

**Award Justification Statement**  
**RFP# 202207118**

- I. **Summary:** Volunteer Maine, the state service commission, awards *grants* of federal AmeriCorps program resources to community-based agencies (public and nonprofit). This RFP solicited proposals to design an AmeriCorps program including the systems, policies, and procedures essential to operate successfully. The goal of these planning grants is for organizations to submit a strong, shovel-ready proposal to a 3-year grant operating competition within 12 months. The funding only supports a 1-year planning process.

**II. Evaluation Process**

The Commission uses selection criteria and a process that incorporates the mandatory AmeriCorps weighting and scoring of various criteria published in the Code of Federal Regulations as well as Commission policies on funding and performance, and the requirements of state contract selection rules.

All AmeriCorps Planning Grant proposals are assessed by the Commission's Grant Selection and Performance Task Force using a two-phase process.

Phase One. Proposal narratives and budget submitted in eGrants along with the organizational chart are reviewed and assessed by Commission board members designated as Phase One reviewers. The Commission uses the mandated federal weighting and selection criteria during this phase: 50% for Program Design (Need and Rationale), 25% for Organizational Capability, and 25% for Budget Adequacy and Cost Effectiveness for a possible total score of 100 Phase One Reviewer points.

At the end of Phase One, the scores will determine whether proposals receive further consideration. The options for recommendations are:

- Strongly Recommend for Further Review (Total score between 90 and 100).
- Recommend for Further Review (Total score between 80 and 89).
- Recommend for Further Review with Hesitation (Total score between 60 and 79).
- Do Not Recommend for Further Review (Total score 59 or below).

Applications not recommended for further review are not submitted to the Task Force for consideration.

Phase Two: Applications recommended for some level of review undergo further assessment by the Grants Selection and Performance Task Force. The Task Force includes in its review documents submitted as part of this competition plus data from publicly available information systems including SAM (the federal System for Award Management). The Task Force uses the following weighting and selection criteria during this phase: 15 points Financial Plan, 15 points Fiscal Systems, 35 points Funding Priority Alignment, and 35 points Commission Preferences (partnerships, support for rural and/or marginalized communities) for a possible total of 100 points.

Upon completion of the Task Force review, the scores from Phase One and Phase Two are combined to produce a single review score. The Grant Selection and Performance Task Force then makes its final recommendations for funding to the full Commission.

Peer Reviewers for planning grants are Commissioners (board members) who are not part of the grant task force. They are familiar with AmeriCorps programming and the potential for impacting a community need through intensive volunteering. The task force members are regular members of that

work group and have expertise in assessing finances, they are well acquainted with the Commission's funding priorities and goals for expansion, and they know the potential weaknesses of programs because they have ongoing oversight of operating programs.

### **III. Qualifications & Experience**

In this grant program, the organizational criteria focuses on whether the applicant has connections to the community it proposes to serve, partners needed to carry out the planning, a logical mission-based connection to the issue and activity, as well as the resources to augment grant funds during the planning period. Selected applicants provided information sufficient to ensure the reviewers that these criteria were met.

### **IV. Proposed Services**

In a planning grant, the organization awarded the grant agrees to complete a schedule of planning activities. These were outlined on pages 10-12 of the RFP. The Commission provides them with training and coaching so they can accomplish the activities.

### **V. Cost Proposal**

The RFP stated the cost for a 12-month process (\$60,000). Selected applicants in the competition submitted for 12-month (\$60,000) planning periods and grants.

### **VI. Conclusion**

Of the six funding priority areas listed in the proposal, only 2 were addressed – one for public health and 2 for workforce development. Three of the four the applicants were selected for funding.



# Volunteer Maine

The Maine Commission for Community Service  
*A Stronger Maine Through Volunteerism*



## AWARD NOTIFICATION LETTER

19 September 2022

Robyn M. Stanicki  
Community Resilience Team Coordinator  
Kennebec Valley Council of Governments  
17 Main Street  
Fairfield ME 04937 – 1119

SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFA # 202207118, Maine AmeriCorps Planning Grants

Dear Robyn:

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Applications (RFA), issued by the State of Maine, Volunteer Maine, for Maine AmeriCorps Planning Grants. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract award(s) to the following bidder(s):

- Maine Bureau of Emergency Medical Services
- Unity College
- Kennebec Valley Council of Governments

The bidder(s) listed above received the evaluation team's highest ranking(s). The Department will be contacting the aforementioned bidder(s) soon to negotiate a contract. As provided in the RFP, the Notice of Conditional Contract Award is subject to execution of a written contract and, as a result, this Notice does NOT constitute the formation of a contract between the Department and the apparent successful vendor. The vendor shall not acquire any legal or equitable rights relative to the contract services until a contract containing terms and conditions acceptable to the Department is executed. The Department further reserves the right to cancel this Notice of Conditional Contract Award at any time prior to the execution of a written contract.

As stated in the RFP, following announcement of this award decision, all submissions in response to the RFP are considered public records available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA). 1 M.R.S. §§ 401 et seq.; 5 M.R.S. § 1825-B (6).

This award decision is conditioned upon final approval by the State Procurement Review Committee and the successful negotiation of a contract. A Statement of Appeal Rights has been provided with this letter; see below.

Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Ashmore".

Michael Ashmore

Program Development & Training Officer

Volunteer Maine

19 Elkins Ln., Rm 105, 105 State House Station, Augusta ME 04333-0105

V: 207-624-7734 [michael.ashmore@maine.gov](mailto:michael.ashmore@maine.gov)

## **STATEMENT OF APPEAL RIGHTS**

Any person aggrieved by an award decision may request an appeal hearing. The request must be made to the Director of the Bureau of General Services, in writing, within 15 days of notification of the contract award as provided in 5 M.R.S. § 1825-E (2) and the Rules of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of General Services, Division of Purchases, Chapter 120, § (2) (2).



# Volunteer Maine

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## AWARD NOTIFICATION LETTER

19 September 2022

Jonathan S. Hurley  
Director, Department of Public Safety  
Maine Bureau of Emergency Medical Services  
152 State House Station  
45 Commerce Drive  
Augusta ME 04333 – 0152

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFA # 202207118, Maine AmeriCorps Planning Grants

Dear Sam:

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Applications (RFA), issued by the State of Maine, Volunteer Maine, for Maine AmeriCorps Planning Grants. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract award(s) to the following bidder(s):

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Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,



Michael Ashmore

Program Development & Training Officer

Volunteer Maine

19 Elkins Ln., Rm 105, 105 State House Station, Augusta ME 04333-0105

V: 207-624-7734 [michael.ashmore@maine.gov](mailto:michael.ashmore@maine.gov)

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# Volunteer Maine

The Maine Commission for Community Service  
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## AWARD NOTIFICATION LETTER

19 September 2022

Elizabeth Weir  
Director of Development & Grants  
Unity College  
Pineland Farms - Yarmouth Hall  
19 Yarmouth Dr Ste 201  
New Gloucester ME 04260 - 5043

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFA # 202207118, Maine AmeriCorps Planning Grants

Dear Beth:

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Applications (RFA), issued by the State of Maine, Volunteer Maine, for Maine AmeriCorps Planning Grants. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract award(s) to the following bidder(s):

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This award decision is conditioned upon final approval by the State Procurement Review Committee and the successful negotiation of a contract. A Statement of Appeal Rights has been provided with this letter; see below.

Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Ashmore".

Michael Ashmore

Program Development & Training Officer

Volunteer Maine

19 Elkins Ln., Rm 105, 105 State House Station, Augusta ME 04333-0105

V: 207-624-7734 [michael.ashmore@maine.gov](mailto:michael.ashmore@maine.gov)

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# Volunteer Maine

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## AWARD NOTIFICATION LETTER

19 September 2022

Amy Stone  
Director  
Bridgton Public Library  
1 Church Street  
Bridgton ME 04009 – 1102

SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFA # 202207118, Maine AmeriCorps Planning Grants

Dear Amy:

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Applications (RFA), issued by the State of Maine, Volunteer Maine, for Maine AmeriCorps Planning Grants. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract award(s) to the following bidder(s):

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- Unity College
- Kennebec Valley Council of Governments

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This award decision is conditioned upon final approval by the State Procurement Review Committee and the successful negotiation of a contract. A Statement of Appeal Rights has been provided with this letter; see below.

Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Ashmore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "M." and the last name "Ashmore" clearly visible.

Michael Ashmore

Program Development & Training Officer

Volunteer Maine

19 Elkins Ln., Rm 105, 105 State House Station, Augusta ME 04333-0105

V: 207-624-7734 [michael.ashmore@maine.gov](mailto:michael.ashmore@maine.gov)

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RFA # 202207118  
 Planning Grants

	Applicant Sheet 1 Application ID Applicant Name	Applicant Sheet 2 Application ID Applicant Name	Applicant Sheet 3 Application ID Applicant Name	Applicant Sheet 4 Application ID Applicant Name
	22AC249365 Maine Bureau of Emergency Medical Services (Maine	22AC249641 Kennebec Valley Council of Governments	22AC249355 Unity College	22AC249397 Bridgton Public Library
<b>Peer Reviewer Results</b>				
Program Design	41.25	45	38.75	32.5
Organizational Capability	18.75	18.75	18.75	12.5
Cost Effectiveness/Budget Adequacy	18.75	12.5	12.5	12.5
<b>Peer Review Final Score</b>	<b>78.75</b>	<b>76.25</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>57.5</b>
<b>Recommendation to Grants TF</b>	Fund with no corrections	Recommend for Further Review with Hesitation	Recommend for Further Review with Hesitation	<=59, Do Not Recommend for Further Review
<b>Task Force Review Results</b>				
Proposal Alignment and Model	27.19	23.44	22.5	Not considered per Peer Reviewer rec above
Preferences from RFP	20.00	22.50	20	
Financial Plan	15.00	11.25	7.5	
Fiscal Systems	12.50	11.25	8.75	
Grant Readiness	15.00	11.25	11.25	
<b>Task Force Final Score</b>	<b>89.69</b>	<b>79.69</b>	<b>58.75</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Final Application Score</b>	<b>168.44</b>	<b>155.94</b>	<b>128.75</b>	<b>57.5</b>
Funding Requested	60,000	60,000	60,000	10,000
CNCS Share				10,000
Match Replacement				0

## Peer Reviewers -- Consensus Process Worksheet

**Strong** This section of the application is a thorough, compelling, and convincing response to criteria; additional information is relevant and enhances or strengthens argument significantly; the argument shows this element shows high levels of success or highly likely to be successful.

**Adequate** This section of the application responds to all criteria– no omissions or additions. The argument shows this element has had some success or could possibly succeed as described.

**Weak** This section responds to many but not all the required elements/criteria. Some text is not relevant or does not add to the argument. The argument does not demonstrate this element has succeeded or would succeed as described

**Substandard** This section barely responds to the criteria, has a significant flaw, or lacks any indication this element could succeed as described.

**Incomplete/Nonresponsive** This section of the application does not respond to the criteria.

APP ID: 22AC249641      PROGRAM NAME: n/a - Planning Grant  
 APPLICANT NAME: Kennebec Valley Council of Governments

**INITIAL COMMENTS:** [LINK TO DOC](#)  
**FUNDS REQUESTED:** \_\_\_\_\_

After peer reviewers discuss the proposal contents, quality, and responsiveness to requirements, record the group's consensus rating in column G for each section in the cells below. (Select from drop-down menu.)

RATER -- Initial ratings						
	Julia Van Steenberghe	Diane Lebson	Pamela Proulx-Curry			
<b>Program Design</b>					<b>Consensus Rating</b>	<b>Point Value</b>
Need and Target Community(ies)	Adequate	Strong	Strong		Strong	15
Response to Need	Adequate	Strong	Strong		Strong	15
Readiness for Planning	Adequate	Strong	Weak		Adequate	11.25
Expertise and Training	Adequate	Strong	Weak		Adequate	3.75
<b>Program Design Score</b>						<b>45</b>

RATER -- Initial Ratings						
	Julia Van Steenberghe	Diane Lebson	Pamela Proulx-Curry			
<b>Organizational Capability</b>					<b>Consensus Rating</b>	<b>Point Value</b>
Organizational Background & Staffing	Strong	Strong	Weak		Adequate	18.75
<b>Org. Capability Score</b>						<b>18.75</b>

RATER -- Initial ratings						
	Julia Van Steenberghe	Diane Lebson	Pamela Proulx-Curry			
<b>Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy</b>					<b>Consensus Rating</b>	<b>Point Value</b>
Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	Adequate	Adequate	Weak		Weak	12.5
<b>Cost and Budget Score</b>						<b>12.5</b>

**FINAL SECTION TOTALS and RECOMMENDATION**

	<b>Program Design</b>	<b>Organizational Capability</b>	<b>Cost Effectiveness/ Budget Adequacy</b>			<b>Total Score</b>
Final Consensus Score	45	18.75	12.5			76.25

Recommendation: 60-79, Recommend for Further Review with Hesitation



## End Peer Reviewer Work - Task Force Work Recorded Below

**INITIAL RATINGS>** Below are the initial ratings offered by GTF Members after their independent reading and assessment of the proposals. These are the starting points for your determination of a final rating of the application narrative.

LINK TO COMMENTS

	Rater -- initial ratings			
	Becky Hayes Boober	Robert Meinders	Matt L'Italien	
<b>Proposal Alignment and Model (35%)</b>				
Alignment with Funding Priorities	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	
Serve communities described in 2522.450(c)	Adequate	Strong	Adequate	
Proposal adds to goal of being programmatically, demographically, and geographically diverse	Strong	Adequate	Strong	
Potential for innovation and/or replication	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	
Strength of evidence planning process will succeed	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	

Consensus rating	Point Value
Adequate	11.25
Adequate	2.8125
Strong	3.75
Adequate	2.8125
Adequate	2.8125
<b>Section Score</b>	<b>23.4375</b>

	Rater -- initial ratings			
	Becky Hayes Boober	Robert Meinders	Matt L'Italien	
<b>Preferences from RFP Announcement (35%)</b>				
from a partnership or coalition whose members represent local organizations working together	Adequate	Strong	Strong	
serve, counties classified as 6, 7, or 8 on the USDA rural-urban continuum	Adequate	Strong	Strong	
from an organization led by or primarily supporting historically marginalized communities and/or people	Substandard	Weak	Adequate	

Consensus rating	Point Value
Adequate	7.5
Strong	10
Weak	5
<b>Section Score</b>	<b>22.5</b>

	Rater -- initial ratings			
	Becky Hayes Boober	Robert Meinders	Matt L'Italien	
<b>Financial Plan (15%)</b>				
	Adequate	Adequate	Substandard	

Consensus rating	Point Value
Adequate	11.25
<b>Section Score</b>	<b>11.25</b>

	Rater -- initial ratings			
	Becky Hayes Boober	Robert Meinders	Matt L'Italien	
<b>Fiscal Systems (15%)</b>				
capacity of financial management system to comply with federal requirements	Adequate	Strong	Adequate	
strength of the sponsoring organization's financial management practices	Adequate	Strong	Adequate	
strength of the sponsoring organization's financial status/stability	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	

Consensus rating	Point Value
Adequate	3.75
Adequate	3.75
Adequate	3.75
<b>Section Score</b>	<b>11.25</b>

	Rater -- initial ratings			

Grant Readiness (15%)	<b>Becky Hayes Boober</b>	<b>Robert Meinders</b>	<b>Matt L'Italien</b>	
	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	

<b>Consensus rating</b>	<b>Point Value</b>
Adequate	11.25
<b>Section Score</b>	<b>11.25</b>

**GTF Total Score:** 79.6875  
 Peer Reviewer Score 76.25  
**Combined Score** **155.9375**  
 of possible 200

\*lookup pre-programmed

**Recommendation:** Fund only if corrections can be negotiated

## Peer Reviewers -- Consensus Process Worksheet

**Strong** This section of the application is a thorough, compelling, and convincing response to criteria; additional information is relevant and enhances or strengthens argument significantly; the argument shows this element shows high levels of success or highly likely to be successful.

**Adequate** This section of the application responds to all criteria– no omissions or additions. The argument shows this element has had some success or could possibly succeed as described.

**Weak** This section responds to many but not all the required elements/criteria. Some text is not relevant or does not add to the argument. The argument does not demonstrate this element has succeeded or would succeed as described

**Substandard** This section barely responds to the criteria, has a significant flaw, or lacks any indication this element could succeed as described.

**Incomplete/Nonresponsive** This section of the application does not respond to the criteria.

APP ID: 22AC249365 PROGRAM NAME: n/a - Planning Grant  
 APPLICANT NAME: Maine Bureau of Emergency Medical Services (Maine EMS)

**INITIAL COMMENTS:** [LINK TO DOC](#)  
**FUNDS REQUESTED:** \$60,000

After peer reviewers discuss the proposal contents, quality, and responsiveness to requirements, record the group's consensus rating in column G for each section in the cells below. (Select from drop-down menu.)

RATER -- Initial ratings						
	Julia Van Steenberghe	Diane Lebson				
Program Design					Consensus Rating	Point Value
Need and Target Community(ies)	Adequate	Adequate			Adequate	11.25
Response to Need	Strong	Adequate			Strong	15
Readiness for Planning	Strong	Adequate			Adequate	11.25
Expertise and Training	Strong	Adequate			Adequate	3.75
<b>Program Design Score</b>						<b>41.25</b>

RATER -- Initial Ratings						
	Julia Van Steenberghe	Diane Lebson				
Organizational Capability					Consensus Rating	Point Value
Organizational Background & Staffing	Adequate	Adequate			Adequate	18.75
<b>Org. Capability Score</b>						<b>18.75</b>

RATER -- Initial ratings						
	Julia Van Steenberghe	Diane Lebson				
Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy					Consensus Rating	Point Value
	Adequate	Adequate			Adequate	18.75
<b>Cost and Budget Score</b>						<b>18.75</b>

**FINAL SECTION TOTALS and RECOMMENDATION**

	<b>Program Design</b>	<b>Organizational Capability</b>	<b>Cost Effectiveness/ Budget Adequacy</b>			<b>Total Score</b>
Final Consensus Score	41.25	18.75	18.75			78.75

Recommendation: 60-79, Recommend for Further Review with Hesitation

## End Peer Reviewer Work - Task Force Work Recorded Below

**INITIAL RATINGS>** Below are the initial ratings offered by GTF Members after their independent reading and assessment of the proposals. These are the starting points for your determination of a final rating of the application narrative.

LINK TO COMMENTS

Proposal Alignment and Model (35%)	Rater -- initial ratings			
	Becky Hayes Boober	Robert Meinders	Matt L'Italien	
Alignment with Funding Priorities	Strong	Strong	Adequate	
Serve communities described in 2522.450(c)	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	
Proposal adds to goal of being programmatically, demographically, and geographically diverse	Strong	Weak	Weak	
Potential for innovation and/or replication	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	
Strength of evidence planning process will succeed	Strong	Strong	Adequate	

Consensus rating	Point Value
Strong	15
Adequate	2.8125
Adequate	2.8125
Adequate	2.8125
Strong	3.75
<b>Section Score</b>	<b>27.1875</b>

Preferences from RFP Announcement (35%)	Rater -- initial ratings			
	Becky Hayes Boober	Robert Meinders	Matt L'Italien	
from a partnership or coalition whose members represent local organizations working together	Strong	Adequate	Adequate	
serve, counties classified as 6, 7, or 8 on the USDA rural-urban continuum	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	
from an organization led by or primarily supporting historically marginalized communities and/or people	Weak	Weak	Weak	

Consensus rating	Point Value
Adequate	7.5
Adequate	7.5
Weak	5
<b>Section Score</b>	<b>20</b>

Financial Plan (15%)	Rater -- initial ratings			
	Becky Hayes Boober	Robert Meinders	Matt L'Italien	
	Adequate	Adequate	Strong	

Consensus rating	Point Value
Strong	15
<b>Section Score</b>	<b>15</b>

Fiscal Systems (15%)	Rater -- initial ratings			
	Becky Hayes Boober	Robert Meinders	Matt L'Italien	
capacity of financial management system to comply with federal requirements	Strong	Adequate	Strong	
strength of the sponsoring organization's financial management practices	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	
strength of the sponsoring organization's financial status/stability	Adequate	Adequate	Strong	

Consensus rating	Point Value
Strong	5
Adequate	3.75
Adequate	3.75
<b>Section Score</b>	<b>12.5</b>

Rater -- initial ratings			
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Grant Readiness (15%)	<b>Becky Hayes Boober</b>	<b>Robert Meinders</b>	<b>Matt L'Italien</b>	
	Strong	Strong	Strong	

Consensus rating	Point Value
Strong	15
<b>Section Score</b>	<b>15</b>

GTF Total Score: 89.6875  
Peer Reviewer Score 78.75  
**Combined Score 168.44**  
of possible 200

\*lookup pre-programmed

**Recommendation:** Fund with no corrections

## Peer Reviewers -- Consensus Process Worksheet

**Strong** This section of the application is a thorough, compelling, and convincing response to criteria; additional information is relevant and enhances or strengthens argument significantly; the argument shows this element shows high levels of success or highly likely to be successful.

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**Substandard** This section barely responds to the criteria, has a significant flaw, or lacks any indication this element could succeed as described.

**Incomplete/Nonresponsive** This section of the application does not respond to the criteria.

APP ID: 22AC249355  
 APPLICANT NAME: Unity College

PROGRAM NAME: n/a - Planning Grant

INITIAL COMMENTS: [LINK TO DOC](#)  
 FUNDS REQUESTED:

After peer reviewers discuss the proposal contents, quality, and responsiveness to requirements, record the group's consensus rating in column G for each section in the cells below. (Select from drop-down menu.)

Program Design	RATER -- Initial ratings					Consensus Rating	Point Value
	Julia Van Steenberghe	Diane Lebson	Pamela Proulx-Curry				
Need and Target Community(ies)	Strong	Adequate	Adequate			Adequate	11.25
Response to Need	Strong	Adequate	Adequate			Adequate	11.25
Readiness for Planning	Strong	Adequate	Adequate			Adequate	11.25
Expertise and Training	Strong	Adequate	Strong			Strong	5
<b>Program Design Score</b>							<b>38.75</b>

Organizational Capability	RATER -- Initial Ratings					Consensus Rating	Point Value
	Julia Van Steenberghe	Diane Lebson	Pamela Proulx-Curry				
Organizational Background & Staffing	Adequate	Adequate	Strong			Adequate	18.75
<b>Org. Capability Score</b>							<b>18.75</b>

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	RATER -- Initial ratings					Consensus Rating	Point Value
	Julia Van Steenberghe	Diane Lebson	Pamela Proulx-Curry				
	Adequate	Adequate	Weak			Weak	12.5
<b>Cost and Budget Score</b>							<b>12.5</b>

**FINAL SECTION TOTALS and RECOMMENDATION**

Final Consensus Score	Program Design	Organizational Capability	Cost Effectiveness/ Budget Adequacy		Total Score
	38.75	18.75	12.5		70

Recommendation: 60-79, Recommend for Further Review with Hesitation

## End Peer Reviewer Work - Task Force Work Recorded Below

**INITIAL RATINGS>** Below are the initial ratings offered by GTF Members after their independent reading and assessment of the proposals. These are the starting points for your determination of a final rating of the application narrative.

LINK TO COMMENTS

	Rater -- initial ratings			
	Becky Hayes Boober	Robert Meinders		
<b>Proposal Alignment and Model (35%)</b>				
Alignment with Funding Priorities	Adequate	Adequate		
Serve communities described in 2522.450(c)	Adequate	Adequate		
Proposal adds to goal of being programmatically, demographically, and geographically diverse	Adequate	Adequate		
Potential for innovation and/or replication	Adequate	Adequate		
Strength of evidence planning process will succeed	Adequate	Adequate		

Consensus rating	Point Value
Adequate	11.25
Adequate	2.8125
Adequate	2.8125
Adequate	2.8125
Adequate	2.8125
<b>Section Score</b>	<b>22.5</b>

	Rater -- initial ratings			
	Becky Hayes Boober	Robert Meinders		
<b>Preferences from RFP Announcement (35%)</b>				
from a partnership or coalition whose members represent local organizations working together	Adequate	Weak		
serve, counties classified as 6, 7, or 8 on the USDA rural-urban continuum	Adequate	Strong		
from an organization led by or primarily supporting historically marginalized communities and/or people	Substandard	Weak		

Consensus rating	Point Value
Weak	5
Strong	10
Weak	5
<b>Section Score</b>	<b>20</b>

	Rater -- initial ratings			
	Becky Hayes Boober	Robert Meinders		
<b>Financial Plan (15%)</b>				
	Weak	Adequate		

Consensus rating	Point Value
Weak	7.5
<b>Section Score</b>	<b>7.5</b>

	Rater -- initial ratings			
	Becky Hayes Boober	Robert Meinders		
<b>Fiscal Systems (15%)</b>				
capacity of financial management system to comply with federal requirements	Adequate	Adequate		
strength of the sponsoring organization's financial management practices	Weak	Adequate		
strength of the sponsoring organization's financial status/stability	Weak	Adequate		

Consensus rating	Point Value
Adequate	3.75
Weak	2.5
Weak	2.5
<b>Section Score</b>	<b>8.75</b>

	Rater -- initial ratings			

Grant Readiness (15%)	<b>Becky Hayes Boober</b>	<b>Robert Meinders</b>		
	Adequate	Adequate		

Consensus rating	Point Value
Adequate	11.25
<b>Section Score</b>	<b>11.25</b>

**GTF Total Score:** 70  
 Peer Reviewer Score 70  
**Combined Score 140**  
 of possible 200

\*lookup pre-programmed

**Recommendation:** Fund only if corrections can be negotiated



## Peer Reviewers -- Consensus Process Worksheet

- Strong** This section of the application is a thorough, compelling, and convincing response to criteria; additional information is relevant and enhances or strengthens argument significantly; the argument shows this element shows high levels of success or highly likely to be successful.
- Adequate** This section of the application responds to all criteria– no omissions or additions. The argument shows this element has had some success or could possibly succeed as described.
- Weak** This section responds to many but not all the required elements/criteria. Some text is not relevant or does not add to the argument. The argument does not demonstrate this element has succeeded or would succeed as described
- Substandard** This section barely responds to the criteria, has a significant flaw, or lacks any indication this element could succeed as described.
- Incomplete/Nonresponsive** This section of the application does not respond to the criteria.

**APP ID:** 22AC249397      **PROGRAM NAME:** n/a - Planning Grant      **INITIAL COMMENTS:** [LINK TO DOC](#)  
**APPLICANT NAME:** Bridgton Public Library      **FUNDS REQUESTED:** \$10,000

After peer reviewers discuss the proposal contents, quality, and responsiveness to requirements, record the group's consensus rating in column G for each section in the cells below. (Select from drop-down menu.)

RATER -- Initial ratings						
	Julia Van Steenberghe	Diane Lebson	Pamela Proulx-Curry			
<b>Program Design</b>					<b>Consensus Rating</b>	<b>Point Value</b>
Need and Target Community(ies)	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate		Adequate	11.25
Response to Need	Adequate	Weak	Adequate		Adequate	11.25
Readiness for Planning	Weak	Adequate	Weak		Weak	7.5
Expertise and Training	Weak	Adequate	Weak		Weak	2.5
<b>Program Design Score</b>						<b>32.5</b>

RATER -- Initial Ratings						
	Julia Van Steenberghe	Diane Lebson	Pamela Proulx-Curry			
<b>Organizational Capability</b>					<b>Consensus Rating</b>	<b>Point Value</b>
Organizational Background & Staffing	Weak	Weak	Adequate		Weak	12.5
<b>Org. Capability Score</b>						<b>12.5</b>

RATER -- Initial ratings						
	Julia Van Steenberghe	Diane Lebson	Pamela Proulx-Curry			
<b>Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy</b>					<b>Consensus Rating</b>	<b>Point Value</b>
	Adequate	Substandard	Weak		Weak	12.5
<b>Cost and Budget Score</b>						<b>12.5</b>

**FINAL SECTION TOTALS and RECOMMENDATION**

	<b>Program Design</b>	<b>Organizational Capability</b>	<b>Cost Effectiveness/ Budget Adequacy</b>			<b>Total Score</b>
Final Consensus Score	32.5	12.5	12.5			57.5

Recommendation: <=59, Do Not Recommend for Further Review

End Peer Reviewer Work - Task Force Work Recorded Below

Not considered by TF per published process.

INITIAL RATINGS> Below are the initial ratings offered by GTF Members after their independent reading and assessment of the proposals. These are the starting points for your determination of a final rating of the application narrative.

LINK TO COMMENTS

	Rater -- initial ratings			
<b>Proposal Alignment and Model (35%)</b>				#REF!
Alignment with Funding Priorities				
Serve communities described in 2522.450(c)				
Proposal adds to goal of being programmatically, demographically, and geographically diverse				
Potential for innovation and/or replication				
Strength of evidence planning process will succeed				

Consensus rating	Point Value
	#N/A
	#N/A
	#N/A
	#N/A
	#N/A
<b>Section Score</b>	#N/A

	Rater -- initial ratings			
<b>Preferences from RFP Announcement (35%)</b>				#REF!
from a partnership or coalition whose members represent local organizations working together				
serve, counties classified as 6, 7, or 8 on the USDA rural-urban continuum				
from an organization led by or primarily supporting historically marginalized communities and/or people				

Consensus rating	Point Value
	#N/A
	#N/A
	#N/A
<b>Section Score</b>	#N/A

	Rater -- initial ratings			
<b>Financial Plan (15%)</b>				#REF!

Consensus rating	Point Value
	#N/A
<b>Section Score</b>	#N/A

	Rater -- initial ratings			
<b>Fiscal Systems (15%)</b>				#REF!
capacity of financial management system to comply with federal requirements				
strength of the sponsoring organization's financial management practices				
strength of the sponsoring organization's financial status/stability				

Consensus rating	Point Value
	#N/A
	#N/A
	#N/A
<b>Section Score</b>	#N/A

	Rater -- initial ratings			
<b>Grant Readiness (15%)</b>				#REF!

Consensus rating	Point Value
	#N/A
<b>Section Score</b>	#N/A

GTF Total Score: #N/A  
Peer Reviewer Score: 57.5  
**Combined Score: #N/A**  
of possible 200

\*lookup pre-programmed

**Recommendation:**

Do not forward or fund

# Planning Grant Proposal Report to Commission from Task Force

**Recommendation:** Forward or fund with corrections/modifications

**Legal Applicant:** Unity College: Sky Lodge

**Application ID:** 22AC249355

- Category:**  AC Formula -- Standard  
 AC Formula – Rural State  
 AC Competitive  
 Other Competition

- Type:**  Planning  
 Operating  
 Fixed Amount  
 Ed Award Only

**Federal Focus Area:** Education, Healthy Futures, Economic Opportunity

**Commission Priorities:** Public Health, Workforce development

- Applicant type:**  New (no prior AC experience)  
 Re-compete (# of yrs: \_\_)

**Proposed Dates:** 1/1/2023 to 10/31/2023  
 Submitted budget is 1 year

**Requested Resources: Funds and Slots** (\*indicates sections with calculation errors)

	CNCS		Local Share
<b>Operating</b>	\$65,310*		\$13,010
<b>Member Support</b>			
<b>Indirect (Admin)</b>			
<b>CNCS Award amount</b>		<b>Total Local Share</b> (cash + in-kind)	
<b>% sharing proposed</b>	83.39%		16.61%
<b>% share required</b>	0%		
<b>Cost-per-member proposed</b>	n/a		

**Program Description (executive summary):**

Unity College Sky Lodge proposes to develop an AmeriCorps program to serve 11 rural Maine communities in the Moose River Valley Jackman region of Somerset County. It will address workforce development and public health access that impacts the lives of the rural residents in the AmeriCorps focus areas of economic opportunity, education, and healthy futures. The AmeriCorps Federal ARP investment of \$60,000 will support planning activities carried out in collaboration with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Hills Consolidated School SAD12, the Jackman Region Community Health Advisory Team (CHAT), Somerset Public Health, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). No AmeriCorps members will be needed to execute this plan.

**Service locations:**

TBD during planning.

**Other than the legal applicant, please list the agencies or organizations that appear to be the major collaborators or partners in this grant.**

(1) US Department of Agriculture (USDA); (2) Forest Hills Consolidated School SAD12; (3) Jackman Region Community Health Advisory Team (CHAT); (4) Somerset Public Health; and (5) Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

**Applicant proposes to deliver services:**

- Within a single municipality  Within a single County but not covering the entire County  
 County-wide in a single County  Multiple Counties but not Statewide  Statewide

- A. Does the Executive Summary format exactly match the template in the RFP?  Yes  No
- B. Does the applicant claim the rural preference?  Yes  No
- C. If the applicant claimed rural preference, is it substantiated by target area?  Yes  No  N/A
- D. Does the applicant claim a preference because the application is from a partnership or coalition whose members represent local organizations working together on a common goal?  Yes  No
- E. Does the applicant claim a preference because the proposal is from an organization led by or primarily supporting historically marginalized communities and/or people.  Yes  No

**Scoring Detail:**

**Peer Reviewer Consensus Score.** *Assessment of narrative using point distribution from federal agency. Major categories (Program Design, Organizational Capability, Budget and Cost) are dictated by CFR rubric for scoring.*

	Quality Rating	Score
<b>Program Design</b>		
Need and Target Community(ies)	Adequate	11.25
Response to Need	Adequate	11.25
Readiness for Planning	Adequate	11.25
Expertise and Training	Strong	5
<b>Organizational Capability</b>		
Organizational Background & Staffing	Adequate	18.75
<b>Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy</b>	Weak	12.5
<b>Total Peer Reviewer Score</b>		<b>70.00</b>

Recommend for Further Review with Hesitation

**Task Force Consensus Score.** *The Task Force reviewers assess the additional technical criteria that states are directed to consider by the CFR.*

	Quality Rating	Score
<b>Proposal Alignment and Model</b>		
• Alignment with Funding Priorities	Adequate	11.3
• Serve communities described in 2522.450(c)	Adequate	2.8
• Proposal adds to goal of being programmatically, demographically, and geographically diverse	Adequate	2.8
• Potential for innovation and/or replication	Adequate	2.8
• Strength of evidence planning process will succeed	Adequate	2.8
<b>Preferences from RFA Announcement</b>		
• from a partnership or coalition whose members represent local organizations working together	Weak	5
• serve, counties classified as 6, 7, or 8 on the USDA rural-urban continuum	Strong	10
• from an organization led by or primarily supporting historically marginalized communities and/or people	Weak	5
<b>Financial Plan</b>	Weak	7.5
<b>Fiscal Systems</b>		
• capacity of financial management system to comply with federal requirements	Adequate	3.75
• strength of the sponsoring organization’s financial management practices	Weak	2.5

• strength of the sponsoring organization's financial status/stability	Weak	2.5
<b>Grant Readiness</b>	Adequate	11.25
<b>Total Task Force Score</b>		70.0
<b>Peer Review Score</b>		70.0
<b>Final Score for Applicant (200 possible)</b>		140.0

**Final Assessment of Application:**

- Forward or fund with no corrections/modifications
- Forward or fund with corrections/modifications
- Do Not Forward or fund

**Referenced Conditions/Corrections**

The following proposal issues need to be clarified or, in the case of missing required elements, added.

- Funding request must not exceed maximum grant amount (\$60,000)
- Budget errors in calculations and formulas must be corrected.

**Peer Reviewer Notes and Appraisal Summary:**

Program Design.

**Need and Target Community(ies)**

- The proposal quantifies the need in the region using data from the school district (SAD12):
  - 28% of the school population is economically disadvantaged;
  - Only 37% of the total student population scored at or above their grade level in math;
  - Only 47% of the school population scored at or above their grade level in reading.
- Rural. Geographic area well defined. Collaboration with existing partners. Need could be more strongly presented.

**Response to Need**

- Given what Unity College articulated as the need in Somerset County, their focus on cultural competence, technological literacy, and career-specific skills appears to be appropriate.
- Good description of partnerships & programs. Rational provided for us of AmeriCorps volunteers. Task description very general Description of intended program very general

**Readiness for Planning**

- Unity College's vision of engaging, educating, and creating a sustainable world appears aligned with this endeavor.
- Lead staff well qualified. Stakeholder engagement plan provided. State that hey have used volunteers, but description not specific. Connection between missions is good.

**Expertise and Training**

- While the proposal transparently cites the college's unfamiliarity with managing AmeriCorps grants, the staff who will leading the college's planning team has a strong background in sustainability. Further, the organization has experience in identifying, tracking, and interpreting research evidence and its impact on the community.
- They have the organizational structure to manage the grant. State they will need help w/Theory of Change and Logic Model.

## Organizational Capability.

### **Organizational Background and Staffing**

- Very strong descriptions of staff experience and background. Does not clearly describe the organization's opportunities and challenges.
- This project appears to be appropriately staffed by United College's Vice President of Sustainable Ventures, the Director of Sky Lodge, and two full-time guest experience coordinators.
- Very good organizational capacity.

Budget Adequacy and Cost Effectiveness. (CNCS no longer allows narrative for this section. They directed reviewers to consider the budget narrative and its formulas, accuracy, expense items.)

### **Section: Cost and Budget Adequacy (25 %)**

- The budget is submitted with mathematical errors.
- Unity College budgets that it will contribute \$13,010 towards this planning effort.
- Face sheet says \$65,310 (\$5,310 over allowed) but narrative says \$60,000.
- The personnel fringe is not reasonable – it is 100% of salaries.

**SUMMARY APPRAISAL** 1. Having reviewed all elements of the proposal provided to you, do you think that this applicant would be effective in this category of grant? Yes ( 3 ) No ( )

### **Comments:**

- Unity College received \$363,310 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for distance learning. This grant serves as an imprimatur but also has established a platform upon which Unity College can build upon for this specific AmeriCorps effort.
- They have very good organizational capacity and are very good at delivering training/educational programming, which is what they are proposing to do.

### **What elements of the proposal are unclear?**

- The first four sections of the proposal were extremely strong, and clear, and demonstrated the organization's readiness to make the most out of this planning grant. The section on "Organizational Capability" was significantly weaker, and I battled with "adequate" or possibly lower.
- Exactly what the AmeriCorps members would do.

### **What else do you have to say about this proposal?**

*[no comments submitted]*

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### **Task Force Review Notes:**

#### Proposal Alignment and Model.

- The 11-town Moose River Valley Jackman region of Somerset County identified in the proposal includes rural communities such as Jackman and meets rural criteria. The applicant indicates it will address public health and workforce development, including cultural competence, technological literacy, and career-specific skills. More clarification with details is needed to confirm this. This proposal dovetails with implementation of a \$363,310 USDA distance learning and telemedicine grant that supports virtual classroom learning (platform to be constructed in 2023), digital and cultural competence, remote collaboration, and healthy lifestyles. AmeriCorps members will provide programming. How will this programming be sustained after AmeriCorps involvement concludes? Unity College has experience and infrastructure to support volunteerism. It appears the external stakeholders' coalition will be developed, using the local partners. Sky Lodge was volunteer run prior to COVID shutdowns.

### Preferences from RFP

- They indicate they are partnering with USDA. I'm uncertain if this refers to a funding partnership or to working with staff from USDA Rural Development offices, USDA service centers or other Maine USDA presences. Other partners include Forest Hills Consolidated School SAD 12, Jackman Region Community Health Advisory Team (CHAT), Somerset Public Health, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (ILLI). Due to COVID, they are revitalizing their partnership relationships. The West River Valley Center was a community center for older people but has been acquired by Unity College. The Sky Lodge now focuses on lifelong learning for local residents.

### Assessment of Financial Plan

- The request for CNCS Share is \$5,310 over the allowable amount for the grant request. The budget reflects a 100% Personnel Fringe Benefit rate, with \$11,300 of that provided by the applicant. The narrative indicates "30% of salary allocated." However, 30% of \$33,900 is not \$22,600. Staff travel seems low unless most interactions will be virtual. The budget is weak.

### Fiscal Systems

- They served as a sub-PI for NIH grant that was complex. The audit made recommendations which the management indicates it is implementing.

# Planning Grant Proposal Report to Commission Task Force

**Recommendation:** Do not recommend for further review.

**Legal Applicant:** Bridgton Public Library

**Application ID:** 22AC249397

**Category:**  AC Formula -- Standard  
 AC Formula – Rural State  
 AC Competitive  
 Other Competition

**Type:**  Planning  
 Operating  
 Fixed Amount  
 Ed Award Only

**Federal Focus Area:** Education, Healthy Futures, Economic Opportunity

**Commission Priorities:** Public Health; Workforce Dev.; Community Sustainability

**Applicant type:**  New (no prior AC experience)  
 Re-compete (# of yrs: \_\_)

**Proposed Dates:** 1/1/2023 to 10/31/2023  
 Submitted budget is 1 year

**Requested Resources: Funds and Slots** (\*indicates sections with calculation errors)

	CNCS		Local Share
<b>Operating</b>	\$10,000*		0.00
<b>Member Support</b>			
<b>Indirect (Admin)</b>			
<b>CNCS Award amount</b>	\$10,000	<b>Total Local Share</b> (cash + in-kind)	<b>0.00</b>
<b>% sharing proposed</b>	0%		
<b>% share required</b>	0%		
<b>Cost-per-member proposed</b>	n/a		

**Program Description (executive summary):**

Bridgton Public Library proposes to develop an AmeriCorps program to serve Bridgton, Maine. It will address community engagement in identifying and addressing community resiliency in a rapidly changing economic reality that impacts the lives of children, families, adults, and senior residents in the AmeriCorps focus areas of Economic Opportunity, Education, and Healthy Futures. The AmeriCorps federal ARP investment \$10,000 will support planning activities carried out in collaboration with the Town of Bridgton Community Development Department and Recreation Department, Community Heart & Soul, Opportunity Alliance Public Health Program, and Loon Echo Land Trust. No AmeriCorps members will be needed to execute this plan.

**Service locations:**

TBD during planning.

**Other than the legal applicant, please list the agencies or organizations that appear to be the major collaborators or partners in this grant.**

(1) Town of Bridgton Community Development Department; (2) Town of Bridgton Recreation Department; (3) Community Heart & Soul; (4) Opportunity Alliance Public Health Program; and (5) Loon Echo Land Trust.

**Applicant proposes to deliver services:**

Within a single municipality  Within a single County but not covering the entire County  
 County-wide in a single County  Multiple Counties but not Statewide  Statewide



- A. Does the Executive Summary format exactly match the template in the RFP?  Yes  No
- B. Does the applicant claim the rural preference?  Yes  No
- C. If the applicant claimed rural preference, is it substantiated by target area?  Yes  No  N/A
- D. Does the applicant claim a preference because the application is from a partnership or coalition whose members represent local organizations working together on a common goal?  Yes  No
- E. Does the applicant claim a preference because the proposal is from an organization led by or primarily supporting historically marginalized communities and/or people.  Yes  No

**Scoring Detail:**

**Peer Reviewer Consensus Score.** *Assessment of narrative using point distribution from federal agency. Major categories (Program Design, Organizational Capability, Budget and Cost) are dictated by CFR rubric for scoring.*

	Quality Rating	Score
<b>Program Design</b>		
Need and Target Community(ies)	Adequate	11.25
Response to Need	Adequate	11.25
Readiness for Planning	Weak	7.5
Expertise and Training	Weak	2.5
<b>Organizational Capability</b>		
Organizational Background & Staffing	Weak	12.5
<b>Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy</b>	Weak	12.5
<b>Total Peer Reviewer Score</b>		<b>57.5</b>

**Do not recommend for further review.**

**Peer Reviewer Notes and Appraisal Summary:**

Program Design.

**Need and Target Community(ies)**

- Covered all required information but not always in detail.
- The proposal describes the lack of affordable housing, lack of childcare options, lack of funding for the Lake Region School District, and lack of transportation -- but does not use data to quantify the lack.
- Good strategic Planning model. Good partnerships. Good description of local needs.

**Response to Need**

- Covered all required information but not always in detail.
- While the planning team appears to have significant experience in government and nonprofit management, there isn't much specificity around what the proposed outcomes of the planning process would yield. It seems overly reliant on whatever the community wants/needs ("we are not sure what the results will be.") That statement suggests to me that the project will focus on what yields popular attention rather on demonstrated need.
- Strong partnerships & local resources. Very good understanding of local needs. Weak description of AmeriCorps activities.

**Readiness for Planning**

- Did not complete all prompts.

- The proposal focuses on the readiness of the library (e.g., its prominence as a cultural and information center and volunteer opportunities) but does not detail the readiness of other partners or the community writ large. I am curious to know how much the town knows about the Community Heart and Soul endeavor.
- Good experience with volunteers, but not clear who will supervise the AmeriCorps members. Description of head librarian, but not clear if she will be the lead person on the project.

### **Expertise and Training**

- Did not complete all prompts.
- The proposal cited that the planning team has experience in government and nonprofit management; theory of change; compliance monitoring; financial management of grants; program design, implementation, and reporting.
- Not clear what AmeriCorps members will do, what training they will receive, or who will supervise them. No mention of Theory of Change or Logic Model.

### Organizational Capability.

#### **Organizational Background and Staffing**

- Did not complete all prompts.
- It seems like this effort is overly-reliant on the library's director and I do not have a good sense for the expertise of others who may be involved.
- Experience w/volunteers. Board & Friends of Library provide oversight and support.

Budget Adequacy and Cost Effectiveness. (CNCS no longer allows narrative for this section. They directed reviewers to consider the budget narrative and its formulas, accuracy, expense items.)

#### **Section: Cost and Budget Adequacy (25 %)**

- Completed all prompts and math added up.
- There isn't much budget detail accompanying the proposal, but \$10,000 feels like an awfully small amount to engage the entire town.
- Not asking for much. Consultant services is 50% - to facilitate strategic planning? - Not a lot of time budgeted for.

**SUMMARY APPRAISAL 1. Having reviewed all elements of the proposal provided to you, do you think that this applicant would be effective in this category of grant?** No

#### **Comments:**

- There isn't sufficient specificity about what the project aims to do. Further, the proposal does not describe the efforts of any other partners beyond the library.
- There should be a maybe button. Good next work of partners. Good understanding of the community, its needs and its resources. Not clear what the AmeriCorps members would do or who would actually supervise them. A bit of a loose proposal.

#### **What elements of the proposal are unclear?**

- While the goals of the program depend on the needs the community identifies, it appears that there is not as clear of a vision for the funds as the proposal requirements specify.
- It is unclear how Bridgton will be a better community after it has engaged in the Community Heart and soul project.
- What they would actually do with an AmeriCorps member.

#### **What else do you have to say about this proposal?**

The library, like many libraries seems really well plugged into the community and responsive to its needs. My main concern is about the capacity to manage an AmeriCorps grant.

# Planning Grant Proposal Report to Commission from Task Force

**Recommendation:** Forward or fund with corrections/modifications

**Legal Applicant:** Kennebec Valley Council of Governments

**Application ID:** 22AC249641

**Category:**  AC Formula -- Standard  
 AC Formula – Rural State  
 AC Competitive  
 Other Competition

**Type:**  Planning  
 Operating  
 Fixed Amount  
 Ed Award Only

**Federal Focus Area:** Economic Opportunity

**Commission Priorities:** Workforce Development

**Applicant type:**  New (no prior AC experience)  
 Re-compete (# of yrs: \_\_)

**Proposed Dates:** 1/1/2023 to 10/31/2023  
 Submitted budget is 1 year

**Requested Resources: Funds and Slots** (\*indicates sections with calculation errors)

	CNCS		Local Share
<b>Operating</b>	\$59,619*		
<b>Member Support</b>			
<b>Indirect (Admin)</b>	2,055*		11,508*
<b>CNCS Award amount</b>	61,674	<b>Total Local Share</b> (cash + in-kind)	<b>11,508</b>
<b>% sharing proposed</b>	84.27%		15.73%
<b>% share required</b>	0%		
<b>Cost-per-member proposed</b>	n/a		

**Program Description (executive summary):**

Kennebec Valley Council of Governments proposes to develop an AmeriCorps program to serve Kennebec, Somerset, and Waldo Counties. It will address Regional Diversity that impacts the lives of Maine's Asylum Seekers and Immigrants, as well as general residents, in the AmeriCorps focus areas of Economic Opportunity and Workforce Development. The AmeriCorps Federal ARP investment \$60,000 will support planning activities carried out in collaboration with the Kennebec Regional Diversity Coalition, the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce, Kennebec Valley Community Action Program, and the United Way of Kennebec Valley. No AmeriCorps members will be needed to execute this plan.

**Service locations:**

TBD during planning.

**Other than the legal applicant, please list the agencies or organizations that appear to be the major collaborators or partners in this grant.**

(1) Kennebec Regional Diversity Coalition; (2) the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce; (3) Kennebec Valley Community Action Program; and (4) United Way of Kennebec Valley.

**Applicant proposes to deliver services:**

Within a single municipality                       Within a single County but not covering the entire County  
 County-wide in a single County             Multiple Counties but not Statewide             Statewide

A. Does the Executive Summary format exactly match the template in the RFP?  Yes     No

B. Does the applicant claim the rural preference?  Yes  No

C. If the applicant claimed rural preference, is it substantiated by target area?  Yes  No  N/A

D. Does the applicant claim a preference because the application is from a partnership or coalition whose members represent local organizations working together on a common goal?  Yes  No

E. Does the applicant claim a preference because the proposal is from an organization led by or primarily supporting historically marginalized communities and/or people.  Yes  No

**Scoring Detail:**

**Peer Reviewer Consensus Score.** *Assessment of narrative using point distribution from federal agency. Major categories (Program Design, Organizational Capability, Budget and Cost) are dictated by CFR rubric for scoring.*

	Quality Rating	Score
<b>Program Design</b>		
Need and Target Community(ies)	Strong	15
Response to Need	Strong	15
Readiness for Planning	Adequate	11.25
Expertise and Training	Adequate	3.75
<b>Organizational Capability</b>		
Organizational Background & Staffing	Adequate	18.75
<b>Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy</b>	Weak	12.5
<b>Total Peer Reviewer Score</b>		<b>76.25</b>

**Recommend for further review with hesitation.**

**Task Force Consensus Score.** *The Task Force reviewers assess the additional technical criteria that states are directed to consider by the CFR.*

	Quality Rating	Score
<b>Proposal Alignment and Model</b>		
• Alignment with Funding Priorities	Adequate	11.25
• Serve communities described in 2522.450(c)	Adequate	2.8
• Proposal adds to goal of being programmatically, demographically, and geographically diverse	Strong	3.75
• Potential for innovation and/or replication	Adequate	2.8
• Strength of evidence planning process will succeed	Adequate	2.8
<b>Preferences from RFA Announcement</b>		
• from a partnership or coalition whose members represent local organizations working together	Adequate	7.5
• serve, counties classified as 6, 7, or 8 on the USDA rural-urban continuum	Strong	10
• from an organization led by or primarily supporting historically marginalized communities and/or people	Weak	5
<b>Financial Plan</b>	Adequate	11.25
<b>Fiscal Systems</b>		
• capacity of financial management system to comply with federal requirements	Adequate	3.75
• strength of the sponsoring organization’s financial management practices	Adequate	3.75
• strength of the sponsoring organization’s financial status/stability	Adequate	3.75
<b>Grant Readiness</b>	Adequate	11.25

<b>Total Task Force Score</b>	79.7
<b>Peer Review Score</b>	76.25
<b>Final Score for Applicant (200 possible)</b>	155.95

**Final Assessment of Application:**

- Forward or fund with no corrections/modifications
- Forward or fund with corrections/modifications
- Do Not Forward or fund

**Referenced Conditions/Corrections**

The following proposal issues need to be clarified or, in the case of missing required elements, added.

- Funding request must not exceed maximum grant amount (\$60,000)
- Budget errors in calculations and formulas must be corrected.

**Peer Reviewer Notes and Appraisal Summary:**

Program Design.

**Need and Target Community(ies)**

- This proposal aims to support asylum seekers and immigrants to Maine.
- Describes workforce needs & benefits if immigration very well. Lots of good data to back up their claims.

**Response to Need**

- Because the services and housing are saturated in Southern Maine and Portland, this proposal explores the possibility of building infrastructure to encourage immigrants and asylum seekers to build their futures in the upper two-thirds of the state, where there is a greater possibility that municipalities have greater bandwidth to support this population.
- Very detailed description of AmeriCorps member activities.

**Readiness for Planning**

- The proposal makes clear that the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) has done their homework to understand the challenges associated with providing housing and support to their targeted population. Further, the proposal is aligned with KVCOG's Impact 2032 plan in which the organization aspires to shift from a municipal-membership framework towards growth and regional capacity which will compound effectiveness.
- Does not appear to be a lot of input from immigrants, nor do they seem to play a big role in the advisory committee.
- The response in this section did not thoroughly address all the points noted in the prompts.
- The applicant states there are no models when, in fact, there are a lot of models.
- Did not see evidence that immigrants were consulted or how they would be incorporated into the advisory board.
- Focus is on recruitment of immigrants and very little said about retention. There were no references to the integrative services needed to ensure immigrants can make it in the community. Integrative services are the largest need.
- Partnerships are really good but seemed like they missed a critical piece of their homework. They need to include immigrant voices from the start. If they were included, it is not in the application.

**Expertise and Training**

- The proposal cites KVCOG's 55 years of providing planning services to 60 municipalities in the Kennebec Valley. Recent planning efforts include work during the pandemic and disaster planning.
- Contrary to their statement, there are lots of models out there for integrating immigrants into a community. There is no evidence that they have done much research about it.

- Grasp of the issue not as deep as it needs to be. Does not discuss developing cultural competence.

Organizational Capability.

**Organizational Background and Staffing**

- The applicant clearly and succinctly describes the organization's staffing, experiences, and structure. The applicant answered all questions in their entirety.
- The planning team includes a variety of experts on municipal planning, creating advisory groups, facilitation of meetings, and the creation of policies, handbooks, and procedures. The Planning Lead has a professional background in Social Work, Research, Quality Improvement, and Systems Change.
- The applicant has the organizational capacity to manage an AmeriCorps program, but the proposal appears to lack an understanding of what is really needed to address the problem they've outlined.
- Likely to be able to plan the program with more input related to the issue than they have had to date or is evident from the narrative. Diversity in hiring is a far different issue than supporting immigrants in the community.

Budget Adequacy and Cost Effectiveness. (CNCS no longer allows narrative for this section. They directed reviewers to consider the budget narrative and its formulas, accuracy, expense items.)

**Section: Cost and Budget Adequacy (25 %)**

- Items were clear and details were provided. All required sections were complete.
- There are formula errors and other issues.
- There is nothing that jumped out that suggests underfunding -- it appears solid.
- Asking for more than \$60,000

**SUMMARY APPRAISAL** 1. Having reviewed all elements of the proposal provided to you, do you think that this applicant would be effective in this category of grant? Yes ( 3 ) No ( )

**Comments:**

- The applicant seems to have clear goals and motivations behind the desire to receive the grant. It appears they have laid the proper foundation needed to be prepared for the assistance of this grant.
- The proposed work is aligned with the work KVCOG has accomplished over the course of the past 55 years. Further, its partners (including United Way) also have demonstrated expertise in leading this level of effort.
- Another maybe. They don't seem to understand that there needs to be a focus on retention as well as recruitment. If they are planning on providing integrative services, they don't mention it. If another organization/partner is planning on providing integrative service, they don't mention it. Without these services their recruitment is not likely to be fruitful.
- Somehow they need to establish, or be working with, a welcome center that provides assistance in accessing integrative services.
- Need to think long and hard about rural areas – how far away from services they will be having immigrants move. Transportation, drivers license, etc. are huge issues. It's more than opportunity for employment.

**What elements of the proposal are unclear?**

- None.
- How, besides job training, they will be working with immigrants that they recruit. How they actually plan to recruit.

**What else do you have to say about this proposal?**

Embracing immigrants is a great idea. They should talk to some to find out what new Mainers really need when they move to a community. The diversity training that they are planning is wonderful, as is workforce development, but it takes more than that.

## **Task Force Review Notes:**

### Proposal Alignment and Model.

- Tangentially, this proposal would alleviate affordable and safe housing needs for immigrants moving to the project area. The proposal is for an area designated a rural. The employment rate in the three-county area dropped from 97% in 2019 to 94.7% in 2020. The Labor Force percentage is consistently three points below state averages. Counties in the Kennebec Valley region are 97-99% white (compared to 72% nationally), lacking culturally relevant infrastructure and networks as well as a sense of inclusivity. It is unclear from the application how the unemployment rates compare to national averages. While AmeriCorps programs are currently in Somerset County (Maine Street Skowhegan), Waldo County (Maine Youth Alliance), and Kennebec (KVCAP), this proposal will work with many more municipalities throughout the three-county region. The proposal is aligned with and will fit into KVCOG's transition from transactional relationship with municipalities to a regional capacity and growth model. It includes key partners and KVCOG has strong relationships with the 60 communities. It is unclear how KVCOG is connected to or informed by immigrant communities who will be one of the key beneficiaries. This will be essential for helping communities develop cultural competence. Financial and leadership stability of KVCOG and its partners will facilitate a successful project. Partners appear to have clear roles and responsibilities.
- The grant focuses on increasing diversity and planning to create more supportive communities for diversity to thrive.

### Preferences from RFP

- The partners who have worked together for the foundation of this proposal include the Kennebec Regional Diversity Coalition, the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce, KVCAP, and the United Way of Kennebec Valley. The work during the planning year can be strengthened by adding more immigrant voices and influence. Waldo and Somerset Counties meet the USDA rural definition. Therefore, two of the three counties meet the criteria. The applicants and partners serve this area. Waldo County CAP is not included and could benefit planning for that county. While the proposal includes partners who serve marginalized populations, leadership is not representative.
- It serves rural communities, increases diversity of communities, and aims to serve marginalized communities.

### Assessment of Financial Plan

- The applicant has the organizational and financial capacity to manage a planning process and an AmeriCorps program. The budget is aligned with the program narrative and has capacity to support the planning process. The budget requests \$1,674 above the allowed CNCS share. That amount needs to be shifted to Grantee Share.
- Federal request exceeds funding limit of \$60,000

### Fiscal Systems

- The applicant submitted evidence of standard financial management practices and of financial stability. The audit is performed every two years. They recently participated in the complex, grant-funded Cares Act Resiliency to provide financial support to area businesses and to build regional capacity.
- The applicant meets all standards.

### Grant Readiness

# Planning Grant Proposal Report to Commission from Task Force

**Recommendation:** Fund. No corrections needed.

**Legal Applicant:** Maine Bureau of Emergency Medical Services  
(Maine EMS)

**Application ID:** 22AC249365

**Category:**  AC Formula -- Standard  
 AC Formula – Rural State  
 AC Competitive  
 Other Competition

**Type:**  Planning  
 Operating  
 Fixed Amount  
 Ed Award Only

**Federal Focus Area:** Healthy Futures

**Commission Priorities:** Public Health

**Applicant type:**  New (no prior AC experience)  
 Re-compete (# of yrs: \_\_)

**Proposed Dates:** 1/1/2023 to 10/31/2023  
 Submitted budget is 1 year

**Requested Resources: Funds and Slots** (\*indicates sections with calculation errors)

	CNCS		Local Share
<b>Operating</b>	\$60,000		0.00
<b>Member Support</b>			
<b>Indirect (Admin)</b>			
<b>CNCS Award amount</b>	\$60,000	<b>Total Local Share</b> (cash + in-kind)	
<b>% sharing proposed</b>	100%		0%
<b>% share required</b>	0%		
<b>Cost-per-member proposed</b>	n/a		

**Program Description (executive summary):**

The Maine Bureau of Emergency Medical Services (Maine EMS) proposes to develop an AmeriCorps program to serve the State of Maine. It will address increasing the quality of emergency medical services that impacts the lives of all visitors and residents of the State of Maine in the AmeriCorps focus area(s) of public health, workforce development (creating new quality improvement specialists), healthy futures for the residents of Maine, and capacity building for the Maine EMS system. The AmeriCorps federal ARP investment \$60,000 will support planning activities carried out in collaboration with the Maine Community College System, regional EMS partners (Atlantic Partners EMS, Tri-County EMS, and Aroostook EMS), the Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee of the Maine EMS Board, and quality assurance and improvement thought leaders from across the State of Maine. No AmeriCorps members will be needed to execute this plan.

**Service locations:**

TBD during planning.

**Other than the legal applicant, please list the agencies or organizations that appear to be the major collaborators or partners in this grant.**

(1) Maine Community College System; (2) regional EMS partners (Atlantic Partners EMS, Tri-County EMS, and Aroostook EMS); (3) the Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee of the Maine EMS Board; and (4) quality assurance and improvement thought leaders from across the State of Maine.



**Applicant proposes to deliver services:**

- Within a single municipality       Within a single County but not covering the entire County  
 County-wide in a single County       Multiple Counties but not Statewide       Statewide

- A. Does the Executive Summary format exactly match the template in the RFP?  Yes  No
- B. Does the applicant claim the rural preference?  Yes  No
- C. If the applicant claimed rural preference, is it substantiated by target area?  Yes  No  N/A
- D. Does the applicant claim a preference because the application is from a partnership or coalition whose members represent local organizations working together on a common goal?  Yes  No
- E. Does the applicant claim a preference because the proposal is from an organization led by or primarily supporting historically marginalized communities and/or people.  Yes  No

**Scoring Detail:**

**Peer Reviewer Consensus Score.** *Assessment of narrative using point distribution from federal agency. Major categories (Program Design, Organizational Capability, Budget and Cost) are dictated by CFR rubric for scoring.*

	Quality Rating	Score
<b>Program Design</b>		
Need and Target Community(ies)	Adequate	11.25
Response to Need	Strong	15
Readiness for Planning	Adequate	11.25
Expertise and Training	Adequate	3.75
<b>Organizational Capability</b>		
Organizational Background & Staffing	Adequate	18.75
<b>Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy</b>	Adequate	18.75
<b>Total Peer Reviewer Score</b>		<b>78.75</b>

**Recommend for further review with hesitation.**

**Task Force Consensus Score.** *The Task Force reviewers assess the additional technical criteria that states are directed to consider by the CFR.*

	Quality Rating	Score
<b>Proposal Alignment and Model</b>		
• Alignment with Funding Priorities	Strong	15
• Serve communities described in 2522.450(c)	Adequate	2.8
• Proposal adds to goal of being programmatically, demographically, and geographically diverse	Adequate	2.8
• Potential for innovation and/or replication	Adequate	2.8
• Strength of evidence planning process will succeed	Strong	3.8
<b>Preferences from RFA Announcement</b>		
• from a partnership or coalition whose members represent local organizations working together	Adequate	7.5
• serve, counties classified as 6, 7, or 8 on the USDA rural-urban continuum	Adequate	7.5
• from an organization led by or primarily supporting historically marginalized communities and/or people	Weak	5
<b>Financial Plan</b>	Strong	15

<b>Fiscal Systems</b>		
• capacity of financial management system to comply with federal requirements	Strong	5
• strength of the sponsoring organization’s financial management practices	Adequate	3.7
• strength of the sponsoring organization’s financial status/stability	Adequate	3.8
<b>Grant Readiness</b>	Strong	15
<b>Total Task Force Score</b>		89.7
<b>Peer Review Score</b>		78.75
<b>Final Score for Applicant (200 possible)</b>		168.45

**Final Assessment of Application:**

- Forward or fund with no corrections/modifications
- Forward or fund with corrections/modifications
- Do Not Forward or fund

**Referenced Conditions/Corrections**

The following proposal issues need to be clarified or, in the case of missing required elements, added.

- N/A

**Peer Reviewer Notes and Appraisal Summary:**

Program Design.

**Need and Target Community(ies)**

- The need and target communities have been defined very broadly (all residents and visitors to the State of Maine)

**Response to Need**

- Very strong section. The rationale for adding AmeriCorps members was articulate, including what they will implement and how.
- The proposal identified significant inconsistencies in the capacity, standardization, and delivery of quality assurance and improvement programming in the state.

**Readiness for Planning**

- While Maine EMS does not oversee volunteers, they have experience in managing interns.
- Role and qualifications of contractor mentioned was not clear – in fact, it was confusing. Contractor seems to have significant role in the planning.

**Expertise and Training**

- Clearly articulates the organization's Theory of Change. Illustrates where the organization currently is with training and where they know they need to be.
- This planning work will be led by a contractor, but it does not identify the skill set that the contractor will have.

Organizational Capability.

**Organizational Background and Staffing**

- The applicant articulates the current organizational structure, strengths and weaknesses, and the status of its planning or development activities. The applicant describes how the organization reports to its governing board on how well the organization is implementing its programs and strategies
- Maine EMS has 10 staff members, including several staff who are dedicated to EMS data, systems of care, education, EMS for children; emergency medical dispatching; and substance abuse disorder response.

Further, the proposal described the organization's challenges and lessons learned during the pandemic -- if they are able to successfully navigate through such a challenge experience, it seems like they should be well-positioned to undertake this effort.

Budget Adequacy and Cost Effectiveness. (CNCS no longer allows narrative for this section. They directed reviewers to consider the budget narrative and its formulas, accuracy, expense items.)

**Section: Cost and Budget Adequacy (25 %)**

- Overall this section was strong and clear. There were no mathematical errors.
- Maine EMS did not put forth any in-kind contribution or other support it is seeking beyond the AmeriCorps grants -- they do not have any financial skin in the game.

**SUMMARY APPRAISAL 1. Having reviewed all elements of the proposal provided to you, do you think that this applicant would be effective in this category of grant? Yes ( 2 ) No ( )**

**Comments:**

- The work that Maine EMS is proposing appears necessary for Maine residents and visitors to expect a high level of emergency care. It also appears to be within Maine EMS's wheelhouse.

**What elements of the proposal are unclear?**

- The one thing I was slightly confused about was the rationale regarding the contractor.
- N/A

**What else do you have to say about this proposal?**

- I liked the way that Maine EMS is looking out for AmeriCorps volunteers after their engagement by calling out recruitment statistics.
- 

**Task Force Review Notes:**

Proposal Alignment and Model.

- This proposal falls under the Commission priority of Public Health. It also contains elements of the Workforce Development priority. Since this is a statewide proposal, it will include work in counties with RUCA codes of 6 or higher (Aroostook, Franklin, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo and Washington). The proposal focuses on assisting the EMS operations across the state, especially in rural counties. It also highlights programmatic areas of public health, emergency care, and Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance. The use of AmeriCorps members to provide training and technical assistance on QI/QA to local communities across the state provides members with marketable workplace skills. The proposed work aligns with Maine EMS's mission while strategically provides TA to improve local services through training and support local entities have indicated they need. Current staffing expansions will strengthen this proposal's success. To avoid the State HR slow hiring process, the Bureau is using an established contract to onboard the planning grant's lead staff person quickly.
- The applicant doesn't indicate a particular population or geographic focus, so it is unclear if the applicant intends to serve priority communities or populations.

Preferences from RFP

- Maine EMS works with key partners, including local and regional EMS entities, the Maine Community College System, the Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee of the Maine EMS Board, and thought leaders. While Maine EMS does not have a physical presence in the counties to be served, their regional partners do. Also, they license agencies and EMS personnel. Almost 70% of the 90 local agencies have expressed interest in receiving the proposed programming.
- ques 12 - weak to substandard, but rated weak because will help improve EMS throughout the state including the marginalized
- Serves EMS regions that contain rural counties. No evidence of serving marginalized communities.

### Assessment of Financial Plan

- The majority of funding will support contracted staffing to lead the planning process. This approach avoids the usual eight-month lag in hiring through the State HR process. The contract already exists. The indirect rate reflects the Department of Public Safety approved rate of 2.2%. Because state budgeting is governed through the legislative process, the applicant match is not reflected in the budget. However, in-kind match will be achieved through oversight and engagement of Bureau leadership and staff.
- The applicant shows strong financial planning and significant controls.

### Fiscal Systems

- The State of Maine financial management system complies with federal requirements for accounting for public grant funds. The Bureau of EMS budget reflects increases for expanded staffing that will support oversight of this application and workflow. A new Deputy Director will be helpful in overseeing fiscal management and personnel for this proposal. The 422-page single audit for the State of Maine for FY 2021 identified deficiencies. However, that does not reflect concerns for fiscal management of the Bureau of EMS in the Department of Public Safety.
- While there is no audit (do they meet the federal threshold?), the controls and systems in place appear to be strong.

### Grant Readiness



## Volunteer Maine

19 Elkins Lane, 105 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333

voice: (207) 624-7792

[service.commission@maine.gov](mailto:service.commission@maine.gov)

[www.MaineServiceCommission.gov](http://www.MaineServiceCommission.gov)



### APPENDIXE: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Please sign this form and return it to Commission staff, as instructed, at the address above *before* you begin to review applications.

I have read the Commission policy on Conflict of Interest as outlined in the Reviewer Information Package and understand that I must contact the appropriate Commission staff if a conflict arises during my service as a reviewer. I also will not divulge any confidential information I may become aware of during the grant review process. Upon completion of this work, I will return to THE Commission the copies of applications and not share them with anyone or hold them.

I fully understand that I must sign and return this Conflict of Interest Acknowledgement to the Commission Office before I begin review of grant applications.

Name (please print): **Julia Van Steenberghe**

Signature: *Julia Van Steenberghe*

Date: **08/30/22**

[For Commission use only - - Date received: \_\_\_\_\_]



# Volunteer Maine

19 Elkins Lane, 105 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333

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## APPENDIX E: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

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Name (please print): Pamela Proulx-Curry

Signature: *Pamela M. Proulx-Curry*  
Pamela M. Proulx-Curry (May 25, 2022 11:31 EDT)

Date: May 25, 2022

[For Commission use only - - Date received: \_\_\_\_\_]



# Volunteer Maine

The Maine Commission for Community Service  
A Stronger Maine Through Volunteerism



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copies of applications and not share them with anyone or hold them.

I fully understand that I must sign and return this Conflict of Interest Acknowledgement to the Commission Office before I begin review of grant applications.

Name (please print): Robert Meinders

Signature: 

Date: 08/29/22

[For Commission use only -- Date received: \_\_\_\_\_]





# Volunteer Maine

The Maine Commission for Community Service  
A Stronger Maine Through Volunteerism



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I fully understand that I must sign and return this Conflict of Interest Acknowledgement to the Commission Office before I begin review of grant applications.

Name (please print): Matthew L'Italien

Signature: Matthew L'Italien

Date: 05/09/2022

[For Commission use only - - Date received: \_\_\_\_\_]