

Montana AmeriCorps State FFY2023 Formula Operating Program Grant

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

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 (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 CFR 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 and grant management materials on [AmeriCorps' website](#).

Purpose of AmeriCorps Operating Program Funding

AmeriCorps improves lives, strengthens communities, fosters civic engagement, and brings people together to tackle some of the country's most pressing challenges through service and volunteering. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities and lives of those who are serving. AmeriCorps demonstrates service as a cornerstone of our state and national culture.

AmeriCorps Grants are awarded to eligible organizations to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence based or informed interventions and practices 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.

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 and the Montana Community Service Act of 1994 (MCA 90-14-103). 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 strengthens 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 delivery
- ✓ Recruits Montanans to serve in their local community
- ✓ Inclusive design and delivery, the program is accessible to individuals with disabilities

Who Should Apply to This Notice of Funding Available (NOFA)?

Organizations proposing a new AmeriCorps State program or continuing a currently formula funded 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 [the 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.

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 2023 [Montana AmeriCorps State Planning Grant Notice of Funding Available](#).

Montana AmeriCorps State Process and Screening

To be eligible for consideration under this *Notice*, an applicant must meet the intent of all the requirements listed in this packet. ServeMontana staff will determine if the applicant's proposal complies with the requirements. 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. Applicants will be reviewed to ensure they meet the standards of responsibility in accordance with [ARM 2.5.407](#). 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 applicant.

Joe Naiman-Sessions, OCS Program Officer
ph: 406.444.5547
joe.naiman-sessions@mt.gov

Keena Irby, OCS Fiscal Officer
ph: 406.444.1809
keena.irby@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.

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Associated Documents

The following documents are referenced through this Notice.

- [FY2023 AmeriCorps Application Instructions](#)
- [FY2023 Mandatory Supplemental Information](#)
- [FY2023 Performance Measure Instructions](#)
- [Letter of Intent Template](#)
- [Operational and Financial Management Survey \(OFMS\)](#)
- [Evaluation Plan Template](#)
- [Budget Worksheet](#)
- [Logic Model Worksheet](#)

TIMELINE

Mar. 9, 2023,	Pre-Notice Training and Technical Assistance Call, 11 a.m., Register at: https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUtcO2sqTopEteyHonlxHwC_EdD5oyhp_zp
Mar. 10, 2023	Letter of Intent and Associated Documents Due 5p.m. MST , email to serve@mt.gov <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letter of Intent (LOI)• PDF of current SAM registration & UEI, https://www.sam.gov/portal/SAM/#1• Documentation of Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate, <i>if applicable</i>• Most Recent Single Audit (as applicable per 2 CFR 200.501)
Mar. 27, 2023	Official posting of the <i>Notice</i>
Mar. 30, 2023,	Technical Assistance Call, 11 a.m., Register at: https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZctdOmgrDgjHNVkEuoAvnbQGTcyQs_I592b
Apr. 3-6, 2023	Written Technical assistance period* Submit questions via email to serve@mt.gov .
Apr. 19, 2023	Last day to submit an Alternative Match Request
Apr. 20, 2023	<u>Application Due Date by 5pm Mountain Time</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete Application, submitted in eGrants https://egrants.cns.gov/espan/main/login.jsp• Additional Documents, submitted via email to serve@mt.gov• AmeriCorps Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS)
May 4, 2023	Formula Operating & Planning Grant Review Workgroup Meeting
May 11, 2023	Special Meeting of the Commission on Community Service
May 15-18, 2023	State of Montana Applicant clarification period – All recommended applicants
May 18, 2023	<u>Clarified applications resubmitted in eGrants by 5pm Mountain Time</u>
Summer 2023	Applicants notified of funding determination; AmeriCorps Clarification and Resolution
August 2023	Awards issued to successful applicants

*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 <https://serve.mt.gov/ameriCorps/ameriCorps-grants/grant-formula-program>.

PLANS, FOCUS AREAS, FUNDING PRIORITIES, & PERFORMANCE MEASURES

To receive priority consideration, applicants must show the priority area is a significant part of the program focus, intended outcomes, and included 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 of Community Service (OCS). Applicants should strive to implement evidence-based service strategies to meet one or more needs identified in the [State Service Plan](#).

Governor and First Lady 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 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 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.
- [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 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, 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 Strategic Program Elements

- AmeriCorps members receive impactful civic education and/or service-learning as part of member development that increases knowledge and deepens the members' ethic of service in line with the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service's Final Report Appendix C, Best Practices in Civic Education and Service Learning.
- 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.
- [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.](#)
- [Faith-based organizations](#)

AmeriCorps Focus Areas

[The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended by the Serve America Act](#), emphasizes measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issue areas. To carry out Congress's intent, maximize the impact of investment in national service, and to achieve the goals laid out in AmeriCorps' [Strategic Plan \(2022-2026\)](#), AmeriCorps has the following Focus Areas:

- [Disaster Services](#) Helping individuals and communities prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of disasters and increase community resiliency.
- [Economic Opportunity](#) Improving the economic well-being and security of underserved individuals.
- [Education](#) Improving educational outcomes for underserved people, including program designs that support youth engagement and service learning as strategies to achieve high educational outcomes.
- [Environmental Stewardship](#) Supporting communities to become more resilient through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve land and water, increase renewable energy use and improve at-risk ecosystems, especially in underserved households and communities.
- [Healthy Futures](#) Supporting for health needs within communities, including mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 and other public health crises, access to care, aging in place, and addressing childhood obesity, especially in underserved communities.
- [Veterans and Military Families](#) Improving the quality of life of veterans, military families, caregivers, and survivors.

Performance Measures

AmeriCorps has aligned Performance Measures with its Focus Areas. Applications must include at least one aligned Performance Measure that may be either National Performance Measures or applicant determined. AmeriCorps and OCS value quality of performance measures over quantity. Applicants should use Performance Measures as part of a comprehensive strategy that relies on both performance and evaluation data to learn from their work and make programmatic adjustments to achieve their goals.

Refer to AmeriCorps Performance Measure Instructions and [Performance Measure Review Criteria](#) for detailed information on performance measure statements, requirements, and data collection expectations. *Applicants are encouraged to use Appendix B: Performance Measure Checklist in the Performance Measure Instructions.*

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
- States and US Territories
- Institutions of higher education
- Local governments
- Nonprofit organizations

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

To receive an award, applicants *must* register with the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If an applicant is awarded a grant, it must maintain an active SAM registration throughout the life of the award. See the [SAM Quick Guide for Grantees](#). [UEI is generated as part of the SAM registration process](#). SAM registration must be renewed annually. AmeriCorps suggests that applicants finalize a new registration or renew an existing one at least three weeks before the application deadline, to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise.

[AmeriCorps will not make awards to entities that do not have a valid active SAM registration, Unique Entity Identifier \(UEI\), and Employer Identification Number \(EIN\). Applications must include the EIN, UEI, and the Applicant Name and Physical Address must match SAM.gov Legal Name and Physical Address exactly.](#) Applicants must use “Edit Organization’s Attributes” module in “My Account” area of the eGrants home screen to enter UEI, EIN numbers and to update the address. These entries will populate the Application’s 424 Facesheet. If the applicant’s name does not exactly match the SAM.gov Legal Entity Name, contact the [OCS Program Officer](#).

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 to compete for funding directly to AmeriCorps. See 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 Program Officer 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. An entity applying on behalf of one or more federally recognized tribe(s) must submit a Tribal Council adopted resolution or other authorization which covers the entire period of performance. The resolution must identify the entity by name as a tribal organization and indicate whether it is controlled, authorized, 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 an AmeriCorps application for the purpose of conducting the activities and providing the services described in the application.

Application Types

New Application

Organizations that have never received AmeriCorps operating program funding and are proposing a new AmeriCorps program to place members in the first year of funding, are encouraged to apply to this Montana Formula Operating Grant notice. New 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. Regardless of whether a planning period is included, all grant funded activities must be concluded in a 12-month period of performance.

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](#).

OCS encourages applicants to plan for sustainable and mission capable program growth. **As such, the general practice is for New Applicants to apply for at least 5 but no more than 20 MSY for the first three-year grant cycle, and Recompete Applicants to apply for at least 10 MSY in the second grant cycle and beyond.**

Applicants who have not received an AmeriCorps operating grant in the last three years are eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement but are not eligible to apply for Full-Cost Fixed Amount grants. Existing subgrantees/ operating sites of Fixed Amount and Cost Reimbursement grantees who demonstrate a successful history and capacity to manage a Fixed Amount grant are considered to have AmeriCorps experience and are eligible to apply for Full Cost Fixed Amount grants. See [Type of Award](#).

Continuation Application

Organizations with current AmeriCorps State operating program awards that are applying for program Year 2 or Year 3 in are considered continuation applicants. Continuation applicants must submit an application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the FY2023 program year. Continuation applicants must follow the requirements for continuation application content as outlined in the Application Instructions. Requests by 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, concisely address the [Review Criteria for Continuation Applicants](#): Budget, Match & MSY, Compliance Findings, Member Enrollment, Member Retention and Performance Measure Progress.

Continuation applicant's performance measures must comply with the current 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. If significant increases or decreases to output or outcome targets for existing measures are proposed, provide a justification for the change.

OCS and AmeriCorps reserve the right to award applications in an amount less than 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. Organizations who have successfully operated AmeriCorps programs for a minimum of 5 years and consulted OCS are eligible to apply for Full Cost Fixed Amount Grants.

Minimum Thresholds for All Applications

Applications must meet all threshold requirements for the application type. If threshold requirements are not met without justification, the application may be deemed nonresponsive and will not be reviewed.

- All applicants should request at least 5 Member Service Years.

- All applicants must propose program designs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. Applicants assessed as Pre-preliminary evidence tier must adequately describe how the proposed intervention is evidence-informed per the Mandatory Supplemental Information.
- All applicants should budget for travel to the [Serve Montana Symposium](#) in Helena for staff and members. Symposium takes place annually in March.
 - Budget Section 1 C. Staff Travel includes mileage to and from Helena and 2-3 nights lodging (depending on distance) at the organization’s travel policy rate or state rate if applicant does not have a travel policy.
- Applicants should budget staff travel to attend the America’s Service Commission’s AmeriCorps Boot Camp. OCS expects program and fiscal staff, who are either new to the organization or new to AmeriCorps, to attend.
 - Budget Section 1 C. Staff Travel includes airfare to Austin, TX, meals minus 4 lunches, and \$175 per night hotel stay for 5 nights.
- Applicants should budget staff travel and staff training for at least one pertinent program and one fiscal staff to attend the [America’s Service Commission’s National Service Training](#) (location to be determined). National Service Training is typically 3 days with 2 to 3 nights hotel stay.
 - Budget Section 1 C. Staff Travel includes \$750 airfare, meals minus 3 lunches, and \$175 per night hotel stay for 2-3 nights.
 - Budget Section 1 G. Staff Training includes \$300 event registration
- If an applicant is applying for a Professional Corps grant, the application must demonstrate the area 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 the applicant must describe how the program will meet requirements (e.g. tutoring: 45 C.F.R. §2522.910-.940).

Other Eligibility Requirements

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

Applications that propose to engage in prohibited activities listed in [AmeriCorps’ statutes](#), [regulations](#), or [the terms and conditions](#) of its awards are not eligible to receive AmeriCorps funding. Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in the [Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. §501 \(c\)\(4\)](#) that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for AmeriCorps funding. Note that under appropriations provisions annually enacted by Congress, if AmeriCorps is aware that any corporation has any unpaid federal tax liability that has been assessed; for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed; and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability; that entity is not eligible for an award under this Notice. However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation that a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and determined that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the federal government.

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 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

AmeriCorps anticipates making three-year grant awards. AmeriCorps generally makes an initial award for the first year of the period of performance, based on the submitted one-year budget. Continuation awards for subsequent years are not guaranteed; they depend upon availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance (see [Review Criteria for Continuation Applicants](#)).

The project period of performance start date may not occur prior to the date AmeriCorps awards the grant. OCS anticipates making 12-month awards with Project Periods beginning September first or January first. Applicants may select either project period and propose a member start date that aligns with the program design. Awarded applicants are prohibited from enrolling members, permitting members to begin service, or certifying any hours a member performs prior to the Project Period Start date.

Type of Award

AmeriCorps Operating Grants: 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. More information [under Eligible Applicants section in the Mandatory Supplemental Information](#).

Cost Reimbursement: Grant applications that require a line-item budget. Awarded grant reimbursement payments are based on allowable costs incurred and reported monthly to OCS. *New and re-compete applicants who have operated AmeriCorps program for less than 5 years must apply as a Cost-Reimbursement application.*

Fixed Amount: Grant applications that do not require a line-item budget. *Applicants who have successfully operated AmeriCorps programs for a minimum of 5 years and have consulted with OCS are eligible to apply for Fixed Amount Grants. Must achieve 100% member enrollment and retention rates to receive the full amount of a fixed grant award. Fixed awards may be:*

- Full Cost – Eligible to claim maximum cost per MSY. May apply for all slot types. (See table below).
- Professional Corps - 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.

FEDERAL FUNDING RESTRICTIONS AND BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

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, applicants must 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 Living Allowance
Full-Time	1,700	\$18,000	\$35,200
Three Quarter-time	1,200	n/a	\$24,640
Half-time	900	n/a	\$17,600
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	\$13,376
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$9,152
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$7,392

Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements

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).

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) using the below MSY values. See the Application Instructions for more details. Below is a description of available slot types.

Table: Member Service Year (MSY) Values and Slot Types

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

AmeriCorps 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 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 and will not be reviewed.**

Table: Maximum Cost per MSY for Application Types

Application Type	Maximum Cost per MSY
Montana Applications (Cost Reimbursement & Full Cost Fixed Award)	\$28,799
Professional Corps Applications	\$1,000

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 should raise the additional revenue required to operate the program. Fixed award applicants must be familiar with the [AmeriCorps Fixed Award Financial and Administrative Guide](#). **Awarded applicants must still comply with all [Minimum Thresholds requirements](#).**

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 each year, to 50% by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in 45 C.F.R. §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 National Community Service Act (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 grant closeout. OCS requires documented permission allowing for funds to be used as match from the non-AmeriCorps federal entity.

Alternative Match

Under certain circumstances, applicants may qualify for an alternative matching schedule. The schedule is detailed in 45 C.F.R. §2521.60(b) and culminates in 35% match instead of 50%. 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 Attachment 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, subgrantees may request prior approval from OCS to charge the following expenses to the grant prior to the project period:

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

These expenses must be submitted for reimbursement with the first financial 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.

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

Application Creation and Submission

Applications must be created and submitted electronically in [eGrants](#). It is *strongly recommended* that applicants initiate and begin the eGrants application well before the deadline. See the [Application Instructions](#) for details on creating an Application. *Previously Awarded AmeriCorps State grant applicants, including planning grants and are requesting a New Project application, must request OCS have an application created when the Letter of Intent is submitted or earlier. eGrants may block the Applicants who were previously awarded from creating a new application or may not apply the correct match schedule.*

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. 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 AmeriCorps Hotline at 800.942.2677 or via [Live Chat or Webform](#). Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization name, and the *Notice* you are applying to. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the AmeriCorps Hotline to submit the application via eGrants and inform OCS.

Content and Form of Application

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

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: this populates when applicant completes the Applicant Info in the Application and My Organization Info in the My Account portions of eGrants
- 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

Page Limits

Page limits are determined by the Application for Federal Assistance print out from 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.

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

- Application & Narratives - Applications must not exceed 10 pages.
 - 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 must not exceed 6 pages.
- Logic Model - The Logic Model may not exceed three pages.

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

Submission Dates and Times

Letter of Intent

New, Recompete, and Continuation applicants must notify OCS of their intent to apply **by Friday March 10, 2023**.

Entities intending to submit an application 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 registration & UEI, <https://www.sam.gov/portal/SAM/#1>
- Documentation of Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate, *if applicable*
- Most Recent Single Audit (as applicable per [2 CFR 200.501](#))

Application Package

Applications are due in eGrants and Additional Documents emailed to serve@mt.gov **by Thursday April 20, 2023, by 5:00pm Mountain Standard Time**. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Late applications may not be reviewed, see below.

- This deadline applies to new, continuation, and recompetete 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 the OCS website.
- **When the application is submitted in eGrants, notify OCS by emailing 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 package deadline:

New, Recompete and Continuation applications (see [Application Instructions](#)):

- Labor union concurrence (if applicable)
- Federal debt delinquency concurrence (if applicable)

New and Recompetete applications:

- Evaluation briefs, reports, studies. Refer to the Evidence Base section of this Notice and Mandatory Supplemental Information for detailed instructions by evidence tier. If multiple evaluation briefs/reports/studies are submitted by the applicant, the most recent (as measured by the date of completion or publication) will be reviewed first, and any documents submitted beyond the allowable number will not be reviewed.
- Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS) in a Microsoft Word file. Forms submitted as a PDF or any other format may not be accepted.
- Two letters of support

New Applicants (Only):

Data collection system description or plan. Must not exceed 2 pages in Microsoft Word, and addresses:

- 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. If the applicant does not yet have a data collection system, describe the plan and timeline for developing a high-quality 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 of funding.

First-time applicants should be aware that OCS and AmeriCorps may require submission of data collection instruments if approved for funding. For more information on developing a high-quality data collection plan, visit <https://americorps.gov/grantees-sponsors/evaluation-resources>.

Recompete applicants who have previously received two or more years of AmeriCorps funding for the same project being proposed:

- Evaluation Plan using the evaluation plan template found available on the *Notice* webpage.

Recompete applicants who have previously received five or more years of AmeriCorps funding for the same project being proposed:

- The evaluation report must 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.
- Evaluation Plan using the template found available on the Notice webpage.

Additional Documents Formatting and Submission

Additional Documents must be emailed to 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
- If the size of an applicant’s files requires multiple emails, please also include an ordering system in the subject line, such as “(1 of 3)”

Attachments to emails should be individually saved files. Each file must include a header or title within the body of the file 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 *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 AmeriCorps Hotline
- any information provided to the applicant by the AmeriCorps 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. Applicants must continue working in [eGrants](#) and with the AmeriCorps 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.

Application Package

Information necessary to apply is accessible at <https://serve.mt.gov/ameriCorps/ameriCorps-grants/>. Applicants may email serve@mt.gov or call 406.444.5547 for printed materials.

Technical Assistance

OCS will host technical assistance calls to answer questions about the funding opportunity and eGrants. OCS strongly encourages all applicants to participate in these sessions. Call-in information for the technical assistance calls will be posted on OCS' Grants website. A written technical assistance period is also available as described in the Notice Timeline.

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.

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 include in line citations; reviewers will not review any documents external to the application other than evaluation report(s) submitted.

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

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 [Montana AmeriCorps Formula Program Grant webpage](#).*

Table: Required Narratives

Required Narrative Fields	Narrative Subsection	Subsection Points
Executive Summary		Pass/Fail
Program Design	THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL	21
	EVIDENCE TIER	12
	EVIDENCE QUALITY	8
	NOTICE PRIORITY	3
	MEMBER EXPERIENCE	6
Organizational Capability	ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND AND STAFFING	13
	COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY	8
	MEMBER SUPERVISION	4
Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy		25

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 performance measure outcome and targets 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.]

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.

Fixed-Amount grant applicants (Full-cost Fixed, Professional Corps, Education Award Program, 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, Logic Model, and Performance Measures (21 points)

Please ensure the Theory of Change and Logic Model incorporate the Funding Priorities listed in this Notice.

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 community need is prevalent and severe in communities where the program plans to serve and has been documented with relevant data.
- The proposed intervention is responsive to the identified community need.

- The applicant’s proposed intervention clearly articulates the design, dosage, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members and leveraged volunteers (if applicable).
- The applicant’s intervention is likely to lead to outcomes identified in the applicant’s Theory of Change.
- The expected outcomes articulated in the narrative and Logic Model represent meaningful progress toward addressing the community need identified by the applicant.
- The rationale for setting performance measure 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.
- The rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the interventions is reasonable.
- The service role of AmeriCorps members will produce significant contributions to existing efforts and build capacity to address the stated community need.

Logic Model

The logic model is a visual representation of the applicant’s theory of change including short, medium and 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 represent significant program activities. Applicants with multiple interventions should depict each intervention on a separate line. Logic Models must be submitted in eGrants and must not exceed 3 pages as printed out in the Application for Federal Assistance from the Review Tab of the application. [A Logic Model Template word document is available in the Application Documents and Resources section of the Montana Formula Program Grant webpage to assist in building the Logic Model.](#)

The logic model briefly describes:

- A summary of the community need.
- 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.

Performance Measures

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 the program's theory of change. Applications may also include Output-Only Performance Measures that assesses a significant program activity, but do not fulfill the requirement for an aligned performance measure. Output-Only Performance Measures are supplemental to the aligned measure(s). See the Performance Measure Instructions for full details.

The Performance Measures section addresses:

- Selected performance measures align with interventions described in Theory of Change and Logic Model.
- Targets appear reasonable and are set using the rationale described in Theory of Change.
- Described data collection practices and instruments are sufficient to ensure reported data is valid, complete, consistent, accurate, and verifiable.

A staff review will be conducted of the full performance measure section using Appendix B: Performance Measure 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 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.

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

- the study design, key findings of any submitted outcome or impact evaluation report(s)
- any other evidence that supports their program, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies that inform their program design.

If submitted reports evaluated a different program, describe in the Program Design narrative and Logic Model how the intervention evaluated in the submitted report(s) matches the proposed "same 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.

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 are required to provide additional information in the form of an Evaluation Plan Template or a Performance Data 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 (3 points)

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

Member Experience (6 points)

- The applicant has, or will have, a Recruitment Plan for engaging AmeriCorps members from the geographic or demographic communities in which the program operates.
- Member experience will be enhanced through civic reflections. Members will be trained on elevator speeches and are encouraged to speak about their role and position while in service. Participants, staff, and community members will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- AmeriCorps members receive additional benefits.
- AmeriCorps members' service will provide them opportunities to develop as leaders.

- 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 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 (13 points)

- The organization details the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will implement, provide oversight, and monitor the program.
- The leadership and staff of the organization have similar lived experience as the beneficiary population and/or community being served.
- The organization has facilitated, partnered, or participated in educational or workforce development programs (i.e., pre-apprenticeship/registered apprenticeship, work experience and job training programs, etc.).

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 extent to which the organization has an effective mechanism in place to report, without delay, any suspected criminal activity, waste, fraud, and/or abuse to both the AmeriCorps Office of Inspector General and AmeriCorps. The organization has a plan for training staff and participants on these reporting protocols.
- The extent to which the organization has sufficient policies, procedures, and controls in place to prevent, detect, and mitigate the risk of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement. This can include an assessment of appropriate segregation of duties, internal oversight activities, measures to prevent timekeeping fraud, etc.
- The evaluation report meets AmeriCorps requirements (if applicable),
- The evaluation report is of satisfactory quality (if applicable).

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 review the budget and budget narrative against the following criteria:

- Budget complies with the [Minimum Thresholds](#), as applicable.
- The cost per MSY is equal to or less than the [maximum cost per MSY](#) listed in this Notice. Applications that exceed the Maximum will be considered unresponsive to the application criteria.

- Cost Reimbursement applicant meets match requirements. Applications that do not meet the required match will be considered unresponsive to the application criteria.
- Cost Reimbursement applicant Source of Funds must match the Total Grantee Share amount in budget narrative exactly.
- Fixed Amount applicant describes proposed sufficient additional revenue to adequately support the program in the Source of Funds narrative.
- All Source of Funds narratives follow the Application Instructions page 14 (for each source designate if the match is secured or proposed; type of classification: cash or in-kind; source type: Private, Federal, State/Local).

Staff will conduct a “budget check” on the application’s budget and budget narrative to ensure compliance with the Application Instructions (Cost Reimbursement Applicants: See Attachment B and C; Fixed Amount Applicants: See Attachment D and E), including checking calculations. Points will not be deducted for budget check deficiencies, but correction must be made 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. Use Evaluation Plan Template as applicable (described in [Additional Documents](#)).

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/recompete application. This field is used to enter continuation narratives for continuation requests. Continuation changes should be labeled by program year with the most recent year first. Do not delete prior year’s continuation changes, if applicable.

REVIEW CRITERIA FOR CONTINUATION APPLICATIONS

For each continuation application, ServeMontana staff will complete a continuation assessment ([Appendix A](#)) that will provide reviewers with critical performance information of the grantee. Reviewers will provide continuation applicants 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 use headers, provide 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 budget performance information. This information will include actual spending compared to the budget, ability to meet budgeted match, and the 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. 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 retain 90% members during the last full program year, or exited members outside the 30-day exit period. 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 results against performance measure targets during the last year of program operation. How successful has the applicant been in solving the identified problem? If the program did not meet performance targets, provide an explanation and describe the plan for improvement.

APPLICATION REVIEW AND AWARD DETERMINATION PROCESS

Montana Application Review

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

- OCS staff reviews application for completeness including Letter of Intent, Additional Documents, and Audit Report as applicable, Minimum Thresholds and other requirements as articulated in this *Notice*. 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 consensus scores, ranking, and a funding recommendation.
- Funding recommendations are 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 the funding recommendation approval, applicants may receive time sensitive requests to provide clarifying information and/or make required changes to the application.

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 assessment criteria.

Funding Priority

All organizations applying for Montana AmeriCorps Formula Funding are placed into Priority Tiers based on *Notice* type and organization experience. Within each tier, applicants will be ranked based on consensus scores by the Grant Review Workgroup.

Table: Funding Priority Tiers

Priority Tier	Notice Type and Organizational Experience
1	Formula Operating Program Continuation requests
2	Unawarded Montana State Competitive Operating Programs
3	New/Recompete Formula Operating Program applicants currently administering AmeriCorps Programs or Planning in Montana
4	New Formula Planning Applicants
5	New Formula Operating Program applicants not currently administering AmeriCorps programs or planning in Montana

Review scores will not necessarily have sole bearing on the distribution of funds. However, within each Priority Tier, 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.

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 for submission to AmeriCorps are subject to the following review and selection process.

Applicant Clarification

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.

Resolution Process

As a result of the review, applicants may receive time sensitive requests to provide resolution information and/or make changes to the application including the budget. This information is used by AmeriCorps in making final funding determination. Applications may be recommended for funding with or without a Resolution request. Failure to respond to AmeriCorps/OCS requests for additional information in response to Resolution items in a timely fashion may result in the removal of application from consideration.

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 on the basis of the Selection 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. Additionally, if AmeriCorps concludes the reasons for applicants having a poor risk assessment are not likely to be mitigated, those applications may not be selected for funding. In assessing risks, AmeriCorps may consider the following criteria:

Due Diligence, including:

- Federal debt delinquency
- Suspension and debarment
- Information available through Office of Management and Budget (OMB)- designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as:
 - [Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System \(FAPIIS\)](#)
 - [U.S. Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services](#)
 - [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#)
- 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:
 - 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
 - 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

Commission staff will assess their subgrantees' programmatic past performance using the criteria above and submit those assessments to AmeriCorps.

Other Programmatic Risks:

- Publicly available information, including from the applicant organization's website

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.

Transparency in Grantmaking

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

Submitted program narratives, executive summaries, a list of reviewers who completed the review process, and a summary of external reviewer comments for successful applications may be available upon request via email to serve@mt.gov.

Re-Focusing Funding

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

FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

AmeriCorps will make awards following the selection announcement. **AmeriCorps anticipates announcing the results of this funding opportunity in July 2023 to State Commissions**, contingent on the availability of congressional appropriations. Applicants will then 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 the state contracting process is then 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 documentation from award recipients in order to monitor the grantee and award to ensure compliance with legal requirements, including the [Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019](#). Failure to make timely responses to these requests may result in award funds being placed on manual hold, reimbursement only status, or other remedies may be applied as appropriate.

AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions

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

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.

- 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.
- AmeriCorps strongly encourages applicants to review the regulations and additional guidance to fully understand how to comply with the requirements. See the [NSCHC regulations and guidance](#). AmeriCorps also strongly encourages award recipients to utilize the two AmeriCorps-approved vendors to conduct all components of NSCHC.
- 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.

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.
3. Fingerprint-based check of the FBI criminal history record database.

All checks must be conducted, reviewed, and eligibility determination 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 or the National Sex Offender Registry.
- Has been convicted of murder.

45 CFR 2540.200– 2540.207 and National Service Criminal History Check Resources contain complete guidance.

Official Guidance

All AmeriCorps active Guidance is available at <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.

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, if applicable. 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, if applicable. 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 member roster report in eGrants.

In addition, at the end of the award period, recipients must submit final financial (cost reimbursement grantees only) and progress reports that are cumulative over the entire award period and consistent with the close-out requirements. The final reports are due after the end of the period of performance.

Progress Report Data

If a 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.

AGENCY CONTACTS

Montana Governor's Office of Community Service

PO Box 200801

Helena, MT 59620

Program Officer: 406.444.5547 joe.naiman-sessions@mt.gov

Fiscal Officer: 406.444.1809 keena.irby@mt.gov

General email: serve@mt.gov

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

- Per the Privacy Act of 1974 ([5 U.S.C §552a](#)), 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.

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

APPENDIX A: STAFF ASSESSMENT OF CONTINUATION APPLICANTS

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 (2022)	Request (2023)	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

- 5) Areas of Assessment (50 points Max)
 - Budget, match, and cost per MSY (10 Points)
 - Compliance findings (10 Points)
 - Member enrollment rate and 8 day compliance (10 Points)
 - Member retention and 30 day compliance (10 Points)
 - Performance measure performance versus goals (10 Points)

Performance Measure statements	Current Grant Year		
	Target	Actual	Status