chair
The Honorable Stephen R. Beaudette, Co-chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Senator Simpson and Representative Beaudette:

The Maine Commission for Community Service, housed at the State Planning Office, will receive American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to engage AmeriCorps members and community volunteers in efforts to stimulate the economy through the expansion of current programming.

Only current AmeriCorps grantees are eligible for these funds. The Maine Commission for Community Service has two grantees, one each in two grant categories: 1) State Commission Formula Grants; and 2) State Commission Competitive Grants. Maine's share is to be determined as requested by the applicant based upon what they believe they can accomplish within program guidelines.

AmeriCorps*State Formula

Maine will receive up to \$127,241 of the \$29 million available nationally. The only current grantee is the Community Resource Corps, a program of Goodwill Industries of Northern New England. The Community Resource Corps is a 43-person AmeriCorps program placing individual AmeriCorps members with host sites throughout Maine. The team of AmeriCorps members works with local non-profits, municipalities, and schools to help them engage volunteers within their organization and programs.

AmeriCorps*State Competitive

There is \$39 million in competitive grant funds available that will be awarded at the federal level. Current grantees addressing any AmeriCorps issue can apply. However, preference for recovery dollars will be given to the following priority activities:

1. employment and skills training;
2. tutoring and literacy;
3. financial literacy;
4. home foreclosures and housing assistance;
5. housing rehabilitation and access, including weatherization and other energy-efficiency techniques;
6. healthcare access and delivery;
7. nonprofit capacity building; and
8. volunteer generation and management.

Maine's only current competitive grantee is the Maine Conservation Corps. The Maine Conservation Corps, part of the Department of Conservation, places AmeriCorps members all over the state at agencies and nonprofits to serve on environmental and conservation projects. The Corps manages two programs: 1) a Field Team program; and 2) an Environmental Educator program. Field Teams build trails, improve campgrounds, and enhance wildlife habitat. They have developed a reputation as some of Maine's most effective trail builders. Environmental Educators recruit, train, and manage volunteers, teach school children and adults about environmental issues, and work with watershed organizations to monitor water quality conditions.

Applications for both the competitive and formula grants are due to the Commission by March 30, 2009, and have to be submitted to the Corporation for National and Community Service in Washington, DC by April 3, 2009. Formula grants will be awarded by mid-April 2009; competitive grants are expected to be announced in May.

There is also \$60 million available for AmeriCorps*VISTA, which will also be awarded at the federal level. No date has been released at this time except to say they expect to have all VISTAs placed by September 30, 2009. Maine will receive 30 additional VISTA positions, which are paid directly by the Corporation. The Maine Commission for Community Service will receive an additional \$15,000 in federal dollars to support the supervision of the 30 positions.

With these funds, there are no policy decisions for the state to make, just program activities to ensure that proper procedures are followed.

If you have questions or would like additional information, we would be happy to have Maryalice Crofton, Executive Director of the Maine Commission for Community Service meet with you or provide follow-up answers.

Please feel free to contact me should you wish me to follow up further.

Sincerely,


Martha Freeman
Director

cc: Ryan Low, Commissioner, Department of Administrative and Financial Services
CarolAnne Dube, Chair, Maine Commission for Community Service
Maryalice Crofton, Executive Director, Maine Commission for Community Service