



**AmeriCorps**  
Rhode Island

**RHODE  
ISLAND**

# State Service Plan 2024-2026

*strengthening Rhode Island through service*



**ServeRI**  
Commission for National and Community Service



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# State Service Plan Summary

Catalyze inclusive, equitable service opportunities  
to strengthen Rhode Island.

## STRONG COMMUNITIES

Grow the awareness of AmeriCorps  
in Rhode Island.

### Objectives

- 1A. Curate and distribute stories about service.
- 1B. Promote AmeriCorps service and resource opportunities.

### Funding Priority

Underserved communities and historically underrepresented individuals.

## STRONG PROGRAMS

Extend the reach of AmeriCorps  
to benefit more Rhode Island  
communities.

### Objectives

- 2A. Develop local high-quality programs that perform to AmeriCorps' competitive funding standards.
- 2B. Partner with other units of government to support service opportunities aligned with the RI 2030 Plan.

### Funding Priority

Designed to reach more service locations or engage community volunteers.

## STRONG MEMBERS

Develop life-long leaders focused on  
service, community, and equity.

### Objectives

- 3A. AmeriCorps Rhode Island members and alumni will develop a sense of pride for their service and their community.
- 3B. Support AmeriCorps members and alumni with their benefits and skill development to transition from service to career pathways or educational institutions.

### Funding Priority

Service-to-Career pathways.



# About ServeRI

Housed and supported by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), ServeRI is the Governor-appointed Rhode Island Commission for National and Community Service ([Public Law 2017 ch 395](#)). We create service opportunities through AmeriCorps for individuals of all ages, abilities, and identities to address community challenges and to gain civic leadership and job experience on their path to new careers or higher education.

**Over the past 30 years, ServeRI has helped 8,300 Rhode Island residents serve 12 million hours in AmeriCorps and earn \$30 million in education benefits.**

## Responsibilities:

- Prepare and implement a national service plan for Rhode Island that inspires service as a strategy to meet local community needs and foster civic engagement;
- Administer AmeriCorps grant competitions;
- Monitor and support AmeriCorps projects to comply with federal and state laws;
- Manage and enhance benefits provided to AmeriCorps service participants, including career exploration and job credentials, and civic leadership training; and
- Promote paid AmeriCorps service and community volunteer opportunities -- bringing people together and empowering changemakers.





# ServeRI Leadership

## Commission Members

Amy Albert<sup>A</sup>  
Dana Borrelli-Murray  
Amanda Cantrell  
Susan Cheesman<sup>A</sup>  
Brian Darrow - *Chair*<sup>A</sup>  
J. Michael Downey  
Daniela Fairchild  
Kimberly Fernandez<sup>A</sup>  
Carlton Howard<sup>A</sup>  
Pedro Pastor<sup>A</sup>  
Arthur Plitt  
Janice Pothier Pac  
Kelly Powers

Lindsey Ravizza<sup>A</sup>  
Kristin Read<sup>A</sup>  
Omar Reyes  
Stephan Rodriguez<sup>A</sup>  
Kayla Rosen<sup>A</sup>  
Elise Swearingen<sup>A</sup>

<sup>A</sup> indicates AmeriCorps Alums

## Department of Education

Angélica Infante-Green<sup>A</sup>  
*Commissioner*

Rosemary Reilly-Chammat  
*Associate Director*

Adam Donaldson<sup>A</sup>  
*Program Specialist*

Amanda Forget<sup>A</sup>  
*Program Associate*

Anthony Vescera  
*Senior Fiscal Officer*

# Our Guiding Principles

Whereas practices may change, ServeRI views these principles as fixed, basic truths that inspire our goals and activities. They are meant to safely guide ServeRI staff and Commission Members toward the right decisions, practices, and processes.

## **LEADERSHIP**

Civic reflection and service-learning experiences stimulate lifelong community engagement. Bringing people together to think and talk deeply about their civic choices, personal values, and public commitments strengthens their relationships and stimulates leaders to be able to respond more imaginatively to a community's challenges and opportunities.

## **COLLABORATION**

Rhode Island's uniqueness as the smallest state allows people and organizations to connect, learn, and partner together.

## **INCLUSION**

All individuals and communities have inherent dignity and local strengths to contribute. Achieving inclusion and cultural responsiveness requires empathy, intentional actions, and public input.

## **EQUITY**

Volunteer service can be an opportunity to fill gaps and address disparities that are the result of unequal distribution of power and opportunities. Yet, service itself requires negotiation of the complicated relationship between the person who serves and the individual served.

## **DATA**

Results must be measured to be meaningful. High-quality data is needed to make informed decisions about programs and activities, to hold partners and ourselves accountable to our goals, to tell the story of program achievements, and to add knowledge to the volunteer service field of practice.



# Our Mission

*Catalyze inclusive, equitable service opportunities to strengthen Rhode Island.*

**catalyze:** service is a strategy to begin or accelerate positive social change

**inclusive, equitable:** service is welcome and accessible to all; leadership and resources are distributed to address disparities

**strengthen:** service develops AmeriCorps members and volunteers AND meets the needs of Rhode Island communities



# Our Theory of Action

## If ServeRI



Braids federal, state, and local funding and public policies.



Brings people together for a common purpose.



Tells stories of transformative service.



Collects and shares data.



Improves incentives to serve and recognizes service participants.



Delivers technical assistance and training to AmeriCorps program applicants, staff, and members.

## Then

There will be a diverse portfolio of service opportunities.

There will be excitement and high demand for service.

There will be more AmeriCorps projects that win *federal* funding competitions.

There will be individuals of all ages, abilities, and identities who develop their civic leadership and career skills and access higher education.

## That

Solve community and state problems *through service*.

Build the civic capacity of RI organizations *through service*.

Transform lives and develop Rhode Island's civic workforce *through service*.







# State Service Plan 2024-2026

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## Process Summary

# State Plan Process

ServeRI began the planning process by reviewing Governor Dan McKee administration's *Rhode Island 2030 plan* and *Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for Public Education*, as well as the *AmeriCorps strategic plan*, all developed through extensive public input. Staff facilitated stakeholder conversations and developed a SWOT analysis. Then commission members reflected on the planning and results of the 2020-2023 service plan, choosing to maintain the core principles, mission, and theory of action and build upon the current plan by identifying key objectives for 2024-2026.

## Feb. '23

- Launch Planning Process
- Review Rhode Island 2030
- Review Plan for Public Education

## May '23

- Comparison of AmeriCorps and RI funding areas
- Grantee and Partners' Input
- SWOT Analysis

## Sep. '23

- Reflect on 2020-2023
- Draft Goals
- Draft Objectives

## Dec. '23

- Collect Feedback on Objectives
- Identify Critical Areas of Focus

## Mar. '24

- Develop Annualized Workplan
- Approve plan



# ServeRI Funding Areas

The [Rhode Island 2030 plan](#), [Rhode Island's Strategic Plan for Public Education](#), and [AmeriCorps strategic plan](#) identify common community challenges where AmeriCorps members can make significant contributions.



**COMMUNITY BUILDING**

**EDUCATION**

**ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE**

**HEALTH**

**HOUSING**



# Stakeholder Input and SWOT Analysis

ServeRI asked AmeriCorps grant recipients, key stakeholders, and commission members to reflect on the prior state service plan and the current state of service in Rhode Island.

## TOP TOPIC: AmeriCorps Recruitment

- Persistent low awareness of AmeriCorps
- ServeRI could help with marketing
- Encourage second service terms at other programs
- Engage youth earlier – AmeriCorps Jr.s
- Improve incentives to serve



# Redefined State Plan Goals

2020 - 2023

2024 - 2026

## STRONG COMMUNITIES

Grow the investment of national service in Rhode Island.

**Grow the awareness of AmeriCorps in Rhode Island.**

## STRONG PROGRAMS

Increase the number of Rhode Islanders applying to volunteer with national service programs.

**Extend the reach of AmeriCorps to benefit more Rhode Island communities.**

## STRONG MEMBERS

Promote volunteerism and leadership among Rhode Islanders through service and civic reflection.

**Develop life-long leaders focused on service, community, and equity.**



# State Service Plan 2024-2026

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Funding Areas

RHODE  
ISLAND

# Community Building

AmeriCorps grants will address the following community building outcomes for Rhode Island in 2024-2026.

- Number of organizations that increase their efficiency, effectiveness, and/or program reach
- Number of students completing service-learning or civics projects
- Number of individuals with increase knowledge of civic bridge-building
- Number of individuals reporting increased disaster readiness

**Building resilient Rhode Island communities requires high-capacity institutions, practicing civic participation, and reducing polarization and community divisions. AmeriCorps members may be placed at community-based organizations and local government agencies to build capacity, organize neighbors, develop new programs, conduct outreach or program registration, collect and analyze data, and recruit and manage community volunteers.**



# Education

AmeriCorps grants will address the following education outcomes for Rhode Island in 2024-2026.

- Number of children ages 0-5 demonstrating gains in school readiness
- Number of students with improved academic performance in Math and/or ELA
- Number of students with improved school attendance
- Number of students with improved social-emotional skills
- Number of students enrolling in post-secondary education or training
- Number of individuals with improved job readiness
- Number of AmeriCorps members hired as teachers, teaching assistants, or specialists

**Student's academic growth continues to be disrupted by the pandemic, consequences more acutely felt by students of color, differently-abled students, and multilingual learners. AmeriCorps members have always been trusted champions of Rhode Island's kids, serving as teachers, tutors, mentors, and academic coaches. They may support state initiatives to bolster attendance, Learn365RI extended-learning time, and Municipal Learning Centers among other activities.**





# Environment and Climate

AmeriCorps grants will address the following environment and climate outcomes for Rhode Island in 2024-2026.

- Number of individuals with increased knowledge of environmental stewardship or practices
- Number of individuals reporting an intention to change behavior to better protect the environment
- Number of acres of public parks or land improved; miles of trails, rivers, or shoreline improved
- Number of pounds of plastic and trash removed from Narragansett Bay, rivers, shorelines, or watershed areas
- Number of pounds of compost material redirected from general waste and disposal systems
- Number of housing units or public structures with reduced energy consumption or reduced energy costs

**Rhode Island communities and economy thrive from access to historic farms, natural landscapes, and the ocean. Reflecting a local approach to preparing for climate change and advancing environmental justice, AmeriCorps members may teach environmental education, complete ecosystem restoration and conservation projects, and increase energy efficiency. Through Community Building and volunteer management, members support Rhode Island Litter Free, the International Coastal Cleanup, and other state-wide initiatives.**



# Health

AmeriCorps grants will address the following health outcomes for Rhode Island in 2024-2026.

- Number of individuals with increased health knowledge
- Number of individuals reporting a change in behavior or intent to change behavior to improve their health
- Number of individuals who report improved capacity for independent living
- Number of pounds of food provided at reduced or no cost to alleviate food insecurity or hunger
- Number of individuals who report increased food security
- Number of individuals with improved access to medical care
- Number of individuals with improved health

**Rhode Island is dedicated to fostering the well-being of kids, individuals, and communities. As community health workers and near-peers, AmeriCorps members may deliver health and mental health education in afterschool settings, home visits, and community forums – exploring a career in public health. AmeriCorps members can be mobilized and trained also to address specific health needs such as hunger or opioid drug prevention. Their own identities can help address gaps in linguistic and cultural competency.**



# Housing

AmeriCorps grants will address the following housing outcomes for Rhode Island in 2024-2026.

- Number of individuals transitioned into safe, healthy, affordable housing
- Number of safe, healthy, affordable housing units made available
- Number of individuals with improved financial knowledge

**Access to affordable housing is a challenge for many Rhode Islanders, and the state continues to invest in housing supply and Housing First models that serve high-need populations. AmeriCorps members may distribute aid and support to Rhode Islanders who want to age in their home, who are experiencing homelessness, or need assistance to remain safe, healthy, and housed. The service activities frequently include delivering workshops, navigating public systems, and one-to-one counseling, as well as construction and renovation.**





# State Service Plan 2024-2026

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Goals and Objectives

# Goal 1

## Grow the awareness of AmeriCorps in Rhode Island.

### Where we are:

Impacted by coronavirus and resulting social and economic changes, Rhode Island experienced historically low AmeriCorps participation from 2020-2022. Emerging leaders and organizations express not knowing how to access AmeriCorps resources. Yet, ServeRI has 30 years of impact and 8,300 alumni to tell our story. Nearly all new grant applicants have alumni on staff.

### Where we want to be:

Everyone in Rhode Island has a service story to tell, or “knows a person,” family member, or work colleague who served in AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps programs are fully enrolled, and Rhode Island leaders from all communities know how to find and successfully apply for funding from AmeriCorps and other sources to develop new service opportunities.

### KEY OBJECTIVES

1A. Curate and distribute stories about service.

1B. Promote AmeriCorps service and resource opportunities.

**Funding Priority:** Priority will be given to proposals that engage underserved communities – identified by concentrated poverty, rural populations, or tribal identities – or engage historically underrepresented individuals, including but not limited to communities of color, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, and people who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

# Goal 1: Progress Measures

## Grow the awareness of AmeriCorps in Rhode Island.

MEASURE QUESTION	HOW TO MEASURE	TARGETS
How many <i>stories</i> does ServeRI document annually?	Spreadsheet that tracks stories. Regardless of media or length, a story has a character, setting, and conflict/theme.	2024 - 12 2025 - 25 2026 - 36
How many people visit americorpsri.com and engage on Handshake, Facebook, and Instagram?	Analytic reports from website provider and META. ServeRI will establish a baseline from 2023 and measure growth.	Minimum 15% increase annually
What is the value of donated media to ServeRI?	AmeriCorps and state vendor tracking systems calculate value reported on federal financial reports.	2024 - \$10,000 2025 - \$10,000 2026 - \$15,000
What is the average rate of enrollment for all ServeRI AmeriCorps programs?	The rate is equal to the # of members that start service divided by the # of service positions awarded. Reported in the AmeriCorps grant system - eGrants.	2024 - 75% 2025 - 85% 2026 - 90%
How do the demographics of AmeriCorps participants change year over year?	ServeRI asks AmeriCorps programs to record demographic information with participant records (current database provided by America Learns).	Target is to reflect the diversity of Rhode Island communities being served
Who and how many organizations get information about applying for AmeriCorps resources?	Staff and commission members will track appointments and event attendance.	2024 - 10 2025 - 20 2026 - 36

# Goal 1: Action Plan 2024

## Grow the awareness of AmeriCorps in Rhode Island.

TIMELINE	ACTION	OBJECTIVE	RESOURCES
Jan – Aug	Purchase and learn “Memory Fox,” an online system jointly funded by state commissions for AmeriCorps testimonials.	1A	\$ federal funding secured; training from Memory Fox;
Feb – May	Website redesign to feature stories/testimonials.	1A	Staff time; AmeriCorps image catalog; CANVA; Squarespace hosting americorpsri.com.
Jan – Aug	Publish data story on AmeriCorps participants with RILDS framed by AmeriCorps 30 <sup>th</sup> anniversary.	1A	\$ federal admin funding secured; contract with RILDS; participant data
Jan – May	Contract with advertising vendor to publish and distribute local AmeriCorps advertisements, including AmeriCorps agency PSA.	1B	\$ federal admin funding secured;; AmeriCorps actors; media distribution plan; Commission member coms. framework
Sep - Dec	Commission members arrange AmeriCorps information sessions, targeting relevant associations and networks.	1B	Standardized presentation; Alliance for Nonprofit Impact
Annual	Maintain Handshake and social media presence to promote AmeriCorps Rhode Island programs.	1B	Social media TTA for grantees; Hootsuite; AmeriCorps agency press kits and TTA webinars
Annual	Be present at career fairs targeting service or charitable professions.	1B	Ongoing communication with college career offices; banners, brochures, take aways
Annual	Host MLK Day of Service, AmeriCorps Week, and Opening Day events.	1A	Specific event workplans; outreach to elected officials and press;

# Goal 2

## Extend the reach of AmeriCorps to benefit more Rhode Island communities.

### Where we are:

ServeRI AmeriCorps programs served over 10,000 kids and 2,000 adults last year, primarily in Providence and Central Falls. For each AmeriCorps member, programs recruited on average two additional community volunteers. AmeriCorps growth will be constrained by the rising cost of supporting +\$15/hour service stipends and benefits, while simultaneously Congress is projected to reduce federal funding for AmeriCorps.

### Where we want to be:

ServeRI seeks to broadly distribute service opportunities that address a variety of community needs across the whole state in alignment with the RI 2030 Plan, especially underserved communities. To accomplish this, RI programs must be supported to win nationally competitive AmeriCorps resources and find opportunities to partner with other government agencies. Programs can maximize the structure of AmeriCorps by raising local match funds, partnering with multiple service sites, and supervising community volunteers.

### KEY OBJECTIVES

2A. Develop local high-quality programs that perform to AmeriCorps' competitive funding standards.

2B. Partner with other units of government to support service opportunities aligned with the RI 2030 Plan.

**Funding Priority:** Priority will be given to proposals that reach more communities through the number of service locations or additional community volunteers recruited and managed by AmeriCorps members.



# Goal 2: Progress Measures

## Extend the reach of AmeriCorps to benefit more Rhode Island communities.

MEASURE QUESTION	HOW TO MEASURE	TARGETS
Which state or municipal agencies took an action to support service?	Staff Reports at commission meetings identify outreach efforts and support, such as new funding, training, policies, or programs.	2024 - 2 agencies 2025 - 3 agencies 2026 - 4 agencies
How much total funding do partners contribute to AmeriCorps grantees?	Grantee fiscal reports track cost sharing.	2024 - \$1,000,000 2025 - \$1,250,000 2026 - \$1,600,000
What is the count of service locations where members are placed and what is their geographic location?	Grantees are required to identify service locations through the AmeriCorps grant system - eGrants.	2024 - 50, 2 counties 2025 - 60, 3 counties 2026 - 75, 4 counties
How many volunteers and volunteer hours do AmeriCorps members recruit or manage?	ServeRI will modify Grant Progress Reports for grantees to document semi-annually.	2024 - 200 volunteers 2025 - 300 volunteers 2026 - 450 volunteers
What events and how many hours of technical assistance does ServeRI provide AmeriCorps program applicants and grant recipients?	ServeRI maintains both a calendar of events and event tracking system for AmeriCorps project reporting requirements.	2024 - 12 events, 200 hours 2025 - 16 events, 300 hours 2026 - 16 events, 300 hours
What progress are subrecipients making toward greater accountability and performance?	ServeRI proposes to develop a new performance accountability and improvement rating system.	All subrecipients demonstrate progress.

# Goal 2: Action Plan 2024

## Extend the reach of AmeriCorps to benefit more Rhode Island communities.

TIMELINE	ACTION	OBJECTIVE	RESOURCES
Jan	Request General Revenue for the state commission as cost sharing resources.	2B	Follow state agency budgeting policy and procedures; Commission member advocacy
Feb – May	Include in State Formula grant process a funding priority for volunteer recruitment and management	Funding Priority	Notice of Funding Availability
Mar – Aug	Commission Members conduct outreach to state agencies, starting with Office of Healthy Aging and Department of Environmental Management.	2B	Commission relationships/ideas; example agency supports and programs from other states; ServeRI Intro PPT
Mar – Aug	Develop a complete understanding of past and current service locations to establish baseline for growth.	Funding Priority	eGrants data; US census data; mapping software
May – Oct	Explore RI service incentives with Post-Secondary Commission	2B	Commission relationships/ideas; examples from other states
May - Nov	Support Accessing Home in submitting an Evaluation Report to AmeriCorps	2A	Brown University; Commission funds; AmeriCorps TTA provider - NORC
Jul – Dec	Receive commission feedback on a grantee performance accountability and improvement rating system.	2A	RIDE star rating system; America’s Service Commissions

# Goal 3

## Develop life-long leaders focused on service, community, and equity.

### Where we are:

AmeriCorps participants in RI have earned \$30 million in education awards, a key incentive that differentiates service from employment and recognizes the public interest in developing changemakers. ServeRI organizes Justice Talks, a civics and equity dialogue, and requires programs to offer “Life After AmeriCorps” support. There is continued interest in adding to the benefits of service, including service-to-career pathways.

**Funding Priority:** Priority will be given to proposals that create service-to-career pathways that embed career development opportunities into the service experience. The program must identify a specific job position and the training, support, or certification provided to AmeriCorps members. Strong proposals will include relationships with future employers and a history of job placement.

### Where we want to be:

AmeriCorps is the preferred choice as a career and education pathway, offering leadership development, certifiable skills, and career counseling – especially for previously underrepresented populations. AmeriCorps alumni are Rhode Island’s leaders in school buildings, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies who contribute to the continued strength of communities, programs, and members.

### KEY OBJECTIVES

3A. AmeriCorps Rhode Island members and alumni will develop a sense of pride for their service and their community.

3B. Support AmeriCorps members and alumni with their benefits and skill development to transition from service to career pathways or educational institutions.



# Goal 3: Progress Measures

## Develop life-long leaders focused on service, community, and equity.

MEASURE QUESTION	HOW TO MEASURE	TARGETS
How many (and what kind) of additional benefits do AmeriCorps RI programs offer in addition to the education award?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review original grant proposals and position listings</li> <li>Interview subrecipient staff</li> <li><i>Funding Priority – service-to-career pathways</i></li> </ul>	2024 – 8 2025 – 14 2026 – 18
To what extent do members feel that service helped their future goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exit survey – Member self-report on a Likert scale</li> </ul>	2024 – establish baseline 2025 +10% of baseline 2026 minimum of 80%
What jobs or schools do members enter after service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grantee Reporting – identify the job or education plan of each member</li> <li>RILDS – report the labor and education data of AmeriCorps members</li> <li>Employers of National Service</li> </ul>	2024 – establish baseline 2025 – show increased alignment to grant areas 2026 – show increased affiliation w RI
What percent of AmeriCorps members report being proud of their Rhode Island service experience?	Exit survey – Member self-report on a Likert scale	2024 – establish baseline 2025 +10% of baseline 2026 minimum of 80%
What percent of AmeriCorps members report feeling connected to a community in Rhode Island?	Exit survey – Member self-report on a Likert scale	2024 – establish baseline 2025 +10% of baseline 2026 minimum of 80%

# Goal 3: Action Plan 2024

## Develop life-long leaders focused on service, community, and equity.

TIMELINE	ACTION	OBJECTIVE	RESOURCES
Jan – Mar	Maintain Justice Talks, five civic reflection trainings, for all ServeRI AmeriCorps members	3B	\$federal funding secured; training partner; Providence College venue partnership;
Apr – May	Develop member survey to understand current landscape for objectives.	3A	Survey design process; online survey system; incentives for survey completion
Apr – Jun	Interview ServeRI subrecipients to document current practice in supporting members’ transitions from service.	3B	Align with spring grant monitoring activity
May	Award AmeriCorps Formula funding to at least two service-to-career pathway program models	Funding priority	RI Notice of Funding Availability; applicant outreach; example models
Jun – Dec	Use America’s Service Commission’s Higher Education Partnerships Toolkit as framework to explore member benefits.	3A	Commission members; RIDE and OPC state agency knowledge; Toolkit
Jul – Dec	Identify existing RI professional development and career supports that programs have access to and can make available to AmeriCorps members; share information with members and alumni.	3A	Commission members; RIDE and OPC state agency knowledge
Ongoing	Support Commission Members in piloting new activities in areas of Member and Alumni Support.	3A, 3B	Pilot and incorporate in 2025 action plan.



# State Service Plan 2024-2026

For additional information contact:

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