

## AmeriCorps State FFY2022 Formula Operating Grant

### NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABLE (NOFA) REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

This *Notice* outlines the process for applying for an AmeriCorps State 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 (OCS aka ServeMontana). The level and timing of grant funding is subject to annual appropriations. OCS reserves the right to modify any component of this RFP, at any time.

#### **Notice of Funding Available (NOFA)**

This *Notice* is the first in a multistep process an applicant must complete to apply for and receive AmeriCorps State Formula operating grant 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. A description of the process used by AmeriCorps is contained in this *Notice*. This *Notice* should be read together with AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 C.F.R.2520–2550, Mandatory Supplemental Information, Application Instructions, and Performance Measure Instructions which are incorporated by reference. It is recommended that applicants review federal regulations at [www.ecfr.gov](http://www.ecfr.gov) and grant management materials on [AmeriCorps' website](#).

#### **ServeMontana**

Montana's Commission on Community Service was established in 1993 to administer grants under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, amended by the Edward M Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009. Under the Montana Commission on Community Service, ServeMontana administers funds to AmeriCorps State programs, encourages citizens of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to engage in service, involves youth in the life and work of communities, and strengthen volunteerism for all Montanans.

**Expectations** ServeMontana expects all respondents to display the following features:

- ✓ 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
- ✓ Collaborative approach to program planning, design, and the delivery
- ✓ Recruits Montanans to serve in their local community
- ✓ Inclusive design and delivery, the program is accessible to individuals with disabilities

#### **Purpose of AmeriCorps Funding**

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based interventions to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in service through an approved National Service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving but are not employees. Upon successful completion of service, members earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust. Commonly referred to as the 'Ed Award', members receive a voucher that can be

used to pay higher education expenses or for qualified student loans, for up to seven years. Members age 55+ may be able to transfer their Education Award.

### **Who Should Apply To This *Notice Of Funding Available (NOFA)*?**

Organizations continuing a formula funded program or proposing a new AmeriCorps State program that operates only in Montana must apply to this competition. The Governor's Office of Community Service will engage a Grant Review Workgroup to review and score grants through a selection process, described in this *Notice*, and select applicants for recommended funding. Funding recommendations are presented to the full Montana Commission of Community Service for approval. Applicants who receive funding for AmeriCorps programs through this *Notice* are overseen by the Governor's Office of Community Service (OCS) in all areas of grant management.

Applying to this Notice is required for AmeriCorps programs that propose to serve primarily in the state of Montana. Tribes and Tribal organizations may apply through this *Notice* or may choose to apply directly to AmeriCorps. 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.

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 apply to the [Montana AmeriCorps State Planning Grant FY2022 Notice of Funding Available](#).

### **Montana AmeriCorps State Process**

To be eligible for consideration, an applicant must meet the intent of all the requirements listed in the *Notice*. ServeMontana will determine whether the submitted materials comply with the requirements in accordance with standards of responsibility set forth in [ARM 2.5.407](#). Federal awarding requirements are incorporated into this notice per ARM 2.5.407(6)(e). Applicant responses that do not meet the full intent of all requirements listed in this RFP may be deemed unresponsive and will not be considered. Such a determination may be made at any time during the process if information surfaces that would result in the determination of non-responsibility.

### **Dual Points of Contact - All Applicants**

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

Joe Naiman-Sessions, OCS Grants Manager  
ph: 406.444.5547  
[joe.naiman-sessions@mt.gov](mailto:joe.naiman-sessions@mt.gov)

Sheree Isola, OCS Financial Manager  
ph: 406.444.1809  
[ShIsola@mt.gov](mailto:ShIsola@mt.gov)

### **Costs/Ownership of Materials**

The applicant is solely responsible for all costs it incurs prior to contract execution. The State shall own all materials submitted in response to this RFP.

## CONTENTS

<b>Notice of Funding Available (NOFA) Request For Proposals (RFP) .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Timeline.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Funding Priorities .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>AmeriCorps Focus Areas &amp; Performance Measures .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Eligibility and Application Type Information .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Federal Award Information .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Federal Funding Restrictions and Budget Considerations.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Application and Submission Information .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Review Criteria for New and Recompete Applicants .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Review Criteria for Continuation Applications .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Application Review and Award Determination Process .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Federal Award Administration Requirements.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Agency Contacts .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Other Information .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Important notices.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: Staff Assessment.....</b>	<b>35</b>

## TIMELINE

<b>March 21, 2022</b>	<b>Official posting of the <i>Notice</i></b>
<b>March 30, 2022</b>	Formula Technical Assistance Teleconference
<b>April 15, 2022</b>	<b>All applicants, due to <a href="mailto:serve@mt.gov">serve@mt.gov</a> by 5pm Mountain Time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter of Intent (LOI)</li> <li>• PDF of current SAM &amp; CCR registration, <a href="https://www.sam.gov/portal/SAM/#1">https://www.sam.gov/portal/SAM/#1</a></li> <li>• Documentation of Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate, <i>if applicable</i></li> <li>• New Applicant Readiness Self-Assessment</li> <li>• Current organization audit, <i>if applicable</i></li> </ul>
<b>April 9, 2022</b>	Last day to submit an Alternative Match Request
<b>April 18-22, 2022</b>	<b>Technical assistance period*</b> Submit questions via email to <a href="mailto:serve@mt.gov">serve@mt.gov</a> .
<b>April 28, 2022</b>	<b><u>New and Recompete Formula applicants: Application Due Date 5pm Mountain Time</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Application, submitted in eGrants <a href="https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp">https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Additional Documents</a>, submitted via email to <a href="mailto:serve@mt.gov">serve@mt.gov</a> (See Page 18)</li> <li>• <a href="#">AmeriCorps Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS)</a></li> </ul>
<b>May 11, 2022</b>	<b>Formula Operating and Planning Grant Review Workgroup Meeting</b>
<b>May 18, 2022</b>	<b>Commission Meeting</b>
<b>May 19-26, 2022</b>	<b>Applicant clarification period</b> – All recommended applicants
<b>May 26, 2022</b>	<b>Clarified applications resubmitted in eGrants</b> <i>no later</i> than 5pm
<b>July 2022</b>	<b>Applicants notified of funding determination</b>

### \*Technical Assistance

Participation in the technical assistance period is optional, and highly encouraged. Applicants are encouraged to use the opportunity to ask clarifying questions, obtain a better understanding of the RFP process, the project, and to notify the State of any ambiguities, inconsistencies, or errors discovered in this RFP. All questions and written responses will be posted on the ServeMontana website at <http://serve.mt.gov/AmeriCorps/ameri-corps-grants>.

## FUNDING PRIORITIES

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

### Montana State Service Plan

The 2022-2024 Montana State Service Plan outlines the goals and objectives of the Governor's Office on Community Service (OCS). Applicants should strive to implement evidence-based service strategies to meet one or more needs identified in the State Service Plan, visit <http://serve.mt.gov/About/State-Service-Plan>.

### Governor's Priorities

- American Indian Affairs- Partner with Tribal Nations and people to help create more and better opportunities. OCS seeks to engage Tribal members into service with Montana's AmeriCorps programs and to foster programs that make real impacts in addressing the diverse needs facing Montana's Tribal Nations, with cultural competency.
- Improve Education and Empower Montana's Workforce – Provide better resources for K-12 Educators, prepare Montana students for the jobs of tomorrow, and to bring our kids and grandkids home to serve in AmeriCorps. Students who receive quality learning are more likely to read at grade level, graduate from high school, and earn more money as adults.
- Promote Stewardship of Montana's Public Lands – Bring Montanans together in service interventions that result in healthier landscapes, more recreational opportunities, more jobs, less severe wildfires, and improve 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, connect them with employment opportunities, and provide services for veterans to fulfill their hopes and dreams. OCS seeks to engage veterans into service with Montana's AmeriCorps programs and to foster programs that make real impacts in addressing the diverse needs facing Montana's veterans and military families.

### Montana Encouraged Program Elements

- Program design that incorporates National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service's recommendations in their Final Report Appendix C, Best Practices in Civic Education and Service Learning. AmeriCorps members should receive impactful civic education and/or service-learning as part of member development that increases knowledge and deepens the members' ethic of service.
- 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 Priorities

AmeriCorps seeks to prioritize the investment of National Service resources in the following areas:

- Efforts that support and aid local communities respond to and recover from COVID-19 disruptions including impacts to student subgroups described in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
- Educational opportunity and economic mobility for communities experiencing persistent unemployment or underemployment, and students experiencing homelessness or those in foster care.
- Programs that prioritize civic engagement and social cohesion.
- 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.<sup>1</sup>
- Veterans and Military Families, Caregivers, and Survivors – a program model that improves the quality of life of veterans and improves the well-being of military families, caregivers, and survivors.
- Rural intermediaries - organizations that demonstrate measurable impact and primarily serve rural communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure.
- Environmental stewardship and climate change including renewable energy and energy efficiency, building community resilience, sustainable food systems and agriculture, and conservation and habitat preservation.
- Faith-based organizations.

---

<sup>1</sup> AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange: <https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange>

## AMERICORPS FOCUS AREAS & PERFORMANCE MEASURES

### Focus Areas

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, amended by the 2009 Serve America Act, emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focuses on a core set of issue areas. To carry out Congress' intent and to maximize the impact of investment in National Service, AmeriCorps maintains six primary Focus Areas:

Disaster Services Grants provide support to increase the personal preparedness of individuals for disasters; improve individuals' readiness to respond to disasters; help individuals recover from disasters; and/or help communities mitigate disasters.

Economic Opportunity Grants provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people; help those people have improved access to services that enhance financial literacy; transition into or remain in safe, affordable housing; and/or have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed.

Education Grants provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved education outcomes for economically disadvantaged students; improved school readiness for economically disadvantaged children; improved educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools; and/or support economically disadvantaged students prepare for success in post-secondary educational institutions.

Environmental Stewardship Grants support responsible stewardship of the environment, while preparing communities for challenging circumstances and helping Americans respond to and recover from disruptive life events: programs that conserve natural habitats; protect clean air and water; maintain public lands; support wildland fire mitigation; cultivate individual and community self-sufficiency and provide reforestation services after floods or fires.

Healthy Futures Grants provide support for activities to address the opioid crisis; increase seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible; and/or increase physical activity and improve nutrition with the purpose of reducing obesity.

Veterans and Military Families Grants positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength, and increase the number of veterans, wounded warriors, military service members, and their families benefiting from service with AmeriCorps.

Capacity Building Grants provide support for capacity building activities provided by AmeriCorps members. As a general rule, capacity building activities are *indirect services* that enable organizations to provide more, better, and sustained *direct services* in the above six focus areas. Capacity building *cannot* be solely intended to support the administration/operations of the organization. Examples include recruiting and/or managing community volunteers, implementing effective volunteer management practices, conducting community assessments that identify goals and recommendations, developing new systems and processes (technology, performance management, training, etc.), or enhancing existing systems and business processes.

## Performance Measures

AmeriCorps has aligned National Performance Measures with its Focus areas. All operational program applications must include at least one applicant determined or National Performance Measure (output and outcome) which corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. All performance measures must be consistent with the program's Theory of Change and represent significant program activities. Every potential member activity or community impact should not be represented by a performance measure. Additional performance measures, including output-only National Performance Measures, may be included. OCS values quality of performance measures over a quantity of performance measures.

AmeriCorps expects applicants to use National Performance Measures as part of their comprehensive performance management strategy if the National Performance Measures are part of the applicant's theory of change. Applicants should use both performance and evaluation data to learn from their program activities as well as make tactical and strategic adjustments to achieve their goals.

*Refer to [AmeriCorps Performance Measure Instructions](#) for detailed information on performance measure statements, requirements, and data collection expectations.*

## ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION TYPE INFORMATION

### Eligible Entities

The following non-Federal entities, as defined in 2 CFR §200.69, who are registered in System for Award Management (SAM) are eligible to apply:

- Indian Tribes, 2 CFR §200.54: In addition to being eligible to apply under this Notice, federally recognized Indian Tribes are also eligible to apply under a separate Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity for Indian Tribes for operating or planning grants.
- Institutions of higher education, 2 CFR §200.54
- Local governments, 2 CFR §200.64
- Nonprofit organizations, 2 CFR §200.70
- States, 2 CFR §200.90

### System for Award Management (SAM) & Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number

All applicants must register with the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete and, if a grant is awarded, throughout the life of the Award. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

Applications must also include a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and an Employer Identification Number (EIN). The UEI number does not replace an EIN. UEI and Dun and Bradstreet (DUNS) numbers are not the same. For UEI and EIN numbers to appear on the application they must be entered in the "My Account" portion of eGrants



under “Edit Organization’s Attributes.” Organizations with an existing DUNS number should also provide it in the Organization’s Attributes.

- Current SAM.gov registrants have been assigned their UEI and can view it within SAM.gov.
- New SAM.gov registrants will be assigned a UEI upon registration with SAM.gov and can view it there.
- OCS suggests finalizing a new registration or renewing an existing one at least two weeks before the application deadline to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise.
- *The legal applicant’s name and address listed on the 424 Facesheet must match the SAM entity name and physical address exactly.* Applicants that do not comply with these requirements are ineligible to receive an award.

### **State and Territory Service Commissions (for Single-State Applicants)**

Organizations that propose to operate in only one state must apply through the Governor-appointed State Service Commission. Each state and territory commission administer its own selection process and submits the selected applications to compete for funding directly to AmeriCorps. A Single-State application from a State or Territory with a Commission that is submitted directly to AmeriCorps by the applicant instead of the Commission will be is unresponsive and will not be reviewed. See the Mandatory Supplemental Information for applicant descriptions.

### **Federally Recognized Indian Tribes in Montana**

Indian Tribes proposing to only operate in Montana are eligible to apply to this Notice, or may apply directly to [AmeriCorps Indian Tribes Grants National Direct Opportunity](#). If interested in pursuing an AmeriCorps Indian Tribes Grant, please reach out to the OCS Grants Manager for more information.

In addition to Indian Tribes (2 CFR §200.54), tribal organizations controlled, sanctioned, and chartered by Indian Tribes are also eligible to apply. An entity applying on behalf of one or more federally recognized tribe(s) must submit a Tribal Council adopted sanctioning resolution which covers entire of the period of performance. The resolution must identify the entity by name as a tribal organization and indicate whether it is controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by an Indian Tribe(s). It must authorize the entity to be the legal applicant and act on behalf of and include the Indian Tribe(s) in a AmeriCorps application for the purpose of conducting the activities and providing the services described in the application.

### **Application Types**

#### New Application

Organizations that are seeking to operate an AmeriCorps program, have never received AmeriCorps funding, and place members in the first year of funding are encouraged to apply to this Montana Formula Operating Grant notice. Montana Formula Operating Grant applicants may propose up to a 6-month planning period prior to placing members. Applicants proposing a planning period on an operating grant must outline the planning and member placement timelines in the grant narrative, and all grant funded activities must be concluded within 1 calendar year. Organizations seeking a planning period longer than 6 months and/or with no members should apply for a Planning Grant. For more information, refer to the [Montana Formula Planning Grant Notice of Funding Available](#).

### Continuation Application - funding information and requirements

Organizations that have current awards that continue beyond FFY2022 must apply in order to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. See the Application Instructions, if applicable. Requests by existing continuation applicants for significant increases/decreases in the level of funding or number of positions will be assessed using the review criteria published in this Notice. The review will also be based on progress reports, financial reports, evaluation plans, and OCS staff knowledge of the grant program. To be approved for continuation funding, recipients must demonstrate satisfactory performance with respect to key program goals and requirements, as well as compliance with grant terms and conditions.

*In addition to the Application Instructions continuation narrative, be sure to concisely address the following [Review Criteria for Continuation Applicants](#): Budget, Match & MSY, Compliance Findings, Member Enrollment, Member Retention and Performance Measure Progress.*

Continuation applicant's performance measures must align with the 2022 Performance Measure Instructions. To revise performance measures, "View/Edit" the performance measures that copy from your original application or add new performance measures. In the eGrants application Continuation Changes field, note updates to any performance measures. If significant increases or decreases to output or outcome targets for existing measures are proposed, provide a justification for the change.

OCS and 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.

### Recompete Application

Previously awarded organizations whose AmeriCorps Operational funding three-year award period is ending, may apply to this Notice as a recompete applicant. Only organizations who have successfully operated AmeriCorps programs for a minimum of 5 years programs and consulted OCS are eligible to apply for Fixed Amount Grants.

### **Minimum Thresholds for All Applications**

Applications should meet all threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying.

- All applicants should request at least 5 member service years. Applicants with less than 5 MSY will be deemed nonresponsive and will not be reviewed.
- All applicants should budget for travel to the ServeMT Symposium in Helena for all staff and Members. Symposium takes place annually in early March.
- Applicants should budget staff travel and staff training on the for 1-2 staff to attend the America's Service Commission's Program Boot Camp in Fall 2021 in Austin, TX, ServeMontana Symposium in March 2022.
- If an applicant is applying for a Professional Corps grant, the application must demonstrate the areas affected has an inadequate number of professionals in the given concentration of operation.

- If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (for example, tutoring: 45 C.F.R. §2522.910-.940) the applicant must describe how the program will meet the requirements.
- All applicants must propose program designs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. Applicants assessed as lower than the Preliminary evidence tier must provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality review criteria to be considered for funding.

### **Other Eligibility Requirements**

Under section 132A(b) of the National Community Service Act, organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this *Notice*. Applications that propose to engage in activities that are prohibited under statutes, regulations, or the terms and conditions of its awards are not eligible to receive funding.

Note that under section 745 of Title VII, Division E of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, if AmeriCorps is aware that any corporation has any unpaid Federal tax liability,

- which 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 which a Federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has made a determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the Federal Government.) A similar restriction may be enacted with the appropriation which will fund awards under this *Notice*.

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in Section 501(c)(4) of 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.

## **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.](#))

### **Available Funds**

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

### **Estimated Award Amount**

Grant awards have two components: operating funds and AmeriCorps member positions with corresponding Education Award amounts. Grant award amounts vary – both in the level of operating funds and in the type and amount of AmeriCorps member positions – as determined by the scope of the project proposed by the applicant.

## Project and Award Period

The grant award covers a three-year project period unless otherwise specified. The project period and budget are typically one year, with a start date proposed by the applicant. In most cases, the application is submitted with a one-year budget. Continuation funding for subsequent years is not guaranteed and shall be dependent upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance.

The project start date may not occur prior to the date AmeriCorps awards the grant. AmeriCorps members may not enroll prior to the start date of the award. AmeriCorps members may not begin service prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period as designated in the grant award. A program may not certify any hours a member performs prior to the beginning of the member enrollment period. The earliest suggested program start date is September 1, 2022, with the understanding some applicants may choose to operate on the calendar year.

## Type of Award

AmeriCorps Operating Grants: AmeriCorps may award a Cost Reimbursement or a Fixed Amount grant to any successful applicant, the availability of a Fixed Amount grant is limited to certain applicants. AmeriCorps will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year. More info under *Eligible Applicants* section and the Mandatory Supplemental Information.

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement, line item	Fixed Amount		
		<i>Note: Under current AmeriCorps policy, a program must achieve 100% member retention rate to receive the full amount of a fixed grant award. Montana's member retention expectation is 90%</i>		
Available Subtypes	Traditional	Full-Cost	Professional Corps for further requirements	No Cost Slots
Maximum Cost per MSY	\$28,800	\$28,800	\$1,000	\$0
Type of Slots in the National Service Trust	FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT	FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT	FT Only	FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT
Budget Submission Required	Yes	No	Yes, if requesting operating funds	No
Availability of Funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSYs	No	Yes		No
Special Requirements	N/A	N/A	Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries and benefits must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in budget.	N/A

\*Per 42 U.S.C. § 12581a, the AmeriCorps may provide the operational support under this section for a program in an amount that is not more than \$800 per individual enrolled in an approved national service position, or not more than \$1,000 per such individual if at least 50 percent of the persons enrolled in the program are disadvantaged youth.

## 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 Member Service Years (MSY) requested using the below MSY calculations. See the Application Instructions for more details.

**Table: Member Service Year (MSY) Calculations**

Slot Type	Minimum # of Hours	Member Service Year (MSY)
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	0.021164022

### Cost per MSY

The AmeriCorps cost per MSY is determined by dividing the Federal share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested (Budget Section II.). 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 requestable is set by AmeriCorps on an annual basis. Subapplicants cannot exceed the maximum cost per MSY for the respective grant type. Applications that exceed that Maximum may be considered unresponsive to the requirements.

**Table: Maximum Cost per MSY**

Grant Program	Maximum
Montana Formula Operational Grantee (cost reimbursement & fixed)	\$28,800
Professional Corps Fixed Amount Applicants/Grantees	\$1,000*

\*AmeriCorps requires **Professional Corps** programs to cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non AmeriCorps resources. AmeriCorps will only consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate significant organizational financial need.

## Member Living Allowance

A living allowance is not considered a salary or 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 and capacity. If a program provides a living allowance to a less than full-time member, it must comply with the 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.

While Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to submit detailed budgets, they are required to provide a living allowance that complies with the minimum and maximum requirements.

**Table: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance**

Slot Type	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1,700	\$18,000	\$33,004
Three Quarter-time	1,200	n/a	\$23,103
Half-time	900	n/a	\$16,502
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	\$12,542
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$8,581
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$6,931

## Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements

Programs existing prior to September 21, 1993 are not required to offer a living allowance. If an applicant chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement, but not the maximum requirement.

Professional Corps Grantees must provide members a living allowance or salary, which must meet the minimum, but 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).

## Cost Reimbursement Grants - Line Item

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. 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 each year, to 50% by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in 45CFR§2521.60 and below.

**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%	30%	34%	38%	42%	46%	50%

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. OCS requires documented permission allowing for funds to be used as match from the non-AmeriCorps entity.

### **Fixed Amount Grants**

There is no specific match requirement for Fixed Amount grants. AmeriCorps does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program, therefore organizations should raise the additional revenue required to operate the program. *Only applicants who have successfully operated AmeriCorps programs for a minimum of 6 years programs and have consulted with OCS are eligible to apply for Fixed Amount Grants.*

### **Cost Sharing and Matching**

All funded grant types are administered on a cost reimbursement basis with advances subject to prior written request and approval.

### **Alternative Match**

Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in the regulations at 45 C.F.R. §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. *To receive consideration, an alternative match request must be submitted to OCS by the date specified in the Timeline.*

### **Indirect Costs**

Application budgets may 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 the Five/Ten Percent Fixed Administrative Costs, a Federally-approved indirect cost rate, or a 10 percent *de minimis* rate (see Appendix B in the Application Instructions), 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.

### **Preaward Costs**

If awarded, applicants are permitted to charge the following expenses to the grant prior to the budget period with prior written approval from OCS:

- National Service Criminal History Checks costs
- Supplies including National Service Gear
- Staff time and benefits

These expenses must be submitted for reimbursement with the first Periodic Expense Report.

## Segal AmeriCorps Education Award

AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service will be 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 the term of service to use the Education Award. AmeriCorps will provide the updated Education Award amounts at the time of grant award. *Note:* Education Awards amounts are determined by the federal fiscal year of the grant award. Read the amounts listed on the AmeriCorps website very carefully.

## APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### How to Submit an Application

Applications must be electronically in [eGrants](#). It is *strongly recommended* that applicants initiate and begin the eGrants application well before the deadline. eGrants requires Microsoft Internet Explorer, any other internet browser will encounter compatibility issues. Applicants should draft the content as a word processing document, then copy and paste the content into the appropriate eGrants fields. The length of a document in word processing software will likely be different than what will print out in eGrants- *follow the [page limits](#)*.

The application's authorized representative must be the person who certifies and submits the application, and must use their own eGrants account to do so. Applicants must have a current authorized signature list on file with OCS, and the authorized representative must be listed on that list.

A copy of the governing body's authorization for the official representative must be on file in the applicant's office.

If a problem arises when creating an account or preparing or submitting the application contact the National Service Hotline at 800.942.2677 or via [eGrants Questions](#). Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization name, and the *Notice* to you are applying. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the National Service Hotline to submit the application via eGrants.

### Content and Form of Application

In eGrants, enter the following components of a complete application:

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: Populates when applicant completes eGrants fields in Applicant Info and
- Narratives
  - Executive Summary
  - Program Design
  - Organizational Capability
  - Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
  - Evaluation Summary/Plan
  - Continuation Changes
  - Clarification
- Logic Model



- Standard Form Budget and Budget Narrative
- Performance Measures
- Authorization, Assurances, and Certification

### Application Package

Information necessary to apply is accessible at <https://serve.mt.gov/ameriCorps/ameriCorps-grants/>. Applicants may email [serve@mt.gov](mailto:serve@mt.gov) or call 406.444.5547 for printed materials. TTY # 800.833.3722.

### Page Limits

Page limits are determined by grant characteristics and are determined by eGrants print out length (Print Application for Federal Assistance in the Review Tab of eGrants). The character limits in eGrants fields do not align with page limits set in the Notice and eGrants will allow an applicant to enter text that exceeds page limits. The length of a document in word processing will likely be different than the eGrants printout.

*OCS strongly encourage applicants to print the Application for Federal Assistance from the “Review and Submit” tab in eGrants prior to submission in order to confirm it does not exceed the page limits. Reviewers will not consider material that is over the page limits in the printed report.*

There are two-page limits that must be adhered to: Application & Narrative and Logic Model.

- Application & Narratives - Applications must not exceed 10 pages or 12 pages for Rural Intermediaries
  - The 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.
  - The application page limit does not include the Budget; Performance Measures; Continuation, Amendment, Clarification or Evaluation Plan narratives; or any required additional documents.
  - The **page limit for the Continuation Changes field is six pages**, when printed from eGrants.
- Logic Model
  - The Logic Model may not exceed three pages when printed with the application from the “Review” tab in AmeriCorps’ web-based management system.

### Submission Dates and Times

#### Letter of Intent

Applicants must notify OCS of their intent to apply by submitting a [Letter Of Intent \(LOI\)](#) by **Friday, April 15, 2022**. Submit the LOI by completing the template and emailing it to [serve@mt.gov](mailto:serve@mt.gov)

- **A legal applicant with a competitive application under review by AmeriCorps who indicated on the LOI that if unsuccessful competitively, intends to be a formula continuation will be considered under this Notice.**

### **Application Package**

Applications are due in eGrants and additional documents emailed to [serve@mt.gov](mailto:serve@mt.gov) by **Thursday April 28, 2022, by 5:00pm Mountain Standard Time**. Late applications may not be reviewed, see below.

- This deadline applies to new, continuation, and recompile applicants, and includes submission of additional documents. ServeMontana reserves the right to add documents to the RFP and to extend the deadline. Any such changes will be posted on OCS's website.
- ***When the application is submitted in eGrants, send an email to [serve@mt.gov](mailto:serve@mt.gov).***

### **Additional Documents**

Only submit items requested in this *Notice* and Application Instructions. Items submitted that are not requested will not be reviewed or returned. Applicants are required to submit additional documents by the application deadline:

#### All applications

- SAM.gov registration confirmation
- Current indirect rate cost agreement, if used to claim indirect/administrative costs
- Labor union concurrence (if applicable)
- Federal debt delinquency (if applicable)

#### New applications

- Readiness Self-Assessment

#### New and Recompile applications

- All recompile applicants regardless of funding level are required to submit the [Operational and Financial Management Survey \(OFMS\)](#) in a MS Word file
- Two letters of support

#### Recompiling applications

- Evaluation report, if required. Please submit in Word. The evaluation report should include a title page with the AmeriCorps grant ID for the project that was evaluated, the name of the project, and the date of completion of the report. Please see the *Evidence Tiers* definitions in the Mandatory Supplemental Information and this Notice. Evaluation Plan for further information.

#### Governor/Mayor Initiative applicants (New applicants)

- Letter(s) of support from partnering nonprofits
- Letter of support cosigned by Governor/Tribal Chair and participating Mayor(s)

Rural Intermediaries:

- Letters of support from the consortium members, no more than three

### **Additional Documents Formatting and Submission**

Additional Documents must be emailed to [serve@mt.gov](mailto:serve@mt.gov) with the subject line: [Legal Applicant Name] – [Application ID number].

Emails should include the following information:

- the legal applicant name and point of contact information
- a list of documents that should be attached to the email
- individually saved files that are clearly labeled
- files that include the legal applicant name and application ID number within the body of each document.

Attachments to emails should include individually saved files. Each file must include a header or title within the body of each additional document that includes the legal applicant name and application ID number.

### **Tribal Sanctioning Resolution Additional Documents**

Entities applying on behalf of a Federally Recognized Tribe must supply sanctioning resolution adopted by the Tribal Council of each Indian Tribe (See the *Eligible Applicants*) by the time the grant is awarded (typically July).

### **Late Applications**

All applications received after the submission deadline published in this *Notice* are presumed to be non-compliant. To overcome this presumption, the applicant must provide 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 National Service Hotline
- any information provided to the applicant by the National Service Hotline
- any other documentation or evidence that supports the justification

OCS must receive the written justification no more than one business day after the submission deadline at [serve@mt.gov](mailto:serve@mt.gov). Applicants must continue working in [eGrants](#) and with the National Service Hotline to submit the application as soon possible. OCS will determine whether to accept a late application on a case-by-case basis. Applicants that do not submit a justification or any other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the published timeframe will not be reviewed.

## **REVIEW CRITERIA FOR NEW AND RECOMPETE APPLICANTS**

Each applicant must describe a project to deploy AmeriCorps members to effectively meet significant community need(s). OCS urges applicants to submit high quality applications that follow the *Notice* and the Application Instructions. Application and budget quality are key factors in determining the funding recommendation.

Applications should be based in evidence and includes citation; however, reviewers will not review any documents external to the application other than evaluation report(s) submitted.

Applicants should address the assessment criteria. Each narrative subsection heading should be formatted in all capital letters. Reviewers will consider the quality of the application's response, do not assume all criteria are of equal value. Use subsection points to prioritize the length of information provided in the narratives. Prior to submission, OCS recommends applicants use the assessment criteria and/or score sheet to review your application, or to have a peer review. *Scoresheets are available on Serve Montana's AmeriCorps Grants page.*

**Table: Required Narratives**

Required Narrative Fields	Narrative Subsection	Subsection Points
<b>Executive Summary</b>		<b>Pass/Fail</b>
<b>Program Design</b>	THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL	21
	EVIDENCE TIER	12
	EVIDENCE QUALITY	8
	NOTICE PRIORITY	3
	MEMBER EXPERIENCE	6
<b>Organizational Capability</b>	ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND AND STAFFING	9
	COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY	8
	CULTURE THAT VALUES LEARNING	4
	MEMBER SUPERVISION	4
<b>Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy</b>		<b>25</b>

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (REQUIRED – PASS/FAIL)

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

The [Name of the organization] proposes to have [Number of] AmeriCorps members who will [service activities the members will be doing] in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will serve]. 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.]

This program will focus on the AmeriCorps focus area(s) of [Focus Area(s)].\* The AmeriCorps investment of \$[amount of request] 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.

\*If the program is not operating in a AmeriCorps focus area, omit this sentence.

Fixed-Amount grant applicants (EAP, Full-cost Fixed, No Cost Slots) should list their Other Revenue (see Mandatory Supplemental Information) because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still raise significant additional resources to operate the program.

## PROGRAM DESIGN NARRATIVE (50 POINTS TOTAL)

---

### Theory of Change and Logic Model (21 points)

#### Theory of Change

The theory of change defines the cause-and-effect relationship between the proposed intervention, or service activity, and an intended outcome. The theory of change shall address:

- The proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community problem.
- The applicant's proposed intervention clearly articulates the design, dosage, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members and leveraged volunteers (if applicable).
- The rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention(s) is reasonable.
- The role of AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.
- The applicant's intervention is likely to lead to outcomes identified in the applicant's Theory of Change.
- The expected outcomes represent meaningful progress toward addressing the community need.
- The rationale for setting performance measures output and outcome targets, which are informed by the organization's performance data (e.g. program data observed over time that suggests targets are reasonable), relevant research (e.g. targets documented by organizations running similar programs with similar populations), or prior program evaluation findings.

#### Logic Model

The logic model is a visual representation of the applicant's theory of change, and include short, medium or long-term outcomes. Applicants are not required to measure all components of the Theory of Change. However, the applicant's performance measures should be consistent with the program's Theory of Change and should represent significant program activities. Applicants with multiple interventions should depict each intervention on a separate line. Logic model content exceeding three pages will not be reviewed. The logic model briefly describes:

- A summary of the community problem.
- The inputs or resources necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:
  - Locations or sites where members will provide services
  - Number of AmeriCorps members who will deliver the intervention
- The core activities of intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
  - The duration of the intervention (e.g., total number of weeks, sessions, or months of the intervention)
  - The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
  - The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level)
- The 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 demonstrate changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior, or condition resulting from the intervention. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

### **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 that 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.

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 outcome or impact evaluation reports of the same intervention (see Mandatory Supplemental Information for definition) described in the application. Describe in the Program Design narrative and Logic Model how the intervention evaluated in the submitted report(s) matches the proposed intervention in the following areas:

- Characteristics of the beneficiary population
- Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention
- Dosage (frequency, duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities
- The context in which the intervention is delivered
- Outcomes of the intervention

Reports insufficiently matching the intervention proposed by the applicant in all areas will not be considered applicable. Submission of additional documents not consistent with the guidance and requirements described in the *Notice* (e.g., advocacy pieces, policy briefs, other narratives that are not research studies or program evaluations) will not be reviewed.

In the Evidence Tier subsection of the Program Design narrative describe:

- the study design, key findings of any outcome or impact evaluation report(s), and how the intervention described in the submitted reports is the same as the intervention (see Mandatory Supplemental Information) as described in the application.
- any other evidence that supports their program, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies that inform their program design.

### **Evidence Quality (8 points)**

The quality of the applicant's evidence and the extent to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored.

For applicants assessed as being in the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tiers, reviewers will score the submitted evaluation reports using the following standards:

- The submitted reports 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, etc.);
- The submitted reports describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years;
- The submitted reports show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries in at least one key outcome of interest.

For applicants assessed as being in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier, reviewers will score the narrative provided in the Evidence Base section of the application using the following standards:

- The applicant uses relevant evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies, to inform their proposed program design;
- The described evidence is relatively recent, preferably from the last six years;
- The evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries 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 threshold requirements for this *Notice* and will not be considered for funding.

All applicants, including new grantees, are required to provide additional information in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field of the application (See Section E. Evaluation Plan); however, information provided in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field will not be scored and will not be reviewed until after funding decisions have been made.

### **Notice Priority (3 points)**

- The applicant proposed program fits within one or more of the 2022 AmeriCorps and Montana funding priorities as outlined in the *Funding Priorities* section. AmeriCorps Funding Priorities are more fully described in the Mandatory Supplemental Information. Proposed program must meet all the requirements detailed in the *Funding Priorities* section and in the Mandatory Supplemental Information.

### **Member Experience (6 points)**

- AmeriCorps members will gain skills as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed.
- The program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the programs operate.
- Participants will know they are AmeriCorps members; they will be trained on describing their role and position while in service. Staff and community members will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- The applicant will foster an inclusive service culture where different backgrounds, talents, and capabilities are welcomed and leveraged for learning and effective service delivery.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY (25 POINTS TOTAL)

---

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

### **Organizational Background and Staffing (9 points)**

- The organization details the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing the AmeriCorps program as well as providing oversight and monitoring for the program.

### **Compliance and Accountability (8 points)**

- The organization has an internal monitoring and oversight plan to prevent, detect, and enforce non-compliance at the program, service site, and member levels, including prohibited and unallowable activities, criminal history checks, and other AmeriCorps rules and Regulations
- The evaluation report meets AmeriCorps requirements (if applicable),
- The evaluation report is of satisfactory quality (if applicable).

### **Culture that Values Learning (4 points)**

- The applicant's board, management, and staff collect and use information, including performance data, for learning and decision making.

### **Member Supervision (4 points)**

- AmeriCorps members will receive sufficient guidance and support from their supervisor to provide effective service.
- AmeriCorps supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations.

## COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY (25 POINTS TOTAL)

---

**Only enter "See budget" narrative box. Any other narrative will not be reviewed.**

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

- Budget is free of mathematical errors and proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award
- Contains adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated
- Budget follows the budget instructions
- Match is submitted with adequate information to support the amount in the budget
- The budgeted match is equal to or more than the required match for the given program year
- The cost per MSY is equal to or less than the maximum cost per MSY
- The member living allowance is within the minimum and maximum allowable amounts

All applicants must complete the budget and ensure the following information is in the source of funds:



- Indirect rate cost used to claim indirect/administrative costs
- Identify non-AmeriCorps funding and resources necessary to support the project
  - For each non-AmeriCorps resource commitments indicate the amount, source, whether it is cash or inkind, and if the commitments are proposed or secured.

## EVALUATION PLAN (0 POINTS)

---

### New Applicants

If the applicant is competing for the first time, please provide a data collection plan in the “Evaluation Summary or Plan” field that includes the following:

- A 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. Or describe the plan, timeline, and how goals will be measured in a developed data collection system.
- A description of how the applicant will use performance data (including AmeriCorps performance measures and other process and outcome measures if applicable) to improve its program in the first three years.

First-time applicants should be aware that if approved for funding, AmeriCorps may require submission of data collection instruments. Visit AmeriCorps Knowledge Network for information about developing a high-quality data collection plan, <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/evaluation-resources>

### Recompete Applicants

If the applicant has previously received three or more years of operational funding for the same project being proposed (see the Mandatory Supplemental Information for the AmeriCorps definition of “same project”), the applicant must submit an evaluation plan as an attachment (see the *Submission of Additional Documents* section for more information). If the applicant has previously received six or more years of operational funding for the same project being proposed, the applicant must submit both an evaluation plan and an evaluation report as attachments.

Applicants should use the evaluation plan template available on the *Serve Montana AmeriCorps Grants* webpage to craft their evaluation plans. The template document provides detailed information about the AmeriCorps evaluation requirements (45 CFR 2522.700-710) and specifies the information that must be provided for the evaluation plan to be approved by AmeriCorps.

All recompile applicants should enter “N/A” in the “Evaluation Summary or Plan” field of the Narrative. 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 recompeting. This field is used to enter continuation narratives for continuation requests.

## REVIEW CRITERIA FOR CONTINUATION APPLICATIONS

For each continuation application, ServeMontana staff will complete a continuation assessment (Appendix A) that will provide reviewers with critical information about the performance of the grantee. Reviewers will provide each continuation applicant with feedback on the continuation narrative and budget but will primarily score the application based on the information provided in the staff assessment. Applicants should provide additional detail for each of the following subsections and should utilize eGrants S & N Reports to calculate rates, where applicable.

### BUDGET, MATCH, AND COST PER MSY (10 POINTS)

---

Commission staff will provide reviewers with information pertaining to the program's performance in relation to the budget. This information will include spending as compared to the budget, ability to meet budgeted match, and the programs cost per MSY as compared to previous operating periods. Applicants should briefly describe changes to the Budget, Match, or Cost per MSY with rationale.

### COMPLIANCE FINDINGS (10 POINTS)

---

Commission staff will describe compliance issues and areas of weakness/risk identified during the last full year of program operation. If the applicant and/or service site locations had compliance or areas of weakness/risk identified, the applicant should provide an explanation, describe the corrective action taken and the plan for improvement.

### MEMBER ENROLLMENT (10 POINTS)

---

If the program enrolled less than 100% of the slots, or enrolled members outside the 8-day enrollment period during its last full program year, the applicant must provide an explanation and describe the plan for improvement in the continuation narrative. State and National Enrollment Rate report calculates this by adding slots filled and refill slots filled, then dividing by slots awarded.

### MEMBER RETENTION AND EXIT (10 POINTS)

---

If the applicant did not to retain 90% members during the last full program year, or exited members outside the 30-day exit period, the applicant must provide an explanation and describe the plan for improvement in the continuation narrative. While retention rates may vary among effective programs depending on the program model, the expectation is that programs pursue the highest retention rate possible. State and National Retention Rate report is calculated by dividing the number of members exited with award (full or partial award) by the number of members enrolled.

### PERFORMANCE MEASURE PROGRESS VERSUS STATED GOALS (10 POINTS)

---

Staff will describe the applicant's performance against performance measure targets during its last year of program operations. How successful has the applicant been in solving the identified problem? If the applicant did not meet performance targets, provide an explanation and describe the plan for improvement.

## APPLICATION REVIEW AND AWARD DETERMINATION PROCESS

Applications cleared through this process will be sent the AmeriCorps for final funding determination. The review process will consist of:

- OCS staff review Letters of Intent; Additional Documents and Audit Report, as applicable. If the applicant is determined to have sufficient capacity to manage federal grants, they are eligible to continue the application process.
- Submitted applications are reviewed for compliance with pertinent state and federal regulations, and responsibility to the request for proposal. All compliant and responsive applications will continue through the review process.
- Applications passing staff review will next be reviewed by a Grant Review Workgroup responsible for scoring applications and making funding recommendations.
- The Grant Review Workgroup will individually score the applications then convene with applicants present to arrive at a consensus score and a funding recommendation.
- Grant Review Workgroup recommendations are presented to the Montana Commission on Community Service for approval. If the proposal of the review committee is rejected by the Montana Commission the review process may be repeated.

***If unforeseen challenges or circumstances make it impossible, impracticable, or inefficient to conduct the review process as planned, OCS and AmeriCorps reserve the right to adjust or make changes to the review process at any time. Adjustments or changes will not affect the selection criteria used to assess applications.***

### Funding priority

OCS prioritizes formula funds first by application type and organization experience. Within each tier, applicants are ranked based on consensus scores by the Grant Review Workgroup.

1. Formula Operating Program Continuation requests
2. New/Recompete Formula Operating Program applicants currently administering AmeriCorps programs or planning
3. Planning Grant applicants
4. New Formula Operating Program applicants not currently administering AmeriCorps programs or planning

Review scores will not necessarily have sole bearing on the distribution of funds. However, a lower scoring application will not be recommended for funding at the expense of a higher scoring one. The distribution of funds will be based on the assessment of the Grant Review Workgroup as to how best to carry out the mission of OCS.

OCS 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, the priorities, if any, set by the Governor and/or State Service Plan, and the input of commission staff.

**All applications approved by the Montana Commission to be submitted to AmeriCorps are subject to the following review and selection process:**

AmeriCorps will engage 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 than what the applicant self-determined upon submission of its application.

**Selection for Funding**

OCS and AmeriCorps review and selection process is designed to identify how well eligible applications are aligned with the application review criteria and build a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:

- AmeriCorps Funding Priorities (See *Funding Priorities*)
- meaningful representation of
  - geographic diversity
  - rural communities
  - single and multi-state programs
  - faith-based organizations
  - focus area representation

Based on the evaluation of these strategic considerations, applications may be selected for funding over applications with a greater degree of alignment with the review criteria. In selecting applicants to receive awards under this Notice, the Montana Commission, and the AmeriCorps Chief Executive Officer will endeavor to include a diverse portfolio of applications based on staff recommendations and strategic considerations.

**Compliance and Eligibility Review:**

OCS Staff conduct a Compliance Review to determine if an application meets the requirements published in this *Notice*. Reviewing for eligibility ensures only the applications that are eligible for award are 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.

Post-Review Quality Control: After the initial review process is complete, AmeriCorps staff will review the results for fairness and consistency. Some applications may be selected for a Quality Control assessment.

Pre-Award Risk Assessment: AmeriCorps staff will evaluate the risks posed by each applicant to assess an applicant's ability to manage federal funds. This evaluation is in addition to assessment of the applicant's eligibility and the quality of its application based on the Selection Criteria. 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. Additionally, if AmeriCorps concludes the reasons for an applicant having a poor risk assessment are not likely to be mitigated, the application may not be funded.

In evaluating risks, AmeriCorps may consider some of the following criteria:

*Due Diligence:*

- federal debt delinquency
- suspension and debarment
- information available through 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](#)

*Operational and Financial Management:*

- Financial stability
- Operational and Financial Management Survey

*Past Performance:*

Commission staff will assess recompeting applicants’ programmatic past performance using the following criteria:

- 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
  - 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 information from the applicant organization's website

AmeriCorps may use the results of the review of the risk assessment evaluation in determining which applications to fund. If AmeriCorps concludes that the reasons for applicants having poor risk assessment evaluations are not likely to be mitigated, those applications may not be selected for funding.

### **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.

### **Clarification Process**

As a result of the review, prior to OCS submission to AmeriCorps, and again after submission to AmeriCorps, applicants may receive time sensitive requests to provide clarifying information and/or make changes to the application including changes to the budget, narratives, or performance measures. This information is used in making final recommendations. Failure to respond to OCS/AmeriCorps clarification requests in a timely manner may result in the removal of application from consideration. Applications may be approved for funding with or without clarification requests.

## **FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates**

Depending on availability of funding, AmeriCorps expects that successful State Commissions will be notified no later than early August, contingent on appropriations and AmeriCorps. Applicants will be notified by OCS as to funding decisions. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. A formal *Notice of Grant Award* will be produced and then the state contracting process is 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](#).

### **Official Guidance**

All AmeriCorps active Guidance is available on the agency's Guidance webpage: <https://www.americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/official-guidance>. 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.

### **Requests for Monitoring or Payment Integrity Information**

AmeriCorps may randomly select and request documentation from recipients in order to monitor the award or to comply with other legal requirements, such as 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.

### **AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions**

All awards made under this Notice will be subject to the FY 2022 AmeriCorps General Terms and Conditions, and the FY 2022 Program-Specific Terms and Conditions for the particular program (when applicable). These Terms and Conditions contain detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. AmeriCorps General and Program Specific Terms and Conditions are available at <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/directs-territories-tribes>.

### **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. Programs are encouraged to minimize barriers to service without putting their program beneficiaries at genuine risk.

- In general, award subrecipients must conduct an NSCHC for AmeriCorps members and staff funded under, or whose salary is reflected as match on, the award.
- 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.
- Failure to conduct a compliant NSCHC may result in significant disallowed costs.
- AmeriCorps strongly encourages applicants to review the regulations and additional guidance to fully understand how to comply with the requirements.
- AmeriCorps strongly encourages funded applicants to utilize the two AmeriCorps-approved vendors to conduct the required NSCHCs.

A 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.

### **Use of Material**

To ensure materials generated with AmeriCorps funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, OCS 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)

### **Reporting**

Recipients are required to submit a variety of reports which 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 mid-year and end of year progress reports, monthly and semi-annual financial reports, and an internal or external evaluation report as required by the AmeriCorps regulations §§2522.500-2522.540 and §§2522.700-2522.740. A final financial report is due at the end of the grant.

Fixed Amount grantees are required to provide monthly financial reports and mid-year and end of year progress reports, and an internal or external evaluation report. A final financial report is due at the end of the grant. Fixed award recipient's final report must reconcile with total hours served on the roster report.

### **Progress Report Data**

If grant is awarded, subrecipients are required to report high quality performance measure data derived from sound policies, processes, and practices. High quality data is generated from the program and service locations (if applicable) through ensuring the following standards are met:

- the data measures what it intends to measure
- the data reported is complete
- the data is collected in a consistent manner
- the data is reviewed for accuracy prior to submission
- the subrecipient takes steps to correct data errors

In addition to semi-annual reporting of progress toward the grant's approved performance measure outputs and outcomes, additional demographic and narrative data must be reported annually (as applicable), including the number of applicants for AmeriCorps positions and the number of volunteers recruited and/or supported by AmeriCorps members (both episodic and ongoing volunteers.) Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the recipient's ability to secure future OCS and AmeriCorps funding. For further guidance and training resources see – Resources: Data Collection and Instruments



## AGENCY CONTACTS

Montana Governor's Office of Community Service

PO Box 200801

Helena, MT 59620

Grants Manager: 406.444.5547 [joe.naiman-sessions@mt.gov](mailto:joe.naiman-sessions@mt.gov)

General email: [serve@mt.gov](mailto:serve@mt.gov)

## OTHER INFORMATION

### Technical Assistance

OCS will host technical assistance call to answer questions about the funding opportunity and eGrants. AmeriCorps strongly encourages all applicants to participate in these sessions. Call-in information for the technical assistance calls is on OCS Grants website.

In addition to consulting the Application Instructions, Mandatory Supplemental Information, and AmeriCorps regulations, applicants are encouraged to consult the ServeMontana website for updated materials during the RFP period.

### Re-Focusing Funding

AmeriCorps/OCS reserve the right to refocus funding in the event of disaster or other compelling need for service.

## 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.

***OCS and 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 adjustments or changes will not affect the selection criteria used to assess applications.***

## APPENDIX A: STAFF ASSESSMENT

### ServeMontana, the Governor's Office of Community Service *Staff Assessment of Continuation Applications*

#### AmeriCorps State Grant Applications

Staff will complete the following assessment for all previously funded applicants.

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

	Current Grant (2021)	Request (2022)	Difference
<b>Federal Funds</b>			\$0
<b>Cash Match</b>			\$0
<b>In-Kind Match</b>			\$0
<b>Total Match</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Match %</b>	#DIV/0!	0%	#DIV/0!
<b>Project Cost</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>MSY</b>	-		0.00
<b>Cost per MSY</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0

- 5) Areas of Assessment
  - i. Budget, match, and cost per MSY (10 Points)
  - ii. Compliance findings
  - iii. Member enrollment rate and 8 day compliance
  - iv. Member retention and 30 day compliance
  - v. Performance measure performance versus goals

Performance Measure statements	2020 or 2021 Grant Year		
	Target	Actual	Status

\*End of AmeriCorps State Grant Formula Request for Proposal (RFP)\*