



WASHINGTON SERVICE CORPS Readiness Assessment

Is my organization prepared to host an AmeriCorps member through the Washington Service Corps?

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Readiness Assessment uses simple questions to help you determine whether your organization is poised to successfully apply for and host an AmeriCorps member with the Washington Service Corps (WSC). Read each question carefully and answer honestly. This assessment is designed for your use and will not be sent to WSC. Please refer to the information provided on the following pages to determine your fit as a host site for an AmeriCorps project and the feasibility of applying for members.

Applications Being Sought for Project Sites:

WSC, a unit of the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD), is seeking applicants to sponsor AmeriCorps members who will serve in high-quality projects that strengthen communities by addressing critical unmet needs related to eight focus areas established by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). These focus areas include Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, Veterans and Military Families, and Youth Opportunity.

What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, an independent federal agency whose mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. AmeriCorps provides opportunities for more than 80,000 Americans each year to volunteer by providing direct service to their communities and country. AmeriCorps members recruit, train, and supervise community volunteers; tutor and mentor youth; build affordable housing; teach computer skills; clean parks and streams; support after-school programs; engage Veterans; help communities respond to disasters; and build the capacity of nonprofit groups to become self-sustaining, among many other activities. Learn more at the Corporation for National and Community Service [website](#).

What is the Washington Service Corps?

Created in 1983, the WSC builds and expands a statewide ethic of service by engaging individuals of all backgrounds to contribute their time, energy, and talents to improve communities across Washington State. The WSC currently provides service opportunities for approximately 567 AmeriCorps members. Creative partnerships with local government entities, faith and community-based organizations, and nonprofit agencies play a critical role in the WSC's ability to support communities as they address their most pressing needs. Learn more at the Washington Service Corps [website](#).

What is the WSC AmeriCorps Program?

The WSC places AmeriCorps members with local nonprofit agencies, community and faith-based organizations, schools and local government organizations to address unmet local needs of the community in which they serve. AmeriCorps members must be 18 years of age or older (17 with signed Parental Consent Form) and serve full-time (40 hours per week) for 10.5 months. Members receive a monthly living allowance and upon successful completion of their term of service an educational award through CNCS. Sponsoring organizations must develop the service opportunity, recruit, train, and supervise the members as well as manage and track project activities. Learn more at the WSC [website](#).

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

Does your organization fit into one of these categories?

- State, local, or tribal government organization;
- Nonprofit, private organization; not limited to those with IRS 501(c)(3) status, but rather all organizations with IRS 501(c) status (organizations that focus solely on advocacy and lobbying ARE NOT eligible.)
- Schools: school districts, educational service districts, colleges, universities, alternative schools and others.

Yes No

Does your organization's plan for utilizing an AmeriCorps member address specific unmet community needs in at least one of the following focus areas: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, veterans, or youth opportunity?

Yes No

Focus Area Definitions -

[Disaster Services](#) refers to unmet needs relating to assisting communities to prepare, respond, and mitigate impacts of disasters and to increase community resiliency to emergencies.

[Economic Opportunity](#) refers to unmet needs relating to economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged individuals including financial literacy, housing assistance, job training, and asset development.

[Education](#) refers to unmet educational needs within communities, especially those that help disadvantaged children and youth to achieve success in school, prevent them from dropping out, and to break cycles of poverty.

[Environmental Stewardship](#) refers to unmet energy-efficiency and environmental needs within communities.

[Healthy Futures](#) refers to unmet health needs within low-income communities including access to health care, disease prevention and health promotion initiatives, and health literacy.

[Veterans and Military Families](#) refers to unmet needs of veterans, and members of the Armed Forces who are on active duty, those that are honorably discharged, and family members of deployed military personnel.

Additional information and a more detailed description of these focus areas can be found in Subtitle C, Section 1302 of the [Serve America Act](#) of 2009.

[Youth Opportunity Corps](#) - will help youth organizations address a call to action to expand and enhance services to improve employment and training outcomes for economically disadvantaged youth, ages 16 to 24 who are students "in school", or who are neither enrolled in school nor participating in the labor market.

Do your plans for utilizing an AmeriCorps member call for that member to provide service exclusively within the State of Washington?

Yes No

If the answer to any of the above questions is "no" then your organization is not eligible to host an AmeriCorps member with WSC.

Does your organization have sufficient funding to pay the member placement fee for every member being requested?

Yes No

Does your organization have commercial general liability coverage with a minimum of \$1,000,000 per occurrence with a limit of no less than \$1,000,000 per accident for bodily injury or disease?

Yes No

Does your organization have the infrastructure to support the efforts of the AmeriCorps member? Variables include work station, computer, telephone/voice mail, email, and internet.

Yes No

Does your organization have staff that can recruit, train, and supervise the AmeriCorps member? This includes providing adequate guidance and oversight by having a project supervisor assigned.

Yes No

Does your organization have the staff to oversee project performance outcomes? Variables include meeting expected timelines and outcomes by using researched-based interventions to address unmet needs; collecting and reporting outcome data four times during the program year, and ensuring the member is using WSC-compliant data tracking methods, and ability to archive materials for at least six years.

Yes No

Does your organization have the capacity to provide a minimum of two project site-specific trainings to the AmeriCorps member?

Yes No

If you answered “no” to any of the above questions, it is likely that your organization would struggle to successfully host an AmeriCorps member with the WSC.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETENCIES

The following questions address key elements of successful organizations. Completion of this portion of the assessment will help provide you with additional information about the capacity and structure in place to host an AmeriCorps member.

Score this section of the assessment by giving yourself one point for each question marked “Yes.”

ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE: THE MISSION

1. Does your organization have a clear written mission statement?
 Yes No Unsure
2. Will your AmeriCorps member’s service duties align with the mission?
 Yes No Unsure
3. Is the mission understood by all stakeholders within the organization?
 Yes No Unsure
4. Is the mission frequently referred to in planning sessions, other meetings and to guide expectations?
 Yes No Unsure

ORGANIZATIONAL GOVERNANCE & OPERATIONS

5. Does your organization have an active and independent board of directors and/or other governing body? (Independent is defined as a majority of board members who are neither employees of the organization nor the family members of employees or other board members).
 Yes No Unsure

6. Does your organization have written policies and procedures, including non-discrimination and drug-free work place?
 Yes No Unsure

ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTION: STRATEGIC PLANNING

7. Does your organization have a clear and coherent written plan for the future?
 Yes No Unsure
8. Does the plan have well defined measurable goals and achievable action steps with timeframes?
 Yes No Unsure
9. Are the goals in the plan well known and understood by staff and board?
 Yes No Unsure
10. Is the plan used at all levels of the organization to guide operations?
 Yes No Unsure
11. Does your organization conduct regular assessment of internal operations to assess efficiency and effectiveness?
 Yes No Unsure

ORGANIZATIONAL REVENUE: SUSTAINABILITY

12. Does your organization have diversified funding from multiple sources?
 Yes No Unsure
13. Does your organization have a group of dedicated volunteers and donors that believe in its mission and are willing to provide financial support and volunteer their time?
 Yes No Unsure

ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

14. Are organizational and programmatic budgets closely and regularly monitored?
 Yes No Unsure
15. Does your organization produce and review financial statements at least quarterly?
 Yes No Unsure
16. Does your organization have a development/fundraising plan in place?
 Yes No Unsure
17. Does your organization have plans to secure the financial resources to meet the member placement fee and travel costs that are required to host an AmeriCorps member?
 Yes No Unsure

ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE: TECHNOLOGY

18. Does every key staff member, and will your AmeriCorps member, have access to a computer with up-to-date software, internet access and e-mail capabilities?
 Yes No Unsure
19. Does your organization have data collection and reporting tools and systems in place?
 Yes No Unsure

ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE: HUMAN RESOURCES

20. Does your organization have a well-planned process to recruit, develop and retain the best employees in accordance with an equal opportunity environment?
 Yes No Unsure
21. Does your organization provide staff and volunteers with written position descriptions and the necessary resources to carry out duties appropriately?
 Yes No Unsure
22. Does your organization provide relevant and regular training for staff and board members?
 Yes No Unsure
23. Are employee performance evaluations conducted on a consistent and fair basis?
 Yes No Unsure
24. Does your organization have a well-planned process to recruit, train, develop, retain and recognize volunteers?
 Yes No Unsure

PROGRAM DESIGN: NEEDS ASSESSMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

25. Does your organization conduct regular assessments of community need?
 Yes No Unsure
26. Does your organization analyze and use the results of needs assessment to chart change?
 Yes No Unsure
27. Does your organization have the ability to grow and/or create new and innovative programs to meet the needs of the community?
 Yes No Unsure
28. Are your organization's programs and services well defined?
 Yes No Unsure

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT: MEASURING PERFORMANCE & CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

29. Does your organization have a comprehensive well-developed evaluation system used to measure the impact of programs and services?
 Yes No Unsure
30. Does your organization conduct regular assessments of existing programs' effectiveness in meeting recipient needs AND identify areas of improvement?
 Yes No Unsure
31. Does your organization collect data to measure performance and progress on a continual basis?
 Yes No Unsure
32. Is data analyzed, used in program redesign and communicated to stakeholders at least annually?
 Yes No Unsure

ORGANIZATIONAL OUTREACH: PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION

33. Does your organization participate in partnerships with other groups?
 Yes No Unsure
34. Have these relationships led to mutually beneficial collaborations?
 Yes No Unsure

FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS

If the conditions below are not acceptable to your organization, hosting a federally-funded AmeriCorps member may not be a good option.

- AmeriCorps program must be open to all who qualify, without regard to religious beliefs
- AmeriCorps members are disallowed from participating in inherently religious activities
- AmeriCorps members are disallowed from proselytizing
- AmeriCorps program must be held in a separate place or time from religious activities

RESULTS

Count the total number of times you selected “yes” and refer to the chart below to determine your organization’s readiness to host an AmeriCorps member through the WSC. Balanced organizations with consistent excellence across organizational competencies tend to be most successful in administering an AmeriCorps project. If your replies to this assessment reveal significant areas of growth, it might be best to address these prior to pursuing an AmeriCorps placement with WSC.

20-34 points: Based on your self assessment, your organization may have the capacity to successfully host an AmeriCorps member with the WSC.

10-19 points: Based on your self assessment, your organization may need to make a few improvements in your capacity and planning to host an AmeriCorps member with the WSC.

Less than 10 points: Based on your self assessment, your organization may have a significant need to build its capacity before it is ready to apply for an AmeriCorps member with the WSC.

Regardless of your results or if you answered “unsure” to many of the questions, WSC is eager to assist you in implementing services benefiting the residents of our state. Please contact us to learn more about AmeriCorps projects that may be able to benefit your organization and how our agency may be able to help you implement new AmeriCorps programs or create partnerships with existing programs.

Washington Service Corps, wscip@esd.wa.gov

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

AmeriCorps Eligibility Requirements

Selected member(s) should demonstrate the skills and commitment required to successfully serve in the position, serve 40 hours a week and meet the 1,700 minimum hour requirement for a full-time term of service. At a minimum, the following criteria required by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) must be met:

1. Be a United States citizen or lawful permanent resident (must submit proof as defined by CNCS regulation)
2. Be at least 18 years of age at the commencement of service (17 years of age with signed parental consent form)
3. Members in tutoring positions must have a high school diploma or GED at time of enrollment
4. Pass required National Service Criminal History Checks
5. Not be listed on the National Sex Offender Public Registry (NSOPR)

Documentation for the above must be obtained and verified before a candidate is offered an AmeriCorps position.

What do Washington Service Corps members receive for their service?

1. Monthly living allowance provided by Washington Service Corps
2. Training and experience
3. Subsidized childcare provided by GAP Solutions Inc. (if qualified)
4. Health insurance (member only and only if no other health insurance available)
5. Student loan forbearance (on qualifying loans)
6. Education Award provided by National Service Trust (upon successful completion of service term commitment and minimum required hours of service)

Funding Contingency

In the event funding for the WSC is reduced or eliminated, or if program requirements are changed prior to or after the due date of a Request for Application, the WSC may terminate or modify the Request for Application without advance written notice and is subject to renegotiation under the new funding level and requirements.