



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**SERVE WASHINGTON**

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**AmeriCorps**  
**Washington**

## **Request for Grant Applications**

AmeriCorps State Competitive Grant  
Federal Fiscal Year 2024

State Solicitation Number: 23-1100

**Release Date:**  
**Application Due Date:**

**September 11, 2023**  
**October 6, 2023**

## OVERVIEW

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

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

### Serve Washington

Serve Washington 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. 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 42 U.S.C. § 12638 and outlined in 45 CFR 2550.50 National and Community Service Trust Act of 1990 as amended by the Serve America Act.

### AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. AmeriCorps brings people together to tackle some of the country's most pressing challenges through national service and volunteerism. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities and those serving. AmeriCorps helps make service a cornerstone of our national culture.

### Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding

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.

## FUNDING PRIORITIES

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Serve Washington seeks to develop a diverse grant portfolio of programs that meet AmeriCorps and/or Serve Washington priority areas:

### Serve Washington Funding Priorities

- 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 strive to recruit and select national service members with high school credentials and/or informal education;
- Models that utilize service as a strategy to develop career pathways and/or lead to industry recognized credentials, address the housing crisis, support child wellness, and tackle climate change;
- Models that show a commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access;
- Programs that provide additional benefits to members such as Member Assistance (mental health), housing assistance, transportation, childcare, etc.;
- Models that engage older adults, tribes, rural, and other underrepresented communities.

### AmeriCorps Funding Priorities (see NOFO materials for additional information)

- Organizations leading service in communities with concentrated poverty, rural communities, tribal communities, and those organizations serving historically underrepresented and underserved individuals, including but not limited to communities of color, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, people who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, people with arrest and/or conviction records, and religious minorities;
- Evidence-based interventions on the [AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange](#) that are assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence. Please note that many of these interventions have demonstrated effectiveness in improving outcomes for individuals living in underserved communities and that the agency has committed resources to supporting grantees seeking to replicate and evaluate these interventions in similar communities;
- Veterans and Military Families, Caregivers, and Survivors – a program model that improves the quality of life of veterans and improves the well-being of military and veteran families, caregivers, and survivors;
- Faith-based organizations;
- Programs that provide additional benefits to AmeriCorps members aimed at enhancing member experience and bolstering member recruitment and retention such as paying more than the minimum living allowance, transportation, housing, food, etc.;
- Programs that create workforce pathways for AmeriCorps members, including deliberate training, certifications, and hiring preferences or support;
- Environmental Stewardship, including 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;
- Community-based programs that enhance and expand services to second chance youth and/or engage those youth as AmeriCorps members;

## **FUNDING PRIORITIES**

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- Programs that support civic bridgebuilding programs and projects to reduce polarization and community divisions; and providing training in civic bridgebuilding skills and techniques to AmeriCorps members;
- Programs focused on implementing or expanding access to high-quality early learning and those that prepare AmeriCorps members to enter early learning careers.

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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### General Information

Applicants are required to complete applications for funding in accordance with the 2024 AmeriCorps State Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and the Application Instructions. These and other resources are located at the Serve Washington [website](#).

*Note: The dates referenced in the NOFO materials are for State Commissions. At no time during the state competition should single-state applicants contact the federal agency.*

### Application Deadline and Additional Documents

All application materials must be completed and submitted in eGrants by 5:00 p.m. (PT) on **October 6, 2023**. Additionally, all required additional documents must be submitted to [servewa@ofm.wa.gov](mailto:servewa@ofm.wa.gov) by the same deadline.

*Note: DO NOT send additional documents directly to the AmeriCorps inbox referenced in the NOFO; the inbox in the NOFO is for State Commission use only.*

### Creating Your Application

#### New and Recompeting (Renewal) Applicants

- 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 or Renewal** Grant Application. (*Bottom left of eGrants home page.*)
- Select a Program Area: AmeriCorps.
- Select the applicable Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO):
  - FY 2024 AmeriCorps State and Territory Commission
  - FY 2024 AmeriCorps State and Territory Commission Fixed and EAP
  - FY 2024 Public Health AmeriCorps Commission
- Select State: Washington.
- Select the applicable Prime Application Identification number from the drop-down list:
  - Reimbursable Grant Prime: 24AC259564
  - Fixed Amount Grant Prime: 24ES259566
  - PHA Grant Prime: 24AC259565

#### Continuation Applicants

- Start a **Continuation** Grant Application (*bottom left of the eGrants home page*). You will be shown a list of grants that are eligible to be continued. Select the grant you wish to continue. **Make sure you select the correct one. Do not start a new application.**
- Edit your continuation application as directed on page 13 of the *AmeriCorps Application Instructions*.

The following components will be entered directly into the AmeriCorps web-based grants management system: eGrants.

### **New and Recompeting Applicants**

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet. This is automatically generated when applicants' complete elements in the system, such as Applicant Info and Application Info.
- Narrative Section:
  - Executive Summary
  - Program Design
    - Community and Logic Model
    - Evidence Tier
    - Evidence Quality
    - Notice Priority
    - Member Experience
  - Organizational Capability
    - Organizational Background and Staffing
    - Member Supervision
    - Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
  - Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
    - Member Recruitment
    - Member Retention
    - Data Collection
    - Budget Alignment to Program Design
  - Evaluation Summary/Plan
- Logic Model
- Performance Measures
- Program Information
- Budget
- Funding/Demographics
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certification

### **Continuation Applicants**

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet. This is automatically generated when applicants' complete elements in the system, such as Applicant Info and Application Info.
- Narrative:
  - **Continuation Changes Field ONLY** (do not edit original grant narratives)
- Performance Measures (only if edits are needed)
- Program Information (review for changes)
- Budget
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certification

### **Additional Documents Submitted via Email**

The following additional documents, as applicable, will be sent via email to Serve Washington.

### **New and Recompeting Applicants**

- [Operational and Financial Management Survey](#) (submit online only)
- Audited financial statements; most recent single audit, or audited financials if not subject to federal single audit requirement (PDF is preferred, however, if the document is too large, a link is acceptable)
- Up to two evaluation briefs, reports, and/or studies that support preliminary, moderate, or strong evidence tiers, if applicable (see AmeriCorps supplemental information for further

- description of evidence tiers)
- Program evaluation plan template (**recompetes only**)
- Program evaluation report, if applicable (**recompetes only**)
- Labor union concurrence, if applicable
- Federally Recognized Tribal eligibility documentation, if applicable

### Continuation Applicants

- Audited financial statements; most recent single audit, or audited financials if not subject to federal single audit requirement (PDF is preferred, however, if the document is too large, a link is acceptable)

Submit additional documents as described on pages 5-6 with the following subject line: **legal applicant name – application ID number**. Emails should include:

- **Point of contact**
- **List of attachments**
- **Clearly labeled attachments**

### Requirement for Minimum Number of Member Service Years

A Member Service Year (MSY) is equivalent to one 1700-hour full-time AmeriCorps position. The purpose of this RFGA is to solicit grant applications from programs that will be most likely to succeed in the national competition for federal funding from AmeriCorps. As such, **to be considered for competitive funding, Serve Washington requires that grant applications request a minimum of 20 MSYs** (through any combination of full-time and/or less than full-time positions).

If your organization is interested in hosting less than 20 MSYs, for example an independent placement AmeriCorps member or a small AmeriCorps team, this is not the appropriate application process. We recommend that you contact an AmeriCorps program in your area or a statewide intermediary to determine if a partnership may be feasible. Refer to the [AmeriCorps Program Directory](#) for a listing of programs in your county. If your organization is looking for AmeriCorps VISTA opportunities, please refer to the [AmeriCorps VISTA](#) website.

A waiver to the minimum 20 MSY may be requested; **waivers are granted at the discretion of the Serve Washington team**. The waiver is located on the Serve Washington [website](#). Submit as an additional document with your grant application.

Applications that don't meet the 20 MSY and have not submitted a waiver request at the application deadline may not be eligible for review or consideration of funding.

## IMPORTANT DATES

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Serve WA Request for Grant Applications Released	September 11, 2023
Serve WA Technical Assistance Call for Applicants	September 20, 2023
<b>Completed Applications Due from Applicants</b>	<b>October 6, 2023, 5:00pm</b>
Serve WA Staff Review for Compliance	October 9-10, 2023
Serve WA Grant Review Committee Application Review	October 11 - November 2, 2023
Serve WA Grant Review Committee Meeting <b>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.</b>	November 3, 2023
Serve WA Clarification/Revision Period for Some Applicants	Beginning On/Around November 7, 2023
Serve WA Commissioners Vote on Grant Review Committee Recommendation	December 7, 2023
Serve WA Notification to Applicants Regarding Vote	Week of December 11, 2023
Serve WA Clarification/Revision Period Continues for Selected Applicants	Notification – December 15, 2023
<b>Serve WA Submits Applications to AmeriCorps (by)</b>	<b>January 4, 2024, 2:00pm</b>
AmeriCorps Notifies Successful Applicants	mid-April 2024: ASN July 2024: PHA
AmeriCorps Clarification/Revision Period	TBD (after notification, before award)
AmeriCorps Issues Awards	mid-July 2024: ASN September 2024: PHA

### Technical Assistance Virtual Meeting

Applicants are highly encouraged to participate in an online technical assistance call via Zoom on **Wednesday, September 20** to review application instructions and as an opportunity for applicants to ask questions about the process.

#### NEW/RECOMPETE 11:00am – 1:00pm

[Join Online Here](#)

Join Audio Only: 1-253-205-0468

Meeting Number: 628 873 5862

Passcode: 652472

#### CONTINUATIONS/PHA 2:00pm - 3:00pm

[Join Online Here](#)

Join Audio Only: 1-253-205-0468

Meeting Number: 628 873 5862

Passcode: 652472



## APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

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### Grant Review Committee

Applications will be reviewed by a committee of internal and external Serve Washington stakeholders during October 11 through November 2, 2023. The Grant Review Committee (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 November 3, 2023, to develop recommendations to present to the full Serve Washington Commission on December 7, 2023.

### 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 NOFO and Application Instructions.

**Applicants must be available by phone on November 3, 2023, to remotely answer any questions the GRC may have.** Further details will be relayed and contact information collected from applicants 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 NOFO and Application Instructions in order to be competitive.

### Serve Washington Staff Review and Clarification/Revision Periods

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, and budget sections (including maximum award amount 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 early-December, 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.

### Planning Grant Opportunity

If applicants are not awarded operational grants (the primary grant opportunity in this RFGA) **and** funding is available, Serve Washington reserves the right to offer prospective applicants a planning grant. Planning grants are used to develop national service models. No members are awarded. Planning grants are awarded for a single year, and usually only cover minimal personal costs/consultation costs, training, and travel. Full details will be communicated upon offer. If you wish to wait and apply directly for a planning grant, that opportunity occurs in the Spring.

## QUESTIONS

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Please submit questions about this funding opportunity to [serveva@ofm.wa.gov](mailto: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](mailto: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 September 29, 2023.

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](mailto:serveva@ofm.wa.gov).

## FAQS

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### **Frequently asked questions are listed below:**

*Note: Additional FAQs specific to the Public Health AmeriCorps (PHA) funding opportunity can be found on the Serve Washington [website](#) under the PHA funding opportunity.*

### **What is the difference between the Competitive grant opportunity and the Formula grant opportunity?**

The fall “Competitive” process is the current process for this Request for Grant Applications. It is the process by which single-state applicants in Washington apply for AmeriCorps funding through the Serve Washington Commission. Serve Washington reviews these applications and identifies which projects should move forward to the national competition. At that point, AmeriCorps the Federal Agency evaluates the applications and determines which will be funded. This competition is a good fit for large programs (20+ MSYs), programs that meet the state and/or national priorities, programs that propose to operate in one single focus area, and/or programs with moderate to strong evidence.

In contrast, the spring “Formula” process is the local state competition. The applications in the Formula competition only compete against applicants in our state (they are not forwarded on to compete against other programs across the nation) and funding decisions are made by Serve Washington. The Formula process, however, has a much smaller allocation of money to draw from. The Formula competition is a good fit for smaller programs (10-30 MSYs), programs that meet local priorities, programs that propose to operate in single or multiple focus areas, and/or programs that are building their evidence-base.

To sign up for information about the Formula process, you can [register](#) on the Grant Information page of Serve Washington’s website to receive e-mail notification of future grant opportunities.

### **What is the project award period?**

The project award period is one full year, generally the 1st of the month through the last day of the 12th month. Applicants determine their project period based on the following example.

- 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.

### **How does an AmeriCorps member's term of service connect to the project award period?**

Within the project year, the start and end dates for members may vary. It may be appropriate to have a buffer before and after members' terms of service. Applicants determine their member term(s) of service. Below is just one example.

- Project Period Example: August 1, 2024 – July 31, 2025
- Full-Time Member Service Year Example: August 15, 2024 – June 30, 2025
- Part-Time Member Service Year Example: January 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025

### **Our organization tracks more outputs and outcomes than are listed in application performance measures, how should we address this?**

This is a program design question that must be addressed at the program level. However, it is noteworthy that the logic model represents the organization's total theory of change. Not all items listed in the logic model require an associated performance measure. Programs are only required to track one output and one aligned outcome to meet performance measure requirements. Additional data tracked at the organizational level will be valuable for narrative reports, great stories, and stakeholder engagement.

### **How do I know if I apply to the cost-reimbursement prime application or the fixed-amount prime application?**

All NEW Serve Washington applicants must apply for a cost-reimbursement application. (Unless you have Serve Washington permission as a long-time fixed awardee under a different AmeriCorps funding stream or your program is a New Education Award Only Program (EAP) – EAP programs apply for the fixed-amount application.)

Recompeting applicants previously awarded under the fixed-amount model or recompeting applicants who have discussed switching to the fixed-amount model with Serve Washington may apply for the fixed-amount application.

Continuation applicants must remain in the prime associated with their current financial model.