# NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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|---|---|
| **Federal Agency Name:** | **AmeriCorps** |
| **Funding Opportunity Title:** | **Fiscal Year (**FY) 2023 AmeriCorps State and National American Rescue Plan (ARP) Planning Grants |
| **Announcement Type:** | Initial Announcement |
| **Assistance Listing Number:** | 94.006 |

**Disclosure**: Publication of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (Notice) does not obligate AmeriCorps to award any specific number of grants or to commit any particular amount of funding. The actual level, timing, and process of grant funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

**Important Dates**

- Applications are due not later than **Monday, November 14, 2022** by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Successful applicants will be notified by **the end of January 2023.**

- Successful applicants should expect awards by **end of March 2023**.

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# FULL TEXT OF THE NOTICE

## A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### A.1. Purpose of AmeriCorps State and National Funding

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.

AmeriCorps planning grants provide support to a grant recipient to develop an AmeriCorps program that will engage AmeriCorps members in implementing evidence-based interventions to solve community problems. Grant recipients are awarded up to $240,000 for a 12-month planning period and are encouraged to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the following grant cycle if they deem the fit with AmeriCorps to be of use to their community. A planning grant may not be used to support AmeriCorps members. Applicants will apply for a Cost Reimbursement grant. The project period is no more than a year, with a start date proposed by the applicant. The project start date may not occur prior to the date AmeriCorps awards the grant.

Please see the AmeriCorps Focus Areas in Appendix I.

### A.2. Funding Priorities

AmeriCorps recently released its 2022-2026 Strategic Plan which defines the agency's goals, objectives, and strategies to both meet and exceed the agency's mission to improve lives and strengthen communities. Over the next 5 years, AmeriCorps will execute the following goals to better position the agency to respond to national and local needs and help the communities it serves prosper: partner with communities to alleviate poverty and advance racial equity; enhance the experience for AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers; unite Americans by bringing them together in service; effectively steward federal resources; and make AmeriCorps one of the best and most equitable places to work in the federal government.

Over the next five years, AmeriCorps will invest in existing and new partnerships with non-profit, faith-based, and Tribal organizations, and state service commissions, to get things done for America. We will prioritize investment in the most critical issues of our time – public health, climate and the environment, and education and economic opportunity – within AmeriCorps' Focus Areas (Appendix 1) and we will increase our efforts to ensure our AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Senior volunteers reflect the communities where they serve. We will target our investments toward communities where the need is greatest, particularly those with populations that face racial inequality and poverty. These steps will enable more Americans than ever to strengthen the communities that need it most across the nation through their service.

AmeriCorps' priorities for this funding opportunity are:

- The needs/challenges in your communities,
- The ability to translate the planning grant award into an application for AmeriCorps programming next year,
- 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,
- Applicants proposing 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,
- Applicants that consider program designs that will 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., and
- Applicants that consider program designs 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.

To receive priority consideration, applicants must show that the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes and must include a high-quality program design. Proposing programs that receive priority consideration does not guarantee funding.

### A.3. Performance Goals or Expected Outcomes

#### National Performance Measures

AmeriCorps expects applicants to use National Performance Measures as part of a comprehensive performance measurement strategy that relies on both performance and evaluation data to learn from their work and make tactical and strategic adjustments to achieve their goals.

All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output and outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. This may be a National Performance Measure or an applicant-determined measure. For more information, please refer to the National Performance Measures Instructions found here.

### A.4. Program Authority

Awards under this Notice are authorized by the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, (42 U.S.C. §12501 et seq.)

## B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

### B.1. Estimated Available Funds

AmeriCorps expects a highly competitive AmeriCorps grant competition.

### B.2. Estimated Award Amount

Award amounts will vary as determined by the scope of the projects.

### B.3. Period of Performance

AmeriCorps anticipates making one-year grant awards.

### B.4. Type of Award

Award recipients will be assigned to an AmeriCorps Portfolio Manager, who will be responsible for assessing recipient performance, providing training and technical assistance, and serving as the agency's primary point of contact.

AmeriCorps State and National grants will be awarded if an application is successful.

| Grant Types | Cost Reimbursement |
|---|---|
| Available Subtypes | Planning Grants |
| Budget Submission Required | Yes |
| Financial Reporting Requirements | Yes |
| Available to new Applicants | Yes |

## C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### C.1. 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
- nonprofit organizations
- states and US Territories

Applicants must have a valid SAM registration and Unique Entity Identifier to receive an award. See Section D.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) for more information.

**New Applicants**
AmeriCorps encourages organizations that have not received prior funding from AmeriCorps to apply.

**Types of Applicants**
1.Single-State Applicants
Organizations that propose to operate in only one state will apply as National Directs.
2. National Direct Applicants [1]
*Multi-State*: Organizations that propose to operate AmeriCorps programs in more than one State or Territory apply directly to AmeriCorps.

*States and Territories without Commissions:* Applicants in South Dakota, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands apply directly to AmeriCorps because this State and these Territories do not have an established Commission.

*Federally recognized Indian Tribes*: Applicants that are Indian Tribes apply directly to AmeriCorps.

In addition to Indian Tribes as defined in 2 CFR 200.1, tribal organizations that are controlled, authorized, or chartered by Federally recognized Indian Tribes are also eligible to apply. If an entity applies for an award as a tribal organization that is controlled or chartered by one or more Indian Tribes, the organization must provide copies or links to documentation which demonstrates that the organization is controlled or chartered by a federally recognized Indian Tribe. If an entity applies as an organization authorized by a federally recognized tribe, or multiple specific federally recognized tribes, it must submit a resolution or other authorization, adopted by the Tribal Council (or comparable tribal governing body) of each Indian Tribe. The authorization(s) must identify the entity applying for an AmeriCorps award by name as a tribal organization that is authorized by the Indian Tribe(s) for the purpose of applying for AmeriCorps funding (or federal grant funds generally).

In addition to being eligible to apply under this *Notice*, Federally recognized Indian Tribes will also be eligible to apply for operating or planning grants under a separate Notice of Funding Opportunity for Indian Tribes found here with an application deadline in the spring.

[1] Although National Direct applicants do not have to apply to Commissions, there are substantial requirements to coordinate with the Commissions for states in which national service programs will operate. See the D.7.c. Coordination among State Commissions and National Direct Applicants section for information on these important requirements.

AmeriCorps may request applicants apply under the Tribal competition, rather than under this *Notice*.

### C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

New applicants are eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement grants.

#### Cost Reimbursement Grants

Applicants are required to match funds based on the chart below. The applicant's match can be non-AmeriCorps cash and/or in-kind contributions. Applicants must indicate whether the match is proposed or secured. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet the match requirement at the time of application submission. See Section D.6. Funding Restrictions for more information.

| AmeriCorps Funding Year | 1, 2, 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grantee Share Requirements | 24% | 26% | 30% | 34% | 38% | 42% | 46% | 50% |

Law requires that grantees that use other Federal Funds as matching funds for an AmeriCorps grant to report those amounts and sources to AmeriCorps on a Federal Financial Report found in 42 U.S.C. §12571(e) Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout.

#### Match Waiver

Please see the Match Waiver information for AmeriCorps State and National Grantees located on the AmeriCorps website's Manage Your Grant webpage.

#### Alternative Match

Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in 45 CFR 2521.60(b). To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Application Instructions. Applicants who plan to request an alternative match schedule must submit a request at the time the application is submitted.
National Directs will submit requests via the Alternative Match Request form located on the AmeriCorps website's Manage Your Grant webpage.

### C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements

Under Section 132A(b) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, organizations that have violated a Federal criminal statute may not receive assistance described in this Notice.

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 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; and
- 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 Notice. However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation that a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and determined that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests 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 funding.

## D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

This Notice should be read together with the AmeriCorps regulations, 45 CFR 2520 – 2550, Guidance, Application Instructions, Performance Measures, and Mandatory Supplemental Information. These documents are available online at AmeriCorps.gov Funding Opportunities webpage.

### D.1. Address to Request an Application Package

All information associated with this funding opportunity is available through the AmeriCorps Funding Opportunities webpages. Applicants should refer to AmeriCorps Funding Opportunities for more information and instructions on how to fully respond to this Notice. Applicants can also send an email to americorpsgrants@cns.gov or call (202) 606-7508 for a printed copy of the Notice and Guidance and Application Instructions. AmeriCorps also offers live text chat.

### D.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

### D.2.a. Application Content

Complete applications must include the following elements:

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: This is automatically generated when applicants complete the data elements in the eGrants system.
- Narrative Sections:
  - Executive Summary: This is a brief description of the proposed program.
  - Program Design
  - Organizational Capability
  - Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy
  - Evaluation Summary/Plan
- Performance Measures
- Standard Form 424A Budget
- Continuation Changes
- Clarification

- Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications

### D.2.b. Page Limits

There are page limits for the Narratives and Logic Model:

- Narratives
    - Applications must not exceed 5 double-spaced pages for the Narratives.
    - The application sections that count towards the page limit are the:
        - SF-424 Face Sheet
        - Executive Summary
        - Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy narratives.
    - The application page limit does not include Evaluation Summary/Plan, Clarification Summary, Continuation Changes, Budget, Performance Measures, or any required additional documents.

Please note that the length of the application as a word processing document may differ from the length of the document printed out from eGrants. The character limits in eGrants do not align with page limits set in the Notice. **AmeriCorps strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the "Review and Submit" tab in eGrants prior to submission in order to confirm that the application does not exceed the page limit.**

AmeriCorps will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods when determining if an application complies with the page limit. Reviewers will also not consider material that is over the page limit, even if eGrants allows applicants to enter and submit additional text.

### D.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

All applicants **must** register with the System for Award Management (SAM) at https://www.sam.gov/SAM/ and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If an applicant is awarded a grant, it must maintain an active SAM registration throughout the life of the award. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees.

SAM registration must be renewed annually. AmeriCorps 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. **Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and physical address on all grant applications to AmeriCorps. The legal applicant's name and physical address in eGrants must match exactly the applicant's SAM-registered information.**

AmeriCorps will not make awards to entities that do not have a valid SAM registration and Unique Entity Identify. If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time AmeriCorps is ready to make a federal award, AmeriCorps may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

Applications must include an Employer Identification Number.

Applications must include a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), which is generated as part of the SAM registration process.

### D.4. Submission Dates and Times

#### D.4.a. Application Submission Deadline

Applications are due not later than **Monday, November 14, 2022 by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.**

AmeriCorps will not consider applications submitted after the deadline, except as noted in Section D.4.c. Late Applications. AmeriCorps reserves the right to extend the submission deadline. AmeriCorps will post a notification in the event of an extended deadline on AmeriCorps' funding opportunities webpage.

#### D.4.b. Additional Documents Deadline

Additional documents are due by the application submission deadline. See Sections D.4.a. Application Submission Deadline and D.7.b. Submission of Additional Documents for more information.

#### D.4.c. Late Applications

All applications received after the submission deadline published in this Notice, of **Monday, November 14, 2022 at 5:00 pm Eastern Time,** are presumed to be non-compliant. To overcome this presumption, the applicant must:

- submit a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that caused the delay, including:
    - the timing and specific cause(s) of the delay
    - the ticket number if a request for assistance was submitted to the AmeriCorps Hotline
    - any information provided to the applicant by the AmeriCorps Hotline
    - any other documentation or evidence that supports the justification
- ensure that AmeriCorps receives the written explanation or justification and any other evidence that substantiates the claimed extenuating circumstance(s), via email to LateApplications@cns.gov no later than 24 hours after the application deadline as stated in the Notice

Communication with AmeriCorps staff, including an applicant's portfolio manager, is not a substitute for a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance that caused the delay as outlined above. Applicants are required to continue working in eGrants, AmeriCorps' web-based application system, and with the AmeriCorps Hotline to submit the application. AmeriCorps will determine whether or not to accept a late application on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants that do not meet the application submission deadline and do not submit a written explanation or justification or any other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the published timeframe will be deemed noncompliant. If AmeriCorps sustains a noncompliant determination, the application will not be reviewed or selected for award.

AmeriCorps will *not* consider an advance request to submit a late application. Please carefully review and follow the guidance in this section and submit your application as soon as possible.

### D.5. Intergovernmental Review

This Notice is not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

### D.6. Funding Restrictions

#### D.6.a. Indirect Costs

Application budgets may include indirect costs. Based on qualifying factors, applicants may either use a Federally approved indirect cost rate or a 10 percent *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly, as outlined in 2 CFR 200.413. States, local governments, and Indian Tribes may use previously-approved indirect cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across all federal awards. Applicants that have a federal negotiated indirect cost rate or that will be using the 10 percent *de minimis* rate must enter that information in the Organization section in eGrants. However, under section 121(d) of the NCSA and AmeriCorps' regulations at 45 CFR 2521.95and 2540.110, no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps State and National grants.

The instructions for how to enter the organization's indirect cost rate are located here: eGrants Indirect Cost Rate User Instructions. Applicants should not submit documentation addressing the indirect cost rate agreement via email.

Please note: To request a federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, when AmeriCorps is the applicable cognizant agency for an organization's indirect costs, the applicant must submit a request to IndirectCostRate@cns.gov. The applicant may also obtain instructions and additional information by contacting the email address above.

#### D.6.b. Pre-Award Costs

Pre-award costs, where authorized, are allowed after receiving written approval from AmeriCorps.

### D.7. Other Submission Requirements

#### D.7.a. Electronic Application Submission in eGrants

Applicants must submit applications electronically via eGrants, AmeriCorps' web-based application system. AmeriCorps recommends that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a Word document, then copy and paste the text into the appropriate eGrants field no later than 10 days before the deadline.

The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must use their own eGrants account to sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Applicants should contact the AmeriCorps Hotline at (800) 942-2677 or via eGrants Questions if they have a problem when they create an account, prepare, or submit the application. AmeriCorps Hotline hours are posted.

Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the name of the Notice to which the organization is applying. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the AmeriCorps Hotline to submit via eGrants.

If circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit in eGrants, applicants may send a paper copy of the application via overnight carrier below. Applicants must include a written explanation and any other documentation or evidence that support their inability to submit their application electronically.

AmeriCorps
ATTN: Office of Grant Administration (OGA)/AmeriCorps State and National ARP Planning Application
250 E Street, SW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20525

Please use a non-U.S. Postal Service carrier to avoid security-related delays. **All deadlines and requirements in this Notice also apply to paper applications. AmeriCorps does not accept applications submitted via fax or email.**

**D.7.b. Submission of Additional Documents**

All applicants

1. All applicants regardless of funding level are required to submit an Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS). Please submit the OFMS as a Word document. Forms submitted as a PDF or any other document format may not be accepted.

Entities applying on behalf of a Federally Recognized Tribe (New and recompeting)

Tribal organization eligibility documentation (See Section *C.1 Eligible Applicants*)

Additional documents must be emailed to AdditionalDocuments@cns.gov with the following subject line: *"Legal Applicant Name" – "Application ID Number."* Emails should include:

- the legal applicant name and its point of contact information
- the application ID number
- a list of documents that are attached to the email by filename, labeling each document type according to the above numbered list
- individually attached files that are clearly labeled, and that include the legal applicant name and application ID number within the file name and heading of each document. To ensure that all required additional documents are considered, please provide each document as a separate single file, labeled appropriately. Please do not send multiple documents in one combined file, and do not send a single document in multiple files.
- If the size of an applicant's files requires multiple emails, please also include an ordering system in the subject line, such as "(1 of 3)"

Failure to submit the required additional documents, following the email instructions in this section, by the deadline may have a negative effect on the assessment of your application.

***Do not submit any items that are not requested in this Notice or Application Instructions. AmeriCorps will not review or return them.***

**D.7.c. Coordination among State Commissions and National Direct/Single State Applicants**

AmeriCorps expects Commissions and National Direct applicants to consult and coordinate activities at the local level, as specified in Section 131 of the NCSA (42 U.S.C. § 12583). This consultation is designed to ensure the most effective use of national service resources and lead to enhanced coordination. The list of Commissions can be found here: https://americorps.gov/contact/state-service-commissions.

To ensure coordination:
National Direct applicants, except Federally-recognized Indian Tribes, must:

Before application submission:

- Consult with the Commission of each state and/or territory in which the organization plans to operate and describe this consultation in their applications. Contact the Commissions for details about the consultation process. Provide information that connects the proposed activities to the current State/Territory Service plan and/or State Logic Model.

After Award:

- Provide the Commission with contact information for National Direct programs in the state and/or territory and update the information on an annual basis.
- Participate in the Commissions' annual needs assessment and training plan development activities, and in the development of its state/territory service plan, as well as appropriate training and other events.
- Include the Commission on the National Direct's mailing/email distribution lists and invite it to appropriate training and other events.

State/Territory Commissions must:
Before application submission:

- Consult in a timely manner with the National Direct applicants, except Indian Tribes, that contact them prior to application submission.

After Award:

- Consider the schedules and needs of National Direct applicants, including Indian Tribes, operating in their states when planning annual events and technical assistance activities.
- Include National Direct programs, including Indian Tribes, in their annual needs assessment and training plan development activities, and in the development of their state/territory service plan.
- Add staff of multi-state programs in their state/territory to their mailing/email distribution lists and invite them to appropriate training and other events.

AmeriCorps will solicit Commission input on National Direct applicants, except Indian Tribes, proposing to operate in their state/territory via the AmeriCorps' web-based management system. Commissions have the opportunity to select "support," "do not support," or "neutral," and provide comments. Participation by Commissions in providing this input is strongly encouraged. AmeriCorps reviews and considers Commission input on Single State and Multi-State applicants proposing to operate in their state.

## E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### E.1. Selection Criteria

Each applicant must describe a how a project would deploy AmeriCorps members effectively to solve a significant community problem. AmeriCorps urges applicants to submit high quality applications that carefully follow the guidance in this *Notice* and in the Application Instructions. The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization will receive funding.

Applications should include a well-designed plan with clear and compelling justifications for receiving the requested funds. Reviewers will assess the quality of applications by using the selection criteria described below and will rate them accordingly. They will also consider the weights assigned to each criterion.

| Categories/Subcategories | Percentage |
|---|---|
| **Executive Summary** | **0** |
| **Program Design** | **50** |
| • **Problem/Need** | 20 |
| • **Planning Process/Timeline** | 30 |
| **Organizational Capability** | **25** |
| • **Organizational Background and Staffing** | 25 |
| **Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy** | **25** |

### E.1.a. Executive Summary (Required – 0 percent):

Please fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary. Do not deviate from the template below.

The [Name of the organization] proposes a planning grant to focus on [what the community interventions will be.]

### E.1.b. Program Design (50 percent):

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

**1. Problem/Need (20 points)**

- The problem is prevalent and severe in communities where the program plans to serve and has been documented with relevant data.

- Applicant discusses the community need as it relates to the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index
- The applicant provides a clear explanation for why a planning grant is needed.

**2. Planning Process/Timeline (30 points)**

- The applicant describes a clear and logical planning process:
  - The applicant describes a detailed description of who is leading the planning process.
  - The applicant describes how the planning period will be used to develop the necessary components to effectively manage an AmeriCorps program in the future.
  - The applicant describes a detailed plan for program sustainability.
- The planning process includes development of the following program elements:
  - Theory of Change/Logic Model
  - Intervention and evidence base
  - Member training and supervision plans
  - Program Compliance and Accountability
  - Securing Match Support for the Program

**E.1.c. Organizational Capability (25 percent):**

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

**1. Organizational Background and Staffing (25 points)**

- The applicant describes how it has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan the proposed program.
- The applicant describes its plans to engage community members and partner organizations in the planning process.
- The applicant has sufficient policies, procedures, and controls in place to prevent, detect, and mitigate the risk of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, such as appropriate segregation of duties, internal oversight activities, measures to prevent timekeeping fraud, etc.
- The applicant's (organization's or institution's) definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility demonstrate the organization is engaged in related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This can include the inclusion of diversity on the Board of Directors, agency staff and leadership, and/or volunteers.
- The applicant describes the extent to which the organization has an effective mechanism in place to report, without delay, any suspected criminal activity, waste, fraud, and/or abuse to both the AmeriCorps Office of Inspector General and AmeriCorps and a plan for training staff and participants on these reporting protocols.

**E.1.d. Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 percent):**

Reviewers will assess the quality of the application's budget to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

**These criteria will be assessed based on the budget submitted. Do not include narrative in the narrative box except for "See budget".**

**1. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25 points)**

- Budget complies with the Application Instructions document found here: See Appendix B and C;
- Cost Reimbursement applicant meets match requirements. Applicant identifies sources in the Source of Funds section of the budget

**E.1.e. Evaluation Plan (0 percent):**

Planning grant applicants should enter "N/A" in this section. Any other text entered in this field will not be reviewed.

**E.1.f. Amendment Justification (0 percent):**

Enter N/A. This field will be used if the applicant is awarded a grant and needs to amend it.

**E.1.g. Clarification Information (0 percent):**

Enter N/A.

**E.1.h. Continuation Changes (0 percent):**

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter changes in the application narratives in continuation requests.

**E.2. Review and Selection Process**

AmeriCorps will engage External Reviewers with relevant knowledge and expertise to assess and provide input on the eligible applications. The review and selection process is intended to produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and strategic considerations described in this Notice. The determinations made by AmeriCorps reviewers may be different from what the applicant self-determined upon submission of its application. The stages of the review and selection process follow:

**E.2.a. Initial Application Compliance and Eligibility Review**

AmeriCorps will conduct an initial Compliance and Eligibility Review to determine if an application meets the eligibility requirements published in this Notice and advances to the next stage of the review process.

An application is compliant if the applicant:

- is an eligible organization
- submitted an application by the submission deadline

Reviewing for eligibility is intended to ensure that only those applications that are eligible for award are further reviewed. However, determinations of eligibility can take place at any point during the application review and selection process. Applicants that are determined to be ineligible will not receive an award.

**E.2.b. Application Review**

**External Review**

External Reviewers will assess applications based on the Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy Selection Criteria (E.1). AmeriCorps

will recruit and select reviewers on the basis of demonstrated expertise in AmeriCorps State and National programming and/or the Focus Areas, as well as experience assessing applications. All External Reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

**Internal Review**
AmeriCorps will review and assess the input from the State Service Commissions about Single State/National Direct applications.

**Post-Review Quality Control**
After the initial review process is complete, AmeriCorps staff will review the initial results for fairness and consistency. Some applications may be selected for a Post-Review Quality Control assessment. This additional level of review will be used to ensure fairness and provide assurances that an application was not disadvantaged in the original review.

### E.2.c. Applicant Clarification

AmeriCorps may ask an applicant for clarifying information after notification of competition results. An applicant's failure to respond to a request for clarification adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of its application from the award process.

### E.2.d. Pre-Award Risk Assessment

AmeriCorps staff will assess the risks to the program posed by each applicant to determine an applicant's ability to manage Federal Funds. This evaluation is in addition to those about the applicant's eligibility and the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria (E.1). Results from this assessment will inform funding decisions. If AmeriCorps determines that an award will be made to an applicant with assessed risks, special conditions that correspond to the degree of assessed risk may be applied to the award. Additionally, if AmeriCorps concludes that the reasons for applicants having poor risk assessment are not likely to be mitigated, those applications may not be selected for funding.

In assessing risks, AmeriCorps may consider the following criteria:

1. Due Diligence, including:
    - Federal debt delinquency
    - suspension and debarment
    - information available through Office of Management and Budget (OMB)- designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as:
        - Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)
        - U.S. Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services
        - System for Award Management (SAM)
        - "Do Not Pay"
    - reports and findings from single audits performed under Uniform Administrative Guidance and findings of any other available audits or investigations
    - IRS Tax Form 990
    - Oversight.gov
    - Public Litigation Records

2. Operational and Financial Management, including:
    - financial stability

- Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS)

3. *Past Performance, including:*
   - an applicant's record in managing previous AmeriCorps awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
     - timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements
     - conformance to the terms and conditions of previous Federal awards
     - applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on award recipients
     - timely closeout of other awards
     - meeting matching requirements
     - the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
     - national service criminal history check (NSCHC) compliance. See section F.2.d. National Criminal History Check Requirements and the NSCHC webpage for more information

4. Other Programmatic Risks, including:
   - publicly available information, including from the applicant organization's website

### E.2.e. Consideration of Integrity and Performance System Information

Prior to making any award that exceeds the $250,000, AmeriCorps is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (See 41 U.S.C. §2313). Additionally, AmeriCorps may expand upon these requirements and use its discretion to review and consider information about any applicant receiving an award, including those under $250,000.

Any applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through FAPIIS and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through FAPIIS.

AmeriCorps may consider comments by any applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing its review of risk posed by the applicant under the E.2.d. Risk Assessment Evaluation section of this Notice.

### E.2.f. Selection for Funding

The review and selection process are designed to:

- identify how well eligible applications are aligned with the application selection criteria (E.1)
- build a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:
  - AmeriCorps Funding Priorities (See Section A.2. Funding Priorities)
  - meaningful representation of
    - rural communities

        - innovative community strategies
    - CEO discretion to advance strategic goals

AmeriCorps will assess an applicant's strategic considerations. Applicants must check the relevant boxes in the Program Information tab in AmeriCorps' web-based management system. Applicants should only check the boxes if the strategic consideration is a significant and intentional part of their program design and if implementation strategies are described in the application.

In selecting applicants to receive awards under this Notice, the Chief Executive Officer will endeavor to include a diverse portfolio of applications based on staff recommendations, alignment with selection criteria, and strategic considerations.

AmeriCorps reserves the right to prioritize funding existing awards over making new awards.

AmeriCorps reserves the right to award applications in an amount other than at the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so.

***AmeriCorps reserves the right to adjust or make changes to the review process, if unforeseen challenges or urgent circumstances make it impossible, impracticable, or inefficient to conduct the review process as planned. Any such adjustments or changes will not affect the selection criteria (E.1.) that will be used to assess applications.***

### E.3. Feedback to Applicants

Each compliant applicant will receive feedback from the External Review of its application.

### E.4. Transparency in Grantmaking

AmeriCorps is committed to transparency in grant-making. A list of all approved applications for new and re-competing applications will be published on AmeriCorps Funded Grants within 90 business days after all grants are awarded.

Submitted program narratives, executive summaries, a blank template of the external review worksheet, a list of all external reviewers who completed the review process, and a summary of external reviewer comments for successful applications will be available upon request via email to AmeriCorpsOGA@cns.gov.

Further information about funded grants and subgrants is also available in USASpending.gov.

## F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

### F.1. Federal Award Notices

AmeriCorps will make awards following the selection announcement. AmeriCorps anticipates announcing the results of this funding opportunity by end of January 2023. All applicants, successful or not, will be notified of funding decisions via email.

Notification of an award is not an authorization to begin activities. The Notice of Grant Award signed by the Office of Grant Administration is the authorizing document. An awardee may not expend Federal Funds until the start of the Period of Performance identified on the Notice of Grant Award.

### F.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

#### F.2.a. Uniform Guidance

All awards made under this Notice will be subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 2205.

#### F.2.b. Requests for Monitoring or Payment Integrity Information

AmeriCorps will request documentation from award recipients in order to monitor the grantee and award to ensure compliance with legal requirements, including the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019. Failure to make timely responses to these requests may result in award funds being placed on manual hold, reimbursement only status, or other remedies may be applied as appropriate.

#### F.2.c. AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions

All awards made under this Notice will be subject to the FY 2023 AmeriCorps General Terms and Conditions, and the FY 2023 Program-Specific Terms and Conditions for the particular program (when applicable). These Terms and Conditions contain detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the AmeriCorps General and Program-Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available on the AmeriCorps Manage Your Grant webpage.

#### F.2.d. National Service Criminal History Check Requirements

The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a specific screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. We encourage grantees to minimize barriers to service without putting their program beneficiaries at genuine risk.

- In general, award recipients and subrecipients must conduct an NSCHC for staff funded under, or whose salary is reflected as match on, the award.
- AmeriCorps strongly encourages applicants to review the regulations and additional guidance to fully understand how to comply with the requirements. See the NSCHC regulations and guidance AmeriCorps also strongly encourages award recipients to utilize the two AmeriCorps-approved vendors to conduct the required NSCHCs.
- Failure to conduct a compliant NSCHC may result in significant disallowed costs.
- The cost of conducting NSCHC is an allowable expense under the award and the individual subject to the NSCHC may not be required to cover the cost without being reimbursed.

An NSCHC consists of a check of the:

1. National Sex Offender Public website through NSOPW.gov (nationwide check);

2. State criminal history record repository or agency-designated alternative for the individual's State of residence *and* State of service; and
3. Fingerprint-based check of the FBI criminal history record database through the State criminal history record repository or agency-approved vendor.

All checks must be conducted, reviewed, and an eligibility determination made before the individual begins work or service.

An individual is not eligible to serve or work in a position subject to the NSCHC requirements if:

- the individual refuses to consent to a criminal history check;
- makes a false statement in connection with a criminal history check;
- is registered, or is required to be registered, on a state sex offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry; or
- has been convicted of murder.

See 45 CFR 2540.200– 2540.207 and National Service Criminal History Check Resources for complete information and FAQs.

### F.2.e. Official Guidance

All AmeriCorps active Guidance is available on the agency's Guidance webpage. The contents of these documents do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way unless incorporated into a contract or grant agreement. These documents are intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

### F.3. Use of Material

To ensure that materials generated with AmeriCorps funding are available to the public and readily accessible to recipients and non-recipients, AmeriCorps reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so (2 CFR §200.315).

### F.4. Reporting

Recipients are required to submit a variety of reports that are due at specific times during the life cycle of an award. All reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time.

Cost reimbursement grantees are required to provide final progress reports and financial reports through eGrants, AmeriCorps' web-based grants management system. Final financial and progress reports are due 120 days after the end of the agreement.

All grantees must submit quarterly financial reports to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Payment Management System.

In addition, at the end of the award period, a grantee must submit final financial and progress reports that are cumulative over the entire award period and consistent with the close-out requirements. The final reports are due 120 days after the end of the period of performance.

Award recipients will be required to report at Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) on all subawards over $30,000, and may be required to report on executive compensation for the recipient organization and its subrecipients. Recipients and subrecipients must have the necessary systems in place to collect and report this information. See 2 CFR Part 170 for more information and to determine how these requirements apply.

Once the grant is awarded, recipients will be expected to have in place data collection and data management policies, processes, and practices that provide assurance that they are reporting high quality performance measure data. At a minimum, recipients should have policies, processes, and practices that address the following five aspects of data quality for themselves and for subrecipients (if applicable):

- data measures what it intends to measure
- data reported is complete
- grantee collects data in a consistent manner
- grantee takes steps to correct data errors
- grantee actively reviews data for accuracy prior to submission.

Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the recipient's ability to secure future AmeriCorps funding.

### F.5. Continuation Funding Information and Requirements

N/A

## G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

For more information, call (202) 606-7508 or email americorpsgrants@cns.gov. AmeriCorps also offers live text chat.

For technical questions and problems with the eGrants system, call the AmeriCorps Hotline at (800) 942-2677. AmeriCorps Hotline hours are also posted. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the name of the Notice to which the organization is applying.

## H. OTHER INFORMATION

### H.1. Technical Assistance

AmeriCorps will host technical assistance calls to answer questions about the funding opportunity and eGrants. AmeriCorps strongly encourages all applicants to participate in these sessions. Information for these technical assistance calls is available on the AmeriCorps' Funding Opportunities website.

### H.2. Re-Focusing of Funding

AmeriCorps reserves the right to re-focus program dollars under this Notice in the event of disaster or other compelling needs.

## I. IMPORTANT NOTICES

**Public Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for collection of information under this Notice of Funding is estimated to average six hours per submission, including reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing the application and reporting forms. AmeriCorps informs people who may respond to this Notice of Funding that they are not required to respond unless the OMB control number and expiration date are current valid. (See 5 C.F.R. 1320.5(b)(2)(i).) This collection is approved under OMB Control #: 3045-0047, Application Instructions, State and National Competitive, New and Continuation, Expiration Date: September 30, 2023.

**Privacy Act Statement:** The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C §552a) requires that we notify you that the information requested under this Notice of Funding is collected pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§12592 and 12615 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended, and 42 U.S.C. §4953 of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 as amended.

- Purposes and Uses - The information requested is collected for the purposes of reviewing grant applications and granting funding requests. Routine uses may include disclosure of the information to Federal, state, or local agencies pursuant to lawfully authorized requests. In some programs, the information may also be provided to Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to determine the existence of any prior criminal convictions. The information may also be provided to appropriate Federal agencies and contractors that have a need to know the information for the purpose of assisting the government to respond to a suspected or confirmed breach of the security or confidentiality or information maintained in this system of records, and the information disclosed is relevant and unnecessary for the assistance.

- Effects of Nondisclosure - The information requested is voluntary; however, to be a recipient of this grant program, disclosure of personal or sensitive information is required to receive federal benefits.

# APPENDIX I – AmeriCorps Focus Areas

**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. In order to carry out Congress's intent and to maximize the impact of investment in national service, and to achieve the goals laid out in our 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**

Supporting 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.