



# Request for Applications

## AmeriCorps Member Placement through Washington Service Corps Programs

Program Year 2023 - 2024

**Release Date:**

**February 13, 2023**

This guidance document accompanies our 2023-24 Request for Applications form, and contains the following information:

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# INTRODUCTION

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## **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, 2023, and will be in effect through August 31, 2024. Projects selected through this RFA process may be eligible to continue their project for the duration of the applicable (per award) three-year AmeriCorps grant cycle, providing that projects meet continuing contractual requirements and expectations, and per continued funding from AmeriCorps. **Future continuation awards will be on a re-application and evaluation process.**

## **Funding and Performance Measurement Contingency**

In the event funding for Washington Service Corps or Washington Reading Corps is reduced or eliminated, or if federal program requirements change, this Request for Applications may be terminated or modified 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, please thoroughly review this guidance document in its entirety.**

We will be hosting a number of live Q&A sessions via Microsoft Teams, the first of which is scheduled for **February 15** at 11:30 a.m. Visit our [website](#) for session schedule and joining options.

Any additional technical assistance provided in the future will be posted on our [RFA webpage](#).

Questions regarding our programs or the application form must be sent to [wscmail@esd.wa.gov](mailto:wscmail@esd.wa.gov).

# INTRODUCTION

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## 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 positions (vacated or otherwise).**

## 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 500 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, 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 literacy tutors in schools, early learning centers and nonprofits. More details about the program are included on pages 5 and 11.

# INTRODUCTION

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## 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](#).

# INTRODUCTION

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## 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 reading 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 limited capacity building of the project, such as resource development, volunteer recruitment/management, and facilitation of community service project opportunities. However, these tasks should not encompass more than 30% of a member's position.

## 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 and Washington Service Corps prohibit certain activities by members and project staff while charging time to the AmeriCorps project, or accumulating service or training hours; these activities include (**but are not limited to**):

1. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. Conducting a voter registration drive or using AmeriCorps funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
5. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services;
6. 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;
7. 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 the member's term.

A complete list of prohibited activities is available on our website:

<https://washingtonservicecorps.org/prohibited-activities/>

# WASHINGTON READING CORPS

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The Washington Reading Corps is expanding to all grade levels and subjects to better support all students and schools. WRC's goal is to improve academic performance and engagement for students in Early Learning through Grade 12. This includes AVID and applicant-determined student outcomes.

WRC members provide literacy-informed tutoring in all academic subjects, academic engagement, social-emotional skills-building activities, and additional literacy and academic supports as needed by their service site.

## **The Reading Power toolkit**

In collaboration with the state's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and youth literacy subject matter experts from our local educational service district, WRC created **Reading Power** – a scripted, non-curriculum-specific tutoring program for WRC AmeriCorps members to utilize with their students in **Kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade**.

Reading Power provides a double- or triple-dose of foundational reading skills focused on **phonemic awareness and fluency**. Members tutor students using the toolkit in one-on-one 20-minute sessions, three times per week for 6 to 12 weeks.

## **The benefits:**

- Reading Power consists of “ready to go” pre/post assessments, lesson plans, guides and student engagement strategies for each grade level;
- WRC provides a live, immersive training event to members on all aspects of the toolkit in November of each program year;
- WRC hosts follow-up trainings and Q&A sessions with members during the year;
- WRC provides an easy-to-use online reporting system for members to submit data on the improvement their students make;
- Reading Power is designed to be used in conjunction with (not in place of) other site-selected tutoring supports to also be provided by members.

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

- [Reading Power introduction](#) (MP4, 6 minutes)
- [Sample lessons for Kindergarten](#)
- [Sample assessment for Grades 2 through 4](#)
- [Sample assessment guide for Grades 2 through 4](#)

*If you have any questions about the Reading Power toolkit, please contact us at [wscmail@esd.wa.gov](mailto:wscmail@esd.wa.gov) for a consultation.*

## PROGRAM INFORMATION

*The following stipends and fees do NOT apply to WSC's Public Health AmeriCorps cohort.*

### Member living allowance (stipend)

For the 2023-24 program year, there are four tiers of monthly living allowance (stipend) available:

Stipend Tier	WSC Monthly Stipend	Per 10.5-Month Term	WRC Monthly Stipend	Per 10.5-Month Term
Tier 1 Stipend	\$1,676.19	\$17,599	\$2,380.95	\$24,999
Tier 2 Stipend	\$2,171.43	\$22,800	\$2,571.43	\$27,000
Tier 3 Stipend	\$2,890.48	\$30,350	\$3,047.62	\$32,000
Tier 4 Stipend	\$3,352.38	\$35,199	\$3,352.38	\$35,199

**\*\*\* Unless otherwise stipulated by WSC, all members serving in the same project must receive the same living allowance amount.**

### Program participation fee

- The Program Participation Fee for WA Service Corps projects will be based on the total number of members enrolled in the Sponsoring Organization's project by the last start date.
- Refer to Section 10, *Fees*, of the WSC Member Placement Contract (hyperlinked in the first page of the online application form) as well as WSC Policy #155 for details regarding payment of Fee, refills and refunds.
  - Review [WSC POL-155](#) for how the Fee may be pro-rated in the event of a member exiting service prior to the originally scheduled term end date, and the circumstances under which the Fee might be adjusted.
- 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 Fee.

WSC Per-Member Program Participation Fees				WRC Per-Member Program Participation Fees
Members Enrolled in Project:				
	1-8 Members	9-14 Members	15+ Members	
Tier 1 Stipend	\$10,800	\$8,500	\$7,000	\$5,000
Tier 2 Stipend	\$16,000	\$13,700	\$12,200	\$7,000
Tier 3 Stipend	\$23,550	\$21,250	\$19,750	\$12,000
Tier 4 Stipend	\$28,400	\$26,100	\$24,600	\$15,200

### Member service terms

WSC and WRC are offering 1,700-hour 10.5-month service terms as follows:

Term Start/End	
<i>(subject to change at WSC's sole discretion)</i>	
9/1/2023 – 7/15/2024	10/2/2023 – 8/15/2024
9/18/2023 – 7/31/2024	10/16/2023 – 8/31/2024

## ELIGIBILITY and PRIORITY OF SELECTION

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### 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 in one or more of the following:

- Economic Opportunity
  - Job Readiness
  - Digital Literacy
- Healthy Futures
  - Food Distribution
  - Food Security
  - Health Education
  - Opioid Abuse Prevention
- Environmental Stewardship
  - Environmental Education
  - At-Risk Ecosystems

For the **Washington Reading Corps**, priority of selection will go to proposed projects in 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

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This Request for Applications is hosted through Zoho's online survey platform. Applications must be submitted through Zoho.

**We strongly recommend you apply by June 30, 2023 to allow enough time for application evaluation, member recruitment and enrollment to be completed in time for your preferred member start date.**

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 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 Member Service Agreement**

## ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

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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 (if requested)
- A position description form for each unique member position
- A MyAmeriCorps recruitment worksheet for each unique member position
- Project performance plan

## DEFINITIONS

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

**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

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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 11 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 - 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.

**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

## FOCUS AREAS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

adequately train/prepare service site staff to follow AmeriCorps and WSC program regulations, priorities, and expectations.

### Applicant-Determined - Performance Plan Guidance

Applicant-Determined performance measures are intended for programs whose interventions, outputs and outcomes do not fit under existing WSC or WRC 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](#)

### **SAMPLE for Applicant Determined Performance Plan:**

Performance Plan – Applicant Determined	
Sponsoring Organization:	
Focus Area:	
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.

## FOCUS AREAS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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### **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:

- [Academic Engagement](#)
- [Academic Improvement – Grades K-4 with Reading Power](#)
- [Academic Improvement](#)
- [Applicant Determined](#)

## ESTIMATED TIMELINE

<b>RFA Release</b> Initial Request for Applications distributed and posted on WSC website	February 13, 2023
<b>Evaluation and Scoring Process</b> Application review and clarification period	2 weeks after receipt of application
Anticipated notification of award status to applicants	3 weeks after receipt of application
<b>At your site</b> <b>Start recruiting as soon as possible to fill your AmeriCorps positions.</b> Recruitment and interviews of AmeriCorps member candidates by Sponsoring Organization and service sites (Sponsoring Organization commits to ensuring placements and member enrollment)	Begins immediately upon award  <i>Factor in at least 8-10 weeks for member recruitment and selection.</i>
<b>Form and guidance provided from WSC Office:</b> 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