



WASHINGTON SERVICE CORPS Request for Application – AmeriCorps Members

Guidance Document

Read prior to completing Request for Application

First Program Year of the Three-Year Grant: September 1, 2018 – August 31, 2019

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Washington Service Corps (WSC) is seeking high-quality projects that develop an ethic of civic mindedness in those who participate and strengthen common bonds and connections within communities in order to maximize the impact of investment in national service. WSC is targeting AmeriCorps funds to help meet community needs in the areas of disaster preparedness, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, veterans and military families, and youth opportunity. Your project must demonstrate engagement of AmeriCorps members in an evidence-informed approach in providing a service intervention that will result in intended solutions to community problems (i.e. based on proposed project's performance and evaluation data or research demonstrating the effectiveness of a similar intervention).

Grant Period and Incremental Funding

The period of performance of any contract resulting from the Request for Application (RFA) is tentatively scheduled to begin September 1, 2018, and will be in effect through August 31, 2019, with possible amendments extending the contract period into calendar years 2020 and 2021. Projects selected through this RFA process must be committed to continuing their project for the duration of WSC's three-year grant cycle which ends August 31, 2021, providing that projects meet continuing contractual requirements and expectations.

If the applicant determines they cannot maintain the commitment due to a compelling reason, adequate notification must be made. Your organization may not be guaranteed continuation with WSC if you apply for funding through another funder before you complete your three-year commitment with WSC.

Amendments extending the period of performance shall be at the sole discretion of the Department/WSC. Funding of member position awards for the second and third years will be contingent upon the availability of funds, satisfactory performance in the prior program year, and demonstrated capacity to manage a grant and comply with WSC grant requirements. In the event funding for the WSC is reduced or eliminated during the three-year cycle, or if federal program requirements change, the WSC may terminate or modify this Request for Application without advance written notice and it will be subject to renegotiation under the new funding level and requirements.

What is AmeriCorps?

AmeriCorps is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), 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 75,000 Americans each year to volunteer by providing direct service to their communities and country. AmeriCorps members recruit, train, and oversee community volunteers; tutor and mentor youth; build affordable housing; teach computer skills; clean parks and streams; support after-school programs; 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, 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. WSC currently provides service opportunities

for approximately 700 AmeriCorps members to support communities as they address their most pressing needs. Learn more at the [WSC 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 the duration of their service term. Members receive a monthly living allowance, and upon successful completion of their term of service, an educational award through CNCS. Applicants must develop the service opportunity, recruit, train, and manage the members as well as manage, track and report project activities. Should awarded organizations plan to place members at service site locations outside the control of their organization, the same standards, expectations, member recruitment and management, and contractual responsibilities will be maintained and upheld by the organization awarded by WSC. Learn more at the [WSC website](#). **Evaluate your organization on its readiness to host members by completing the [WSC Readiness Assessment](#) and/or the [CNCS Organizational Assessment Tool](#).**

Funding and Performance Measurement Contingency:

In the event funding for the WSC is reduced or eliminated, or if federal program requirements change, the WSC may terminate or modify this Request for Application without advance written notice and it will be subject to renegotiation under the new CNCS funding level, requirements, terms and conditions or clarification/negotiation.

The performance measures listed in this document may be revised with the releases of future Corporation for National and Community Service's guidance documents, pre-award clarification or award. Data collection approaches and reporting could be re-negotiated during the grant period.

Applicant Eligibility Requirements:

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- State, local, and tribal government organizations;
- Nonprofit, private organizations; 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.
- Federal agencies and organizations may apply as long as the funding being used to pay the program participation fee is allowable by federal funding source (written confirmation must be available).

Priority of Selection will go to AmeriCorps projects that:

1. Provide AmeriCorps services in rural, distressed and under-resourced communities.
2. Select one of the following priority WSC performance measures:
 - **Economic Opportunity**
 - Housing Services
 - Job Placement Services
 - **Education**
 - Academic Improvement (math and/or literacy)
 - Academic Engagement
 - **Healthy Futures**
 - K-12 Nutrition Education
 - Health Education
 - **Environmental**
 - Environmental Education
 - At-Risk Ecosystems
 - **Veterans**
 - Veterans as Volunteers

Evaluation and Scoring Process

Applications will be reviewed and scored by a panel of WSC staff. A rating scale will be used. Responses to questions will be rated on completeness, relevancy, and specificity. Selection of applications may be contingent upon the applicant

providing additional information or making revisions to their application. There are checklists provided for completion of the Logic Model and Theory of Change which provide guidance and framework to what is being sought and scored.

Technical Assistance

Email WSC, wscip@esd.wa.gov; Lorraine Coats, lcoots@esd.wa.gov; or Robert Brader, rbrader@esd.wa.gov if you have additional questions. Answers to questions will be posted weekly to the [WSC website](#) based on the projected timeline included in this document.

Oral Presentation May Be Required:

WSC may elect to schedule oral presentations of finalists or applicants requesting 20 or more members. If oral presentations become necessary, WSC will contact the applicant to schedule a date, time and location. Commitments made by the applying applicant at the oral interview, if any, will be considered binding.

Definitions:

Definitions that will be useful for the purposes of this RFA include:

Applicant: an organization proposing to manage a WSC AmeriCorps project.

Sponsoring Organization: Once awarded, an organization that manages their AmeriCorps project. AmeriCorps members may be placed at the Sponsoring Organization, or at multiple member service sites.

Member Service Site: The location (organization) at which an AmeriCorps member is placed to provide their service to the community.

Multi-focus Organization: a Sponsoring Organization that places members in interventions that cross multiple focus areas. Multi-focus organizations may also place members at multiple member service sites. WSC anticipates that applicants have a carefully considered plan for their project implementation and have identified service sites based on demonstrated community needs. It is expected that all service site locations assist in the recruitment and selection of the AmeriCorps member(s).

Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS): The Corporation for National and Community Service is an independent federal agency charged with administering AmeriCorps; the source of federal funds for AmeriCorps programs.

Employment Security Department (ESD): References to the Department shall mean the Employment Security Department of the state of Washington, any division, section, office, unit or other entity of that Department or any of the officers or other officials lawfully representing the Department.

Member: A person who has been enrolled and is participating in an AmeriCorps project.

Person Providing Primary Oversight: Employee of the Sponsoring Organization who is responsible for (a) recruiting, selecting, training and providing on-going support for AmeriCorps members, and (b) tracking and reporting all data relative to performance measures for the project and service hours of the AmeriCorps member(s).

Note: Person providing secondary oversight will need to be identified and available when the person providing primary oversight is not available to provide member support.

Proposal: A formal offer submitted in response to this solicitation.

Request for Application (RFA): Formal document in which a service or need is identified but no specific method to achieve it has been chosen. The purpose of an RFA is to permit the applicant community to suggest various approaches to meet the need.

Serve Washington: The primary recipient of federal funds for national service programs in Washington State. Formerly known as Washington Commission for National and Community Service.

Washington Service Corps (WSC): The Washington Service Corps is an office of the Washington State Employment Security Department.

Rural Communities: In determining whether a program is rural, WSC will consider “rural” as a county with a population density less than 100 persons per square mile or counties smaller than two hundred twenty-five square

miles as of April 1, 2017. Distressed or Under-resourced: Counties where the three-year unemployment rate is at least 20 percent higher than the statewide average. See Chapter 43.168 of the Revised Code of Washington.

Applicant Clarification: Some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information and/or make changes to their application. This information is used by WSC staff in making award considerations. Applications may be recommended for an award even if they are not asked clarification questions. A request for clarification does not guarantee an award. Failure to respond to requests for clarification adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of an application from consideration.

Logic Model: is a visual representation of the applicant's theory of change. Applicants are not required to measure all components of their theory of change. The applicant's performance measures should be consistent with the program's theory of change and should represent significant program activities.

AmeriCorps Candidate Eligibility Requirements:

Selected member(s) should demonstrate the skills and commitment required to successfully serve in the position, serve 40 hours per week, and meet the 1,700 or 900 minimum-hour requirement of their designated service term. At a minimum, the following criteria must be met:

1. be a United States citizen or lawful permanent resident (must submit proof as defined by CNCS regulation);
2. be 18 years of age and older (17 with parental consent);
3. have a high school diploma or GED at time of enrollment if in a tutoring position;
4. pass required criminal history background 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 WSC members receive for their service?

1. Living allowance of \$1,307.82 per month provided by WSC (before taxes);
2. Training and experience;
3. Subsidized childcare provided by GAP Solutions Inc. (if qualified and all parties complete required documents);
4. Health insurance (member only and only if no other health insurance coverage);
5. Student loan forbearance (on qualifying loans);
6. \$5,920 Education Award provided by National Service Trust (upon successful completion of service term commitment and 1,700 hours of service); \$2,960 Education Award provided by National Service Trust (upon successful completion of service term commitment and 900 hours of service).

Member Development/Oversight/Training:

Service in AmeriCorps must have a positive impact on members. Because of their AmeriCorps service, members develop additional skills, gain valuable experience, and receive education awards that they can use to repay school loans or for future education; however, as service is a primary goal, no more than 20% of the AmeriCorps member's service hours may be spent in education and training.

Oversight: The Sponsoring Organization and Member Service Site must provide members with the oversight, training, skills, and knowledge they need to perform their tasks. Members must be given the background information they need on the community in which they are serving and help them understand the community's need for a specific service or project. Members must have regular and adequate oversight. If applying for 12 members or more, your project will be required to provide a dedicated person who will be responsible for the full time oversight of the members and act as the organization's representative to coordinate with the WSC program.

Service site oversight will be responsibility of the Sponsoring Organization: If the Sponsoring Organization places members at multiple Member Service Sites, they must provide adequate recruitment, completion of required documents for enrollment, training and oversight of assigned site staff who will work directly with members. It will not be accepted that service sites do not place and fill all assigned positions; and they must provide the same quality oversight expected of the Sponsoring Organization. It is expected that all service site locations assist in the recruitment and selection of the AmeriCorps member(s).

Program Participation Fee:

- Fee rate invoiced will be based on the number of AmeriCorps member placements filled, not awarded.

- There will be no consideration of a payment plan for Sponsoring Organizations. It is expected that budget adequacy is in place at time of application and award.
- The Fee will not be refunded for any member position filled, including for reason of early termination/exit of the member.
- If a member leaves prior to serving 15% of their service term (255 hours for 1,700-hour term, 135 hours for 900-hour term), WSC may allow the possibility of refilling the position if time allows.
- Refund of Fee for any un-filled member position(s) will be processed approximately six weeks after the last full-time start date.

Training Related to Service Activities: The Sponsoring Organization must ensure training is provided for the activities members will conduct. Whether the activities involve tutoring children, environmental education, or health education, etc., members need to learn the basic skills and technical information associated with good practice before they perform service.

Core Training: The Sponsoring Organization will be expected to ensure that their members receive core and site-specific training. WSC will provide access to on-line training that meets the requirements of the core training. The training listed below is the current required core training for all AmeriCorps members serving with WSC. Member core training requirements may change and will be confirmed with the project after the time of the award.

- AmeriCorps Affiliation/ Program Orientation/Prohibited Activities
- Volunteer Recruitment, Management and Recognition
- Effective Communication
- Cultural Awareness
- Leadership Skills
- Performance Measures
- Life After AmeriCorps

Prohibited Activities:

While charging time to the AmeriCorps project, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps project or CNCS, staff and members may not engage in the following activities and the grantee may not use grant funds to support the following activities:

1. Attempting to influence legislation;
2. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts or strikes;
3. Assisting, promoting or deterring union organizing;
4. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
5. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
6. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
7. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytizing;
8. Providing a direct benefit to –
 - a. A business organized for profit;
 - b. A labor union;
 - c. A partisan political organization;
 - d. A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
 - e. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in number (7) of the prohibited activities, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
9. Conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
10. Organizing a letter-writing campaign to Congress;
11. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services;

12. Participating in activities that pose a significant safety risk to participants;
13. Preparing any part of a grant proposal or performing other fundraising functions to help the program achieve its match requirements, or to pay the program's general operating expenses;
14. Fundraising is allowable if it provides direct support to a specific service activity, falls within the program's approved objectives, is not the primary activity of the program, and does not exceed 10% of the total hours served for any member; and
15. Such other activities as the Corporation may prohibit.

Note: Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-CNCS funds. Individuals must not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so.

WSC Impact Evaluation:

If selected, projects may be requested to participate in focus group(s), surveys or questionnaires and to provide information and/or data for the required WSC program impact evaluation during the grant period.

Submittal Instructions. The Request for Application is located on the [WSC website](#).

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

1. Read the Guidance Document and refer to it as you complete the application
2. Complete the application electronically
3. Print out the completed application
4. Your organization's "Authorized Signer" signs and dates (hand-written) the application
5. Scan the completed, signed and dated application
6. Attach the scanned documents in an email to WSC at wscip@esd.wa.gov
7. The subject line in the email must include your organization's name and "RFA"

The following documents must be scanned and attached to the application submission email:

1. RFA application form
2. Study, evaluation or research report to support your project's intended goals
3. Completed Performance Plan(s)
4. Completed Logic Model
5. Organization Chart. The agency organization chart must include position titles and names, including the AmeriCorps member(s).
6. Financial Records. Include your organization's current A-133 audit, or 2) current financial audit, or 3) current financial statements (Profit/Loss and Balance Statements) if you have not had an audit. Audits requiring corrective actions must submit management letters or describe the status of all corrective action items.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Application materials must be emailed to WSC no later than March 1, 2018 to receive priority processing. Applications will be reviewed, scored, and awarded based on receipt date.

Applications may be submitted March 2, 2018 through May 31, 2018 and will be processed as received, and awarded based on availability of member slots available.

Projected Timeline for Application Process

Request for Application distributed and posted on WSC website	January 22, 2018
Answers to Request for Application questions posted to WSC website (Fridays)	January 26 – February 23, 2018
Last date to submit questions to WSC	February 19, 2018
Priority Submission: Application packet due to WSC by 11:59 p.m. PST	January 22 - March 1, 2018
Applicant Clarification Period Begins	March 2 – April 2, 2018
Non-Priority Submission: Application packet due to WSC by 11:59 p.m. PST	March 2 - May 31, 2018
Priority Submission: Applicant interviews (for teams over 20); if required	March 12 – March 23, 2018
Non-Priority Submission: Applicant interviews (for teams over 20); if required	March 26 – April 6, 2018
Anticipated notification of award status to applicants	Beginning April 2, 2018

If Awarded; Estimated Timelines

Finalization and approval of Performance Plan, Data Collection Strategy, Data Collection Tools and AmeriCorps Member Position Description	April – June 15, 2018
National AmeriCorps Recruitment Posting due to WSC	2 weeks after award
Recruitment and interviews of AmeriCorps member candidates by Sponsoring Organization and service sites (Sponsoring Organization commits to ensuring placements and member enrollment)	Begins 2 weeks after award
Contract sent out for signature (electronically) by WSC	May, 2018
Sponsoring Organization staff providing oversight to project/member provided recruitment/enrollment training by WSC staff	TBD
Deadline to select AmeriCorps member candidate(s)	At the latest, 3 weeks prior to the member’s start date
Enrollment paperwork due to the WSC	At the latest, 1.5 weeks prior to the member’s state date
Written Union Concurrence due to WSC, if applicable	June 15, 2018
Signed Contract due to WSC	June 15, 2018
Proof of current, valid Commercial General Liability Insurance with minimum of \$1,000,000 per occurrence with Washington State Employment Security Department endorsed to the policy as additional insured with limit of no less than \$1,000,000 per accident for bodily injury or disease due to WSC by mail or email.	June 15, 2018
Deadline to submit payment to WSC for Program Participation Fee	September 30, 2018

COMPLETION OF THE APPLICATION

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Each item must be completed. List complete contact information for organization and staff, including mailing addresses.

The **Applicant Organization** is your organization. The **Authorized Signer** is the person within your organization who has the authority to enter into a contract with the WSC on behalf of your organization. The **staff providing primary oversight** may or may not be the Authorized Signer. This person will be the primary contact with WSC and will oversee the AmeriCorps member and the execution of the project. The **staff providing secondary oversight** is the person who will be available in the absence of the primary staff person. The **Fiscal Contact** is the staff person who WSC will contact if there are questions regarding the Program Participation Fee or the organization's audit/financial records submitted with the application.

EIN and DUNS Numbers. The WSC cannot enter into a contractual agreement or place members with organizations that do not have an EIN and DUNS number. Click on the links on the cover sheet for further information. Do not leave these sections blank.

Project Title. Select a title that reflects the service activities and project of the AmeriCorps member. The project title is not the member's position title nor the name of your organization.

Project Summary: Please fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the project summary. Do not deviate from the template below:

[Name of organization] proposes to have [number of] AmeriCorps members who will [service activities the members will be doing] in [the location(s) the AmeriCorps members will serve]. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing].

Focus Area. Select a strategic focus area that represents your project. It may be to your advantage to submit separate applications for projects in different focus areas so that you can describe the project in detail. Or, applicants may select a multi-focus designation and submit one application. Applicants with a multiple-focus designation must complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each identified intervention.

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.

Multi-Focus – a Sponsoring Organization that places members in interventions that cross multiple focus areas. Multi-focus organizations may also place members at multiple member service locations. Applicants seeking consideration as a multi-focus organization must ensure that the activities provided by the Sponsoring Organization collectively address a compelling community need or set of needs; has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program; has sufficient financial and management capacity to hold all member service site locations accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified; can ensure that all AmeriCorps members receive sufficient guidance and support from service site staff; and can adequately train/prepare service site staff to follow AmeriCorps and WSC program regulations, priorities, and expectations.

Will ALL of your members serve in one or more of the following rural and/or distressed counties? Answer yes only if all of your members will serve in one of the counties listed here: Adams, Benton, Asotin, Chelan, Clallam, Columbia, Cowlitz, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lewis, Lincoln, Mason, Okanogan, Pacific, Pend Oreille, San Juan, Skagit, Skamania, Stevens, Wahkiakum, Walla Walla, Whitman, Yakima.

WSC is giving priority of selection and a reduced Program Participation Fee if the answer to the above question is yes. WSC plans to focus its support even more deeply in rural communities during the next grant cycle, doubling the number of WSC AmeriCorps members placed within counties that meet the WSC definition of rural.

Payment of the Program Participation Fee is required for all filled member positions. Failure to provide payment on or before the September 30, 2018 due date may result in termination of the contract and removal of members from sites. Special conditions will apply if using federal funding to pay the Program Participation Fee. If federal funds are used, the source of those federal funds must be contacted and approve the use of those funds for Program Participation Fee to the WSC federal award. A copy of the approval must be submitted to WSC prior to the Program Participation Fee being paid.

Note: The Program Participation Fee may increase incrementally for the second and third years of the grant cycle.

Start Dates. There are numerous start dates to choose from. Select the start date(s) that best suit your AmeriCorps project. The full-time service term that begins on **September 1** is the preferred start date. Note that full time positions run for approximately 10.5 months and require the AmeriCorps member to serve a minimum of 1,700 service hours. The 900-hour positions run for approximately 6 months. They are also designated as “full-time” because the AmeriCorps members are required to serve an average of 40 hours per week just like the 1,700 hour positions, just for a shorter period of time.

Number of Members Requested. Enter the total number of AmeriCorps members you are requesting, combining the number of 1,700-hour and 900-hour positions you are requesting (if applicable).

Funding Contingency. In the event funding for the Washington Service Corps is reduced or eliminated, or if federal program requirements change, the Washington Service Corps may terminate or modify this Request for Application without advance written notice and it will be subject to renegotiation under the new funding level and requirements.

Union Concurrence. If employees of your organization and/or service site(s) are represented by a labor organization (union) and the duties to be performed by the AmeriCorps member customarily and historically have been performed by employees represented by the labor organization (union), you are required to obtain written concurrence of the AmeriCorps placement from the local labor organization and provide that to WSC by June 15, 2018.

Section I EXPECTATIONS AND AGREEMENTS

Provide a clear picture of how the proposed AmeriCorps project will fit into your organization and the capacity of your organization to support the members. For a list of AmeriCorps member prohibited activities, refer to pages five and six of this Guidance Document or refer to the [WSC website](#) to confirm that your proposed project activities are allowable.

Questions should be answered in detail. Incomplete answers will not receive full credit.

If you have specific questions about any question in Section I, contact WSC at wscip@esd.wa.gov. Your questions will be answered via the weekly website posting.

It is essential that the required criminal history background checks are completed for members prior to the AmeriCorps member's enrollment packet due date. The WSC, as required by CNCS 45 Code of Federal Regulations, requires up to a four-part criminal history background check on members. Required checks include:

- National Sex Offender Public Registry check;
- a Washington State WATCH state patrol check;
- FBI database check using WSC's approved FBI Channeler;
- Out-of-state criminal registry check for candidates who reside in another state at the time of application. This also applies to project supervisors on border-states who reside outside of Washington State (i.e., Oregon, Idaho).

All required criminal history background checks must be completed prior to the enrollment packet due date.

Pending results of the out-of-state checks, a temporary waiver may be granted. Consult with your WSC Program Coordinator prior to submitting your enrollment packet if this pertains to you. Prior to the member starting service, WSC program staff will ensure that:

- all checks are received for the members, and
- fully completed according to WSC policy and criminal history background check guidance document.

If criminal history background checks are not fully executed per WSC policies, the member will not be authorized to start serving until the next WSC available start date (providing all checks are executed by this date, as well as providing the updated forms required with the new start date identified).

Section II ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Provide a clear picture of how the proposed AmeriCorps project fits into your organization's mission and the capacity of your organization to support the member.

Questions should be answered in detail. Incomplete answers will not receive full credit.

If you have specific questions about any question in Section II, contact WSC at wscip@esd.wa.gov. Your questions will be answered via the weekly website posting.

Section III PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- 1. Clearly and specifically describe the community problem/need your AmeriCorps project will be addressing.**
The problem the program will address must be prevalent and severe in communities where members will serve. "Community" can be a geographic region, a specific population of people, or a combination of both. The applicant must document the need it plans to address with its proposed program, whether it is a defined geographic community or a subset of individuals living in a particular area.

The **PROBLEM** is the negative condition that exists in the service area proposed, while the **NEED** explains the scope, significance, and cause of the problem. The problem/need statement answers questions such as: who's affected, how many, how severe, it also answers the question "so what?" What will likely happen if nothing is done? And finally why does the problem exist and how is it perpetuated?

- 2. The problem the program will address must be prevalent and severe in communities where members will serve and must be documented with relevant data. Provide specific quantitative data about the severity of the problem/need.**

The problem/need must be documented with relevant data. The problem/need statement should reflect statistics and data sources that are reputable, current, and local. The best data come from reputable primary sources (such as government agencies, institutes, foundations, and universities that have conducted their own research), are as current (up to date) as possible, and are as locally relevant as possible. News reports are NOT primary sources. Data from multiple (reputable) sources increase reliability.

Red Flags for Need or Problem Statements: Beware of Lengthy statements that outline multiple negative conditions in a service area – particularly those that are irrelevant to the proposed intervention and outcome. “Data dumps,” with too many indirect or unrelated statistics provided, makes it difficult for WSC reviewers to identify the specific need your AmeriCorps project will address.

The problem you describe should NOT be defined as the lack of services or lack of staffing at your organization. Example: don’t say “the problem in the community is that more students need tutoring” – the problem is that students are not reading at grade level; tutoring is a strategy you will use to solve the problem. Don’t define the problem simply as the lack of services you are providing.

3. Describe the full scope of the AmeriCorps project.

Provide a high level overview of your project’s structured activities (your planned intervention) designed to solve the problem within your community and produce the intended outcome.

Whether you are designing a new program, selecting services you will provide from an existing model, or reviewing your current plan for implementing services, you should take the time to ensure that your planned services (your intervention) are ones that directly address defined needs and are likely to help you achieve your objectives.

4. What is the specific role of your AmeriCorps member(s) within the AmeriCorps project?

Each applicant must describe a project that will deploy AmeriCorps members effectively to solve a significant community problem. The rationale for utilizing AmeriCorps members to deliver the intervention(s) should be reasonable and the role of AmeriCorps members should produce significant contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem. The quality of member activities will be an important factor in determining whether an applicant will receive funding.

AmeriCorps members should gain skills as a result of their training and service activities that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed. AmeriCorps members will have access to meaningful service experiences that includes education about the community problem/need and the community in which they will serve. AmeriCorps members will have access to opportunities for reflection that involves the intentional processing of members’ experience and the incorporation of lessons learned. The applicant should also foster an inclusive service culture where different backgrounds, talents, and capabilities are welcomed and leveraged for learning and effective service delivery.

5. Attach a copy of at least one research study or evaluation that shows how the intervention/activities and services of the project will improve the problem and will produce intended outcomes. Additionally, provide a brief description of the study according to the following criteria:

Applicants are required to submit and attach a copy of high-quality evidence from one of the strongest and most relevant studies that exists for your program intervention. Research that does not focus on a specific program or intervention, but rather focuses on a broader issue area or population will not be considered applicable and will not receive any points.

Reviewers will examine the description using the following criteria:

- How closely the intervention evaluated in the studies matches the one proposed by the applicant;
- The date of the study, with a preference towards studies that have been conducted within the last six years.

6. Please list the specific short-term outcomes that your project intends to achieve.

Provide clear, specific changes or impacts that will come about most immediately from your AmeriCorps member activities. You will need to describe a change that is observable in a shorter (i.e., one year) timeframe. If you select a WSC intervention, your performance measure must align to the outputs and outcomes described within the WSC Performance Measurement Instructions (located in the WSC guidance document Section IV – Performance

Measures). The described outcome must be a changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occurs as a result of the intervention. An **outcome** is a type of measure that indicates progress toward achieving the intended result of a program, which usually represents a change in the situation of beneficiaries of service, such as educational achievement or transitioning into housing. In other words, outcomes reflect the changes or benefits that occur. Outcomes answer the question, “What difference did our service make for beneficiaries?” or “How did the new system or product enhance the capacity of the organization to serve the community?”

7. Use the information from the above section to write a Theory of Change.

A theory of change articulates a problem, a proposed intervention, and the change (outcomes) that is expected to result from delivering the intervention, with supporting evidence or research that demonstrates the effectiveness of the AmeriCorps Project.

Reviewers will examine the Theory of change using the following criteria:

- 1) The community problem
- 2) The proposed intervention including the roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) the roles of leveraged volunteers.
- 3) How the intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes.
- 4) How the project will produce short-term and long term outcomes

The following Theory of Change Checklist does not need to accompany your RFA application; it is to be used as a tool for you to develop your Theory of Change.

Theory of Change Checklist			
Community Problem w/Data	The Theory of Change describes the community need within the local community clearly and specifically	Yes	No
	The Theory of Change description includes an explanation of why the need exists within the local community	Yes	No
	The explanation of why the need exists within the local community includes specific and relevant data	Yes	No
	The data provided is current (within the last five years)	Yes	No
	The data provided is from a reputable source (e.g., a state research department, a school district research department, a university)	Yes	No
Primary Intervention w/Evidence	The Theory of Change describes the primary proposed intervention	Yes	No
	The Theory of Change description includes evidence that supports the proposed intervention	Yes	No
	The evidence cited is relevant to the proposed intervention (e.g., related to a similar program or service, provided to a similar population).	Yes	No
	The evidence provided is from a formal research study (rather than a newspaper article, a program brochure, or a list of recommended practices)	Yes	No
	The research was conducted by a reputable institution (e.g., a university, government agency, respected not-for-profit agency)	Yes	No
	The study is current (published within the past five years)	Yes	No
Intended Outcome(s)	The Theory of Change describes the intended outcome(s) of the intervention	Yes	No

	Each outcome listed is relevant to the community need (i.e., achieving the outcome is likely to improve the problem identified in the need statement)	Yes	No
	Each outcome listed is relevant to the intervention (i.e., is likely to occur <i>as a result</i> of the intervention being provided)	Yes	No
	Each short-term outcome listed is measurable within one program year	Yes	No
	Each short-term outcome listed is achievable within one program year	Yes	No

8. Complete and attach a [Logic Model Chart](#).

Each application must include a completed Logic Model. The Logic Model is a visual representation of the applicant's Theory of Change. Projects must include short, medium or long-term outcomes in the Logic Model. Applicants are not required to measure all components of their Theory of Change. However, the applicant's performance measures should be consistent with the program's Theory of Change and should represent significant program activities.

Note: Applicants with multiple interventions should complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each intervention.

The following Logic Model Checklist does **not** need to accompany your RFA application; it is to be used as a tool to develop your Logic Model.

Logic Model Checklist			
Element	Criterion	Yes	No
Problem	The Logic Model describes the community need within the local community clearly and specifically	Yes	No
	The data provided is current (within the last five years)	Yes	No
Inputs	The Logic Model lists the human, financial, organizational, and/or community resources available to help implement the intervention	Yes	No
	The resources listed are directly relevant to the proposed intervention	Yes	No
Activities	The Logic Model describes the <i>key</i> activities the members will engage in to provide the primary intervention	Yes	No
	The description of activities in the Logic Model is clear	Yes	No
	The description of activities specifies the dosage (intensity, frequency, and duration). <i>For example, if the primary intervention is to provide reading tutoring, the dosage might be 30- minute, individual tutoring sessions (intensity), twice a week (frequency), for 10 weeks (duration).</i>	Yes	No
	All key activities directly relate to the defined primary intervention	Yes	No
Output Targets	The Logic Model lists the specific numeric outputs to be achieved. These measures reflect the quantity of the services you have provided. How many people did you reach, train, tutor, refer, etc.	Yes	No

	The list in the Logic Model includes ALL applicable outputs	Yes	No
Outcome Targets	The Logic Model describes short-term outcome objectives (i.e., changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, or conditions that can be measured during the program year)	Yes	No
	The short-term outcomes are likely to occur <i>as a result of</i> member activities	Yes	No
	The Logic Model describes intermediate outcome objectives (i.e., changes that will likely occur after the program ends but cannot be measured during the program year)	Yes	No
	The intermediate outcomes are likely to result <i>from achievement of</i> short term outcomes objectives	Yes	No
	The Logic Model describes long-term outcome objectives (i.e., changes that may occur in a later period)	Yes	No
	The long-term outcomes are likely to result from achievement of intermediate outcome objectives	Yes	No

Section IV
VOLUNTEER GENERATION

WSC requires all AmeriCorps members to be engaged in volunteer recruitment, and management.

Community Volunteer: Citizens or residents in the community who are recruited and/or managed by the CNCS-supported organization or assigned national service participant(s) to offer time, knowledge, skills, and expertise for free to support the CNCS-supported program or organization. Community volunteers differ from national service participants in that they are under no formal obligation to provide a specified amount of assistance (e.g., as measured by service hours), and said volunteers are not enrolled in a national service program. Also referred to as “leveraged volunteers.”

Episodic Volunteer: a volunteer recruited and/or supported directly by AmeriCorps members that participated in one-time service projects. Each volunteer should be counted only once, even if an individual volunteer participated in more than one volunteer opportunity.

Ongoing Volunteer: a volunteer recruited and/or members that have made an ongoing volunteer commitment. Each volunteer should be counted only once, even if an individual volunteer participated in more than one volunteer opportunity.

Number of Volunteer Hours Expected to be Generated by Episodic and On-Going Volunteers: While individual volunteers are counted only once; their volunteer hours can be counted and reported to WSC throughout the program year.

Section V
PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Choose from the following list of interventions described in this section that include the following focus areas: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, Veterans and Military Families and Youth Opportunity. Choose the intervention(s) that coincides with your project description, Theory of Change and Logic Model. Complete the Performance Plan connected to each chosen intervention. For each chosen intervention, attach a completed Performance Plan with your RFA application submission. You are required to choose at least one intervention. Multi-focus projects can choose more than one intervention and its associated Performance Plan.

When choosing a WSC intervention, applicants must ensure that the WSC data collection standards outlined in the WSC Instructional Guidance can be met. A link to the instructional guidance is located under each of the described interventions.

All WSC projects are required to track and report on at least one aligned performance measure to WSC. All selected interventions should include reportable outputs and outcomes and must be identified on the Logic Model. WSC does not expect applicants to report on each and every potential member activity or community impact. Additionally, there is no expectation that 100% of program activity be allocated to performance measures.

WSC selection does not limit or exclude organizations from choosing to follow other WSC interventions included within this RFA or by developing an Applicant Determined intervention.

When completing the Performance plan, each applicant is required to describe the data collection method used to measure the output as well as the data collection method used to measure the outcome.

Some applicants may receive requests to provide additional clarifying information and/or make changes to their performance measures prior to award. A request for clarification does not guarantee an award. Failure to respond to requests for clarification adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of the application from consideration.

Review our [Performance Measurement FAQ](#) to review solutions to common performance measure problems.

Each Performance Plan includes two additional questions. Guidance is described below.

1. Describe the data collection method you will use to measure the output. If the WSC Performance Measure instructions require a specific instrument or method, you must describe that instrument and method.

Output Examples:

- a. Individuals sign an attendance log at member presentations. Program staff enters participant information into an internal tracking system, which can identify and consolidate duplicate entries and ensure that individuals are not counted more than once.
- b. Members will record in the program's secure database the name and ID number of each student who enrolls in the tutoring program. The list of names/IDs will be checked to ensure that no student is counted twice.
- c. For each of the ten projects, the program will secure a report from the host site specifying the number of acres that are treated to remove invasive species, conduct fuels reduction (to reduce the risk of wildfire) or plant new native species.
- d. Client database maintained via quarterly reports submitted by the ABC Food Depot's partner agencies are documented through quarterly reports submitted to the ABC Food Depot and stored in order to be able to track aggregate numbers reached. Tracking form is used for ABC Food Depot food pantry to track food donations as well as lbs. of food distributed to individuals in need. The client database and tracking form will only count individuals for whom the distributed food is intended, the first time they are served. During the quarterly report review we will ensure that beneficiaries are only counted once. The client database and tracking form will distinguish individuals visiting the food banks for routine help vs. individuals with true emergency food assistance needs, such as their house burning down, a natural disaster, etc.
- e. Activity logs will be kept for each service opportunity and veteran volunteers will be asked to sign in and note the time. After the completion of a service event, veteran volunteers will be asked to sign out and note the time again. A veteran will be counted under this measure if he/she spends a total of 4 hours or more engaged in volunteer service through one or more service opportunities. Upon signing in at their first service event, veteran volunteers are assigned a unique identifier that is used for any subsequent volunteer activities so that no individual is counted more than once over the course of the year, and so that total volunteer hours can be tracked.

2. Describe the data collection method you will use to measure the outcome. If the WSC Instructional guidance requires you to use a specific instrument or method, you must select and describe that instrument and method. Refer to WSC Performance Measurement Instructions for specific Outcome requirements.

Outcome Examples:

- a. Members will administer a pre- and post-test that measures knowledge of key disaster preparedness topics, using survey questions developed and validated on the national Public Readiness Index. An increase in knowledge of 30% or more will be considered sufficient for a participant to be considered as having increased knowledge. Pre- and post-tests will be administered to all beneficiaries. Results from the pre-posttest will be entered into our internal tracking system, which allows us to track the number of interventions any individual has received.
- b. When students enroll in the tutoring program at the beginning of the school year, they will take a standardized, district-approved pre-test in mathematics (insert name of actual test here) that aligns with the material being taught and is appropriate for the grade level and that has demonstrated reliability and validity for the population of middle school students served. The same test will be administered to students at the end of the school year. Scores will be recorded in the program’s secure database. Students who increase their scores in mathematics by at least 1.2 grade levels over the course of their participation in the tutoring program will be counted under this measure.
- c. Members will send a survey to project hosts/sponsors after the project has been completed and ask them to use their professional knowledge to rate the condition of the treated land compared to its initial condition and the prescribed treatment to improve it on a scale of one to five. For nine of the ten projects, the rating will be 4 (improved) or 5 (greatly improved).
- d. The standardized pre-post/test will be distributed to individuals receiving community meals and other wrap-around services. The test will include questions from the USDA’s Household Food Security Survey. Individuals will be classified as “food secure” if they report two or fewer food insecure conditions. Additionally, it will assess increase in knowledge of where to access needed food assistance services, support services to end long-term hunger, participation in food assistance programs such as SNAP, use and benefit of referral services to end hunger. The post-test will occur 3 to 6 months after the first one. Individuals must visit ABC Food Depot or one of its partner agencies to receive a meal and/or other education session about wrap-around services at least twice in order to be counted.
- e. Before engaging in their first service opportunity, volunteers and AmeriCorps members who are veterans will complete a brief 7-question pre-survey assessing (on a five-point scale) the level of connection they feel to their community. After completing a minimum of 4 hours of service, veteran volunteers and AmeriCorps members will complete the survey again. Veterans whose post-surveys indicate an increase of one or more points on at least 5 of the 7 survey questions will be counted under this measure.

The checklist below will be used to assess each submitted Performance Plan during the review process. Items on the checklist are common problems that require clarification. The checklist is not a comprehensive list of all performance measure items that may require clarification.

Alignment with Theory of Change			
1	Focus areas, objectives, interventions, outputs and outcomes are consistent with the application narrative, logic model, and theory of change	Yes	No
Interventions			
2	The interventions selected must contribute directly to the outputs and outcome	Yes	No
Dosage			
3	The dosage (frequency, intensity, duration of intervention) is described and is sufficient to achieve outcomes.	Yes	No
PM Rules			
4	The applicant has at least 1 aligned performance measure (output + outcome) for the primary intervention.	Yes	No
5	It is clear that beneficiaries are not double-counted within a performance measure.	Yes	No
6	The population counted in each WSC Performance Measure is the population specified in the Performance Measure Instructions	Yes	No

Alignment & Quality			
7	Outputs and outcomes are aligned correctly.	Yes	No
8	Outputs and outcomes clearly identify what is counted.	Yes	No
9	Each output or outcome counts the same thing.	Yes	No
10	Outcomes clearly identify a change in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition. (Counts that do not measure a change are outputs and must be labeled as such. Completion of a program is considered an output, not an outcome.)	Yes	No
11	Outcomes clearly specify the level of improvement necessary to be counted as "improved" and it is clear why this level of improvement is significant for the beneficiary population served.	Yes	No
12	Outcomes count individual level gains, not average gains for the population served.	Yes	No
13	Outcomes measure meaningful/significant changes and are aligned with the applicant's theory of change. (Note: Outcomes that do not measure significant changes in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition should be revised or removed. WSC prefers that applicants measure a small number of meaningful outcomes rather than a large number of insignificant outcomes)	Yes	No
14	Outcomes can be measured during a single grant year.	Yes	No
Data Collection Instruments			
15	Data collection methods are appropriate.	Yes	No
16	Instruments are likely to yield high quality data.	Yes	No
17	The instrument, and what it measures, is clearly described.	Yes	No
18	If the Performance Measure Instructions specify the instrument to be used, the applicant is using that instrument (e.g., pre/post/test).	Yes	No
19	The instrument measures the change specified in the outcome. (For example, if the outcome is a change in knowledge, the proposed instrument measures a change in knowledge, not a change in attitude.)	Yes	No
20	Output instruments are sufficient to count all beneficiaries served and to ensure that individuals are not double counted.	Yes	No
21	Outcome instruments will be administered to all beneficiaries receiving the intervention.	Yes	No
Pre/Post Test (Skip this section if the applicant is not using a pre/post test.)			
22	If using a pre/post/test to measure knowledge gains from training activities, it is clear how the pre/post/test is connected to the learning objectives of the training.	Yes	No
23	The timeline for administering the pre/post-test is clear.	Yes	No
24	The applicant can successfully match pre-test data with post-test data at the individual level. The same instrument must be used for the pre-test and the post-test	Yes	No
25	Target values appear ambitious but realistic/it is clear how targets were set.	Yes	No
26	Outcome targets are smaller than output targets, with some exceptions (i.e., capacity-building National Performance Measures). Note: In some cases it may be appropriate for the outcome target to be equal to the output target.	Yes	No
27	The output and outcome targets are reasonably proportional. Note: What constitutes reasonably proportional may depend on what is being counted, how and when.	Yes	No
Unit of Measure			
28	The unit of measure is a number, not a percent.	Yes	No
29	The applicant has not opted into WSC Performance Measures but has the potential to do so. (In this case, clarify why the applicant has not opted into National Performance Measures and, if applicable, direct them to select appropriate National Performance Measures.)	Yes	No

WSC Performance Measurement Instructions

WSC Performance Measure Instructions can be found at the links below. **These are currently clearly noted as “draft” as some adjustments may be made to them upon negotiation or clarification by CNCS with WSC during the final grant award process.** If choosing a WSC measure, please read carefully to ensure your organization can implement with fidelity.

- [Disaster Services - Disaster Preparedness](#)
- [Economic Opportunity - Adult Basic Education \(ABE & ESA\)](#)
- [Economic Opportunity - Financial Literacy](#)
- [Economic Opportunity - Housing Services](#)
- [Economic Opportunity - Job Placement Services](#)
- [Education - K-12 Academic Engagement](#)
- [Education - K-12 Academic Improvement](#)
- [Education – K-12 Closing the Opportunity Gap – AVID](#)
- [Environmental Stewardship - At-Risk Ecosystems](#)
- [Environmental Stewardship – Education](#)
- [Healthy Futures - Access to Care](#)
- [Healthy Futures - Food Security](#)
- [Healthy Futures - Health Education Programs](#)
- [Healthy Futures - Nutrition Education for Children and Youth](#)
- [Healthy Futures - Services to Live Independently](#)
- [Veterans & Military Families - Veterans as Volunteers](#)
- [Youth Opportunity Corps](#)

Applicant-Determined Performance Plan Guidance

Applicant-Determined Performance Measures are intended for programs whose interventions, outputs and outcomes do not fit under existing WSC Performance Measures. Programs may create performance measures to track changes in beneficiary (knowledge, attitude, behavior, or conditions). If selecting an Applicant-Determined Performance Measure, please ensure outputs and outcomes are aligned correctly (unit of measure is the same for both outputs & outcomes), outputs and outcomes clearly identify what is counted, outcomes clearly identify a change in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition, the unit of measure is a number, not a percent and can be measured in a single grant year.

WSC Performance Plan: 2018-2019	
Organization Name:	
Applicant-Determined Focus Area – Economic Opportunity	
Performance Measure Title:	Target:
Output Description:	
Outcome Description:	

Performance Measure Title. Enter a short, descriptive title for your performance measure. Different aligned performance measures should have different titles so that they can be easily referenced.

Description of Output. Enter your own output title. Make sure it is clear what the output is counting. The unit of measure must be a number, not a percent.

Output Target. Enter the number of beneficiaries you intend to serve, described in the output title. Targets must be numbers, not percent's. Make sure the output is **UNDUPLICATED**.

Description of Aligned Outcome. Clearly state a measurable change in knowledge, attitude, behavior or condition for your beneficiaries.

Outcome Target Number. Identify your numerical Outcome. Include only outcomes that can be measured in a single year. Outcome targets are generally smaller than output targets, with some exceptions (i.e., capacity-building National Performance Measures). **Note:** In some cases it may be appropriate for the outcome target to be equal to the output target. The unit of measure is a number, not a percent.