FFY2026 Montana AmeriCorps State Formula Program Grant

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)

This Notice outlines the process for applying for an AmeriCorps State Formula grant, funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) doing business as AmeriCorps, administered and overseen by the Montana Governor's Office of Community Service (GOCS aka ServeMontana). The level and timing of grant funding is subject to annual appropriations. GOCS reserves the right to modify any component of this Notice anytime.

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
This Notice is the first step an applicant must complete to apply for and receive AmeriCorps State Formula funding. ServeMontana's role is to solicit, screen, and rank applications. All applications cleared through screening will be ranked and submitted to AmeriCorps for funding determination. This Notice contains a description of the process used by AmeriCorps. This Notice should be read together with AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR §2520–2550, Mandatory Supplemental Information, Application Instructions, and Performance Measure Instructions. See Associated Documents.

Governor's Office of Community Service (GOCS) aka ServeMontana
Established in 1993, Montana's Commission on Community Service administers grants under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, amended by the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009 and the Montana Community Service Act of 1994 (MCA 90-14-103). In partnership with the Montana Commission on Community Service, a primary function of the Governor's Office of Community Service (GOCS) is administering funds to AmeriCorps State programs.

Expectations of All Applicants
- ✓ Address rural, Tribal, underserved, or areas of poverty not currently served by AmeriCorps programs;
- ✓ Clearly connect proposed activities to the needs and priorities in the Montana State Service Plan;
- ✓ Take a collaborative approach to program planning, design, and delivery;
- ✓ Recruit Montanans to serve in their local community; and
- ✓ Design and deliver an inclusive program that is accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding
AmeriCorps improves lives, strengthens communities, fosters civic engagement, and brings people together to tackle pressing needs through service and volunteering. AmeriCorps members serve with organizations dedicated to improving communities and the lives of those serving. AmeriCorps Grants are awarded to eligible organizations to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence based or informed interventions to strengthen communities. AmeriCorps members are individuals who engage in service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving and are *not* employees. Upon successful completion of service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust.

Who Should Apply to This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)?
Organizations proposing a new AmeriCorps State program or continuing a currently formula funded program that places AmeriCorps members and operates only in Montana must apply to this competition. Tribes and Tribal organizations may apply through this Notice or may choose to apply directly to AmeriCorps. ServeMontana will engage a Grant Review Workgroup to review and score grants and select applicants recommended for funding.

Funding recommendations are presented to the Montana Commission of Community Service for approval. Applicants who receive funding through this Notice are overseen by GOCS in all areas of grant management.

AmeriCorps may award a Cost Reimbursement or an Education Award Program grant to any successful applicant, but a Fixed Amount grant is limited to certain applicants (see Application Types).

Organizations seeking to apply for a one-year Planning Grant to identify if AmeriCorps State resources are well-suited to meet identified needs and plan a program are encouraged to contact ServeMontana for a consultation and apply to the 2026 Montana Formula Planning Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Montana AmeriCorps State Process and Screening
Organizations applying to this Notice must meet the intent of all the requirements in this packet. GOCS staff will determine if the proposal complies with the requirements, including the standards of responsibility in accordance with ARM 2.5.407. If responses do not meet all requirements listed in this Notice, the application may be deemed unresponsive and/or incomplete and will be removed from the review process. A determination of unresponsiveness may be made anytime if information surfaces that would result in the determination of non-responsibility.

Dual Points of Contact
From the date this Request for Proposal (RFP) is officially posted until an applicant is selected and announced by GOCS, *applicants shall only communicate with designated staff listed below regarding this Notice.* Any unauthorized contact may disqualify the applicant from further consideration.

Kristina Jordan, GOCS Program Officer
Phone: 406-444-5547
Email: kristina.jordan@mt.gov

Keena Irby, GOCS Fiscal Officer
Phone: 406-444-1809
Email: keena.irby@mt.gov

Costs/Ownership of Materials
The applicant is solely responsible for all costs it incurs prior to subaward contract execution. The State shall own all materials submitted in response to this RFP. To ensure materials generated with AmeriCorps funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, GOCS and AmeriCorps reserve 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(b)

Associated Documents
The following documents and/or forms are referenced through this Notice and are available at
https://serve.mt.gov/americorps/americorps-grants/Formula-Program-Grant
- FFY2026 AmeriCorps Application Instructions
- FFY2026 Mandatory Supplemental Information
- FFY2026 Performance Measure Instructions
- FFY2026 Applicant Determined Performance Measure Instructions
- Program Letter of Intent Template
- Evaluation Plan Summary Template
- Logic Model Template
- Budget Worksheet
- Match Waiver Request Form

Mar. 4   **Technical Assistance Teleconference,** 12:00 – 1:00 pm MST

Mar. 17   **Official posting of the Notice**

Mar. 19   <u>**Letter of Intent & associated documents due by 5pm Mountain Time**</u> (see Application and Submission Information in this Notice)
- Letter of Intent (LOI)
- PDF of current SAM registration & UEI
- Documentation of Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate, if applicable
- Confirmation of most recent Single Audit, as applicable

Mar. 25   **Technical Assistance Teleconference,** 12:00 – 1:00 pm MST

Mar. 30 - Apr. 2   **Written Technical assistance period*** Submit questions via email to serve@mt.gov.

Apr. 23   <u>**Applications and Additional Documents Due by 5pm Mountain Time**</u> (see Application and Submission Information in this Notice)
- Complete Application, submitted in eGrants
- Additional Documents, submitted via email to serve@mt.gov

May 19   **Formula Grant Review Workgroup Meeting**

The following dates are tentative and subject to change

Jun. 11   **June Meeting of the Commission on Community Service**

Jun. 12-18   **State of Montana clarification period** – All recommended applicants

Jun. 18   <u>**Clarified applications resubmitted in eGrants by 5pm Mountain Time**</u>

Summer 2026   **Applicants notified of funding determination**

Aug. 2026   **Awards issued to successful applicants**

*Technical Assistance
Applicants should use the technical assistance period to ask clarifying questions, obtain a better understanding of the RFP process, the notice, and to notify the State of any ambiguities, inconsistencies, or errors discovered upon examination of this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Participation in the technical assistance period is optional, however, all interested parties should participate. All questions and written responses will be posted publicly at https://serve.mt.gov/americorps/americorps-grants/Formula-Program-Grant

STATE SERVICE PLAN, FOCUS AREAS, FUNDING PRIORITIES, & PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Montana State Service Plan

The [Montana State Service Plan](#) outlines ServeMontana's goals and objectives, and includes data from a statewide needs assessment that identifies Montana's most pressing needs.

Governor and First Lady Priorities

- American Indian Affairs: Partner with Tribal Nations and people to help create more and better opportunities. Engage Tribal members into service with AmeriCorps programs and foster programs that address needs facing Montana's Tribal Nations with cultural responsiveness.
- Improve Education and Empower Montana's Workforce: Provide better resources for educators, prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow, and bring our kids and grandkids home to serve in AmeriCorps.
- Boosting Literacy: Prepare Montanans of all ages to better engage in daily life through developing written communication and reading comprehension skills.
- Stewardship of Montana's Public Lands: Support service interventions resulting in healthier landscapes, more recreation opportunities and jobs, less severe wildfires, and improved habitat and water quality.
- Improve Access to Mental Health Care: Increase Montana's access to mental health care, suicide prevention services, health education, and innovative community strategies.
- Increase Opportunities for Veterans: Engage veterans in overcoming barriers to employment and provide services for veterans to fulfill their hopes and dreams. Engage veterans into service with AmeriCorps programs and to foster programs that address the diverse needs of veterans and military families.

Montana Encouraged Program Elements

- Program design facilitates AmeriCorps members receiving impactful civic education and/or service-learning as part of member development that increases knowledge and deepens the members' ethic of service.
- Program includes basic professionalism training and leadership skill development to prepare AmeriCorps members for meaningful post-service careers (communication & active listening, networking, receiving and giving feedback, etc.).
- Program includes AmeriCorps as a strategy to develop service to career pathways.
- Programs that provide additional benefits to AmeriCorps members aimed at bolstering member recruitment, retention, and experience such as paying more than the minimum living allowance, housing, food, etc.
- Program design includes engaging citizens with lived experience to serve people in the area of defined need with robust training, development, and support.
- Program design engages Montanans and uniquely prepares them to serve the communities where they live.

AmeriCorps Focus Areas

- Disaster Services: Supporting response, recovery, and resiliency in the wake of disasters.
- Economic Opportunity: Improving economic well-being and security of all people.
- Education: Improving educational outcomes for all people, especially children.
- Environmental Stewardship: Serving public lands and people by conserving natural habitats, protecting clean air and water, and reducing utility bills for underserved households.
- Healthy Futures: Supporting health needs within communities, especially in underserved areas.
- Veterans & Military Families: Improving quality of life of veterans, military families, caregivers, and survivors.

FY2026 AmeriCorps Funding Priorities
Programs that:

- are housed within faith-based organizations.

- serve communities with concentrated poverty, rural communities, and tribal communities.

- expand access to high-quality youth mental health and substance use recovery services and prepare AmeriCorps members to enter behavioral health careers. These may include individuals who have experienced substance use and mental health challenges.

- focus on improving quality of life for veterans, active-duty members of the Armed Forces, and their families through models that provide effective interventions or services that are designed to recruit veterans, military spouses, and their older children into national service.

- are community-based, and enhance and expand services to youth and/or engage those youth as AmeriCorps members.

- focus on public safety, crime prevention, and/or partnerships between law enforcement and the community.

- focus on expanding outdoor recreation opportunities for future generations by maintaining public lands; supporting wildland fire mitigation and sustainable forest management; and providing reforestation services.

- create workforce pathways for AmeriCorps members, including deliberate training, such as pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities, certifications, and hiring preferences or support.

- focus on strengthening families, e.g., activities that aim to support low-income parents through parenting education, responsible parenting and healthy relationship skills.

- provide enhanced member experience by providing opportunities for skill attainment, personal growth and connection to the community they are serving in support of a lifetime of civic participation.

- provide enhanced and expanded services to formerly incarcerated and at-risk youth and/or engage those youth as AmeriCorps members.

- are evidence-based, and utilize reports from the AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange Catalogue on programs assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence to scale, replicate, or adapt the intervention.

Performance Measures
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 applicant-determined. AmeriCorps and GOCS value quality of performance measures over quantity.

Refer to the AmeriCorps Performance Measure Instructions (Associated Documents) and the Review Criteria for more information on performance measure requirements and data collection expectations. *Applicants are encouraged to use Appendix B: Performance Measure Checklist in the Performance Measure Instructions.*

FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

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.

Estimated Available Funds

GOCS expects a competitive grant selection process. The actual amount and timing of funds awarded is subject to availability of funds.

Estimated Award Amount

Grant awards have two components: operating funds and AmeriCorps member positions with corresponding Education Award amounts. Award amounts will be different depending on the scope of projects.

Project and Award Period

AmeriCorps typically makes three-year grant awards. An initial award is generally made for the first year of the period of performance, based on the submitted budget. Continuation awards for subsequent years are not guaranteed and depend upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance (see Review Criteria for Continuation Applicants).

The earliest suggested program start date is September 1, 2026 with the understanding some applicants may choose to operate on the calendar year by starting January 1, 2027. AmeriCorps members may *not* be enrolled or count service hours prior to the start date of the award. A program may *not* certify any hours a member serves prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period as designated in the grant award.

Type of Award

AmeriCorps may award a Cost Reimbursement or a Fixed Amount grant to any successful applicant. AmeriCorps will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year. For more information, see the *Eligible Applicants* Section in the Mandatory Supplemental Information (Associated Documents).

Cost Reimbursement applications require a line-item budget in eGrants. Awarded grant reimbursement payments are based on allowable costs incurred and reported monthly to GOCS. New and recompete applicants who have operated AmeriCorps program for less than 5 years must submit a Cost Reimbursement application.

Fixed Amount applications do not require a line-item budget in eGrants. Applicants who have successfully operated AmeriCorps programs for a minimum of 5 years and have consulted with GOCS are eligible to apply for Fixed Amount Grants. Recipients must achieve 100% member enrollment and retention rates to receive the full amount of a fixed grant award. Fixed awards may be either Full Cost or Professional Corps.

- **Full Cost** – Eligible to claim maximum cost per Member Service Year (MSY) and may apply for all slot types. See MSY Values and Slots table below).
- **Professional Corps** – Recipient must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Only Full Time Slots are available to this award type. Professional Corps program requirements are in the Mandatory Supplemental Information.

While Fixed Amount award applicants are not required to submit a line-item budget in eGrants, they are required to submit a completed budget worksheet, demonstrating the internal AmeriCorps program budget meets the Minimum Thresholds outlined in this Notice and is otherwise adequate to operate the proposed program. Submitted Budget Worksheets must show both federal and grantee share of the budget.

ELIGIBILITY, TYPES OF APPLICANTS, AND APPLICATION TYPE INFORMATION

Eligible Entities

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
- State & local governments, including school districts
- 501(c)(3) Nonprofit organizations

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 [and the organization does not meet any of the other applicant eligibility types], 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).

System for Award Management (SAM) & Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number
All applicants must have a valid System for Award Management (SAM) registration and must maintain an active SAM registration throughout the application process and, if applicable, throughout the life of the award. SAM registration must be renewed annually. Applicants should 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. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees.

> **Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and physical address on AmeriCorps grant applications. The legal applicant name and physical address entered in eGrants must match the applicant's SAM-registered information EXACTLY.**

Applications must include an Employer Identification Number (EIN) and UEI. UEI is generated as part of the SAM registration process. *UEI and Dun and Bradstreet (DUNS) numbers are not the same.* Applicants must use "My Account" on the eGrants home screen to enter UEI and EIN numbers in the "Edit Organization's Attributes" module. These entries will populate the Application's 424 Face Sheet.

AmeriCorps will not award a grant to applicants without a valid SAM registration and UEI. If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time AmeriCorps is ready to make the award, AmeriCorps may not award the applicant.

Types of Applicants
Single State Applicants: Organizations proposing to only operate in Montana must apply through ServeMontana. Each state and territory commission administers its own selection process and submits the selected applications directly to AmeriCorps for funding approval. See Mandatory Supplemental Information (Associated Documents) for applicant descriptions.

Federally Recognized Indian Tribes in Montana
Indian Tribes proposing to operate only in Montana are eligible to apply to this Notice, or may apply directly to the AmeriCorps Indian Tribes Grants National Direct Opportunity, if available. If interested in pursuing an AmeriCorps Indian Tribes Grant, please contact GOCS for more information. In addition to Indian Tribes (2 CFR §200.54), tribal organizations controlled, authorized, and chartered by Indian Tribes are also eligible to apply for AmeriCorps funding.

Application Types
New Application is defined by AmeriCorps as an applicant that is applying for an AmeriCorps State and National grant for the first time or is a former grantee (non-formula) whose last AmeriCorps State and National grant was received more than five years ago. Organizations seeking an AmeriCorps program to place members in the first year of funding are encouraged to apply to this notice.

Organizations that have not received an AmeriCorps program grant in the last three years are not eligible to apply for Fixed Amount grants. See Type of Award section (above) for eligibility and more information.

Organizations proposing activities that have previously received AmeriCorps or CNCS funding have experienced difficulties accessing their organizations' eGrants account or have not been able to create a new application. In either instance, please contact ServeMontana to have the issue resolved.

Applicants should plan for sustainable and mission capable program growth. As such, New Applicants must apply for at least 7 MSY but no more than 20 MSY for the **first** three-year grant cycle. GOCS reserves the right to adjust the number of awarded MSY depending on availability of funds, and will inform impacted applicants.

Continuation Application
Organizations with current AmeriCorps State programs applying for year 2 or 3 are considered continuation applicants and must follow the requirements for continuation applications as outlined in this Notice. Requests for significant increases or decreases in the level of funding or number of positions will be assessed using the review criteria in this Notice. The review will also be based on progress and financial reports, evaluation plans summaries, and GOCS staff knowledge of the program. To be approved for continuation funding, subrecipients must demonstrate satisfactory performance and compliance with AmeriCorps Grant requirements and Terms and Conditions.

Continuation applicants should prioritize addressing the Review Criteria for Continuation Applicants. Applicants may also address the Continuation Changes fields listed in the Application Instructions.

Continuation applicant performance measures must comply with the current AmeriCorps Performance Measure Instructions. To add or revise performance measures, use the Performance Measures Module. In the eGrants application Continuation Changes field, note updates to any performance measures.

GOCS and AmeriCorps reserve the right to award applications in an amount less than the requested level of funding. GOCS will document the rational for doing so, but AmeriCorps may not.

Recompete Application
Previously awarded organizations whose three-year AmeriCorps State award period is ending may apply to this Notice as a recompete applicant. Organizations who have successfully operated AmeriCorps programs for a minimum of 5 years and consulted GOCS are eligible to apply for Full-Cost Fixed Amount Grants.

Required Minimum Thresholds for All Applications
Applications must meet all threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying. Applications that do not meet all minimum thresholds and provide no justification will not be reviewed.

- Budget includes at least 7 Member Service Years (MSY).
- Budget includes staff and member travel to the ServeMontana Symposium, if travelling from outside of Helena. The symposium takes place annually in March, in Helena.
- Budget includes staff travel for new program and/or financial staff to attend America's Service Commissions' AmeriCorps Program and Fiscal Boot Camps, typically held in Austin, TX. Training is typically 5 days with 4-5 nights hotel stay. GOCS pays for the registration fee.
- Budget includes staff travel and staff training for at least one program and one fiscal staff to attend the America's Service Commission's National Service Training, either in-person (location determined annually), or virtually. National Service Training is typically 3 days.
    o The registration fee is at least $400 per person and should be listed in the budget under Staff Training.

- o If attending in-person, the training is typically 3 days and requires budgeting for airfare, 3-4 nights of lodging, and per diem in the Staff Travel section of the budget.
    - Rates should be calculated at the organization's travel policy rate or at the state rate if applicant does not have a travel policy.
    - Airfare has typically cost at least $800 per person, depending on the location of the event, and should be listed under Staff Travel.
- Budget includes Staff Training and Staff Travel (if travelling from outside of Helena) for at least one organization staff to attend the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs' Tribal Relations Training, held annually in Helena.
    - o The training is typically 1-2 days with hotel stay depending on attendee distance. Registration fee is $150 and should be listed in the budget under Staff Training.
- Professional Corps applicants must show that the community where it will place AmeriCorps members has a shortage of professionals in the relevant area, e.g. teachers, medical professionals.
- If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training the applicant must describe how the program will meet requirements (e.g., tutoring: 45 CFR§2522.910-.940).
- All applicants must propose program designs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. Applicants assessed as pre-preliminary evidence must provide adequate response to the Evidence Quality review standards within the Review Criteria section.

Optional Budget Items for Applicants
After meeting the required minimum thresholds, applicants may choose to budget for the following:
- Member Assistance Program from ASC, if the organization cannot otherwise provide similar benefits to members (i.e., via an existing employee assistance program).
    - o This is an add-on to the ASC program membership. GOCS typically pays for the program membership fee unless otherwise discussed with the applicant.
    - o MAP is available at a per-member fee, see the MAP webpage for the most current plan options. MAP should be listed under Other Operating Costs.
- Staff training opportunities, if applicable and relevant to management and administration of the AmeriCorps program. This may include the cost of travel (to be listed under Staff Travel) and/or registration (to be listed under Staff Training).

Other Eligibility Requirements
Even if an organization is otherwise eligible under C.1, an organization is not eligible if:
- It has violated a Federal criminal statute/
- It proposes activities that are not allowed by AmeriCorps laws, rules, or terms and conditions.
- It has any unpaid federal taxes that are not being paid through an agreement with the relevant tax authority. However, this does not apply if a federal agency decided that a suspension or debarment for the corporation is not necessary.
- It is described in the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. §501 (c)(4) and lobbies.

FEDERAL FUNDING RESTRICTIONS AND BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Member Service Year (MSY)
Applicants request the number of positions per slot type in Budget Section II. The Budget calculates the total number of MSYs using the values below. See the Application Instructions (Associated Documents) for more details.

Table: Member Service Year (MSY) Values and Slot Types for FY26 New and Recompete Applicants

Slot Type	Minimum # of Hours	MSY Value
Full-time	1,700	1
Three Quarter-time	1,200	0.7
Half-time	900	0.5
Quarter-time	450	0.26455027
Minimum-time	300	0.21164022

Table: Member Service Year (MSY) Values and Slot Types for FY26 Continuation Applicants

Slot Type	Minimum # of Hours	MSY Value
Full-time	1,700	1
Three Quarter-time	1,200	0.7
Half-time	900	0.5
Reduced Half-time	675	0.38095240
Quarter-time	450	0.26455027
Minimum-time	300	0.21164022

Cost per MSY

Cost per MSY is determined by dividing the federal share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested. It does not include childcare or the value of the education award a member may earn.

Maximum Cost per MSY

The maximum Cost per MSY is set by AmeriCorps annually. Applications cannot exceed the maximum cost per MSY for the application type. Applications that exceed the maximum may be considered unresponsive.

Table: Maximum Cost per MSY for Application Types

Application Type	Maximum Cost per MSY
Cost Reimbursement & Full Cost Fixed Award Applications	$25,199
Professional Corps Applications	$1,000

Member Living Allowance

The living allowance is not a wage. Programs are required to provide a living allowance for members in full-time positions and members serving in a full-time capacity. Full-time capacity is generally 32 hours or more per week for 6 weeks or more. Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time slot types or capacity. If a program provides a living allowance to a less than full-time member, it must comply with the minimum and maximum limits in the table below. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either AmeriCorps or grantee share. Exceptions noted below.

Fixed Amount grant applicants must provide a living allowance that complies with the minimum and maximum requirements, as demonstrated in the submitted Budget Worksheet (see Additional Documents).

Table: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance

Slot Type	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Living Allowance
Full-time	1,700	$20,400	$40,800
Three Quarter-time	1,200	n/a	$28,560
Half-time	900	n/a	$20,400
Reduced Half-time *(only available to FY26 continuation applicants)*	675	n/a	$15,504
Quarter-time	450	n/a	$10,608
Minimum-time *(only available to FY26 continuation applicants)*	300	n/a	$8,568

Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements

Professional Corps Grantees must provide members a living allowance or salary, which must meet the minimum, and may exceed the maximum living allowance set in the Living Allowance Table above. Professional Corps member salaries and benefits, including childcare, are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve and are not included in the budget request to AmeriCorps (federal share).

Segal AmeriCorps Education Award

AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service are eligible for an Education Award from the National Service Trust. The amount of the Education Award is linked to the value of the Pell Grant. A member has up to seven years after their term of service to use the Education Award. Education Award amounts are determined by the federal fiscal year of the grant award.

Fixed Amount Grants

There is no specific match requirement for Fixed Amount grants. AmeriCorps does not provide all funds necessary to operate the program, therefore organizations must provide the additional funds required to operate the program. Fixed Amount applicants must be familiar with the AmeriCorps Fixed Award Financial and Administrative Guide. Applicants must comply with all Minimum Threshold requirements as described in this Notice, including the completed Budget Worksheet. New applicants are not eligible to apply for Full-Cost Fixed Amount grants.

Cost Reimbursement Grants

Required Match

Applicants are required to match funds based on the chart below. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet the match requirement at the time of application submission. The source of funds can be state, local, or private cash and/or in-kind contributions. Applicants must indicate if the match is "proposed" or "secured." A first-time successful applicant is required to match 24% for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every three years to 30% by year ten.

Table: Cost Reimbursement Grant Required Match Schedule

AmeriCorps Funding Year	1, 2, 3	4, 5, 6	7, 8, 9	10+
Grantee Share Required Match	24%	26%	28%	30%

Section 121(e)(5) of NCSA (42 U.S.C. 12571(e)) requires programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant to report the amount and source of these funds to AmeriCorps on a Federal Financial Report (FFR). Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout. GOCS requires documented permission allowing for funds to be used as match from the non-AmeriCorps federal entity.

<u>Match Waiver</u>
Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify for a match waiver, detailed in 45 CFR §2521.70. See the Match Waiver Request Form available on the Montana Formula Program Grant webpage to learn more. To receive consideration requests must be submitted to GOCS by the date specified in the timeline.

<u>Indirect Costs</u>
Budget Section III should include indirect costs; however, no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps State and National grants (45 CFR §2521.95 and §2540.110).
Applicants may use either:
- the AmeriCorps Fixed-percentage method (five/ten percent fixed administrative cost option),
- a Federally-approved indirect cost rate (IDCR), or
- a 15 percent *de minimis* rate (see Attachment B in the Application Instructions),

Applicants 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 with a federal negotiated IDCR or that will use the 15 percent *de minimis* rate must enter that information in the Organization section in eGrants using the AmeriCorps eGrants IDCR User Instructions.

<u>Pre-award Costs</u>
If awarded, applicants may request approval from GOCS to charge the following expenses to the grant prior to the project period. If approved, these expenses must be submitted for reimbursement with the first financial report:
- National Service Criminal History Checks costs
- Supplies including National Service Gear
- Staff time and benefits

APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Application Package
Information necessary to apply is at the Montana Formula Program Grant Webpage. Applicants may email serve@mt.gov or call (406) 444-5547 for printed materials or alternative formats.

How to Submit an Application
Applications must be submitted electronically in eGrants. It is *strongly recommended* that applicants initiate and begin the eGrants application well before the deadline. See the Application Instructions (Associated Documents) for details on creating and submitting an application in eGrants.

Previously awarded AmeriCorps State grant applicants, including planning grants, that are requesting a "new project" application, must request GOCS have an application created when the Letter of Intent is submitted or earlier. eGrants may block applicants who were previously awarded from creating a new application or the match schedule may not be applied correctly.

Applicants should draft the application content in a word processing document, then copy and paste the content into the appropriate eGrants fields. The length of a document in word processing software is typically different than what prints out from eGrants. Follow the page limits.

The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who certifies and submits the application and must use their own eGrants account to do so.

If a problem arises when creating an account or preparing or submitting the application, inform GOCS and contact the AmeriCorps Hotline at 1-800-942-2677 or via Live Chat or Webform. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization name, and the Notice the organization is applying to. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with GOCS and the AmeriCorps Hotline to submit the application via eGrants.

Content and Form of Application
- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: this auto-populates when an applicant completes the Applicant Info in the and My Organization Info in the Application and My Account portions of eGrants, respectively.
- Narratives:
  - Executive Summary
  - Program Design
  - Organizational Capability
  - Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
  - Evaluation Summary/Plan
  - Continuation Changes
  - Clarification
- Performance Measures
- Logic Model
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certification

Page Limits
Page limits are determined by the number of pages printed from eGrants. Character limits in eGrants do not align with page limits set in the Notice, and eGrants will allow applicants to enter text over the page limits. Document length in word processing is different than the eGrants printout.

Applicants should print the Application for Federal Assistance from the "Review and Submit" tab in eGrants before submitting to confirm it does not exceed the page limits. **Content over the page limits will not be reviewed.**

Two application components have page limits that **must** be adhered to: Application & Narratives and Logic Model.
- Application & Narratives - Applications must not exceed **11 pages** when printed from eGrants; this is generally equivalent to the following metrics in MS Word: 12.5 pages, regular margins, in Calibri font, size 11, double-spaced (2.0), with no extra line spacing or indents between headers or paragraphs.
  - Application sections that count towards the page limit are the:
    - SF-424 Face Sheet
    - Narrative portions contained in the Executive Summary, Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy narratives.

- Logic Model – **8 -page** maximum length when printed with the application from the "Review" tab in eGrants.
  - Logic models should be clear and concise, and may be shorter than 8 pages.

- Continuation Changes: must not exceed **6 pages** when printed from eGrants; this is generally equivalent to the following metrics in MS Word: 7.5 pages, regular margins, in Calibri font, size 11, double-spaced (2.0), with no extra line spacing or indents between headers or paragraphs.
  - This page limit includes narrative from both continuation years in the three-year grant cycle.
  - Do not delete any prior continuation changes narrative.
  - Continuation changes should be labeled by program year.

The page limits do not include the Budget; Budget Narrative; Performance Measures; Continuation, Amendment, or Clarification narratives; Evaluation Plan; or any required additional documents.

Submission Dates and Times

<u>Letter of Intent</u>

Applicants must notify GOCS of their intent to apply by **5 pm MST on Thursday March 19, 2026.** Entities intending to apply must submit the following by email it to serve@mt.gov:

- Letter of Intent (LOI) utilizing the template available on the Montana Formula Program Grant webpage
- PDF of current SAM.gov certification and Universal Entity Identifier
- Documentation of Indirect Cost Rate, if applicable
- Confirmation that the Organization's most recent Single Audit is available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse, as applicable per 2 CFR 200.501, or indication that a Single Audit is Not Applicable.

<u>Application Package</u>

Applications are due in eGrants and Additional Documents emailed to serve@mt.gov **by Thursday, April 23, 2026, 5:00 pm Mountain Time.** Incomplete applications will not be considered. Late applications may not be reviewed, see below.

- This deadline applies to all applicants. ServeMontana reserves the right change components of the RFP and to extend the deadline. Any such changes will be posted on the GOCS website.
- **Once the application is submitted in eGrants, notify GOCS by emailing serve@mt.gov.**

<u>Additional Documents</u>

Applicants must submit the following additional documents by the application deadline. Template forms are available on the Montana Formula Program Grant Webpage. Items not requested will not be reviewed or returned.

All Applicants:

- Labor union concurrence (if applicable)
- Federal debt delinquency concurrence (if applicable)
- Match Waiver Request Form (if applicable), available on the Montana Formula Program Grant webpage
- Fixed Amount applicants must submit a completed Budget Worksheet, available on the Montana Formula Program Grant webpage
    - The Budget Worksheet must show the applicant's internal budget meets the Minimum Thresholds outlined in this Notice and is otherwise adequate to operate the proposed program.

New and Recompete Applicants (see also separate sections for New Applicants and Recompete Applicants below):

- Two letters of support
- Organizational Chart
- Evidence documents. See the Evidence Base section of this Notice and Mandatory Supplemental Information for instructions by evidence tier. If multiple evidence documents are submitted by the applicant, the most recent (as measured by the date of completion or publication) will be reviewed first. Documents submitted beyond the allowable number will not be reviewed. Evidence documents that do not sufficiently match the intervention will not be reviewed or receive any points, see Mandatory Supplemental Information for definition of Same Intervention.

New Applicants (Only):

Data collection system description or plan. Must not exceed two pages in Microsoft Word, and includes:

- Description of the applicant's data collection system and how it is sufficient to collect high quality performance measurement data during the first three years of the grant. If the applicant does not yet have a data collection system, describe the plan and timeline for developing a high-quality system.
- Description of how performance data (including AmeriCorps Performance Measures and other process and outcome measures, if applicable) will be used to improve the program in the first three years of funding.

GOCS and AmeriCorps may require submission of data collection instruments if approved for funding. For more information on developing a high-quality data collection plan, For more information on developing a high-quality data collection plan, reach out to GOCS.

Recompete Applicants (Only)
- Applicants who have previously received **three or more years** of funding for the same project being proposed must submit:
  - Evaluation Plan Summary Form using the template found available on the Montana Formula Program Grant webpage. Evaluation plan summaries are not scored and will not be assessed. Applicants approved for funding will be responsible for working with GOCS to confirm they meet all evaluation requirements.
- Applicants who have previously received **six or more years** of funding for the same project being proposed must submit:
  - Evaluation Plan Summary Form as described above, and
  - Evaluation report in Microsoft Word. The evaluation report should include a title page with the AmeriCorps grant number for the project that was evaluated, the name of the project, and the date of completion of the report. If any of this required information is missing, the applicant may not receive credit for meeting the evaluation requirements.

Additional Documents Formatting and Submission
Email Additional Documents to serve@mt.gov with the subject line: [Legal Applicant Name] – [Application ID number].

Emails should include:
- the legal applicant's name and point of contact information
- a list of documents that should be attached to the email
- clearly labelled attachments as individually saved files
- files that include, within each document,
  - a header,
  - the legal applicant's name, and
  - application ID number
- If the file size requires multiple emails, please include an ordering system in the subject line, such as "(1 of 3)"

Late Applications
Applications received after the submission deadline published in this Notice are assumed to be non-compliant. To overcome this presumption, the applicant must provide a written explanation or justification of the 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, and/or
- any other documentation or evidence that supports the justification.

GOCS must receive the written justification no more than one business day after the submission deadline at serve@mt.gov*.* GOCS will determine whether to accept a late application on a case-by-case basis. Applicants that do not submit a justification or other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the timeframe will not be reviewed.

Technical Assistance

GOCS will host technical assistance calls to answer questions about the funding opportunity and eGrants. Applicants are strongly encouraged to participate. Call-in information will be posted on the Montana Formula Program Grant webpage. A written technical assistance period is also available as described in the timeline.

REVIEW CRITERIA FOR NEW AND RECOMPETE APPLICANTS

✓ Each applicant must describe a project to use AmeriCorps members to effectively meet community needs while developing professionally.

✓ Application and budget **quality** are key factors in determining the funding recommendation. For tips on preparing quality AmeriCorps applications, see ServeMontana's Grant Writing Tips and Tricks document.

✓ Applications should be based in evidence, which should be cited using in line citations; reviewers will not review any links or documents external to the application.

✓ Applications must have a well-designed plan with clear and compelling justification for requesting funds. Reviewers will assess the quality of applications by using the selection criteria below and will consider the weights assigned to each criterion.

✓ Applicants should respond to criteria in the order they appear below. Format each narrative subsection heading in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS (for example, when responding to the member experience criteria, the start of that section in the application narrative should read "MEMBER EXPERIENCE," followed by responses to the criteria). Applicants should use subsection points to prioritize the length of information provided.

✓ Prior to submission, applicants should use the assessment criteria and/or Scoring Matrix to review the application or have a peer review. The Scoring Matrix is available on the Montana Formula Grant webpage.

Table: Required Narratives

Required Narrative Fields	Narrative Subsection	Subsection Points
Executive Summary		Pass/Fail
Program Design	COMMUNITY AND LOGIC MODEL	20
	EVIDENCE TIER	12
	EVIDENCE QUALITY	8
	NOTICE PRIORITY	4
	MEMBER EXPERIENCE	6
Organizational Capability	ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND AND STAFFING	15
	MEMBER SUPERVISION	10
Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	MEMBER RECRUITMENT	8
	MEMBER RETENTION	9
	DATA COLLECTION	8

Fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary. ***Do not deviate from the template.***

The [Name of the organization] will have [Number of] AmeriCorps members in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will serve]. AmeriCorps members will [service activities the members will be doing] At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing.]

Additional language for Cost Reimbursement applicants:
The AmeriCorps investment will be matched with $[amount of projected match], $[amount of local, state, and federal funds] in public funding and $[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.

Additional language for Fixed Amount applicants (Full-Cost, EAP, No Cost Slots):
In addition to the AmeriCorps investment, $[amount of local, state, and federal funds] in public funding and $[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding will support the project.

PROGRAM DESIGN NARRATIVE (50 POINTS TOTAL)

Community, Logic Model, and Performance Measures (20 points)
Community
The applicant will provide a detailed summary of the community need, including:
- Data that describes the extent of the need. Applicants should provide in-line citations for studies or data sources described, links will not be reviewed; and
- How the applicant's intervention(s) will lead to the outcomes identified in the organization's Logic Model.

Logic Model
The Logic Model is a visual tool that should include short, medium, and/or long-term outcomes. Applicants are not required to measure all components of the Logic Model. The applicant's performance measures should be consistent with the Logic Model and reflect significant program activities. Applicants with multiple interventions should depict each intervention on a separate line within one Logic Model.

To assist in building the Logic Model, a template is available on the Montana Formula Program Grant webpage.

The applicant must describe in the Logic Model:
- Inputs or resources necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:
  - Locations or sites where members will provide services.
  - Setting and community condition where the intervention is delivered.
  - Number of AmeriCorps members who will deliver the intervention.
  - Characteristics of AmeriCorps members, including specific knowledge, skills, and abilities required to implement the intervention.
- Core activities that members will implement or deliver as part of the intervention, including:
  - Length of each activity (e.g., total number of weeks, sessions, or months of the intervention).
  - Dosage of each activity (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week).
  - Target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level).
- Measurable outputs resulting from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served, types and number of activities conducted). If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as output indicators.

- Outcomes that result from the intervention, including meaningful changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition resulting from the intervention. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

Performance Measures *(see Performance Measure Instructions for full details)*
Performance measures are entered into the Performance Measure module in eGrants. All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output paired with outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. This may be a National Performance Measure or an applicant-determined measure depending on program design; however, applicant-determined performance measures cannot duplicate existing National Performance Measures. Applicants do not need performance measures for every program activity.

Applications may also include National Performance Measure outputs *without* associated outcome(s), provided the output measures a significant program activity. Output-only measures do not fulfill the requirement for an aligned performance measure but may be selected in addition to the aligned measure(s).

Selected Performance Measures must:
- Align with interventions described in the Logic Model.
- Include reasonable targets that are set using the rationale described in the Logic Model.
- Include a description of data collection practices and instruments that are sufficient to ensure reported data is valid, complete, consistent, accurate, and verifiable.

Staff will review the performance measure section using Appendix B: Performance Measures Checklist found in the Performance Measure Instructions.

Evidence Base
Evidence Tier (12 points)
An evidence tier will be assessed for each applicant for the purpose of understanding the relative strength of each applicant's evidence base and the likelihood the proposed intervention will lead to outcomes identified in the logic model. All evidence tiers are defined in the Mandatory Supplemental Information. Applicants must meet all requirements of an evidence tier to be considered for that tier. If the evaluation reports submitted by the applicant do not meet the definitions in the Mandatory Supplemental Information, the applicant may be considered for a lower evidence tier.

In 2025, the evidence tiers of competing applicants recommended for AmeriCorps State and National funding were as follows: 57% Strong, 11% Moderate, 25% Preliminary, 7% Pre-Preliminary. AmeriCorps values and funds programs all along the evidence continuum and expects programs to progress along the evidence continuum over time. **Applicants should not be deterred from applying due to their current evidence level**.

To qualify for the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tier, the applicant submits the evaluation report from their last three-year grant cycle (if applicable) and/or up to two additional evidence documents (see Mandatory Supplemental Information for guidance by evidence tier). See Additional Documents for submission instructions.

In the Evidence Tier subsection of the application narrative, applicants must:
- Summarize the study design and key findings of any submitted evidence document and, if applicable, the evaluation report from their last 3-year grant cycle; and
- Describe any other evidence that supports the program, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies that inform the program design.

Applicants should provide in-line citations for any studies described. Links will not be reviewed.

Evidence Quality (8 points)
Reviewers will score the quality of the applicant's evidence and the extent to which it supports the proposed program design.

Standards for scoring submitted evidence documents in the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tiers:
- Are of satisfactory methodological quality and rigor for the type of evaluation conducted (e.g., adequate sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, appropriate use of control or comparison groups).
- Describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years; and
- Show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries or AmeriCorps members in at least one key outcome of interest.

Standards for scoring submitted evidence in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier:
- The applicant uses relevant evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies, to inform the proposed program design;
- The described evidence is relatively recent, preferably from the last six years; and
- The evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries or AmeriCorps members in at least one key outcome of interest.

Applicants assessed in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier who do not provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality standards will not meet the minimum threshold requirements for this Notice and will not be considered for funding.

All applicants are required to provide additional information in the form of an Evaluation Plan Summary Form or a Performance Data Collection System or Plan detailed by applicant type in the Additional Documents section; However, information provided will not be scored and will not be reviewed until after funding is determined.

Notice Priority (4 points)
The applicant describes how the proposed program fits within:
- One or more of the AmeriCorps funding priorities outlined in this notice that are a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes, and
- the current Montana State Service Plan, and
- If applicable, one or more of the Governor and First Lady or Montana funding priorities as outlined in this Notice.

Member Experience (6 points)
The applicant describes how AmeriCorps members will be provided with:
- Service to career, leadership, personal growth, and skill development in support of a lifetime of civic participation,
- Connection and orientation to the community,
- An enhanced experience through civic reflections, and
- Elevator pitch training so that participants, staff, and the community know they are AmeriCorps members.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY (25 POINTS TOTAL)

Organizational Background and Staffing (15 points)

The applicant describes:

- The roles, responsibilities, and structure of staff who will implement and oversee the program, including but not limited to demonstrating the organization has sufficient policies, procedures, and controls to effectively implement a federal grant.
    - This should include an oversight plan to prevent and detect non-compliance and enforce compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations, including prohibited and unallowable activities, and criminal history checks.
- How the applicant will incorporate AmeriCorps members into its organization, such as in fiscal reporting, human resources, leadership staff, and relevant systems.

Member Supervision (10 points)

The applicant describes:

- How AmeriCorps members will receive sufficient guidance and support from the site supervisor to provide effective service, such as regular supervisor/member check-ins, member and supervisor opportunities to assess strengths, opportunities for growth, member training plan, etc.
- How host site supervisors will be trained to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations and expectations.

COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (25 POINTS TOTAL)

All organizations applying for a program grant must respond to the following criteria, regardless of grant type.

Member Recruitment (8 points)

- The applicant describes budget expenses to support inclusive recruitment of AmeriCorps members where different backgrounds and capabilities are welcomed and prepared to serve the community.

Member Retention (9 points)

- The applicant describes budget expenses to support AmeriCorps member retention, which may include additional member benefits, supporting service to career pathways through resume building and certifications, regular coaching, network and community building, member recognition, and other appropriate supports.

Data Collection (8 Points)

- The applicant describes budgeted items that support data collection and evaluation, including the process for collecting and maintaining high-quality performance data from your organization and community partners, how data will be analyzed, and how this will ensure timely and accurate reporting.

Proposed budgets that exceed the maximum cost per MSY, do not meet the required match and minimum living allowance amounts, and do not include all minimum budget threshold items may be considered unresponsive to the application review criteria. GOCS staff will conduct a "budget check" on the application's budget, budget narrative and for Fixed Amount applicants, the budget worksheet. Budget checks will note deficiencies such as unclear calculations, incorrect dollar amounts, and misalignment with budget instructions, and will be provided to the applicant to adjust the budget during clarification without modifying approved CNCS or Grantee totals.

EVALUATION PLAN (0 POINTS)

Enter "N/A." Any other text entered in this field will not be reviewed.

AMENDMENT JUSTIFICATION (0 POINTS)

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

CLARIFICATION INFORMATION (0 POINTS)

Enter "N/A." This field will be used to enter information that requires clarification in the post-review period.

CONTINUATION CHANGES (0 POINTS)

Enter "N/A" if new or recompeting applicant. This field is used to enter continuation narratives for continuation requests. Continuation changes should be labeled by program year. Do not delete prior year's continuation changes, if applicable.

REVIEW CRITERIA FOR CONTINUATION APPLICATIONS

Applicants should respond to the following subsections. The Continuation Changes narrative should start with the header "FY2026 Continuation Changes," followed by responses to the criteria below. Applicants should not delete any existing narrative from this field.

Continuation applicants should prioritize addressing the Review Criteria for Continuation Applicants, below. Applicants may also address the Continuation Changes fields listed in the Application Instructions.

CHANGES IN PROGRAM SCOPE OR DESIGN (5 POINTS)

The applicant describes and justifies any changes in program scope or design (e.g., changes in focus area, priority area, intervention, number or type of MSY, etc.) or describes how there are no changes.

CHANGES TO PERFORMANCE MEASURES (5 POINTS)

The applicant describes and justifies any changes to performance measures or goals (e.g., changes to described data collection tools, updates to targets, removing a performance measure), or describes how there are no changes.

CHANGES TO PROGRAM MANAGEMENT STAFFING OR STRUCTURE (5 POINTS)

The applicant describes and justifies any changes to program and fiscal management staffing or structure, or describes that there are no changes. Changes to staffing include primary program staff, organizational staff who play a key role in supporting the program, or leadership staff. Changes to structure might include the level of staffing assigned to manage or support the program, an update to the organizational chart that impacts the AmeriCorps program, etc.

BUDGET, MATCH, AND COST PER MSY (15 POINTS)

The applicant describes and justifies changes to the budget, match, and/or cost per MSY.

STAFF ASSESSMENT (20 POINTS)

AmeriCorps Montana programs operate on one of two timelines, September through August, or January through December.

For **September through August** program applicants, the GOCS staff assessment will provide reviewers with:
- past performance information for each applicant from the last full program year (FY2024) including compliance and risk; member enrollment, retention, and exit; and performance measures. At the time of the grant review, programs on this timeline will not have been operating in the current grant year (FY2025) long enough to provide performance data to GOCS for the current year so far.

For **January through December** program applicants, the GOCS staff assessment will provide reviewers with
- past performance information for each applicant from the last full program year (FY2023) including compliance and risk; member enrollment, retention, and exit; and performance measures, and
- the most up-to-date information available regarding the current program year (FY2024) at the time of the staff assessment and the grant review, as the program will have almost completed the current program year and GOCS will have performance data on file at the time of the grant review.

For all continuation applicants, information on member enrollment, retention, and exit, will be obtained from eGrants S & N Reports. The application budget request will be compared to the previous year's (FY2024) application.

APPLICATION REVIEW AND AWARD DETERMINATION PROCESS

Montana Application Review
Applications cleared through the following review process will be sent to AmeriCorps for funding approval.
- GOCS staff review Letters of Intent, Additional Documents, Audit Report as applicable, Minimum Thresholds, and other requirements as articulated in this Notice. If it is determined the applicant appears to have sufficient capacity to manage federal grants, they may continue in the application process.
- Applications are reviewed for compliance with pertinent state and federal regulations, and responsiveness to the RFP. All compliant and responsive applications will continue through the review process.
- Applications passing staff review will next be reviewed by a Grant Review Workgroup.
- The Grant Review Workgroup will individually score the applications, then convene with applicant representatives present to arrive at consensus scores, ranking of applicants, and a funding recommendation.
- The funding recommendation is presented to the Montana Commission on Community Service for approval. If the funding recommendation is rejected by the Commission the review process may be repeated.
- Following approval of the funding recommendation, applicants may receive time sensitive requests to provide clarifying information and/or make required changes to the application.

If unforeseen circumstances make it impossible, impracticable, or inefficient to conduct the review process as planned, GOCS and AmeriCorps reserve the right to adjust or make changes to the review process anytime. Adjustments or changes will not affect the review criteria.

Funding Priority
Applicants will be placed into the following Priority Tiers. Within each tier, applicants will be ranked based on consensus scores by the Grant Review Workgroup, and a lower scoring application will not be recommended for funding at the expense of a higher scoring one.

Table: Funding Priority Tiers

Priority Tiers
1. Recommended, but not awarded, Competitive programs
2. Formula program continuation and recompete applicants
3. New Formula program and planning applicants, ranked by consensus scores

GOCS and AmeriCorps reserve the right to award applications in an amount other than at the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so. When making funding recommendations, the Grant Review Workgroup will consider the score of the application, the effectiveness of the program in addressing Montana's needs in the State Service Plan, the priorities, if any, set by the Governor, and the input of commission staff.

Applicant Clarification & Resolution

After review but before award, applicants may receive time sensitive requests for additional information and/or changes to the application package after notification. Failure to respond promptly to these requests may result in denial of funding. AmeriCorps will ask all subrecipients for a written compliance implementation plan that includes notification of waste, fraud, and abuse to the agency's Office of Inspector General.

Pre-Award Risk Assessment

AmeriCorps will assess the risks posed by each applicant and assess 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 based on the Review Criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. If AmeriCorps determines an award will be made to an applicant with assessed risks, then special conditions corresponding to the degree of assessed risk may be applied to the award. Applicants may not be selected for funding if AmeriCorps determines the applicant's risks cannot be mitigated.

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:
  - 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

Operational and Financial Management:
- Financial stability
- Operational and Financial Management Survey

Past Performance:
- Applicant's record in managing previous AmeriCorps awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards:
  - Timely compliance with applicable reporting requirements
  - Accuracy of data reported
  - Validity of performance measure data reported
  - Conformity to the terms and conditions of previous federal awards
  - Ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements
  - 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 compliance

Other Programmatic Risks:
- Publicly available information, including from the applicant organization's website
- Amount of funding requested
- Other elements, such as keyword searches for prohibited activities

Applicants will find information to help them understand pre-award due diligence checks in the AmeriCorps Due Diligence Review Process and Compliance training available on the [Manage Your Grant](#) webpage. This content will help applicants obtain due diligence compliance and remain compliant throughout the grant life.

Consideration of Integrity and Performance System Information
Before making any award that exceeds $250,000, AmeriCorps must review and consider information about the applicant from the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov. Any applicant may comment on information previously entered by another federal agency in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM.gov. AmeriCorps may consider applicant comments when completing its review of risk. AmeriCorps may also consider other information about any applicant receiving an award, including those under $250,000.

Transparency in Grantmaking
Submitted program narratives, executive summaries, a blank template of the external review worksheet, and a list of all external reviewers who completed the review process for successful applications will be available upon request via email to serve@mt.gov.

Re-Focusing Funding
AmeriCorps/GOCS reserve the right to refocus funding in the event of disaster or other compelling need for service.

FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Disclosure: Awards made under this Notice may be terminated by the agency if it no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities.

Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates
AmeriCorps will make awards following the selection announcement. AmeriCorps anticipates announcing the results of this funding opportunity in summer 2026 to State Commissions, contingent on the availability of congressional appropriations. Applicants will then be notified by GOCS of funding decisions. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. A formal Notice of Grant Award will be produced and the state subaward contracting process will be initiated.

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

Requests for Monitoring or Payment Integrity Information
AmeriCorps will request information to ensure compliance with legal requirements, including the [Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019](#). If grantees do not respond timely to these requests, award funds may be placed on manual hold or reimbursement only status, or other restrictions may be applied as appropriate.

AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions
All grantees and subrecipients must follow the FY2026 AmeriCorps General Terms and Conditions, and the FY2026 AmeriCorps State and National Terms and Conditions. These Terms and Conditions contain mandatory compliance and reporting requirements, and applicants should review these instructions prior to any grant award. Current versions of the AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions are available on the [AmeriCorps Manage Your Grant](#).

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. See 45 CFR 2540.200– 2540.207 and National Service Criminal History Check Resources for complete guidance. Failure to fully comply with all NSCHC requirements will result in significant disallowed costs and unpleasant consequences.

Reporting
If awarded, subrecipients are required to submit a variety of reports which are due at specific times during the award. All reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time. Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the recipient's ability to secure future GOCS and AmeriCorps funding. Reports include program progress reports, financial reports, and close-out reporting. Reported performance measure and performance indicator data must be high-quality

AGENCY CONTACTS

Montana Governor's Office of Community Service
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
General email: serve@mt.gov

Program Officer: 406-444-5547
kristina.jordan@mt.gov
Fiscal Officer: 406-444-1809
keena.irby@mt.gov

OTHER INFORMATION

Resources applicants need to effectively manage their grant award, including eGrants instructions, terms and conditions, pre-award requirements, financial reporting requirements, and training and technical assistance materials are found on the Manage Your Grant webpage.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Public Burden Statement
Public reporting burden for collection of information under this Notice of Funding is estimated to average eighty (80) 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 they are not required to respond unless the OMB control number and expiration date are current and valid. Use 5 CFR 1320.5(b)(2)(i). This collection is approved under OMB Control *#:* 3045-0047, Application Instructions, State and National, New and Continuation, Expiration Date: September 30, 2026.

Privacy Act Statement
The Privacy Act of 1974 5 U.S.C. §552a, requires that applicants are notified 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.
- 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.
- 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.

ServeMontana, the Governor's Office of Community Service
Commission Staff Assessment of Continuation Applicant Past Performance

Commission (GOCS aka ServeMontana) staff will complete the following assessment for all continuation applicants.

1) Applicant:
2) Federal Request:
3) Total Match:
4) Match %:

	FY2025 Application Request	FY2026 Application Request	Difference
Federal Funds			$0
Cash Match			$0
In-Kind Match			$0
Total Match	$0	$0	$0
Match %	#DIV/0!	0%	#DIV/0!
Project Cost	$0	$0	$0
MSY	-		0.00
Cost per MSY	$0	$0	$0
Living Allowance	$0	$0	$0

5) Assessment of past performance and
- Budget, match, and cost per MSY
- Compliance and risk
- Member enrollment rate and 8-day enrollment period compliance
- Member retention and 30-day exit window compliance
- Performance measures
    i. Prior application measures and targets versus current application request
    ii. Last full grant year performance versus goals
    iii. Current grant year performance versus goals (if applicable)

End of AmeriCorps State Grant Request for Proposal (RFP)