

# Washington Climate Corps Network

## Applicant Toolkit

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## OVERVIEW

**State Entity:** Serve Washington

**State Funding Opportunity:** Washington Climate Corps Network

Serve WA is pleased to administer the Washington Climate Corps Network (WCCN) with funds from the Climate Commitment Act (CCA). The WCCN will make equity-based investments to mobilize young adults, veterans, and vulnerable populations to expand service projects building climate resiliency in overburdened communities.

Serve WA is seeking qualified entities to join the WCCN to host service projects and provide service-learning programs to build low-carbon and climate-resilient communities, ecosystems, and economies.

### Serve Washington

[Serve Washington](#), a state service commission, advances national service, volunteerism, and civic engagement to improve lives; expands opportunity to meet the local critical needs of residents of Washington; and strengthens community capacity while creating healthy and resilient communities. Authorized by Executive Order 16-08, a 20-member board of Governor-appointed commissioners supports and advises Serve Washington.

### Purpose of the Network

The WCCN is creating a climate resilient Washington through enterprising service projects, community partnership, and investing in the next generation of environmental leaders.

The WCCN invests in service projects and educational opportunities for young adults (17-31), veterans (any age), and overburdened communities<sup>1</sup>. Service projects and educational opportunities will build clean energy and climate-resilient communities, economies, and ecosystems.

The WCCN will achieve the following goals:

- Increase participation in addressing climate challenges in overburdened communities.
- Expand the diversity, awareness, and accessibility of climate service opportunities in Washington.
- Create a service-learning program for funded network partners and their service project members.
  - The service-learning program will increase awareness of and access to clean energy and climate-related career opportunities and networks.

### History of the Network

In 2023, the Washington State Legislature passed [Second Substitute House Bill 1176](#) to create more service projects mobilizing young adults and veterans, provide training and educational opportunities, and expand our state’s climate workforce opportunities. The creation of the Washington Climate Corps Network acknowledges climate change as one of our state’s greatest challenges and recognizes service projects as a unique opportunity to address this



challenge.

## WCCN Grant Program Details

### Award Amounts

This grant supports two tiers of awards, hereafter referred to as Tier 1 and Tier 2.

#### 1. Tier 1 (Cedar Level) Grants: \$2,000 - \$35,000

- a. Accessible to small organizations and applicants located in overburdened communities.
- b. Contracts will involve less reporting and contractual requirements.
- c. Project budget prioritizes increasing community participation, project activation, and service member compensation.

#### 2. Tier 2 (Hemlock Level) Grants: \$35,001 - \$100,000+

- a. Accessible to all eligible applicants.
- b. Contracts will involve more reporting and contractual requirements.
- c. Project budget may support organizational functions and capacity building.

### Benefits of joining the WCCN

In addition, selected grantees will benefit from additional support by Serve WA for:

- Professional development for WCCN members through a dedicated service-learning program.
- Statewide coordination efforts for project or partner identification, member recruitment, and other communications and engagement efforts.
- Participation in a learning cohort of peer programs to identify best practices for climate service efforts in Washington.
- Recognition by state leaders and coordination with state climate efforts.
- Ongoing efforts to secure additional financial support.

### Use of Funds

Grantees may use WCCN funds on personnel, project costs, participant stipends, and indirect costs.

- Funds **CANNOT** be used for any of the following:
  - Participate in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office;
  - Make subgrants to individuals on a non-objective basis, or for any non-charitable or noneducational purpose;
  - Lobby or attempt to influence legislation;
  - Any expenses not-related or detailed in the final agreement budget and scope of work.

### Eligibility Requirements

To receive funds, applicants must agree to the following requirements for any included and/or funded members, community partners or project sites.

### Applicants

- Must be an eligible organization or host site:
  - Nonprofit organization

- Academic Institution (K-12, Collegiate, Technical, etc.)
- Special Purpose District
- Local Government Agencies (County, Municipality)
- Tribe or tribal organization
- Fiscally-sponsored organization
- Must meet the goals of the WCCN (as outlined in this RFA) as part of the grant agreement.
- Must meet the commitments outlined in this RFA around the member, host, or project site goals outlined in this agreement.
- Must aspire and actively work with towards the bill's goal that a minimum of 60 percent of climate corps funding shall support service by and for members of overburdened communities<sup>1</sup> as defined in [RCW 70A.65.010](#), and the Climate Commitment Act. These terms are also defined in exhibit B: Definitions.

## WCCN Participants<sup>2</sup>

- Must:
  - Be between 17 – 31 years old; **OR**
    - a U.S. military veteran; **OR**
    - Individuals with physical or sensory disabilities; **OR**
    - Come from a vulnerable population in an overburdened community. The individual does not have to be from the overburdened community being served.
  - Receive a living allowance that meets or exceeds the appropriate tier living allowance, as defined in the Budget section of this RFA and exhibit B: Definitions
  - Participate in service-learning sessions and network events coordinated by Serve WA

## WCCN Host Organizations or Project Sites

- Must prioritize service by and for overburdened communities, though applications may request support for projects or sites of varied overburdened community ranking.
  - Serve WA has a core value of including equity in every aspect of our work, and that is represented in the service and the funding we provide.
  - Serve WA encourages applicants to deliver services and resources that are culturally responsive and partner with the communities served to implement a project.
- Must submit as part of their application budget the determination of the area as overburdened using either the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#) or the [Washington Environmental Health Disparities \(EHD\)](#) map.
  - For the [CEJST](#) data, a tract is considered overburdened if it meets more than 1 burden threshold and the associated economic threshold.
  - For the [WA EHD Map](#), communities receive overall environmental for a community. The [Environmental Justice Task Force final report](#) defined a community ranked as 9 or 10 as the starting point for identifying overburdened communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Please reference the [Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map Report](#) and the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) to identify an overburdened community.

<sup>2</sup> Participants do not have to be funded directly to be included in network activities.

# Important Dates

## General Timeline

Application Released	April 10, 2024
Application Overview and Webinar	Recording Available: [insert link]
Monthly Application Deadline	21 <sup>st</sup> Day of Every Month
Applications Review*	First two weeks of the month, following application submittal
Awards Notice sent to Applicants	3 <sup>rd</sup> Week of Every Month

\*Serve WA may reach out to applicants during the application review period with clarifying questions or for additional information.

## WCCN Overview & Application Walkthrough - Webinar

Applicants are encouraged to review the recorded online informational session to learn about Serve WA, the WCCN structure, completing the application, and other answers to commonly asked questions.

- Please view the recording session [here](#).

# Application Instructions

## Letter of Intent

To receive a link to the application, organizations must first submit a Letter of Intent [via Smartsheet form](#).

### **Please include the following in your Letter of Intent:**

- An overview of you/your organization
- A summary of your proposed service project(s)
- Communities supported by the service project(s)
- A budget estimate for your proposal
- Brief description of proposal's alignment with WCCN goals
- Educational or service-learning outcomes

Serve WA will review all letters of intent submitted, you will receive a response notifying you if your project was selected for application.

**NOTE:** Only those applicants who submitted a letter of intent and who were selected by Serve WA to apply are eligible to submit an application.

## Rolling Application

All application materials must be submitted via the online 2023 Washington Climate Corps Network Application. Applications will be reviewed in the order they are received. Awards will be made in the month following the application's submittal, pending availability of funding.

## How to Apply

Click the links below to begin the process for submitting a letter of intent, selected letters will be invited to apply in a follow-up message.

- [Submit a Letter of Intent](#) (Smartsheet Form)
- [Application Preview](#) (Word Document)

Applications shall include the complete responses to each of the application sections included below.

- [Project Narrative](#): As outlined below.
  - Project Overview
  - Community Partnerships & Project Locations
  - Evaluation & Measuring Success
- [Budget Worksheet](#): Using the provided template.
  - The budget template is provided as an Excel file, see exhibit A, and may be submitted in Excel format or as a PDF.
- [Additional Documents and Comments](#): As outlined below.
  - **Please combine the additional documents into a single PDF and upload it to the online application.**

## Final Award Amount and Participation in WCCN

Applicants are encouraged to apply for the amount and categories of funding they deem necessary to achieve project goals. Serve WA reserves the right to award amounts different than the amount requested in the application.

Organizations will be selected based on several factors, including, but not limited to:

- Location of and partnership with overburdened communities served.
- Project responsiveness to and impact on community climate needs.
- Service project design that provides intentional support of member development in the areas of leadership skills, environmental stewardship and civic engagement, and climate-related professional and educational opportunities.

## Award Notification

Selected organizations will be notified of their application's status by the end of the month following their application's submittal.

- Awardees may request approved funding for host site organizations in overburdened communities after host sites are confirmed and a member is enrolled for the host site or project.
- Project funding will be issued via reimbursement (monthly or quarterly).

## Invoicing

Funds for WCCN awards are delivered on a reimbursement basis and **projects must be under agreement before project spending or invoicing**. The following will help facilitate timely reimbursements:

- Accurate and current W9 and ACH forms
- Invoices aligned with the budget expenses and scope of work in the executed grant agreement.
- Supporting documentation displaying expenses incurred by the project included with the completed invoice.

**Please note:** Invoices and payments must be reviewed and approved by teams within Serve WA and the Office of Financial Management. The invoicing process includes submission, review, approval, and disbursement of funds and is expected to take **30 days from approval** if submitted invoices and documentation are sufficient and complete.

## Commitments

### Applicants

#### Usage of Funds

- Actively seek out overburdened community partners.
- Must work with Serve WA and aim to achieve a minimum of 60% of climate corps funding supporting service in, for, or by members of overburdened communities as defined in RCW 70A.65.010, the Climate Commitment Act.
- Use funding to support projects or placements that are focused on low-carbon or climate resilience benefits for communities in Washington.
- Include preference in recruiting for individuals who represent the diversity of the communities being served in the project description.
- Ensure participants receive stipend amounts that correspond to the defined tier for their service location (see guidance below).
- Carry out the project in accordance with the executed grant agreement.

#### Program Implementation (Expectations of host or project sites)

- Ensure member participation in a service-learning program as defined by WCCN.
- Ensure the safety and well-being of program participants, including compliance with proper health and safety procedures, providing WCCN members with personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Invest in the success of WCCN members by providing meaningful organizational capacity to manage and oversee their service experience.
- Provide channels for direct communication between WCCN members, host sites, and Serve WA, as appropriate.
- Provide WCCN Architects with opportunities to network for career exploration and professional mentorship.

#### Participation in Network Development

- Participate in network calls with Serve WA and other participating programs to:
  - share learnings,
  - address challenges, and

- collaboratively create a successful network for participants, communities, and the state of Washington.
- Work with Serve WA on WCCN coordination activities (e.g., project or host partner identification, member recruitment, program completion).
- Use WCCN communications guidance (e.g., branding, messaging)
- Participate in network communications activities including but not limited to:
  - amplification on social channels,
  - storytelling opportunities (e.g., video/photography, interviews with WCCN members, success stories), and
  - coordinated press/media efforts as needed.

## Outcomes

- Participate in basic data sharing with Serve WA, as well as program evaluation efforts (see Reporting Requirements/Performance Measures below).
- Submit quarterly and final reports including:
  - Member demographic data:
    - race/ethnicity,
    - geographic location,
    - socioeconomic status,
    - gender identity, and
    - education level.
  - Community benefits:
    - Services provided to communities,
    - Program activities (e.g. performance measures), and
    - Measurements broken out by overburdened vs. other communities.
  - Member Benefits:
    - Connections to career pathways and
    - Certifications or trainings completed.

## Reporting Requirements/Performance Measures

All projects will require a project deliverable including a set of key performance indicators that will reflect overall anticipated outcomes in addressing:

- Community needs,
- Member recruitment, and
- Engagement with overburdened communities.

This data will be reported through a standardized data collection tool that will be distributed to awardees upon grant award. These indicators will be developed in partnership with WCCN programs in year one, including but not limited to the following expected areas of data reporting:

- Number of service hours by type (learning / service) and location (project or community).
- Number of overburdened communities served.
- Member demographics.
- Performance Measurement data points specific to WCCN project activities.

## Quarterly Reporting

WCCN programs and Serve WA will work together to provide quarterly reports that inform network progress and identify best practices. These reports may include qualitative questions such as:

- How did your organization effectively involve overburdened communities in your projects?



- What challenges did you experience?
- What was effective in developing partnerships?
- How did you recruit from overburdened communities?
- What methods, partnerships, or techniques were valuable for recruitment?
- Describe any accomplishments (community or participant benefits) from your project.
- How can Serve WA improve service-learning programming for your community?
- Please share any media demonstrating the project and community impacts.

## **Closeout Report**

WCCN programs and Serve WA will work together to define a closeout report that documents outcomes and areas for development. The final report narrative may include quantitative and qualitative questions such as:

- Describe policies, programs or practices that affected the recruitment of WCCN members, positively or negatively.
- Describe policies, programs or practices that affected the benefits and impacts for overburdened communities.
- Provide feedback on the service-learning structure for members.
- Provide feedback on Serve WA coordination efforts for the WCCN.
- Describe how WCCN members' service made an impact or meaningful difference in the community.
- Please provide space to share the feedback and perspective of the WCCN Architect.

Reporting templates and additional instructions will be provided upon grant award.

The Closeout Report and final invoice must be submitted prior to the contract end date.

## **Questions? Contact WCCN!**

The WCCN Administrator and Serve WA are available to answer any additional questions via e-mail ([WCCN@OFM.WA.GOV](mailto:WCCN@OFM.WA.GOV)) or via virtual meeting. Serve WA will not advise, author, or edit any applications.

All written and general questions about the WCCN funds will be recorded in a regularly updated FAQ document, available [here](#).

Please read through the Frequently Asked Questions document before submitting your questions.

If you still have questions or need additional information regarding your project or the WCCN, you can schedule a short meeting with the WCCN Administrator using this Microsoft Bookings page: [Book time with the WCCN Program Administrator](#).