



**STATE OF WASHINGTON
SERVE WASHINGTON**

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AmeriCorps Washington

**Request for Grant Applications
PLANNING GRANTS ONLY**

AmeriCorps State Formula Grant
Federal Fiscal Year 2024

State Solicitation Number: 24-100

Release Date:	February 8, 2024
Application Due Date:	March 4, 2024

OVERVIEW

State Entity:	Serve Washington
Federal Agency:	AmeriCorps
Federal Funding Opportunity:	2024 AmeriCorps State Formula Grants
Announcement Type:	Request for Planning Grant Applications <i>Only</i>
Assistance Listing Number:	94.006

Serve Washington is pleased to announce the *2024 AmeriCorps State Formula* Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) to meet state and local challenges through service and volunteer action.

This RFGA is for Planning Grants ONLY.

If you are interested in a New/Recompete Grant to begin a three-year cycle not previously funded by Serve Washington or restart a three year cycle as an established AmeriCorps operational program, this is NOT the appropriate RFGA. Please return to the [Serve Washington website](#) for the RFGA for New/Recompete Grants.

If you are a Continuation Grant entering year two or three of a current operational cycle, this is NOT the appropriate RFGA, please return to the [Serve Washington website](#) for the RFGA for Continuation Grants.

Serve Washington

Serve Washington advances national service, volunteerism, and civic engagement to improve lives, expand opportunity to meet the local critical needs of residents of Washington, and strengthen community capacity while creating healthy and resilient communities.

Authorized by Executive Order #16-08, a 20-member board of Governor-appointed commissioners support and advise Serve Washington. Its role is to carry out the mission and goals of the [State Service Plan](#) and to fulfill the statutory responsibilities for state service commissions authorized by the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1990 as amended by the Serve America Act.

AmeriCorps

[AmeriCorps](#) brings people together to tackle some of the country's most pressing challenges through national service and volunteering. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities. AmeriCorps helps make service a cornerstone of our national culture. AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions/practices to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a [Segal AmeriCorps Education Award](#) from the National Service Trust that members can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

AMERICORPS FOCUS AREAS

[The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act](#), emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. To carry out Congress's intent, maximize the impact of investment in national service, and achieve the goals laid out in the [Strategic Plan \(2022-2026\)](#), AmeriCorps has the following Focus Areas:

Disaster Services

Helping individuals and communities prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of disasters and increase community resiliency.

Economic Opportunity

Improving the economic well-being and security of underserved individuals.

Education

Improving educational outcomes for underserved people, especially children. AmeriCorps is particularly interested in program designs that support youth engagement and service learning as strategies to achieve high educational outcomes.

Environmental Stewardship

Supporting communities to become more resilient through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve land and water, increase renewable energy use and improve at-risk ecosystems, especially in underserved households and communities.

Healthy Futures

Support for health needs within communities, including mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 and other public health crises, access to care, aging in place, and addressing childhood obesity, especially in underserved communities.

Veterans and Military Families

Improving the quality of life of veterans, military families, caregivers, and survivors.

SERVE WASHINGTON FUNDING PRIORITIES

Serve Washington seeks to employ AmeriCorps resources to develop a diverse portfolio of programs that meet the following priority areas:

- Service strategies are driven **by community identified priorities**;
- Organizations that **are led and staffed by people that reflect the communities being served**;
- Programs that strive **to recruit and select national service members that reflect communities being served**;
- Programs that **support communities historically excluded and/or underserved from government services, addressing structural and institutional inequities, and/or increasing opportunity to achieve sustainable change**;
- Models that **utilize service as a strategy to develop career pathways and/or lead to industry recognized credentials**;

- Models that **demonstrate an implemented commitment to Justice, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access;**
- Programs that **provide additional benefits to members such as Member Assistance (mental health), housing assistance, transportation, childcare, etc.;**

WHAT WE DO NOT FUND

AmeriCorps funds cannot be used to fund the following program activities:

Religious Use

AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to provide religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any form of proselytization.

Political Activity

AmeriCorps assistance may not be used by program participants or staff to assist, promote, or deter union organizing; or finance, directly or indirectly, any activity designed to influence the outcome of a Federal, State, or local election to public office.

Contracts or Collective Bargaining Agreements

AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to impair existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements.

Supplantation

AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to replace State and local public funds that had been used to support programs of the type eligible to receive AmeriCorps support.

Nonduplication

AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity already available in the locality of a program. AmeriCorps assistance will not be provided to a private nonprofit entity to conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities currently provided.

Nondisplacement

An employer may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, because of the use by such employer of a participant in a program receiving AmeriCorps assistance.

An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving AmeriCorps assistance.

A service opportunity will not be created under this chapter that will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual.

A participant in a program receiving AmeriCorps assistance may not perform any services or duties or engage in activities that would otherwise be performed by an employee as part of the assigned duties of such employee.

A participant in any program receiving AmeriCorps assistance may not perform any services or duties, or engage in activities, that—

- Will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or
- Are services, duties, or activities with respect to which an individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures.

A participant in any program receiving assistance may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any—

- Presently employed worker;
- Employee who recently resigned or was discharged;
- Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures;
- Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick); or
- Employee who is on strike or who is being locked out.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

The following Non-Federal Entities (all of which are defined in 2 CFR §200.1) are eligible to apply:

- Indian Tribes
- Institutions of higher education
- Local governments, including school districts
- Nonprofit organizations
- States and US Territories (2 CFR §200.90)

Purpose of Planning Grants

Planning grants provide initial funding to support current staff or to hire additional staff who can plan a proposed AmeriCorps program and develop systems for successful implementation of an AmeriCorps operational grant application. Planning grants DO NOT receive/provide AmeriCorps members.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Read the Planning Grants Curriculum and Benchmarks document located on the Serve Washington [website](#).

Serve Washington also suggests applicants complete an AmeriCorps Readiness Assessment found on the Serve Washington [website](#). This is not required, and should not be submitted, but will aid in helping applicants determine if an AmeriCorps Planning Grant or future AmeriCorps Operational Grant is a good fit for the organization. Also located on this page is a “decision tree” titled Navigating National Serve Resources Flow Chart to aid applicants in determining the best stream of national service to apply for (AmeriCorps State, AmeriCorps National,

AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps NCCC, Senior Corps, or a traditional volunteer program). This planning grant opportunity is for AmeriCorps State ONLY.

IMPORTANT DATES

Request for Grant Applications Released	February 8, 2024
Technical Assistance Zoom for Potential Applicants	February 12, 2024, 9:00am PST
Completed Applications Due from Applicants	March 4, 2024, by 5:00pm PST
Staff Review for Compliance	March 5, 2024
Grant Review Committee Application Review	March 6 – 29, 2024
Grant Review Committee Meeting Note: Applicants must be available by phone on this day in the event the GRC needs additional information or clarification. Interviews will not be conducted.	April 4, 2024
Clarification/Revision Period for Some Applicants	Beginning On/Around April 4, 2024
Serve Washington Commissioners Vote on Grant Review Committee Recommendation	April 10, 2024
Notification to Applicants Regarding Serve Washington Vote	Week of April 15, 2024
Serve Washington to submit applications to AmeriCorps (No Later Than)	May 17, 2024
AmeriCorps to Award Grants (No Later Than)	July 2024

Technical Assistance Zoom

Applicants are highly encouraged to participate in an online technical assistance session via Zoom on **Monday, February 12th, 2024** to review application instructions and as an opportunity for applicants to ask questions about the process. This session will also be recorded and posted on the Serve Washington [website](#).

PLANNING GRANTS ONLY 9:00am-10:00am

[Join Online Here](#)

Call In: 253 215 8782

Meeting ID: 847 9544 4537

Passcode: 790378

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Estimated Award Amount

Awards for planning grants may not exceed \$75,000.

Type of Award

AmeriCorps grants can be awarded on a Cost Reimbursement or Fixed Amount basis, but first time/new operational grants are awarded as cost-reimbursement only. If awarded, grantees will submit monthly invoice packages to Serve Washington for reimbursement. Grantees are required to match at 24 percent, either through cash or in-kind.

Period of Performance

Serve Washington anticipates making three-year grants. The initial award for the first year is based on a one-year budget. Continuation awards for subsequent years are anticipated but not guaranteed. Continuation awards depend on availability of funds and satisfactory performance. The start date for the first year is proposed by the applicant. (The *earliest* project award period allowed is August 1, 2024 – July 31, 2025. The *latest* project award period allowed is January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025. Any 12-month period in between is acceptable.)

The project start date may not occur prior to the date AmeriCorps/Serve Washington awards the grant. AmeriCorps applicants may not enroll prior to the start date of the award. AmeriCorps applicants may not begin service prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period as designated in the grant award. A program may not certify any hours an applicant performs prior to the applicant becoming a member in the system of record (eGrants) and the beginning of the member enrollment period.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applications must include an Employer Identification Number (EIN).

System for Award Management ([SAM](#)) registration is required. Serve Washington suggests that applicants finalize a new registration or renew an existing one at least three weeks before the application deadline to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise. All applicants must maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete and, if a grant is awarded, throughout the life of the award. **Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and address on all grant applications to AmeriCorps/Serve Washington.**

Applications must also include a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). A UEI is a 12-character alphanumeric identifier automatically assigned in the System for Award Management (SAM).

Awards will not be made to entities that do not have a valid SAM registration and Unique Entity Identifier.

Applicants awarded will need a [Statewide Vendor Registration Number](#) to receive payment from Serve Washington. If you have not received payment from the State of Washington within the last two years your Statewide Vendor Number will need to be renewed.

Other Requirements

Under section 132A(b) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this RFGA.

Applications that propose to engage in activities that are prohibited under AmeriCorps' statutes, regulations, or the terms and conditions of its awards are not eligible to receive AmeriCorps funding.

Note that under appropriations provisions annually enacted by Congress, if AmeriCorps/Serve Washington is aware that any corporation has any unpaid Federal tax liability—

- that has been assessed
- for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed
- that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability—

that corporation is not eligible for an award under this RFGA. However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has decided that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interest of the federal government.

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(4) that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for AmeriCorps/Serve Washington funding.

This *Notice and [Application Instructions](#)* should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR §§ 2520-2550, the [Mandatory Supplemental Information](#), and the [National Performance Measure Instructions](#) which are incorporated by reference.

INSTRUCTIONS

General Information

Applicants are required to complete applications for funding in accordance with this RFGA *only*. These and other resources are located at the Serve Washington [website](#).

Application Deadline

All application materials must be completed and submitted in eGrants by **5:00pm** (PST) on **March 4, 2024**. Required additional documents must be submitted to servewa@ofm.wa.gov by the same deadline.

Creating Your Application in eGrants

Planning Grants ONLY

- Create an eGrants account ONLY IF you do not currently have one by going to: <https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp> and selecting “Don’t have an eGrants account? Create an account”
- Start a **New** Grant Application (*Bottom left of the eGrants home page under Creating an Application*)
- Select a Program Area: AmeriCorps
- Select the applicable Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO):
FY 2024 AmeriCorps State and Territory Commission (New and Cont)
- Select State: Washington
- Select the applicable Prime Application Identification number from the drop-down list:
Reimbursable Grant Prime: 24AC263126

Additional Documents Submitted via Email

Files are preferred; however, if a document is too large, a link is acceptable.

- 1) Most recent single audit (entities subject to 2 CFR 200 Subpart F); **OR**
Most recent audited financial statements; **OR**
An explanation as to why neither are available.

Failure to submit additional documents may have a negative impact on the assessment of an application. Do not submit other items as Serve Washington will not review or return them.

Application Fields and Page Limits

In eGrants, applicants will enter the following components of a complete application:

- Standard Form 424 Face Sheet: This is automatically generated when applicants complete the Applicant Info and Application Info sections.
- Narrative Questions 1-7
- Logic Model – N/A for Planning Grants, Follow Instructions
- Performance Measures – N/A for Planning Grants, Follow Instructions
- Program Information
- Documents
- Budget Sections(s)
- Funding/Demographics
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certification (under Authorize and Submit section)

Narrative sections may not exceed 10 pages. Please note the length of a document in word processing software may be different than what will print out in eGrants. Serve Washington will consider the number of pages as they print out through eGrants when determining compliance for page limits. Serve Washington strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the “Review” page prior to submission to check that the application does not exceed the page limit.

Applicant Info and Application Info

Complete to the best of your ability.

Project Start and End Dates are August 1, 2024 – July 31, 2025.

Under State Application Identifier enter N/A.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Categories/Subcategories	Points
Executive Summary	
Rationale and Approach/Program Design	30
• Community Need	10
• AmeriCorps Members as an Effective Tool	10
• AmeriCorps Focus Areas/Serve WA Funding Priorities	10
Organizational Capability	25
• Organizational Background and Staffing	15
• Resource Development	10
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	20
• Data Collection	10
• Budget Alignment to Program Design	10

Narrative: Executive Summary

Please enter N/A.

Narrative: Rationale and Approach/Program Design

1. Need (approximately 1-2 pages, 10 points)

Detail the community need(s) the organization is hoping to address, and the methods used by your organization to successfully engage within the communities being served. Describe what makes your program unique in addressing the specific community needs identified above.

2. AmeriCorps Members as an Effective Tool (approximately 2-3 pages, 10 points)

Describe why your organization believes that AmeriCorps Members could potentially be an effective tool for addressing the community need that is described in section 1. Additionally, please describe a “week in the life” of an AmeriCorps member with your organization. What will members be doing day to day. How would an anticipated schedule look? Please describe all positions proposed.

3. AmeriCorps Focus Areas/Serve Washington Funding Priorities (less than a page, 10 points)

In two paragraphs, detail how the planning grant application or proposed future AmeriCorps program aligns with any AmeriCorps Focus Areas or Serve Washington Funding Priorities as outlined on pages 3-4 of this RFGA.

Narrative: Organizational Capability

4. Organizational Background and Staffing (approximately 1-2 pages, 15 points)

Describe how the organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure necessary to plan and implement the proposed project. Describe your mission and relevant experience in areas such as volunteer recruitment and management? Do you plan to partner with other organizations (e.g. host sites)? If so, how do you plan to support those organizations?

5. Resource Development (approximately 1-2 pages, 10 points)

Describe the organization’s experience in securing outside cash and in-kind contributions. Additionally, describe the resources that could potentially be utilized/secured to assist the organization in supporting a full AmeriCorps program.

Narrative: Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

6. Data Collection (less than one page, 10 points)

Provide a description of budget expenses that will support data collection, continuous improvement activities, and evaluation in service to evaluating the interventions and impact on the community.

7. Budget Alignment to Program Design (less than one page, 10 points)

Highlight how your budget is aligned to your narrative, i.e. activities discussed in the narrative that are incorporated in the budget (agency or applicant share).

Narrative: Evaluation Summary or Plan

Please enter N/A.

Narrative: Amendment Justification

Please enter N/A.

Narrative: Clarification Summary

Please enter N/A.

Narrative: Continuation Changes

Please enter N/A.

Logic Model

Skip this section. No need to enter information. Serve Washington does not use this section in grant-making decisions for planning grant competitions.

Performance Measures

Performance measures are NOT required for planning grants. However, eGrants will require you to complete this section for submission.

Home Page

To start the module, click the “Begin” button on the Home Page. As you proceed through the module, the Home Page will summarize your work and provide links to edit the parts of the module you have completed. You may navigate sections of the module using the tab feature at the top of each page. Once you have started the module, clicking “Continue Working” will return you to the tab you were on when you last closed the module. To edit the interventions, objectives, MSYs, and slot allocations, click “Edit objectives/MSYs/Slots”.

Objectives Tab

An expandable list of AmeriCorps Focus Areas appears on this tab. When you select a Focus Area, a list of objectives from the AmeriCorps strategic plan appears. A list of common interventions appears under each objective.

- In order for you to submit the application, you are required to select a Focus Area, an objective, and an intervention in eGrants. First click on a focus area. Then click on an objective and select an intervention. For all sections, select “other” from the list.

MSYs/Slots Tab

On this tab, you will enter information about the allocation of MSY. Planning Grant applicants must enter “1” when entering the total MSYs for your program. Otherwise, eGrants will continue to give you error messages and prevent submission. Next, enter “1” for the number of objectives selected on the previous tab. In the slots column, enter “1” for number of members that will be assigned to each objective.

Performance Measure Tab

Performance measures are not required for planning grants. However, you must create at least one aligned performance measure for eGrants to allow submission.

- Begin by selecting “other” as an objective.
- Enter “N/A” for the title for your performance measure.
- Enter “N/A” in the text box provided.
- For the intervention section, click “add user intervention” and enter “N/A” for the description of the intervention.
- Select “Add User Outcome” and enter “N/A” in the text box.
- Enter “1” for the number of MSYs and slots section.
- Click “next” to proceed to the data collection tab.

Data Collection Tab

- Expand each output and outcome and enter “N/A” in each text box.
- Enter “1” for your output or outcome.
- After entering “N/A” for the outputs and outcomes section, click “Mark Complete.” You will return to the Performance Measure tab.

Summary Tab

The summary tab shows all of the information you have entered in the module.

- Click “Validate Performance Measures” to validate this module prior to submitting your application.

Program Information

Complete to the best of your ability.

EGrants has a few default questions that must be completed for submission; under Priority mark “no NOFO priority area” and under Grant Characteristics mark “none.” If other default questions arise, complete to the best of your ability. Serve Washington does not use this section in grant-making decisions for planning grant competitions.

Documents

Mark any drop-down boxes as not applicable. Serve Washington does not use this section in grant-making decisions for planning grant competitions.

Budget

Refer to the attachments on the Serve Washington [website](#) and look for the one titled Budget Worksheet for Planning Grants. This will provide you general instructions, required costs, and an example worksheet for use outside of eGrants. Actual budget projections will be entered directly into eGrants.

Funding Demographics

Enter "0" in each section. Serve Washington does not use this section in grant-making decisions for planning grant competitions.

Review

This section allows you to print for review, prior to submission. We highly encourage applicants do this to check page limits and review overall application.

Authorize/Submit

Complete authorization, assurances and certifications before submission.

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Grant Review Committee

Applications will be reviewed by a subcommittee selected by Serve Washington during March 6 – March 29, 2024. This subcommittee, known as the Grant Review Committee (GRC), is comprised of community members and Serve Washington Commissioners who have volunteered to be part of the process. The GRC members are required to each sign forms certifying (1) that they have no real or perceived conflicts of interest, and (2) that they will not disclose any confidential information about the programs until after the grant review process is completed. The GRC will meet April 4, 2024, to develop recommendations to present for consideration to the full Serve Washington Commission on April 10, 2024.

Assessment Criteria

The GRC will assess each of the applications based solely on how well the applicant answers the questions and follows the directions included in the RFGA.

Applicants must be available by phone on April 4, 2024, to remotely answer any questions the GRC may have. Further details will be relayed, and contact information will be collected from applicants sometime during the GRC application review period. Serve Washington does not expect all applicants will receive an inquiry via phone. Receipt of (or no receipt of) a phone inquiry does not indicate award status. It is, therefore, highly incumbent upon applicants to submit quality applications that conform to the requirements set forth in the RFGA to be competitive.

Serve Washington Staff Review and Clarification/Revision Period

Serve Washington staff will conduct an immediate technical review at the application deadline. The technical review will include timeliness, eligibility, submission of additional required documents, application page limits, volunteer generation, and budget sections (including cost per MSY and match requirements). If substantial and substantive errors are found the

application may be declined for further review. If declined, organizations will be offered consultation on the successes and challenges of the application.

For applications that make it past the technical review, Serve Washington staff will be simultaneously reviewing applications with the GRC. After the GRC recommendations are made, staff will begin working with some applicants on clarification and revision items. After the Commission has voted on the GRC's recommendation, Serve Washington staff will notify applicants. Once applicants are notified in mid-April, staff will continue working closely with selected applicants to finalize their applications. If declined, organizations will be offered consultation on the successes and challenges of the application.

QUESTIONS

Please submit questions about this funding opportunity to serveva@ofm.wa.gov. Serve Washington is committed to a fair and open competition for this funding opportunity, and, as such, staff will not be able to answer questions about the funding opportunity unless the questions are asked through the serveva@ofm.wa.gov email address or through the technical assistance call.

We will attempt to answer all questions in a timely manner; however, we cannot guarantee effective or efficient responses near the deadline. Please ask all questions no later than one week before the deadline, or February 26, 2024.

If you require accommodation for this RFGA process, such as language translation or cultural translation technical assistance, please email your specific request to serveva@ofm.wa.gov.

FAQS

Frequently asked questions are listed below:

How do I pronounce AmeriCorps?

The “p” and the “s” in AmeriCorps is silent. AmeriCorps is pronounced *Ameri-Core*. Think of apple core or core of the earth.

Does this opportunity include AmeriCorps Members?

No. AmeriCorps Members are NOT included in this opportunity. This opportunity is solely to explore designing an AmeriCorps program that may lead to the receipt of AmeriCorps Members in your community. AmeriCorps Members are only included in operational grant opportunities.

Are planning grantees guaranteed operational awards and AmeriCorps Members in the future?

No. There is no guarantee the planning grant will result in an operational award or AmeriCorps members. There is also no requirement that planning grants apply for operational awards. The exploration of a planning grant may result in various outcomes and next steps. Planning grantees will be coached on pathways and opportunities that may be a good fit their desired outcome.

How does Serve Washington handle late applications?

All applications received after the deadline published in this RFGA are presumed to be non-compliant and will not be reviewed or eligible for selection of award. To overcome this presumption, the applicant must:

- Submit a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that cause the delay, including:
 - The timing and specific cause(s) of the delay
 - The ticket number if a request for eGrants assistance was submitted to the AmeriCorps Hotline and any associated information regarding technical issues
 - Any other documentation that supports the justification
- Ensure that Serve Washington receives the written explanation described above via serveva@ofm.wa.gov no later than 24 hours after the application deadline

Serve Washington will determine whether to accept a late application on a case-by-case basis.

Serve Washington will not consider an advance request to submit a late application. Applicants are highly encouraged to review the RFGA carefully and submit applications as soon as possible to prevent late submissions.