

RHODE ISLAND

AmeriCorps RI Grants

February 15, 2024

ServeRI | **AmeriCorps Rhode Island** | **RIDE** Rhode Island Department of Education

www.serverhodeisland.com/grants

Hello folks. My name is Adam Donaldson and I support ServeRI and AmeriCorps programs in Rhode Island, as the National and Community Service Program Specialist at the Rhode Island Department of Education.

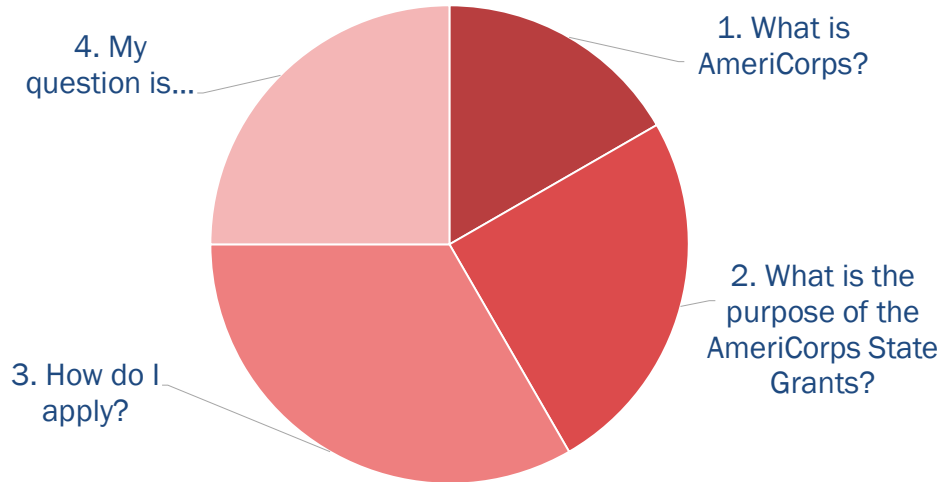
This is a bidder's conference, or information session about applying for AmeriCorps State Formula Grants. The date is February 15, 2024.

This presentation is being recorded. If you do not wish to be recorded please be sure to keep your video camera off or leave the meeting.

The recording and presentation will be made available online at www.serverhodeisland.com/grants.

Any and all information relevant to this funding opportunity is available on that webpage, including the most important detail – the deadline to apply is March 30, 2023.

PRESENTATION SUMMARY



ServeRI
Commission for National and Community Service



2

RHODE
ISLAND

We have four main questions to answer in the next hour:

What is AmeriCorps anyway?

What is the purpose of these specific AmeriCorps State grants?

How can I apply?, including specific requirements and technical aspects of this application.

And I will try and address specific questions that you enter into the chat or ask on camera in real time.

What is AmeriCorps?



ServeRI
Commissioner of National and Community Service



| 3 |

RHODE
ISLAND

Anything this AWESOME is complicated. If you are here, you probably know something about AmeriCorps already.

AmeriCorps is a federal agency originally known as the Corporation for National and Community Service - CNCS

AmeriCorps is also more than seven different main programs and thousands of subgrantees and partners, so I am going to speak about what is most relevant to the ServeRI funding opportunity.



PURPOSE OF AMERICORPS

To unite America

By bringing together people of all backgrounds

To serve communities with their time and skills **TO GET THINGS DONE**

So that we enrich the lives of those we serve and those who serve

ServeRI
Commission for National and Community Service



| 4 |


RHODE ISLAND

AmeriCorps is a federal program that works with states and local organizations. It was created with the National and Community Service Trust Act in 1993 but its history is rooted in the American idea of the power of assembly or mobilization for mutual aid.

Every year hundreds of thousands of AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve with organizations working to tackle the nation's most pressing challenges. With people serving in more than 45,000 locations nationwide, AmeriCorps helps make service to others a cornerstone of our national culture.

In Rhode Island there are annually several hundred AmeriCorps members and two thousand AmeriCorps Seniors.

What is most important to ServeRI is what I call the "two-fer." AmeriCorps programs in Rhode Island work to both enrich the lives of those we serve by getting things done, and second, those WHO serve by providing a pathway to education, careers, and leadership roles post-service.






ORGANIZATION BENEFITS

Developing a national service program in Rhode Island benefits your organization.

- Extend Your Reach
- Bring New Perspectives and Diversity
- Develop Future Leaders
- Raise Your Profile

AmeriCorps is a HUMAN RESOURCE project



| 5 |



AmeriCorps provides annual funding to the state according to its population – we call this State Formula funding. ServeRI is authorized to subgrant these funds to you.

You will be creating new positions at your organization and inviting folks to long-term volunteer assignments in AmeriCorps that meet needs in your community.

I may return to a core idea in this presentation – namely that AmeriCorps should be viewed a human resource project -- more than looking at the application as a funding request. You can benefit from this human resource to:

- Extend Your Reach: The people power in AmeriCorps positions will increase the capacity of your organization to serve more kids, families, and neighbors in your community.
- Bring New Perspectives and Diversity: AmeriCorps participants bring community and cultural competency to their positions from the diversity of their lived experiences.
- Develop Future Leaders : AmeriCorps provides the hands-on experience that develops new skills for participants to continue work at your organization or find a new path to strengthen Rhode Island.

- Raise Your Profile: As a federal, state, and local partnership, AmeriCorps provides numerous opportunities to highlight and promote the work of your organization to elected leaders and other funders.

AMERICORPS MEMBER MANAGEMENT

Recruit

- Selection
- Inclusive of the community
- Background checks

Train

- Orientation
- Service activities
- Life after service
- Civic reflection

Place

- Service sites
- Partner training
- Monitoring
- Data reporting

Supervise

- Team development
- Personal support
- Timesheets
- Performance review
- Recognition

ServeRI



6

RHODE ISLAND

As you think about AmeriCorps as a human resource project, you should consider your capacity and commitment to AmeriCorps member management.

You are taking on a project to RECRUIT, TRAIN, PLACE, and SUPERVISE a team of AmeriCorps members.

Recruit – while ServeRI and AmeriCorps support your outreach, you are expected to recruit your own AmeriCorps members, developing position descriptions, an application, and selection process.

The new AmeriCorps members will need orientation to your community and training to carry out your project. Ideally members may earn a career credential as part of this training.

The AmeriCorps members need a schedule, a place to go every day, a system to track their success.

And a supervision plan. Its not exciting, but time tracking is critical to AmeriCorps supervision, as members work towards completing a term of service measured in hours.

Insider's tip - The biggest challenge first time applicants have in writing their application is that they say that they will do these things but they do not write HOW.

Consider How will you recruit. How will you train. How will you place. How will you supervise the AmeriCorps members.

AMERICORPS MEMBERS

There are minimum AmeriCorps eligibility rules to serve in AmeriCorps.

Age – 17 and older

Education – working on high school or more

Citizenship – U.S. Citizen or permanent resident

Background – Agree to National Service Criminal History Check

Organizations set their own suitability, or selection, requirements.



The basic requirements for participation in AmeriCorps are written in federal legislation.

Participants must be age 17 and older. The majority of members are in their 20s but there are many currently serving members in Rhode Island age 35-50 well into their 80s.

Participants must have or be working toward a high school diploma. The majority of members in Rhode Island have some college or a college degree.

Participants must be citizens or have permanent resident status. AmeriCorps has an enrollment process to verify this status.

Participants must have a thorough criminal history screening to help safeguard recipients of services. Failure by programs to follow the checks results in lost grant funds.

Organizations also determine what characteristics and skills are needed to implement their program.

MEMBERS RECEIVE BENEFITS

As the saying goes, membership has its privileges. With some variation due to the duration of service hours or AmeriCorps program type, national service participants receive benefits.



- Living allowance
- Student loan deferment
- Education award
- Health insurance (not all)
- Childcare benefits (not all)
- Pathway to a career
- Opportunity to *make a difference*

ServeRI
Commission for National and Community Service

AmeriCorps
Rhode Island

| 8 |

RHODE
ISLAND

There are many benefits for the AmeriCorps member.

Members can receive a living allowance – programs decide on the amount.

Your program will provide both soft job skills and specific skills that are a step on a career pathway.

Members who complete their service earn an educational scholarship from the National Service Trust. The value is equivalent to a Pell grant, over six thousand dollars, for those completing a full year of 1700 hours.

Many individuals are called to service for personal, cultural or religious reasons.

AmeriCorps is an adventure and many folks are looking for a way to take action for a cause or make a difference

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

While charging time to the AmeriCorps grant, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program, there are activities that are not allowed.

Political Activity and
Advocacy

Impairing Collective
Bargaining

Religious Activity

Benefitting
For-Profits

Voter Registration

Abortion-Related
Services

ServeRI
Commission for National and Community Service



9

RHODE
ISLAND

AmeriCorps is very clear about what AmeriCorps members cannot do.

For example.

- Attempting to influence legislation; engage in partisan political activities;
- Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing or collective bargaining
- Engaging in religious instruction
- Providing a direct benefit to a business
- Conducting a voter registration drive
- Providing abortion services

These are called AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities

In addition, an AmeriCorps program can not aim to supplant volunteer or paid staff already at work.

GET THINGS DONE

AmeriCorps projects in Rhode Island may address any community need. AmeriCorps describes six “Focus Areas.”



Disaster Services

Helping individuals and communities prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of disasters and increase community resiliency.



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.



Economic Opportunity

Improving the economic well-being and security of underserved individuals.



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.



Education

Improving educational outcomes for underserved people, especially children. AmeriCorps is particularly interested in program designs that support youth engagement and service learning as strategies to achieve high educational outcomes.



Veterans and Military Families

Improving the quality of life of veterans, military families, caregivers, and survivors.

ServeRI
Commission for National and Community Service



| 10 |

RHODE ISLAND

You can design a program to address any community need. Educating students for the jobs of the 21st century, supporting veterans and military families; preserving the environment; helping communities recover from natural disasters.

Each announcement of an AmeriCorps funding opportunity may identify specific priorities for that competition. I will address this in the next section.

SERVICE AS A STRATEGY



How will you use
service as a strategy?

ServeRI
Commission for National and Community Service



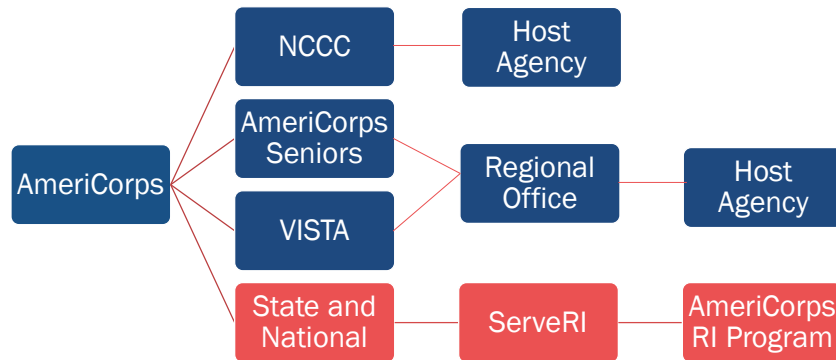
| 11 |

RHODE
ISLAND

Let me pause and pose a question to you. How are you proposing to use AmeriCorps members to address a community need or improve the quality of life in Rhode Island?

AMERICORPS RESOURCES

There are a number of AmeriCorps programs with different federal and state management relationships and funding mechanisms.



Before we go further in talking about the ServeRI RFP, I do want to highlight again that AmeriCorps is a complex collection of distinct service programs.

ServeRI promotes but does not directly manage AmeriCorps NCCC, VISTA, and AmeriCorps Seniors. These programs have distinct features and separate applications.

At a very high level VISTA places one volunteer for a year at anti-poverty organizations to build capacity. NCCC members, are not recruited, but arrive by passenger van for a 6 week service adventure under your supervision. Please contact me for more information about these other programs or visit the website americorps.gov.

What is the purpose of an AmeriCorps State grant?



ServeRI
Commission for National and Community Service



| 13 |

RHODE ISLAND

ServeRI is the public authority responsible for managing AmeriCorps State Grants in Rhode Island.

In each state there is a Commission for National and Community Service, or a Governor appointed volunteer board. Here we are housed at the Rhode Island Department of Education for staffing and administrative systems.

ServeRI adopted a strategic plan for 2020-2023 called the State Service Plan that articulates a mission to catalyze inclusive, equitable service opportunities to strengthen Rhode Island.



TWO-FER

Successful proposals will describe:

how AmeriCorps service positions are an appropriate strategy to meet a community need

AND

will provide a service-to-career or to-education pathway for the AmeriCorps participants.

While ServeRI has always viewed AmeriCorps as a two-part strategy to strengthening the state, we aim in the Notice of Funding Availability to be very clear that your application should ONE explain how you meet a community need and TWO support the learning and growth of AmeriCorps members.

In practical terms the grant review process scores 40 points to community need and 20 points to member development.

What I want to emphasize is that you must convey that your organization has the heart of a teacher, recognizing that you are not creating a job but a program in which AmeriCorps members will participate for a short term, leaving with new attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

Some of the ways that current AmeriCorps programs support their members include training, coaching, resume and interviewing workshops, strengths assessments, self-directed professional development budgets, conference attendance, diversity training, skill and career certifications.



COMMUNITY NEED

The ServeRI Notice identifies performance measures (A.3.) that address [Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for Public Education](#) and the McKee Administration's [Rhode Island 2030 plan](#).

CLIMATE

COMMUNITY CAPACITY

EDUCATION

HOUSING & PUBLIC HEALTH

ServeRI
Commission for National and Community Service



| 15 |

**RHODE
ISLAND**

AmeriCorps Grants in Rhode Island should align with the state's goals in the Plan for Public Education and Rhode Island 20230 Plan. You may want to explain how your community need shows up in these strategic planning documents from the state.

As part of your application, you will describe the community need you aim to address by identifying a performance measure, or target outcome. This will be a change in knowledge, behavior, or condition within the community.

While ServeRI is open to any community need, we have listed common AmeriCorps measures that align with state goals.

Review pages 6-7. There you will find, for example, under education - Number of students with improved school attendance. Or under Climate - Acres of public land improved; miles of trails, rivers, or shoreline improved. Are there any immediate questions about how community need is described in the Notice?

PRIORITIES

Priorities are factored into the scored review of the proposal and recommendation for awards.

**MUNICIPAL
PARTNERSHIPS FOR
EDUCATION**

**SERVICE-TO-
CAREER PATHWAYS**

**EXTENDING REACH
TO UNDERSERVED
COMMUNITIES**

**VOLUNTEER
RECRUITMENT AND
MANAGEMENT**

ServeRI



| 16 |

**RHODE
ISLAND**

10 of 100 points assessed in the application review process are available only to applicants that address ONE of ServeRI's funding priorities for this grant competition.

We will briefly review each priority.

FUNDING PRIORITY 1

MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR EDUCATION

- Municipalities across Rhode Island have committed to increasing learning opportunities for young people in their communities, spurred by Governor Dan McKee’s Learn365RI and Municipal Learning Centers initiatives. ServeRI encourages applicants to provide evidence of collaboration between municipal authorities and community partners to conduct activities after school, during school vacation periods, or summer. The service activities of AmeriCorps members might include program development, volunteer recruitment, student outreach, academic coaching, family engagement, or other direct program supports.

FUNDING PRIORITY 2

SERVICE-TO-CAREER PATHWAYS

- Service-to-career pathways embed career development opportunities into the service experience, such as career exploration, coaching, skills training, and credential attainment. Applicants who identify with this priority should be able to name the specific career fields; the training, support, or certification provided; and relationships with future employers.

FUNDING PRIORITY 3

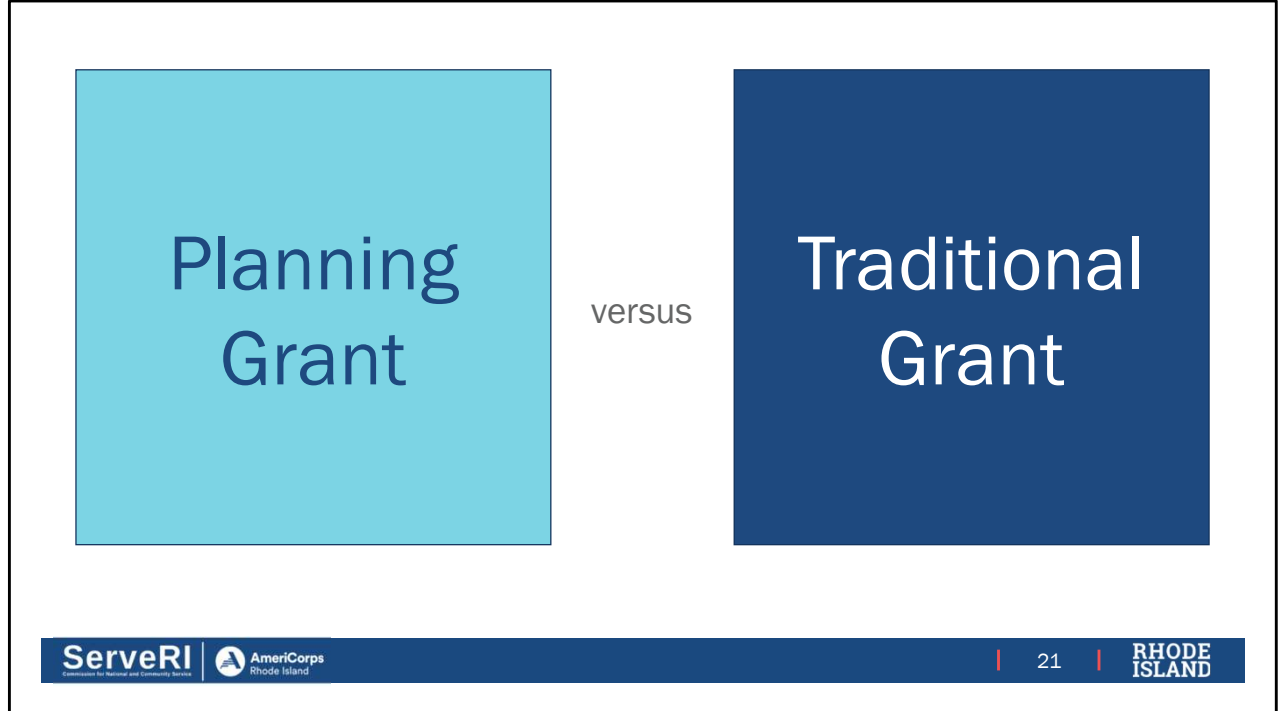
EXTENDING REACH TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

- ServeRI seeks continuously to support a portfolio of AmeriCorps programs that reflect the diversity of Rhode Island and to support the development of AmeriCorps programs in underserved areas. Applicants who identify this priority need to describe in their community need statement the extent to which their organization will lead service in communities with concentrated poverty, rural communities, tribal communities, or serve historically underrepresented and underserved individuals, including but not limited to communities of color, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, people who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, people with arrest and/or conviction records, and religious minorities.

FUNDING PRIORITY 4

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND MANAGEMENT

- AmeriCorps members can add capacity to organizations and multiply impact by recruiting and managing additional community volunteers. To be eligible for this priority members must spend approximately 50% of their time on volunteer management activities. Strong proposals will describe volunteer outreach efforts and training members in volunteer management practices.



ServeRI welcomes either Planning Grant or Traditional Grant applications. Be sure to read the Notice for different application instructions.

A “planning grant” may not be used to support AmeriCorps members. Planning grants allow time and financial resources for organizations to determine and explore AmeriCorps program feasibility and design including a Logic Model and Theory of Change; develop program service plans in response to the identified community need(s); and build organizational capacity to host AmeriCorps members. The amount of the award ranges from \$35,000 to \$50,000.

How do I apply for an AmeriCorps State grant from ServeRI?

The screenshot shows a website header with the AmeriCorps Rhode Island logo and the text 'AmeriCorps Youth'. The main content area features the title 'Funding & Resources' in large blue font. Below the title, there is a sub-header 'AmeriCorps Rhode Island Grants' and a link for 'Request for Proposal and Application Instructions'. A paragraph of text follows, starting with 'On behalf of ServeRI, Rhode Island's Commission for National Secondary Education is requesting proposals to develop new ways that the service role of AmeriCorps members will directly benefit students and the community.'

ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility

- Nonprofit organizations
- LEAs, schools, colleges, and universities
- Government agencies
- Faith-based organizations
- Native American / Indian Tribes

NOT ELIGIBLE

- Organized primarily for-profit or for lobbying
- Convicted of a Crime

Requirements

- eGrants – grant and member management system
- SAM.gov active registration
- Cost Sharing
- National Service Criminal History Checks
- AmeriCorps Visual Identity
- ServeRI Meetings and Events

REVIEW THE FULL LIST IN THE NOTICE OF FUNDING

First, know that you are eligible to apply for AmeriCorps funding.

Unless you are For-Profit Business, 501c4 organization, or convicted of a federal crimes.

Be sure to familiarize yourself with additional requirements described in the Notice.

GRANT PERIOD

August 1 - July 31

- If member service through the summer, you may elect a September 1 start.
- Traditional = 3-year funding commitment.
- Planning = 1-year grant.



ServeRI
Commission for National and Community Service



| 24 |

RHODE ISLAND

The grant award is for ONE YEAR. The start date is August 1, 2023.

The one year award is related to ServeRI's current operating environment.

You will have the opportunity to re-compete for a 3-year award next year.

GRANT TYPES AND FEATURES

GRANT TYPE	AWARD AMOUNT	MATCH REQUIRED	NOTES
Cost-Reimbursement Traditional Grant	\$26,000 x # MSYs	24%-50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “standard” application • Detailed budget and fiscal reports • 0.5FTE minimum staff requirement
Fixed Grant	\$26,000 x # MSYs	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment based on service hours • Suitable for small (2MSYs) projects • Suitable for experienced w/ AmeriCorps
Education Award Program Fixed Grant	\$800 x # MSYs	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment based on # of members • Usually no living allowance provided • Suitable for education pathways
Professional Corps Fixed Grant	\$1,000 x # MSYs	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs requiring license or certification • Demonstrate workforce shortage
Cost-Reimbursement Planning Grant	Up to \$50,000	24%-50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources to dedicate one year of planning to develop a new program

CALCULATING FUNDING AMOUNT - MSYs

Member Term of Service	Calculation	MSYs
Full Time (1700 hours)	4__members x 1.0000000	= 4
Reduced Full Time (1200 hours)	__members x 0.7000000	=
Half Time (900 hours)	__members x 0.5000000	=
Reduced Half Time (675 hours)	__members x 0.3809524	=
Quarter time (450 hours)	__members x 0.26455027	=
Minimum time (300 hours)	24 members x 0.21164022	= 5.08
Abbreviated time (100 hours)	__members x 0.07054674	=
	TOTAL MSYs	9.08

Federal Grant Share = \$26,000* x 9.08 (Total MSYs) = \$236,080

ServeRI



| 26 |

RHODE ISLAND

Planning Grant submit a budget and may request any amount up to \$50,000.

Other AmeriCorps grants provide funding in proportion to the number of AmeriCorps members and their Terms of Service.

First you will need to calculate the number of MEMBER SERVICE YEARS or MSYs that match your program design.

To enroll in the AmeriCorps service experience, an individual agrees to a term of service measured by hours. One MSY is equivalent to at least 1700 service hours, a “full-time” AmeriCorps term of service. AmeriCorps has a limited number of defined terms of service, and the federal agency has a formula for calculating how shorter terms of service equate to one (1) MSY. ServeRI makes grant awards based on a published amount times the number of MSYs. See the table. The applicant may design the service experience to be one hour a week or 40 plus and last one month or one year. The design will determine the relevant term of service. The number of AmeriCorps members in each term of service determines the size of the grant award.

In this example, the proposal includes 4 full time members. Each of these is valued at one MSY. But the plan also includes 24 Minimum Time, or 300 hours, slots. Perhaps they are

running a summer education program. Those slots are not valued at 1 MSY but a fraction relative to the reduced hours. You see the math equals 9.08 MSYs.

9.08 is multiplied by the cost per MSY. ServeRI has directed applicants to use a cost per MSY of \$26,000. The total result is \$236,080. This is your target for a cost reimbursement budget. You can budget for less. But you cannot budget for more.

COST REIMBURSEMENT “MATCH”

Item	Calculation	CNCS Share	Grantee Share	Total
Program Manager	50% x \$55,000	\$27,500	\$27,500	\$55,000
AmeriCorps T-Shirts	\$12 x 10 members x 2 shirts	\$0	\$240	\$240

- Grantee Share can be cash or in-kind
- 24% minimum match
- “CNCS Share” and “AmeriCorps Share” mean the same thing!

It is important when developing your budget to understand that the Budget must include costs charged to AmeriCorps, or CNCS Share for the Corporation for National and Community Service, and costs contributed by you, or Grantee Share.

You determine the split.

The Grantee Share can comprise of purchases you will make with cash from other grants, fundraising, etc.

Or The Grantee Share can identify in-kind contributions such as donated supplies, personnel time from partners, or donated training consultants.

For new applicants, your total project budget must be built to have a 24% or higher cost share or match rate. The rate increases after three years.

During the program implementation you will need to achieve this cost share rate in order to be fully paid your awarded grant funds.

There are Detailed Budget instructions in the AmeriCorps State and National Application Instructions document and technical assistance webinars.

ServeRI further makes available to applicants an online learning experience on AmeriCorps finance created by the company On3Learn. To learn more and access this resource for free contact ServeRI

ESTIMATING REQUIRED MATCH

Example:

Federal Grant Share = \$26,000 * x 9.08 (Total MSYs) = \$236,080

Total CNCS Share	\$236,080
min Grantee Share	\$74,552
Total Project	\$310,632

1. Total Funding Request / (1-Match Rate) = Total Project Budget
2. Total Project Budget – Total Funding Request = Total Grantee Share, or Match
3. Calculate \$236,080 / (1 – 0.24) = \$310,632 Total Project Budget
4. Calculate \$310,632 Total Project Budget - \$236,080 Total Funding Request = \$74,552

A compliant budget will show a minimum of \$74,552 in Grantee Match.

ServeRI



| 28 |

RHODE ISLAND

Many applicants misunderstand the match requirement. The match rate is not applied to the amount requested, CNCS Share, but the larger amount of the Total Project Budget. To estimate the match requirement, use the calculation shown.

Total Funding Request / (1-Match Rate) = Total Project Budget

Total Project Budget – Total Funding Request = Total Grantee Share, or Match

In our earlier example 9.08 MSYs provide a CNCS Share of \$208,840. When we work that figure through the formula, we see that the budget needs to include \$65,949 in Grantee Match. Those are addition funds that need to be raised or already committed to in staff time or other budget items.

If it was not clear already, I want to highlight for you that AmeriCorps does not fully fund the cost of your proposed project. The match, or shared cost, is required by AmeriCorps and not something added by ServeRI.

LIVING ALLOWANCE AND EDUCATION AWARDS

AmeriCorps publishes an annual range of allowable living allowance and the education award amount for seven pre-determined terms of service. This table shows the most current information available.

TERMS OF SERVICE	HOURS REQUIRED	LIVING ALLOWANCE 2024	EDUCATION AWARD 2024
Full-time	1,700	\$18,700 - \$37,400	\$7,395.00
Three quarter-time	1,200	\$0 - \$26,180	\$5,176.50
Half-time	900	\$0 - \$18,700	\$3,697.50
Reduced half-time	675	\$0 - \$14,212	\$2,817.14
Quarter-time	450	\$0 - \$9,724	\$1,956.35
Minimum-time	300	\$0 - \$7,854	\$1,565.08
Abbreviated-time	100	\$0 - \$2,244	\$416.17

Living allowance. Question. I mentioned its complicated.

AmeriCorps members are not employees. By law they do not earn an hourly wage or annual salary. However, to support their living while dedicating time to your project they can receive a living allowance. Every program determines what the living allowance will be for members. That amount is divided weekly or by the number of pay periods for your organizations that will occur during their service schedule. Then the member receives the living allowance in equal payments REGARDLESS of the hours they actually serve.

In today's environment ServeRI recommends you consider a living allowance of \$25,500 or more for a 1700 hours term of service, BUT your projects' values, resources, and selection needs will impact how you budget this. Living allowance is often the largest expense.

OTHER MEMBER BENEFITS

- Health Insurance (for 1700 hours member)*
- “Member” Assistance Plan
- Childcare Benefits
- Student Loan Forbearance
- Public Service Student Loan Forgiveness
-benefits you provide*

* Benefit may appear on application budget

Grants & Resources

FY24 AmeriCorps Rhode Island Formula Grants

Application Materials

- [AmeriCorps Rhode Island Notice of Funding Availability](#)
- [Applicant Questions and Answers \(as of 2/7/2024\)](#)
- [2024 AmeriCorps State and National Mandatory Supplemental Information \(PDF\)](#)
- [2024 AmeriCorps State and National Performance Measure Instructions \(PDF\)](#)

The Rhode Island Department of Education, on behalf of ServeRI, announces the availability of funding to recruit individuals, called AmeriCorps members, to perform paid community service at Rhode Island schools, nonprofit organizations, or government agencies. Successful proposals will describe how AmeriCorps service positions are an appropriate strategy to meet a community need AND will identify supports for AmeriCorps participants to develop their career or continue their education. Both 3-year program grants and 1-year planning grants will be awarded. The deadline for proposals is **March 30, 2024**.

Read the [AmeriCorps Rhode Island Grants Notice of Funding Availability](#).

[Register here](#) on Zoom for an optional information session about AmeriCorps and the application process taking place February 15, 2024 starting at 10:00AM.

APPLICATION STEPS OVERVIEW

1. **Intent to Apply.** Applicants must signal their non-binding intent to apply by completing the [Intent to Apply webform](#). The webform assists ServeRI in communicating with applicants. It contains a series of questions to determine if an applicant is ready to apply for an AmeriCorps grant.
2. **eGrants Narrative and Budget.** Applicants must respond to the proposal questions, select AmeriCorps performance measures, and enter a budget in eGrants – the AmeriCorps grant management system. See below for information about starting an eGrants account. Organizations must have or apply for a Unique Entity Identifier by registering with the federal System of Award Management.
3. **Additional Documents.** Please read the Notice for additional documents to submit. Includes the [ServeRI AmeriCorps Grant](#)

There are a number of resources at www.serverhodeisland.com/grants.

In addition to the Notice, you can find our reviewers scoring form, and additional videos and templates for developing a performance measures, and budget. You will want to explore this site.

SAM.GOV and E-GRANTS

UNEXPIRED
REGISTRATION
SAM.GOV
UEI #



ServeRI
Commissioner of National and Community Services



| 32 |

RHODE
ISLAND

We have highlighted some of the features of the grant. Now let's talk application submission.

This is a federal funding source. To apply, your organization must have an active registration on the sam dot gov website. As explained in the Notice, you will need to enter the UEI and exact spelling for contact information into the AmeriCorps application system. This system is called eGrants.

You will need to create a user account in eGrants.

ServeRI provides detailed information in the Notice on these steps. What is important to know is that these steps can take time! Get them done immediately so you can access the systems you need to submit the application.

APPLICATION STEPS

Priorities are factored into the scored review of the proposal and recommendation for awards.

INTENT TO APPLY

eGrants
APPLICATION

ADDITIONAL
DOCUMENTS

OCEAN STATE
PROCURES

ServeRI



33

RHODE
ISLAND

THE REMAINDER OF THIS PRESENTATION WILL FOCUS ON THE APPLICATION BUT I DO WANT TO IDENTIFY 4 STEPS TO THE APPLICATION PROCESS.

1.Intent to Apply. Applicants must signal their non-binding intent to apply by completing the [Intent to Apply webform](#). The webform assists ServeRI in communicating with applicants. It contains a series of questions to determine if an applicant is ready to apply for an AmeriCorps grant.

2.eGrants Narrative and Budget. Applicants must respond to the proposal questions, select AmeriCorps performance measures, and enter a budget in [eGrants](#) – the AmeriCorps grant management system. See below for information about starting an eGrants account. Organizations must have or apply for a Unique Entity Identifier by registering with the federal System of Award Management.

3.Additional Documents. Please read the Notice for additional documents to submit, including the [ServeRI AmeriCorps Grant Assurances \(PDF\)](#). Additional documents should be sent by email to serveri@ride.ri.gov on or before March 30, 2024.

4.OSP state procurement. In addition, although it is not necessary for the application itself, in order for an entity to be awarded a grant, the fiscal agent for the grant must be [registered as a vendor in Ocean State Procures](#), the State's electronic procurement system.

APPLICATION CONTENT

eGrants Content

1. Applicant Information
2. Application Information
3. Narrative Sections:
 - i. Executive Summary
 - ii. Program Design
 - iii. Organizational Capability
 - iv. Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy
4. Logic Model
5. Performance Measures
6. Budget

Additional Documents

1. Signed Assurances form
2. a financial audit or 990
3. Partnership agreement (optional)
4. Evaluation reports (optional)
5. Additional materials can be requested by ServeRI as a special condition of funding

Applications must not exceed
14 double-spaced pages
for the Narratives

Planning Grant		Traditional Grant	
Categories	Points	Categories	Points
Executive Summary	0	Executive Summary	0
Program Design		Program Design	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem/Need 	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and Logic Model 	30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Process /Timeline 	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding Priority 	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding Priority 	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence 	10
Organizational Capability	20	Organizational Capability	
Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Background 	10
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Recruitment 	10
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Experience & Supervision 	10
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to Diversity & Equity 	5
		Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports program design 	7
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports capability 	8

The planning grant and traditional grant are each scored differently. This is explained in the RFP using these tables shown here.

The planning grant seeks information about the identified need and primarily asks how will you use the year to plan. What are you going to do and who is involved.

The tradition grant has a focus on what the AmeriCorps members will do and what will be the results.

- How many AmeriCorps members?
- What are they going to do? When? Where?
- What is the result of their service? Who benefits?
- What is the rationale, or added benefit, of utilizing AmeriCorps members to implement this project?
- How will you recruit and select AmeriCorps members?
- What support and training is provided AmeriCorps members?

NARRATIVE TIPS

- Reviewers want to be able to picture and clearly understand what the AmeriCorps members do during their day.
- AmeriCorps members do not “work,” they serve.
- Answer the questions in the order of the application – refer to the rubric and scoring form – and do not skip any.
- Style is more scientific, less literary.
- Explain HOW the thing is done, not only what is done.

See Exact Questions in Application Instructions

LOGIC MODEL

- ServeRI expects to read your logic in the grant narrative.
- In this state competition, we are not using the logic model in eGrants.

Project Resources	Core Project Components	Evidence of Project Implementation and Participation	Evidence of Change		
INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES		
			Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
What we invest (# and type of AmeriCorps members, # of sites)	What we do (duration, dosage and target population)	Direct results from delivering the intervention (# of beneficiaries served)	Changes in Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, Opinions	Changes in Behavior or Action that result from participants' new knowledge	Meaningful changes, often in their condition or status in life
See Narrative	See Narrative	See Narrative	See Narrative	See Narrative	See Narrative

Ideally, you would start with the logic model and use it to develop the program design described in the narrative.

The key ideas are:

What is the proposed service activity.

How much of it is delivered?

What are the immediate results or outputs.

What change in knowledge, behavior, or condition occurs.

Note - The logic model is not about changes for AmeriCorps members but the beneficiaries of their activities.

Part of the planning grant activity is to spend time developing a logic model. Therefore a logic model is not a required component of a planning grant application.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

OUTPUT ED1A: Number of individuals served

OUTCOME ED5A: Number of students with improved academic performance

- Collect and report data on ONE aligned output and outcome that corresponds to the primary service activity.
- Refer to National Performance Measure Instructions

ServeRI



38

RHODE ISLAND

Every AmeriCorps grant application identified at least one Performance Measure to assess the success and impact of the project.

A performance measure has two aligned parts. One output and one outcome from the primary service activity.

AmeriCorps published a separate document titled National Performance Measures Instructions that is referenced in the Notice and posted online. This document will help you identify an out put and outcome paired performance measure.

You can create what is called an applicant determined measure if none of the measures fit your service activities.

As an example in the area of Education. The output is the number of students who receive services, ED1A. The outcome identified as ED5A is improved academic performance. In the application you provide more detail about how you measure the improvement.

On the ServeRI website there are Performance Measure instruction documents and recorded trainings for additional information. You should complete the Performance Measure model in eGrants AND describe your performance measure when writing about

your program design in the application narrative.

BUDGET

- Federal Funds do not cover all costs
- Application budget describes AmeriCorps program only, not organization
- Explain the calculation of each cost
- Budgets include costs such as:
 - Personnel and Fringe
 - Travel
 - Training
 - Supplies – AmeriCorps Gear
 - Evaluation
 - Living Allowance
 - Member Support
 - Indirect Cost

BENEFITS NOT INCLUDED

- Education Award
- Child Care
- Loan Interest Payment

It is important in the budget itself to explain how you calculate each cost. Write out \$15 t-shirt x 10 members = \$150.

It is also important that the budget align to the activity described in the narrative and demonstrate sufficient expenditures to implement a successful program.

There is a recorded training dedicated to developing a budget. ServeRI also provides a traditional AmeriCorps grant budget template in excel format.

AmeriCorps has a specific budget format required in eGrants. This includes specific categories. It also includes for each line item how the total cost is shared between CNCS Share (grant resources) and Grantee Share (organizational resources).

Travel such as mileage reimbursement to visit service sites.
Training such as certification programs or training consultants.
Supplies like AmeriCorps t-shirts.
The cost of conducting the criminal history checks.
Living Allowance for the members.
Other member support costs, such as healthcare.

ServeRI has never received a perfect budget. Applicants selected for a grant award can expect

ServerI to ask questions and to require modifications prior to a final award.

ServeRI

Commission for National and Community Service

www.serverhodeisland.com/grants

Adam.Donaldson@ride.ri.gov

Please submit questions by email to adam.donaldson@ride.ri.gov.

Questions applicable to all will be compiled and shared on the RFP website slash grants.

I hope this introduced key features of the grant. I look forward to supporting your application which is due on or before March 30, 2024.