Request for Applications

AmeriCorps Member Placement
through Washington Service Corps Programs

Program Year 2021 - 2022

Release Date: **February 15, 2021**

This guidance document accompanies our 2021-22 Request for Applications form, and contains the following information:

INTRODUCTION

Purpose
The Washington Service Corps and Washington Reading Corps programs are seeking organizations interested in recruiting, placing, and utilizing AmeriCorps members to impact a variety of needs in communities across Washington State. We are interested in partnering with organizations that will support and develop AmeriCorps members and projects with an ethic of civic mindedness.

Successful applicant organizations will demonstrate how they will implement the use of AmeriCorps members in an evidence-informed approach, providing a service intervention that will result in intended solutions to identified community problems.

Application Review
Applications will be reviewed and scored by a panel of WSC staff. A rating scale will be used. Responses to questions will be rated on completeness, relevancy, and specificity.

Some applicants may receive a request to provide clarifying information and/or make changes to their application. This information is used by WSC staff in making award considerations. Applications may be recommended for an award even if they are not asked clarification questions. A request for clarification does not guarantee an award. Failure to respond to requests for clarification adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of an application from consideration.

Grant Period and Incremental Funding
The period of performance of any contract resulting from the Request for Application (RFA) is scheduled to begin September 1, 2021, and will be in effect through August 31, 2022 with possible amendments extending the contract period into calendar year(s) 2022 and 2023. Projects selected through this RFA process may be eligible to continue their project for the duration of our three-year AmeriCorps grant cycles ending August 31, 2023 (Washington Reading Corps) and August 31, 2024 (Washington Service Corps), providing that projects meet continuing contractual requirements and expectations.

Funding and Performance Measurement Contingency
In the event funding for Washington Service Corps is reduced or eliminated, or if federal program requirements change, WSC may terminate or modify this Request for Application without advance written notice and will be subject to renegotiation under the new AmeriCorps funding level, requirements, terms and conditions or clarification/negotiation.

Technical Assistance
Prior to starting your application, we strongly encourage you to review our Q&A video.

Questions regarding our programs or the application form must be sent to wscmail@esd.wa.gov.

INTRODUCTION

What is AmeriCorps?
AmeriCorps is a federally-funded national service program whose mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. AmeriCorps provides opportunities for more than 75,000 Americans each year to provide direct service to their communities and country.

AmeriCorps members typically serve a term of 10-12 months.

In exchange for their service, AmeriCorps members receive (*visit our website for more details*):
- a monthly living allowance;
- training and professional development;
- subsidized childcare assistance;
- health insurance;
- student loan forbearance;
- a Segal Education Award.

AmeriCorps members may be recent high-school graduates, college graduates, exploring a career path, or changing their career. They come with all levels of professional experience, and sometimes no professional experience at all.

By hosting an AmeriCorps member, the Sponsoring Organization should be prepared to cultivate the professional pathway of their member and develop civically-minded leaders.

A member's position is to enhance or expand their Sponsoring Organization's service to its clients or participants through the project in which the member serves; not to maintain existing programs or replace (supplant) staff.

What is the Washington Service Corps?
Created in 1983 and administered by the Washington State Employment Security Department, Washington Service Corps (WSC) is a national service intermediary that runs multiple grant-funded AmeriCorps programs. Our mission is to build and expand a statewide ethic of service by engaging individuals of all backgrounds to contribute their time, energy, and talents to improve communities across Washington State. WSC currently provides service opportunities for approximately 600 AmeriCorps members to support communities as they address their most pressing needs.

Our programs:

Washington Service Corps
WSC places AmeriCorps members to address unmet local needs in the areas of disaster preparedness, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, and healthy futures.

Washington Reading Corps
Supported by both federal and state funding through AmeriCorps and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), WRC was established in 1998 to address Washington State's literacy needs, placing AmeriCorps members to serve as Early Learning and K-4 literacy tutors in schools, early learning centers and nonprofits. More details about the program are included on pages 5 and 12.

INTRODUCTION

Are you prepared to host an AmeriCorps member?

Roles and responsibilities
Our Member Placement Contract outlines the responsibilities that the Sponsoring Organization will have to its AmeriCorps members and the Washington Service Corps.

We strongly urge you to review the sample contract (hyperlinked at the beginning of the application form), particularly *Exhibit A – Statement of Work*, to understand what will be required.

A few of these key expectations:

The Sponsoring Organization and/or its sub-service sites will be responsible for **recruiting and interviewing** AmeriCorps applicants.

The Sponsoring Organization and any sub-service sites must have a plan in place to actively recruit for their member position(s), and **be committed to filling all awarded positions** by the last member start date offered.

The Sponsoring Organization must identify a staff member that will provide **primary, daily oversight and support of the AmeriCorps member**, as well as an additional staff member that can immediately step in, in the absence of the primary staff.

The primary site staff will also be responsible for **tracking and reporting all data** relative to performance measures for the project and service hours of the member.

The Sponsoring Organization must build in an element of **professional development** for their AmeriCorps members, related to their service position. This is in addition to an orientation provided by the member's service site and training provided by WSC.

The Sponsoring Organization must ensure that its member(s) and the staff providing oversight to the member(s) **complete all required training** provided by WSC.

Sub-service site oversight will be the responsibility of the Sponsoring Organization. Should awarded organizations plan to place members at service site locations outside the control of their organization, the same standards, expectations, member recruitment and management, and contractual responsibilities will be maintained and upheld by the Sponsoring Organization, including completion of required documents for enrollment, training, reporting, and oversight of the assigned site staff who will work directly with the members.

Applicants can evaluate their readiness to host members by completing the WSC Readiness Assessment and/or the CNCS Organizational Assessment Tool.

INTRODUCTION

What AmeriCorps members CAN do

In general, members serving through one of our programs directly interact with the beneficiaries of the project they serve in. Examples include (*but are not limited to*):

- tutoring students in literacy or math
- promoting better eating habits to kids in schools
- engaging the public in environmental conservation
- teaching English to immigrants
- restoring salmon habitat
- providing job readiness training

Service activities can also include capacity building of the *project*, such as resource development, volunteer management structure, and facilitation of community service project opportunities.

What AmeriCorps members CANNOT do

Per federal regulations, a member's position cannot displace an employee or a paid staff position within your organization or the member's service site.

Members can do minimal administrative tasks specific to the project they serve in (e.g. help with project progress reporting), but they cannot do administrative tasks for the organization at large.

In addition, federal regulations prohibit the following activities by members <u>and project staff</u> while charging time to the AmeriCorps project, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps project:

1. Attempting to influence legislation;
2. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts or strikes;
3. Assisting, promoting or deterring union organizing;
4. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
5. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
6. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
7. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytizing;
8. Providing a direct benefit to –
a. A business organized for profit;
b. A labor union;
c. A partisan political organization;
d. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
e. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in number (7) of the prohibited activities, unless CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
9. Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
10. Organizing a letter-writing campaign to Congress;
11. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services;
12. Participating in activities that pose a significant safety risk to participants;
13. Preparing any part of a grant proposal or performing other fundraising functions to help the [organization] achieve its match requirements, or to pay the [organization's] general operating expenses;
14. Fundraising, unless under the following circumstances: if it provides direct support to a specific service activity; falls within the project's approved objectives; is not the primary activity of the project; and does not exceed 10% of the total hours served in their term;
15. Engaging in census activities. Being a census taker during service hours is categorically prohibited, along with other census-related activities (e.g. promotion of the Census, education about the importance of the Census);
16. Providing services for election or polling locations or in support of such activities;
17. Such other activities as CNCS may prohibit.

WASHINGTON READING CORPS: READING POWER

WRC's goal is to improve academic performance and school readiness for low-income and English Learner children in preschool through fourth grade.

WRC members provide tutoring to K-4th graders; integrated classroom literacy activities for preschool children; and additional literacy and reading supports as needed by their service site.

Reading Power toolkit
Reading Power is a set of *non-curriculum-specific* pre/post assessments, lesson plans and guides designed in collaboration with the state's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide *foundational skills*.

Reading Power allows WRC to effectively measure the program's intervention and impact, which is necessary as an AmeriCorps grantee.

At least one-third (1/3) of the member's tutoring activities must utilize the Reading Power toolkit at their service site, during one-on-one 15-minute sessions with their students, at least three times per week for 6-12 weeks. Members are required to monitor each student's progress and report the data through WRC's Web-based reporting system.

As a WRC service site, the Sponsoring Organization will be required to incorporate Reading Power into their member's position, and support the use of the toolkit.

Click on the links below to learn more about Reading Power:

- [Reading Power introduction](#) (MP4, 6 minutes)
- [Sample lessons for Grade 2](#)
- [Sample assessment for Grade 2](#)
- [Sample progress monitoring form for tutors](#)

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Member service terms
WSC: 10.5-month term, minimum of 1,700 hours served

WRC: 10.5-month term, minimum of 1,700 hours served, OR
       10.5-month term, minimum of 900 hours served (20 hours per week), OR
       8.5-month term, minimum of 1,200 hours served

Term Start/End (subject to change at WSC's sole discretion)	Minimum Service Hours	WSC	WRC
9/1/2021 – 7/15/2022	1,700	☑	☑
9/1/2021 – 5/15/2022	1,200		☑
9/1/2021 – 7/15/2022	900		☑
9/16/2021 – 7/31/2022	1,700	☑	☑
9/16/2021 – 5/30/2022	1,200		☑
9/16/2021 – 7/31/2022	900		☑
10/1/2021 – 8/15/2022	1,700	☑	☑
10/1/2021 – 6/15/2022	1,200		☑
10/1/2021 – 8/15/2022	900		☑
10/16/2021 – 8/31/2022	1,700	☑	☑
10/16/2021 – 6/30/2022	1,200		☑
10/16/2021 – 8/31/2022	900		☑

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Project Size
The WSC program offers three levels of projects, based on the number of members enrolled. The Program Participation Fee per member will be based on the total number of members enrolled in the Sponsoring Organization's project by the last start date available.
- Individual Placement: 1-8 members
- Medium Team: 9-14 members
- Large Team: 15 or more members

Member living allowance (stipend)
For the 2021-22 program year, there are three tiers of monthly living allowance available, with corresponding Program Participation Fee:
- Tier 1 - $1,450.00 per month
- Tier 2 - $1,945.24 per month
- Tier 3 - $2,876.19 per month

*** All members serving in the same project must receive the same living allowance amount.

Program participation fee
- Refer to Section 10, *Fees*, of the WSC Member Placement Contract (hyperlinked in the first page of the online application form) for details regarding payment of Fee, refills and refunds.

- The Fee may increase incrementally for each subsequent year of the program's grant cycle.

- Each of our programs is offering the ability for the Applicant Organization to elect to increase their member's monthly living allowance (stipend) by paying a higher Program Participation Fee.

Project Size	Fee per Member		
	WSC 1700	WRC 1700, 1200	WRC 900
Individual Placement – Tier 1 Stipend	$10,000	$5,000	$3,500
Individual Placement – Tier 2 Stipend	$15,200	$10,200	$6,500
Individual Placement – Tier 3 Stipend	$24,975	$19,975	$12,100
Individual Placement – Rural* Tier 1 Stipend	$9,000		
Individual Placement – Rural Tier 2 Stipend	$14,200		
Individual Placement – Rural Tier 3 Stipend	$23,975		
Medium Team – Tier 1 Stipend	$7,700		
Medium Team – Tier 2 Stipend	$12,900		
Medium Team – Tier 3 Stipend	$22,675		
Medium Team – Rural* Tier 1 Stipend	$6,700		
Medium Team – Rural Tier 2 Stipend	$11,900		
Medium Team – Rural Tier 3 Stipend	$21,675		
Large Team – Tier 1 Stipend	$6,200		
Large Team – Tier 2 Stipend	$11,400		
Large Team – Tier 3 Stipend	$21,175		
Large Team – Rural* Tier 1 Stipend	$5,200		
Large Team – Rural Tier 2 Stipend	$10,400		
Large Team – Rural Tier 3 Stipend	$20,175		

* See Definitions section below.

ELIGIBILITY and PRIORITY OF SELECTION

Applicant eligibility
The following organizations are eligible to apply:
- State, local, and tribal government organizations;

- Nonprofit, private organizations; not limited to those with IRS 501(c)(3) status, but rather all organizations with IRS 501(c) status, including faith-based organizations;

- Schools: school districts, educational service districts, colleges, universities, alternative schools and others;

- Federal entities may apply as long as the funding being used to pay the program participation fee is allowed by the federal funding source (written confirmation must be available).

Organizations that focus solely on advocacy, lobbying or religious proselytizing are NOT eligible.

Priority of selection
For the **Washington Service Corps** program, priority of selection of applications will be:
- Projects where one or more of the following WSC performance measures are selected:
  - Economic Opportunity
    - Job Readiness

  - Education
    - Academic Engagement

  - Healthy Futures
    - Food Distribution
    - Food Security
    - Health Education
    - Opioid Abuse Prevention

  - Environmental Stewardship
    - Environmental Education
    - At-Risk Ecosystems

* See Definitions section below.

For the **Washington Reading Corps**, priority of selection will go to proposed projects in EL-K4 school districts and early learning / community centers that can show high need as indicated by:

1. At least 50% eligibility for free and reduced lunch population in the district, and/or

2. High percentage of low-income students, and/or

3. High percentage of English Language Learner (ELL) student population, and/or

4. High percentage of K-4 students not reading at grade level.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

This Request for Applications is hosted through Zoho's online survey platform. **Zoho will automatically save your responses so you may return to your application later using the same device.** Applications must be submitted through Zoho.

Applications must be submitted per the [application timeline](#).

If you would like to apply for more than one project, you must submit a separate application for each project.

Please review the sample Member Placement Contract and Member Service Agreement before submitting your application! They outline your organization's responsibilities to WSC and to your member, if awarded. **These documents are hyperlinked at the beginning of the application form**.

- **Sample (2020-21) Member Placement Contract -** *no revisions to this document will be allowed, unless at WSC's sole discretion*. Organizations cannot submit their own standard contract, purchase order, terms and conditions, etc. in response to an award or as a contingency to process payment of the Program Participation Fee.

- **Sample (2020-21) Member Service Agreement**

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

As part of your application for each project, you will need to submit the following documents (hyperlinked within the application form) by uploading them into the application form:

- Wage Theft Prevention Certification
- A position description form for each unique member position
- A recruitment worksheet for each unique member position
- Performance plan

DEFINITIONS

Distressed or Under-Resourced: Counties where the three-year unemployment rate is at least 20 percent higher than the statewide average. See Chapter 43.168 of the Revised Code of Washington.

Member Service Site: The location (organization) at which an AmeriCorps member is placed to provide their service to the community.

Rural: In determining whether a program is rural, WSC will consider "rural" as a county with a population density less than 100 persons per square mile or counties smaller than two hundred twenty-five square miles as of April 1, 2017. **ALL members within the project must serve in one or more of the following counties: Adams, Benton, Asotin, Chelan, Clallam, Columbia, Cowlitz, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lewis, Lincoln, Mason, Okanogan, Pacific, Pend Oreille, San Juan, Skagit, Skamania, Stevens, Wahkiakum, Walla Walla, Whitman, Yakima.**

Sponsoring Organization: Once awarded, an organization that manages their AmeriCorps project. AmeriCorps members may be placed at the Sponsoring Organization, or at multiple member sub-service sites.

FOCUS AREAS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

All awarded projects are required to track and report on at least one aligned performance measure related to the chosen focus area or program.

Note: The performance measures listed in this document may be revised based on the potential release of future guidance from AmeriCorps, pre-award clarification of program grant applications, or grant awards. Data collection approaches and reporting could be re-negotiated during the grant period.

Focus areas and WSC performance measures are listed below (*see page 12 for Washington Reading Corps):*

Focus Area - Disaster Services refers to unmet needs relating to assisting communities to prepare, respond, and mitigate impacts of disasters and to increase community resiliency to emergencies.

Performance measure:
- Disaster Preparedness

Focus Area- Economic Opportunity refers to unmet needs relating to economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals including job readiness and housing services.

Performance measures:
- Job Placement Services
- Job Readiness
- Housing Services
- Financial Literacy
- Adult Basic Education

Focus Area - Education refers to unmet educational needs, especially those that help disadvantaged children and youth to achieve success in school, prevent them from dropping out, and break cycles of poverty.

Performance measures:
- Academic Engagement (Student Attendance)
- Academic Engagement (Student Attitudes)
- Academic Improvement
- AVID

Focus Area - Environmental Stewardship refers to unmet environmental needs within communities, such as habitat/riparian restoration and public education.

Performance measures:
- Environmental Education
- At-Risk Ecosystems

Focus Area - Healthy Futures refers to unmet health needs within low-income communities including access to health care, disease prevention and food security.

Performance measures:
- Access to Care
- Food Distribution
- Food Security
- Health Education (includes nutrition education and opioid abuse prevention)
- Services to Live Independently

NOTE: If you're considering a project that doesn't align with any of the WSC performance measures above, please contact us to request a consultation prior to submitting an application.

FOCUS AREAS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Multi-Focus: an organization may place members in interventions that cross multiple focus areas. Multi-focus organizations may also place members at multiple member service locations. Applicants seeking consideration as a multi-focus organization must ensure that the activities provided by the organization collectively address a compelling community need or set of needs; has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program; has sufficient financial and management capacity to hold all member service site locations accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified; can ensure that all AmeriCorps members receive sufficient guidance and support from service site staff; and can adequately train/prepare service site staff to follow AmeriCorps and WSC program regulations, priorities, and expectations.

Applicant-Determined - Performance Plan Guidance (WSC only)
Applicant-Determined performance measures are intended for programs whose interventions, outputs and outcomes do not fit under existing WSC performance measures. Programs may create performance measures to track changes in beneficiary (knowledge, attitude, behavior, or conditions). If selecting an Applicant-Determined performance measure, please ensure outputs and outcomes are aligned correctly (unit of measure is the same for both outputs & outcomes), outputs and outcomes clearly identify what is counted, outcomes clearly identify a change in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition, the unit of measure is a number, not a percentage, and can be measured in a single grant year.

- Applicant-Determined performance measurement instructions

<u>**SAMPLE for Applicant Determined Performance Plan:**</u>

WSC Performance Plan – Applicant Determined	
Sponsoring Organization:	
Focus Area: Economic Opportunity	
Performance Measure Title:	**Target:**
Output Description:	
Outcome Description:	

- **Performance Measure Title.** Enter a short, descriptive title for your performance measure. Different aligned performance measures should have different titles so that they can be easily referenced.

- **Description of Output.** Enter your own output title. Make sure it is clear what the output is counting. The unit of measure must be a number, not a percent.

- **Output Target.** Enter the number of beneficiaries you intend to serve, described in the output title. Targets must be numbers, not percentages. Make sure the output is **UNDUPLICATED**.

- **Description of Aligned Outcome.** Clearly state a measurable change in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition for your beneficiaries.

- **Outcome Target Number.** Identify your numerical Outcome. Include only outcomes that can be measured in a single year. Outcome targets are generally smaller than output targets, with some exceptions. **Note:** In some cases, it may be appropriate for the outcome target to be equal to the output target. The unit of measure is a number, not a percentage.

Washington Reading Corps

The focus area and performance measures for WRC are pre-defined as follows:

Focus Area - Education refers to unmet educational needs within communities, especially those that help disadvantaged children and youth to achieve success in school, prevent them from dropping out, and to break cycles of poverty.

Performance measures:

- K-4 Academic Improvement
  - Number of students tutored
  - Number of students with improved academic performance
- Pre-K (Early Learning) School Readiness
  - Number of individuals served
  - Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness

ESTIMATED TIMELINE

RFA Release Initial Request for Applications distributed and posted on WSC website	February 15, 2021
Evaluation and Scoring Process Application review and clarification period	2 weeks after receipt of application
Anticipated notification of award status to applicants	3 weeks after receipt of application
At your site **Start recruiting as soon as possible to fill your AmeriCorps positions.** Recruitment and interviews of AmeriCorps member candidates by Sponsoring Organization and service sites (Sponsoring Organization commits to ensuring placements and member enrollment)	Begins immediately after award
Form and guidance provided from WSC Office: Contract sent out for signature (electronically) by WSC	2 weeks after award
Signed contract due to WSC	2 weeks after receipt of contract; must be received prior to first member start date
Written Union Concurrence due to WSC, if applicable	2 weeks after award
Insurance certificate, or statement of self-insured status, submitted to WSC. Requirements outlined in Member Placement Contract Section 11.	2 weeks after award
Program Participation Fee invoice issued	Dependent upon award date
Deadline to submit payment to WSC for Program Participation Fee	30 days from invoice date