



Request for Proposals & Instructions

2024-25 AmeriCorps State Funds

RFP #2425WNCSB-AC

Issued by:

State of Wisconsin

Serve Wisconsin – Wisconsin National and Community Service Board

A Notification of Intent (NOI) to Apply is required for all applicants.

Access the NOI at <https://forms.gle/mo8YXSgQdnvuSLpDA>

Notification of Intent must be submitted by

12:00 midnight CT on September 21, 2023

All Proposals and Required Additional Documents must be received
no later than **4:30 PM CT on October 10, 2023**

For further information regarding this *RFP*, contact ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov.

All questions must be submitted via email.

Questions on this *RFP* will be accepted until 12:00 Midnight, October 4, 2023

Note From the Executive Director

Thank you for your interest in hosting AmeriCorps members. With the challenges we face across the state, it's time to harness the power of service more than ever. Whether your program focuses on serving communities with concentrated poverty, environmental stewardship, reducing polarization and community divisions, or advancing racial equity, we look forward to the positive impact your program will have in Wisconsin.

If you are new to Serve Wisconsin, I strongly encourage you to contact me at Jeanne.Duffy@wisconsin.gov as soon as possible to talk more about options, the process, and best next steps.

If you have received funds from us before, welcome back! This document will walk you through this year's process. All applicants can find additional resources, videos, and contact information on the [Serve Wisconsin](#) website.

Last year, AmeriCorps programs across Wisconsin hosted 640 members across 24 programs, and we look forward to growing and strengthening our programs across the state. We are committed to supporting greater diversity, equity, and inclusion within Serve Wisconsin, our programs, and our AmeriCorps members.

At Serve Wisconsin, we view all funded organizations as our partners in achieving our mission to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. We are here to support you through the application process and beyond; the coming year promises to help us achieve even more together.

We can't wait to learn more about your program!

Jeanne Duffy

Executive Director, Serve Wisconsin

Serve Wisconsin

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2023 Serve Wisconsin AmeriCorps Dates and Deadlines

Date	Item
August 29	<i>Request for Proposals (RFP) Released</i>
September 21 @ midnight CT	Notification of Intent to Apply due to Serve Wisconsin
October 4 @ midnight CT	Last day for submitting written inquiries regarding this <i>RFP</i>
October 6	Final Questions & Answers from applicants available
October 10 @ 4:30pm CT	Applications and additional documents due to Serve Wisconsin in eGrants
October 10 @4:30pm CT	Additional documents due to Serve Wisconsin via email
October 10 @ 4:30pm CT	Alternative Match Requests Due (if applicable, via email)
November 14	Applications in eGrants will be returned to you for clarifications
November 28	Revisions due to Serve Wisconsin , applications are still pending Wisconsin National and Community Service Committee and Board approval; there may be further rounds of revisions after this date
December 5	Program Evaluation & Development Committee of the Wisconsin National and Community Service meets All recommended applicants are required to attend to present to committee
December 14	Wisconsin National and Community Service Board Meeting
January 4	Board-approved applications due to AmeriCorps
Mid-April 2024	Expected AmeriCorps Notification Date of Competitive awards
Spring 2024	Formula grant process (if funds available)
Mid-July 2024	Successful Competitive grant applicants will be issued grant awards

Meeting dates will be posted on the [Serve Wisconsin](#) website and all meetings are publicized as open meetings. Please check the website for up-to-date schedules. Email ServeWisconsin@wisconsin.gov with any questions.

Application Resources

Please use this document to apply for AmeriCorps Wisconsin State grant funding for program year 2024-2025.

These grants are awarded to organizations that propose to place AmeriCorps members in service within Wisconsin. Selected organizations will receive grants to support AmeriCorps member positions that engage members in service to meet critical needs in Wisconsin.

If you are a national or multi-state applicant, please refer to the AmeriCorps website [list of funding opportunities](#). National applicants include Native Nations.

Use this document in conjunction with the AmeriCorps federal regulations (45 CFR [Chapter XXV](#) and [Chapter XII](#)), the AmeriCorps [Mandatory Supplemental Information](#), and the [AmeriCorps Performance Measure Instructions](#) to complete your AmeriCorps State grant proposal for program year 2024-2025.

This document and other resources to help complete this application can be found on Serve Wisconsin's [AmeriCorps Competitive Grant Program RFP](#) webpage. This includes an All-Access Pass to [On3Learn courses](#), which Serve Wisconsin encourages you to use in conjunction with writing your proposal. For details on how to access these, please email ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov as soon as possible.

Contents

I. Program Description	2
A. Who We Are	2
B. Funding Priorities and Focus Areas	2
1. Funding Priorities	3
2. Focus Areas	4
C. Federal Award Information	4
1. Estimated Available Funds	4
2. Estimated Award Amount	4
3. Period of Performance	4
4. Types of Awards	4
5. Types of Grants	5
D. Funding Requirements	7
1. Member Living Allowance	7
2. Maximum Cost Per Member Service Year (MSY)	7
3. Cost Sharing or Matching	8
4. Funding Restrictions	9
II. Eligibility Information	10
A. Eligible Applicants	10
1. New Applicants	10
2. Continuation Applicants	10
3. Threshold Issues	11
B. Other Eligibility Requirements	11
C. Other Considerations	12
III. Application and Submission Information	13
A. How to Apply	13
1. Notification of Intent to Apply	13
2. System for Award Management	13
B. Application Content	13
1. Application Fields	13
2. Page Limits	14
C. Late Applications	14
IV. Submitting Your Grant Application in eGrants	15
If you are in a continuation year, please skip to Page 17	15
A. New and Recompete Applicants	16
1. Applicant Information	17
2. Application Information	17
3. Narratives	17
a) Executive Summary (0 points)	18
b) Program Design (50% of total points)	18
(1) Community and Logic Model (24 points)	18
(2) Evidence Base (20 points)	19
(3) Funding Priority (0 points)	24

(4) Member Experience (6 points)	24
c) Organizational Capability (25% of total points)	25
(1) Organizational Background and Staffing (15 points)	25
(2) Member Supervision (6 points)	25
(3) Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (4 points)	25
d) Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25% of total points – 25 points)	26
(1) Member Recruitment (7 points)	26
(2) Member Retention (8 points)	26
(3) Data Collection (7 points)	26
(4) Budget Alignment to Program Design (3 points)	26
e) Evaluation Plan (Required for recompeting grantees – 0 points)	26
f) Amendment Justification (0 points)	27
g) Clarification Information (0 points)	27
h) Continuation Changes (0 points)	27
i) Logic Model	27
j) Performance Measures (0 points)	28
k) Program Information	28
l) Additional Documents	29
m) Funding/Demographics Section	33
n) Review, Authorize, and Submit	33
B. Continuation Applications	17
1. Applicant Information and Application Information	18
2. Narrative	18
3. Logic Model	19
4. Performance Measures	19
5. Program Information	19
6. Additional Documents	19
7. Budget	20
8. Funding/Demographics	20
9. Review, Authorize, and Submit	20
D. Late Applications	21
V. Proposal Selection and Award Process	22
A. Procuring and Contracting Agency	22
B. Initial Application Compliance and Eligibility Review	22
C. Serve Wisconsin Application Review Process	22
1. External Review	22
2. Internal Review	23
3. Post-Review Quality Control	24
4. Pre-Award Financial Risk Assessment	24
5. Applicant Clarification	25
6. Feedback to Applicants	25
7. Program Evaluation & Development Committee Meeting	25
8. Wisconsin National Community Service Board (Board) Meeting	25
D. AmeriCorps/Federal Review	25
E. Application Resolution	26
F. Transparency in Grantmaking	26
G. Appeal of Grant Decision	26

VI. Award Administration Information	27
A. Federal Award Notices	27
B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements	27
1. Uniform Guidance	27
2. Requests for Monitoring Payment Integrity Information	27
3. AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions	28
4. National Service Criminal History Check Requirements	28
5. Official Guidance	29
6. Use of Material	29
7. Re-Focusing of Funding	29
C. Technical Assistance	29
D. Reporting	30
VII. Notices	30
VIII. Appendices and Attachments	33
A. Appendices are for your reference	33
B. Attachments must be submitted (if applicable)	33
IX. Right to Reopen RFP	33

Table 1. Requirements in the AmeriCorps Regulations

Topics	Citation in the AmeriCorps Regulations
Member Service Activities	§2520.20 - §2520.55
Prohibited Activities	§2520.65
Tutoring Programs	§2522.900-2522.950
Matching Funds	§2521.35-2521.90
Member Benefits	§2522.240-2522.250
Calculating Cost Per Member Service Year (MSY)	§2522.485
Performance Measures	§2522.500-2522.650
Evaluation	§2522.500-2522.540 and §2522.700-2522.740
Selection Criteria and Selection Process	§2522.400-2522.475

If there is any inconsistency between the AmeriCorps regulations and this *RFP*, the regulations take precedence. Find an electronic version of the CFR here: www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-B/chapter-XXV

I. Program Description

The mission of AmeriCorps is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. AmeriCorps has helped to engage millions of people in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations (see [Eligible Applicants section](#)) proposing to engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions/practices to strengthen communities.

An AmeriCorps member is an individual who engages in community service through an approved national service position. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving. Upon successful completion of their service, members earn a [Segal AmeriCorps Education Award](#) from the National Service Trust that can be used to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

The purpose of this document is to provide interested parties with information to enable them to prepare and submit a proposal for AmeriCorps State funding for the creation, expansion, or enhancement of programs that meet the requirements of the AmeriCorps national service program.

A. Who We Are

Serve Wisconsin is Wisconsin's National and Community Service Board. Our mission is to promote service, provide training, and allocate resources to programs that enrich lives and communities through service and volunteerism. We achieve this mission primarily through our work with AmeriCorps programs and AmeriCorps members throughout the state of Wisconsin. We are governed by a 21-member citizen board that is appointed by the Governor.

AmeriCorps is a federal agency that funds organizations to make a positive impact in communities. To support the placement of AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in communities, AmeriCorps provides more than \$800 million in grants every year.

B. Funding Priorities and Focus Areas

AmeriCorps released its [2022-2026 Strategic Plan](#), which defines the agency's goals and objectives to advance the agency's mission to improve lives and strengthen communities. AmeriCorps will execute the following goals to better position the agency to respond to national and local needs and help the communities it serves prosper:

1. Partner with communities to alleviate poverty and advance racial equity
2. Enhance the experience for AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers
3. Unite Americans by bringing them together in service
4. Effectively steward federal resources
5. Make AmeriCorps one of the best and most equitable places to work in the federal government

AmeriCorps will invest in existing and new partnerships with non-profit, faith-based, and Tribal organizations, and State Service Commissions, to get things done for America. The AmeriCorps agency will prioritize investment in the most critical issues of our time — public health, climate and the environment, and education and economic opportunity — within AmeriCorps' Focus Areas and will increase its efforts to ensure AmeriCorps members, AmeriCorps Seniors

volunteers, and community-based volunteers reflect the communities where they serve. We will target our investments toward communities where the need is greatest, particularly those with populations that face racial inequality and poverty. These steps will enable more Americans than ever to strengthen the communities that need it most across the nation through their service.

1. Funding Priorities

AmeriCorps' funding priorities for this grant competition are:

- Organizations leading service in, and those organizations serving historically underrepresented and underserved individuals, including but not limited to communities of color, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, people who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, people with arrest and/or conviction records, and religious minorities
- Evidence-based interventions on the [AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange](#) that are assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence. Please note that many of these interventions have demonstrated effectiveness in improving outcomes for individuals living in underserved communities and that the agency has committed resources to supporting grantees seeking to replicate and evaluate these interventions in similar communities
- Veterans and Military Families, Caregivers, and Survivors – a program model that improves the quality of life of veterans and improves the well-being of military and veteran families, caregivers, and survivors
- Faith-based organizations
- Programs that provide additional benefits to AmeriCorps members aimed at enhancing member experience and bolstering member recruitment and retention such as paying more than the minimum living allowance, transportation, housing, food, etc.
- Programs that create workforce pathways for AmeriCorps members, including deliberate training, certifications, and hiring preferences or support
- Environmental Stewardship, including supporting communities to become more resilient through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve land and water, increase renewable energy use and improve at-risk ecosystems, especially in underserved households and communities
- Community-based programs that enhance and expand services to second chance youth and/or engage those youth as AmeriCorps members
- Programs that support civic bridgebuilding programs and projects to reduce polarization and community divisions; and providing training in civic bridgebuilding skills and techniques to AmeriCorps members
- Programs focused on implementing or expanding access to high-quality early learning and those that prepare AmeriCorps members to enter early learning careers

To receive priority consideration, you must show that an AmeriCorps priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes and must include a high-quality program design. Proposing programs that receive priority consideration does not guarantee funding. It is also important to remember that your program does not need to fit into a funding priority to be considered for an award.

2. Focus Areas

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

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

C. Federal Award Information

1. Estimated Available Funds

AmeriCorps expects a highly competitive grant competition. AmeriCorps reserves the right to prioritize providing funding to existing awards over making new awards. The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

2. Estimated Award Amount

Award amounts will vary, as determined by the scope of the projects.

3. Period of Performance

The project period is generally one year with a start date of August 15 or September 1, 2024, and end date of August 14 or August 31, 2025, respectively. Continuation awards for subsequent years are not guaranteed; they depend on availability of appropriations and satisfactory performance.

4. Types of Awards

AmeriCorps State Competitive Program Grants. These grants are awarded to fund a portion of program costs and AmeriCorps members' living allowance. AmeriCorps State competitive applications are submitted to Serve Wisconsin through this *RFP* process. Eligible applications are reviewed at the state level and then sent to AmeriCorps (federal level) where they are selected for funding or returned back to the state for further consideration under the formula grant process.

Public Health AmeriCorps (PHA) Program Grants. These grants are awarded to fund program costs and members' living allowance for programs that enable the recruitment, training, and development of a new generation of public health leaders who are ready to respond to the public health needs of the nation by providing public health service in communities. The AmeriCorps State Public Health AmeriCorps Request for Proposals for 2024-25 is a continuations-only funding opportunity for current PHA grantees. *Do not use this Request for Proposals to apply for a PHA continuation grant—visit the Public Health AmeriCorps Request for Proposals page for the PHA-specific RFP.*

AmeriCorps State Formula Program Grants. The State of Wisconsin receives an annual formula allocation of funds from AmeriCorps. Serve Wisconsin determines which applications receive formula grants in the state of Wisconsin. An applicant that is not selected for competitive funding may be considered for formula funding. Dependent on funding availability, a separate *RFP* for Formula Program grants may be posted in early spring 2024.

AmeriCorps State Planning Grants. AmeriCorps planning grants provide support to a grant recipient to develop an AmeriCorps program that will engage AmeriCorps members in implementing evidence-based interventions to solve community problems. Planning grants may not be used to support AmeriCorps members. Dependent on funding availability, a separate *RFP* for Formula Planning grants may be posted in early spring 2024.

5. Types of Grants

There are two types of grants: **cost reimbursement** and **fixed amount**. With either a competitive or formula grant, AmeriCorps and Serve Wisconsin may award a cost reimbursement or a fixed amount grant to a successful applicant. The availability of a full-cost fixed amount grant is limited to certain applicants. See Table 2 on the next page for more information.

Professional Corps applicants are not eligible to receive for Cost Reimbursement grants. Use the [Eligible Applicants section](#) and the [Mandatory Supplemental Information](#) for more information, including definitions of terminology.

AmeriCorps will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year.

Table 2. Types of Grants

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement	Fixed Amount			
		Full-Cost	Education Award Program (EAP)	Professional Corps <i>See Appendix 7 for further requirements</i>	No Cost Slots
<i>Available Subtypes</i>	Traditional	Full-Cost	Education Award Program (EAP)	Professional Corps <i>See Appendix 7 for further requirements</i>	No Cost Slots
<i>Maximum Cost per MSY*</i>	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$800 or \$1,000**	\$1,000	\$0
<i>Type of Slots in the National Service Trust</i>	FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT	FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT	FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT	FT only	FT, TQT, HT, RHT, QT, MT, AT
<i>Budget Submission Required</i>	Yes	No		No	No
<i>Availability of funds linked to enrollment and retention of awarded MSYs</i>	No	Yes			No
<i>Special Requirements</i>	N/A	N/A		Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals. Member salaries and benefits must be paid entirely by organization where member serves and not included in budget.	N/A
<i>Financial Reporting Requirements</i>	Yes	No			
<i>Available to New Applicants</i>	Yes	No	Yes		

* Member Service Year (MSY): One Member Service Year (MSY) is equivalent to a full-time AmeriCorps position (at least 1,700 service hours.)

** Per 42 U.S.C. § 12581a, the Corporation may provide the operational support under this section for a program in an amount that is not more than \$800 per individual enrolled in an approved national service position, or not more than \$1,000 per such individual if at least 50 percent of the persons enrolled in the program are disadvantaged youth.

FT = Full time, TQT = Three Quarter Time, HT= Half Time, RHT = Reduced Half Time, QT = Quarter Time, MT = Minimum Time, AT = Abbreviated Time

D. Funding Requirements

1. Member Living Allowance

- A living allowance is not considered a salary or wage. Programs are required to provide a living allowance for members serving in full-time (FT) terms of service. Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time terms of service. If you choose to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time member, the living allowance amount must comply with the maximum limits in the table below. For Cost Reimbursement grants, the amount must be included in the proposed budget as either AmeriCorps or grantee share. Exceptions are noted below.

While Fixed Amount grant applicants are not required to submit detailed budgets, they are still required to provide a living allowance to members that complies with the minimum and maximum requirements. Exceptions noted below. Fixed Amount grant applicants should indicate that amount in the application.

Table 3. Member Service Year (MSY) + Living Allowance Amounts

Service Term Type	Min # of Hours	Member Service Year (MSY) Calculation	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Living Allowance
Full-Time	1700	1.0	\$18,700	\$37,400
Three-Quarter Time	1200	0.70	n/a	\$26,180
Half-Time	900	0.5	n/a	\$18,700
Reduced Half-Time	675	0.381	n/a	\$14,212
Quarter-Time	450	0.2646	n/a	\$9,724
Minimum-Time	300	0.2116	n/a	\$7,854
Abbreviated-Time	100	0.0705	n/a	\$2,244

Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements

- Programs existing prior to September 21, 1993 are not required to offer a living allowance. If an applicant chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement, but not the maximum requirement above.
- EAP Grantees are not required to provide a living allowance, but if a living allowance is provided, it must comply with the maximum requirements set forth in the Living Allowance Table above.
- Professional Corps Grantees must provide members a living allowance or salary, which must meet the minimum, but may exceed the maximum living allowance set in the Living Allowance table above. Professional Corps member salaries and child care benefits are paid entirely by the organizations with which the members serve and are not included in the budget.

2. Maximum Cost Per Member Service Year (MSY)

The AmeriCorps cost per MSY is determined by dividing the AmeriCorps share of budgeted grant costs by the number of MSYs requested. It does not include child care benefits or the value of the education award a member may earn. The maximum amount you may request from AmeriCorps per MSY is determined on an annual basis.

New and re-competing applicants will be held to the maximum cost per MSY for their grant type.

Table 4. Maximum Cost Per MSY

Grant Program	Maximum
Individual Competitive State/Territory Program (cost reimbursement)	\$25,000
Professional Corps competitive Fixed Amount Applicants/Grantees	\$1,000*
Full-cost competitive Fixed Amount Grant	\$25,000
Education Award Program (EAP) Fixed Amount Grant (competitive & formula)	\$800 or \$1,000**
All non EAP formula grants***	\$27,000****

*AmeriCorps requires Professional Corps programs to cover the operating expenses associated with the AmeriCorps program through non-AmeriCorps resources. AmeriCorps will only consider operating funds of up to \$1,000 per MSY if an applicant is able to demonstrate significant organizational financial need.

** Per 42 U.S.C. 12581a, the Corporation may provide the operational support under this section for a program in an amount that is not more than \$800 per individual enrolled in an approved national service position, or not more than \$1,000 per such individual if at least 50 percent of the persons enrolled in the program are disadvantaged youth.

*** Except planning grants

****\$18,000 adjusted for inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers.

AmeriCorps reserves the right to 1) treat an applicant that meets the statutory requirements of a Professional Corps as such, whether or not they submitted their application as a professional corps program; and 2) determine whether an applicant has demonstrated inability to effectively operate in the absence of AmeriCorps operating funds.

3. Cost Sharing or Matching

Fixed Amount Grants. There is no specific match requirement for fixed amount grants. AmeriCorps does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program; therefore, organizations must raise the additional revenue required to operate the program. New applicants are not eligible to receive full-cost fixed amount grant.

Cost Reimbursement Grants. You are required to match funds based on the chart below. The applicant’s match can be non-AmeriCorps cash and/or in-kind contributions. You must indicate whether the match is proposed or already secured. You must demonstrate the ability to meet the match requirement at the time of application submission. Use [Funding Restrictions section](#) for more information.

A first-time successful applicant is required to match at 24 percent for the first three-year funding period. Starting with year four, the match requirement gradually increases every year to 50 percent by year ten, according to the minimum overall share chart found in [45 CFR §2521.60](#) and below.

Table 5. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements

AmeriCorps Funding Year	1, 2, 3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Grantee Share Requirements	24%	26%	30%	34%	38%	42%	46%	50%

[42 USC §12571\(e\)](#) requires that grantees that use other federal funds as matching funds for an AmeriCorps grant to report the amounts and sources of these funds to AmeriCorps on a Federal Financial Report. Grantees must track and be prepared to report on that match separately each year and at closeout. Match can be non-AmeriCorps cash and/or in-kind contributions.

The living allowance or salary provided to AmeriCorps members in Professional Corps programs does not count toward the matching requirement.

Individual Match Waiver. In accordance with 45 CFR §§ 2521.70, you may request a full or partial waiver of match requirements. Before submitting a match waiver request form, please contact Serve Wisconsin's RFP Manager at ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov to discuss your intent to request a match waiver.

Serve Wisconsin has created a Microsoft Forms form for you to use if you would like to submit a request for match waiver at <https://forms.office.com/g/aJ9tFg9U13>. The form includes details about the match waiver process.

Please send an email to the RFP Manager at ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.com after you have submitted the form.

Alternative Match. Under certain circumstances, you may qualify to meet alternative matching requirements that increase over the years to 35 percent instead of 50 percent as specified in the regulations at [45 CFR §2521.60\(b\)](#). To qualify, you must demonstrate that the proposed program is either located in a rural county or in a severely economically distressed community as defined in the Glossary (Appendix 8). If you plan to request an alternative match schedule, submit a request to ServeWisconsin@wisconsin.gov at the time the application is submitted.

4. Funding Restrictions

- *Religious use.* AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to provide religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any form of proselytization.
- *Political activity.* AmeriCorps assistance may not be used by program participants or staff to assist, promote, or deter union organizing; or finance, directly or indirectly, any activity designed to influence the outcome of a federal, state, or local election to public office.
- *Contracts or collective bargaining agreements.* AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to impair existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements.
- *Supplantation.* AmeriCorps assistance may not be used to replace State and local public funds that had been used to support programs of the type eligible to receive AmeriCorps support.
- *Nonduplication.* Corporation assistance may not be used to duplicate an activity that is already available in the locality of a program. And AmeriCorps assistance will not be provided to a private nonprofit entity to conduct activities that are the same or substantially equivalent to activities currently provided.
- *Nondisplacement*
 - An employer may not displace an employee or position, including partial displacement such as reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits, as a result of the use by such employer of a participant in a program receiving AmeriCorps assistance.
 - An organization may not displace a volunteer by using a participant in a program receiving AmeriCorps assistance.
 - A service opportunity will not be created under this chapter that will infringe in any manner on the promotional opportunity of an employed individual.

- A participant in a program receiving AmeriCorps assistance may not perform any services or duties or engage in activities that would otherwise be performed by an employee as part of the assigned duties of such employee.
- A participant in any program receiving AmeriCorps assistance may not perform any services or duties, or engage in activities, that—
 - Will supplant the hiring of employed workers; or
 - Are services, duties, or activities with respect to which an individual has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures.
- A participant in any program receiving assistance may not perform services or duties that have been performed by or were assigned to any—
 - Presently employed worker;
 - Employee who recently resigned or was discharged;
 - Employee who is subject to a reduction in force or who has recall rights pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or applicable personnel procedures;
 - Employee who is on leave (terminal, temporary, vacation, emergency, or sick); or
 - Employee who is on strike or who is being locked out.
- Prohibited Activities – See the [Mandatory Supplemental Information](#) for the full list of prohibited activities.

II. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are organizations that propose to place AmeriCorps members in service within Wisconsin to meet critical needs in Wisconsin.

The following non-federal entities (all of which are defined in [2 CFR. §200.1](#)) are eligible to apply to Serve Wisconsin:

- Indian Tribes
- institutions of higher education
- local governments and state agencies
- nonprofit organizations
- states and US Territories

Entities must have a valid [SAM registration](#) and Unique Entity Identifier to receive an award.

1. New Applicants

If you are applying for a new program, please reach out to Serve Wisconsin at ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov before proceeding. Serve Wisconsin requires that New Program proposals are submitted during the spring Formula competition, with rare exceptions. Serve Wisconsin staff can assist you with next steps, which will likely include applying for a Planning Grant for the first year to be best prepared to launch a new AmeriCorps program.

2. Continuation Applicants

Continuation requests apply only to programs that are currently in their first or second year of operation within a grant cycle. If your program is currently in the final/third year of its grant cycle, you must apply using the application instructions for new and re-competing programs.

The following programs are eligible to apply for competitive continuation funding: Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee; Easter Seals Wisconsin; Marquette University; Milwaukee Public Library Foundation; Public Allies Wisconsin; Racine Zoological Society; Renewal Unlimited; United Way of Dane County – Achievement Connections; United Way of Dane County – Schools of Hope; Western Dairyland Economic Opportunity Council; and Wisconsin Association for Homeless and Runaway Services.

Continuation applicants must submit a Notice of Intent to Apply and an application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the following year. All applicants, including continuation applicants, must submit a [Notification of Intent to Apply](#) by 12:00 Midnight CT on September 21, 2023. **The submission deadline for continuation requests is also October 10, 2023 by 4:30 PM Central Time.** Applications are submitted using [the eGrants website](#).

Serve Wisconsin and AmeriCorps reserve the right to award applications in an amount other than the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so.

3. Threshold Issues

Applications should reflect that they meet the following threshold requirements for the grant type for which they are applying.

- Professional Corps applicants and/or applicants determined to be a Professional Corps by AmeriCorps must demonstrate that the community in which it will place AmeriCorps members serving as professionals has an inadequate number of said professionals.
- If the proposed service activities require specialized member qualifications and/or training (e.g., [tutoring programs](#)), the applicant must describe how the program will meet these requirements.
- In order to be considered for funding, all applicants must propose program designs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. Applicants assessed as lower than the Preliminary evidence tier (i.e., Pre-Preliminary) must provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality selection criteria.

B. Other Eligibility Requirements

- Under Section 132A(b) of the [National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended](#), organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime may not receive assistance described in this *RFP*.
- Applications that propose to engage in activities that are prohibited under AmeriCorps' statutes, regulations, or the terms and conditions of its awards are not eligible to receive AmeriCorps funding.
- Note that under appropriations provisions annually enacted by Congress, if AmeriCorps is aware that any corporation has any unpaid federal tax liability –
 - that has been assessed
 - for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed
 - that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability –that the corporation is not eligible for an award under this *RFP*. However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation which a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and has made a determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the federal government.
- Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in the [Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. 501 \(c\)\(4\)](#) that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for AmeriCorps funding.

C. Other Considerations

Serve Wisconsin supports programs that actively engage qualified people with disabilities as AmeriCorps members and volunteers. These efforts are part of a larger initiative from AmeriCorps which supports efforts to increase participation in national service by people with disabilities. Serve Wisconsin stands behind the principle that everyone can serve their community and encourages programs to engage people with disabilities in their local service efforts.

III. Application and Submission Information

This document should be used together with the AmeriCorps Regulations and Mandatory Supplemental Information. These documents can be found on the [AmeriCorps FY2024 NOFO webpage](#).

Please note that organizations that apply to Serve Wisconsin through this *RFP* have different deadlines, more required additional documents, and different instructions than national applications. Please ensure that you use this *RFP* to complete your proposal to Serve Wisconsin and not the Notice of Funding Opportunity from AmeriCorps.

A. How to Apply

- 1) Submit a mandatory [Notification of Intent to Apply](#) by September 21, 2023 at midnight CT
- 2) Obtain a valid UEI number and register/update your organization with the federal [System for Award Management](#)
- 3) Establish an [eGrants](#) account
- 4) Write a high-quality proposal that is responsive to this *RFP*
- 5) Submit required additional documents to ServeWisconsin@wisconsin.gov by October 10, 2023 at 4:30pm CT
- 6) Submit the application in eGrants by October 10, 2023 @ 4:30pm CT

1. Notification of Intent to Apply

All applicants, including continuation applicants, must submit a Notification of Intent to Apply via the online Google form at <https://forms.gle/mo8YXSgQdnvuSLpDA> by 12:00 Midnight CT on September 21, 2023.

2. System for Award Management

All applicants must register with the [System for Award Management](#) (SAM) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If an applicant is awarded a grant, it must maintain an active SAM registration throughout the life of the award. See the [SAM Quick Guide for Grantees](#) for more details.

SAM registration must be renewed annually. Serve Wisconsin is responsible for ensuring our state applicants have compliant registrations. We suggest you finalize a new registration or renew an existing one at least three weeks before the application deadline, to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise. **You must use your SAM-registered legal organization name and physical address on all grant applications to AmeriCorps.**

AmeriCorps will not make awards to entities that do not have a valid SAM registration and Unique Entity Identifier. If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time AmeriCorps is ready to make a federal award, AmeriCorps may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

Applications must include an Employer Identification Number. Applications must include a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), which is generated as part of the SAM registration process.

B. Application Content

1. Application Fields

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

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet - *this is automatically generated by eGrants when you complete the Applicant Info, Application Info, and Budget sections*
- Applicant Info
- Application Info
- Narratives
 - Executive Summary
 - Program Design
 - Organizational Capability
 - Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
 - Evaluation Summary or Plan (if applicable)
- Logic Model
- Performance Measures
- Budget
- Authorization, [Assurances](#), and [Certifications](#)

2. Page Limits

There are page limits for the Narratives and Logic Model:

- Narratives: The narratives must not exceed **ten pages** when printed from the “Review” tab in AmeriCorps’ web-based eGrants system. The application sections that count towards the Narrative page limit are:
 - SF-424 Face Sheet (automatically generated)
 - Executive Summary
 - Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy narrative sections
- Logic Model: The Logic Model may not exceed **eight pages** when printed with the application from the “Review” tab in AmeriCorps’ web-based eGrants system.

Please note that number of pages of a document printed from word processing software may be different than number of pages that will print out from eGrants. Serve Wisconsin will consider the number of pages only as they print out from eGrants (on the “Review” tab under the “View/Print your application” heading) when determining compliance for page limits.

We strongly encourage you to print out the application from the “Review” tab prior to submission to confirm that the application does not exceed the page limits.

C. Late Applications

Submitting an application after the deadline will result in disqualification of the application.

IV. Submitting Your Grant Application in eGrants

- You must submit applications electronically via the AmeriCorps web-based system, [eGrants](#). It is recommended that you create an eGrants account and begin the application creation process as soon as possible.
- New applicants need to establish an eGrants account by accessing this [link](#) and selecting “Don’t have an eGrants account? Create an account.”
- The applicant’s authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must use their own eGrants account to sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body’s authorization for this official representative to sign on behalf of the applicant organization must be on file in the applicant’s office.
- This *RFP* should be read together with the AmeriCorps Regulations, 45 CFR. §§2520-2550, Budget Instructions, and the National Performance Measure Instructions, which are incorporated by reference. These documents can be found on the [Serve Wisconsin](#) website. The full Regulations are available [online](#).
- Contact the AmeriCorps Hotline at (800) 942-2677, via the [web form](#) or live chat if a problem arises when creating an account or preparing or submitting the application. The hours for the AmeriCorps Hotline hours are posted [online](#) as well.
 - Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization’s name, and the competition to which the organization is applying.

If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, you must continue working with the AmeriCorps Hotline to submit your application via eGrants. You must then submit a brief paragraph including your eGrants ticket number issued to you by the AmeriCorps Hotline with your explanation of the technical issues that prevented you from submitting in eGrants by the deadline via email to ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov before the application submission deadline.

If you are in a continuation year, please skip to Page 17

A. New and Recompete Applicants

Please use these application instructions if you are a new or recompeting applicant to AmeriCorps.

Each applicant must describe a project that will deploy AmeriCorps members effectively to solve a significant community problem. AmeriCorps urges you to submit high quality applications that carefully follow the guidance in this Notice and in the Application Instructions. The quality of an application will be an important factor in determining whether an organization will receive funding.

Applications should include a well-designed plan with clear and compelling justifications for receiving the requested funds.

In eGrants, before Starting Section I you will need to:

- Start on the eGrants homepage in the “Creating an Application” section
 - If you are recompeting (in the final year of a competitive funding cycle and applying for a new grant cycle), select **Continuation/Renewal**
 - If you are not a current grantee, but have received a competitive AmeriCorps grant in the past five years, select **Continuation/Renewal**
 - If you are applying for the first time, have only received formula funding in the past, or are a former grantee (non-formula) whose last AmeriCorps grant was received more than five years ago, select **New**¹
 - If you are applying for a new program, please contact Serve Wisconsin at ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov before submitting an application. With rare exception, Serve Wisconsin requires new organizations to apply for a Planning Grant before operating a new AmeriCorps program. Serve Wisconsin staff can assist you with next steps.
- Select a Program Area: AmeriCorps
- Select a NOFA
 - Select: FY 2024 AmeriCorps State and Territory Commission (New and Cont)
 - Serve Wisconsin’s Cost Reimbursement Prime Grant number will be updated when available; Application ID number will be updated when available.
 - Serve Wisconsin’s Fixed Cost Prime Grant number will be updated when available; Application ID number will be updated when available.

Your application consists of the following components. Make sure to complete each section.

- I. Applicant Info
- II. Application Info
- III. Narratives
- IV. Logic Model
- V. Performance Measures
- VI. Program Information
- VII. Documents
- VIII. Budget
- IX. Funding/Demographics
- X. Review
- XI. Authorize, and Submit

¹ Previous competitive funding history for the same project, even if more than five years ago, may still affect some application requirements; see *RFP* for more details, or contact RFP Manager at servewisconsin@wisconsin.gov.

- **Applicant Information**

Enter or update the requested information in the fields that appear. The contact person needs to be the person who can answer questions about the application.

Information entered in the Applicant Info, Application Info, and Budget sections will populate the SF 424 Facesheet.

- **Application Information**

In the Application Info Section enter:

- Areas affected by your proposed program. Please include the city and/or county name for each service site location, separated with a comma. Include the two-letter capitalized state abbreviation (WI). If there is not enough space to list all cities/counties, note the number of cities/counties, the two-letter capitalized state abbreviation (WI), and ensure to list all service locations in your grant narrative.
- Requested project period start and end dates.
 - Projects start on August 15, 2024 or September 1, 2024
 - Projects complete on August 14, 2025 or August 31, 2025.
- The Application is Subject to Review by State Executive Order 12372 Process: This is pre-filled as “No, this is not applicable.”
- Indicate Yes or No if you are delinquent on any federal debt. If yes, provide an explanation.
- State Application Identifier: Enter N/A.

- **Narratives**

The narrative section of the application is your opportunity to convince reviewers that your project meets the selection criteria as outlined in this Request for Proposals. It is strongly recommended that you create your narrative in a word processing document prior to entering into eGrants. Below are some general recommendations to help you present your project in a way the reviewers will find compelling and persuasive.

- **Lead from your program strengths and be explicit.** Do not make the mistake of trying to stretch your proposed program description to fit funding priorities and special considerations articulated in the regulations or *RFP*.
- **Be clear and succinct.** Do not use jargon, boilerplate, rhetoric, or exaggeration. Describe clearly what you intend to do and how your project responds to the selection criteria.
- **Avoid circular reasoning.** The problem you describe should not be defined as the lack of the solution you are proposing.
- **Explain how.** Avoid simply stating that the criteria will be met. Explicitly describe how the proposed project will meet the criteria.
- **Don't make assumptions.** Even if you have received funding from AmeriCorps in the past, do not assume your reviewers know anything about you, your proposed program, your partners, or your beneficiaries. Avoid overuse of acronyms.
- **Use an impartial proofreader.** Before you submit your application, let someone who is completely unfamiliar with your project read and critique the project narrative, including using the Peer Review Form (Appendix 9).
- **Follow the instructions and discuss each criterion in the order they are presented in the instructions.** Include the section headings in all capital letters to differentiate narrative sections by criterion.

Table 6. Application Section Point Values

Categories/Subcategories	Percentage
Executive Summary	0
Program Design	50
Community and Logic Model	24
Evidence Tier	12
Evidence Quality	8
Notice Priority	0
Member Experience	6
Organizational Capability	25
Organizational Background and Staffing	13
Member Supervision	8
Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility	4
Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy	25
Member Recruitment	7
Member Retention	8
Data Collection	7
Budget Alignment to Program Design	3

Narrative Sections and Selection Criteria

a) Executive Summary (0 points)

Please fill in the blanks of these sentences to complete the Executive Summary. **Do not deviate** from this template.

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

* The AmeriCorps investment of \$[amount of request] will be matched with \$[amount of projected match]**, \$[amount of local, state, and federal matching funds] in public funding and \$[amount of non-governmental matching funds] in private funding.

**If the program is not operating in an AmeriCorps focus area, omit this sentence.*

*** Fixed Amount grant applicants (EAP, Full-Cost Fixed Amount, No Cost Slots, and Professional Corps Fixed) should list your Other Revenue (see page 35 of this RFP for instructions) because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still raise significant additional resources to operate the program.*

b) Program Design (50% of total points)

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application’s response to the criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value. For scoring criteria, see the [Proposal Selection and Award Process section](#). Please ensure the Community and Logic Model incorporates the funding priorities listed above—for example supporting communities historically excluded and/or underserved from government services, addressing structural and institutional inequities, or increasing opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities.

(1) Community and Logic Model (24 points)

Provide a detailed summary of the community problem, including:

- The role that current or historical inequities faced by underserved communities may play in contributing to the problem
- The community need as it relates to the CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index, in order to communicate the severity and prevalence of the community problem

The Logic Model chart will demonstrate that the intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the organization’s logic model; this information is no longer part of this narrative section (see [Logic Model section](#) for instructions).

(2) Evidence Base (20 points)

The assessment of your evidence base has two parts:

- You will be assigned to an evidence tier is appropriate for your program. Definitions and requirements for each tier are below. The four evidence tiers are:
 - Pre-preliminary
 - Preliminary
 - Moderate
 - Strong
- The quality of the evidence you provide and the degree to which it supports the proposed program design will be assessed and scored, including program alignment with the priority areas above.

(a) Evidence Tier (12 Points)

An evidence tier will be assessed for the purpose of understanding the relative strength of your evidence base and the likelihood that the proposed intervention will lead to outcomes identified in the Logic Model.

Evidence Tiers

Pre-preliminary evidence means the you have not submitted an outcome or impact evaluation of the same intervention described in the application, although you may have collected some performance data on the intervention (e.g., data on intervention outputs and/or outcomes). In this tier, you must describe in the Evidence Base section of the application how your program design is evidence-informed (see definition above). You may also cite prior performance measure data, if applicable.

Preliminary evidence means you have submitted up to two outcome evaluation reports (non-experimental) that evaluated the same intervention described in your application and yielded positive results on one or more key desired outcomes of interest in your logic model. The outcome evaluations may either have been conducted internally by your organization or by an external entity. The study design must include pre- and post-assessments without a statistically matched comparison group or a post-assessment comparison between intervention and comparison groups. In some cases, a retrospective pre-post assessment may be considered, but its use must be justified in the text of the evaluation report.

If you are a current AmeriCorps grantee and are recompeting for your third competitive grant cycle, you are required to submit an evaluation report of your AmeriCorps funded program. The AmeriCorps-required evaluation report may count towards one of the two reports allowed for the

Preliminary evidence tier or may be submitted in addition to this. In the latter case, all three evaluation reports will be considered against the selection criteria.

If you are not required to submit an evaluation report of your AmeriCorps funded program, then more than two reports will not be considered.

Moderate evidence means you have submitted up to two well-designed and well-implemented evaluation reports that evaluated the same intervention described in your application and identified evidence of effectiveness on one or more key desired outcomes in your logic model. Evidence of effectiveness (or positive findings) is determined using experimental design evaluations (i.e., Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT)) or Quasi-Experimental Design evaluations (QED) with statistically matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups. The ability to generalize the findings from the RCT or QED beyond the study context may be limited (e.g., single site). The evaluations were conducted by an independent entity that is external to the organization implementing the intervention.

If you are a current AmeriCorps grantee and are recompeting for your third competitive grant cycle, you are required to submit an evaluation report of your AmeriCorps funded program. The AmeriCorps-required evaluation report may count towards one of the two reports allowed for the Moderate evidence tier or may be submitted in addition to this. In the latter case, all three evaluation reports will be considered against the selection criteria.

If you are not required to submit an evaluation report of your AmeriCorps funded program, then more than two reports will not be considered.

Strong evidence means you have submitted up to two evaluation reports demonstrating that the same intervention described in your application has been tested nationally, regionally, or at the state-level (e.g., multi-site) using a well-designed and well-implemented experimental design evaluation (i.e., Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)) or a Quasi-Experimental Design evaluation (QED) with statistically matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups. Alternatively, the proposed intervention's evidence may be based on multiple (up to two) well-designed and well-implemented QEDs or RCTs of the same intervention described in your application in different locations or with different populations within a local geographic area. The overall pattern of evaluation findings must be consistently positive on one or more key desired outcomes of interest in your logic model. Findings from the RCT or QED evaluations may be generalized beyond the study context. The evaluations were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.

In 2023, the evidence tiers of successful AmeriCorps State and National applicants that were competing were as follows: Strong 25 percent, Moderate 12 percent, Preliminary 20 percent, and Pre-Preliminary 43 percent. As these figures indicate, AmeriCorps values and funds programs at all points along the evidence continuum and expects programs to progress along the evidence continuum over time. Thus, you should not be deterred from applying for funding due to your current evidence level.

If you have outcome or impact evaluation reports of the same intervention described in your application and Logic Model (use the Glossary (Appendix 8) for a definition of "same intervention"), you may submit up to two of those reports, plus (if applicable) the evaluation

report from your last three-year grant cycle, to qualify for the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tier. In order to qualify for consideration, the intervention evaluated in the submitted report(s) must match the intervention proposed by you in the following areas, all of which must be clearly described in the Community and Logic Model sections of the application:

- Characteristics of the beneficiary population, including evidence of current or historic inequities facing the population
- Characteristics of the population delivering the intervention
- Dosage (frequency and duration) and design of the intervention, including all key components and activities
- The context in which the intervention is delivered, and
- Outcome of the intervention

Submitted reports that do not sufficiently match the intervention proposed by you in all of these areas will not be considered applicable and will not be reviewed or receive any points. If you submit additional documents that are not consistent with the guidance and requirements described in this *RFP* (such as advocacy pieces, policy briefs, other narratives that are not research studies or program evaluations), they will not be reviewed.

In the Evidence Tier of the application narrative, you must:

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

If you submit evaluation reports for consideration, you must also describe in the Evidence Base section of the application narrative how the intervention described in the submitted reports is the same as the intervention described in your application (use the Glossary's definition of "same intervention").

You must provide citations for the studies you describe, if applicable; however, reviewers will not review any links or cited documents referenced in the application and will not review any additional document that is not a study submitted in accordance with the instructions in this Request for Proposals.

Your program must meet all requirements of an evidence tier in order to be considered for that tier. If the evaluation reports you submit do not meet the definitions, you may be considered for a lower evidence tier.

(b) Evidence Quality (8 points)

After the application's evidence tier has been assessed, the quality of the applicant's evidence and the extent to which it supports the proposed program will be assessed and scored.

For applicants who are assessed as being in the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tiers, reviewers will score the submitted evaluation reports using the following standards:

- The submitted reports are of satisfactory methodological quality and rigor for the type of evaluation conducted (e.g., adequate sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, appropriate use of control or comparison groups, etc.)
- The submitted reports describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years
- The submitted reports show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries and/or AmeriCorps members in at least one key outcome of interest.

For applicants who are assessed as being in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier, reviewers will score the narrative provided in the Evidence Base section of the application using the following standards:

- You use relevant evidence, including past performance measure data and/or cited research studies, to inform your proposed program design
- The described evidence is relatively recent, preferably from the last six years
- The evidence described by the applicant indicates a meaningful positive effect on program beneficiaries and/or AmeriCorps members in at least one key outcome of interest.

Applicants assessed in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier who do not provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality standards will not meet the threshold requirements for this *RFP* and will not be considered for funding.

Funding Priority (0 points) Please identify if your program fits within one or more of the AmeriCorps [funding priorities](#) and meets all of the [funding requirements](#).

Your application does not need to fit a Notice Priority. If your application does not fit a priority, please state so.

(3) Member Experience (6 points)

In the narrative, please address how:

- AmeriCorps members' service will provide them opportunities to develop as leaders.
- AmeriCorps members will gain skills as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed.
- AmeriCorps members receive additional benefits.
- AmeriCorps members will be provided a high quality orientation to the community they will serve in that is from an asset based frame and guided and informed by the community.

The following language is required for all New/Recompete applicants for flexibility of service:

"Incidental Service: AmeriCorps members may be provided the opportunity for occasional service outside the focus of this program in order to better understand and benefit their community and to participate in National Days of Service. These hours may be counted towards the member's term of service if they do not interfere with their normal service hours or conflict with prohibited

activities, the service is approved by the member’s supervisor [and/or] program director, and the supervisor of the service activity signs an agreement certifying the service and hours performed.”

The following language is not required, but Serve Wisconsin does recommend it for flexibility of service:

“Disaster Response: AmeriCorps programs and members may participate in disaster relief. There is no cap on the amount of time programs and members may spend on disaster relief efforts during the program year; however, programs will not engage in disaster relief on such a long-term basis that the program focus significantly changes. Hours served by members responding to disaster will count toward their AmeriCorps term of service, as long as they are pre-approved by the Program Director. Disaster response on-site supervisors will track and verify AmeriCorps members’ activities and hours.”

c) Organizational Capability (25% of total points)

This section should explain how your organization is qualified to operate the proposed programs. Reviewers will consider the quality of the application’s response to the following criteria. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

(1) Organizational Background and Staffing (15 points)

Explain the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing, providing oversight, and monitoring the program.

Explain if your organization facilitated, partnered, or participated in educational or workforce development programs (i.e., pre-apprenticeship/registered apprenticeship, work experience and job training programs, etc.)

Describes how your organization’s mission and relevant experience in areas such as volunteer recruitment and management, community outreach, overcoming project implementation challenges, etc.

(2) Member Supervision (6 points)

Demonstrate how AmeriCorps members will receive sufficient guidance and support from their supervisor to provide effective service, such as a structure for member supervision, cadence and format of supervisor/AmeriCorps member check-ins, member and supervisor opportunities to assess strengths and opportunities for growth, member training plan, etc.).

Explain how AmeriCorps members’ supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations, such as a structure for support of supervisors, training plan for supervisors related to supervision and AmeriCorps rules and regulations, cadence and format of AmeriCorps supervisors/their supervisors check ins, opportunities to assess strengthens and opportunities for growth of supervisors, etc.

(3) Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (4 points)

Demonstrate if the leadership and staff at your organization have the same lived experience as the beneficiary population and/or community being served.

Explain if your organization has definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility that demonstrate the organization is engaged in relation to diversity, equity, and inclusion (i.e., inclusion of diversity on the Board of Directors, agency staff and leadership, and/or volunteers).

d) Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (25% of total points – 25 points)

This section includes two parts:

- responding to the four scoring criteria in the narrative and
- completing the budget.

Please follow the information in the Budget Instructions Appendix available at the [Serve Wisconsin RFP webpage](#).

(1) Member Recruitment (7 points)

Provide a description of budget expenses to support successful recruitment of AmeriCorps members best suited to serve the community, for example from geographic or demographic communities in which the program operates.

(2) Member Retention (8 points)

Provide a description of budget expenses to support retention of AmeriCorps members (e.g., additional member benefits such as increasing above the minimum living allowance, supporting workforce pathways, certifications, coaching for members, resume building, individual benefit as well as community building, network building, member recognition, alumni programming, etc.).

(3) Data Collection (7 points)

Provide a description of budget expenses to support data collection, continuous improvement activities, and evaluation in service to evaluating the interventions and impact on the community and the member experience).

(4) Budget Alignment to Program Design (3 points)

Explain how your budget is aligned to the program design outlined in the narrative, meaning activities discussed in the narrative are incorporated in the budget in the agency or applicant share.

e) Evaluation Plan (Required for recompeting grantees – 0 points)

If the applicant has previously received three or more years of competitive funding for the same project being proposed (use the Glossary (Appendix 8) for the AmeriCorps definition of “same project”), the applicant must submit an evaluation plan as an attachment.

If the applicant has previously received six or more years of competitive funding for the same project being proposed, the applicant must submit both an evaluation plan and an evaluation report as attachments.

You must submit the Evaluation Plan in Word based by following the template in Attachment 5. The template document provides detailed information about the AmeriCorps evaluation requirements ([45CFR 2522.700-710](#)) and specifies the information that must be provided for the evaluation plan to be approved by AmeriCorps. The evaluation plan will not be scored and will not be reviewed until after funding decisions have been made by AmeriCorps.

All applicants should enter “N/A” in the “Evaluation Summary or Plan” field of the Narrative.

f) Amendment Justification (0 points)

Enter N/A. This field will be used if the applicant is awarded a grant and needs to amend it.

g) Clarification Information (0 points)

Enter N/A

h) Continuation Changes (0 points)

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter changes in the application narratives in continuation requests.

i) Logic Model

(24 points in combination with [Community Problem section](#))

Depict in the Logic Model:

- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including but not limited to:
 - Locations or sites in which members will provide services
 - Context in which the intervention is delivered (e.g., the setting where the intervention is delivered)
 - Number of AmeriCorps members who will deliver the intervention
 - Characteristics of AmeriCorps members, including specific knowledge, skills, and abilities required to implement the intervention
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
 - Duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention)
 - Dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
 - Target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level)

- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e., number of beneficiaries served, types and number of activities conducted, equity gaps closed). If applicable, identify which [National Performance Measures](#) will be used as output indicators.
- Outcomes that demonstrate meaningful changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

The logic model is a visual representation of the applicant’s Theory of Change. Programs should include short, medium, and long-term outcomes in the logic model. You are not required to measure all components of your logic model. The applicant’s performance measures should be consistent with the program’s logic model and should represent significant program activities.

Rationales and justifications should be informed by the organization’s performance data (e.g., program data observed over time that suggests targets are reasonable), relevant research (e.g. targets documented by organizations running similar programs with similar populations), or prior program evaluation findings.

If your program has multiple interventions, complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each intervention in multiple rows. Logic Model content that exceeds eight pages will not be reviewed.

To begin entering your logic model, from your eGrants application page select “Logic Model” in the left side navigation menu.

In the first blank row of the logic model, click “edit.” Clicking this link will open a pop-up screen with fields for each column of the logic model. Complete any fields that are applicable; there are no required fields in this screen. When you are finished click “save and close.”

You may add an unlimited number of rows to the logic model by clicking “add a new row”; however, your logic model may not exceed eight pages as it prints from eGrants. Reviewers will not consider any information that is over the page limit, even if eGrants allows you to submit it.

You may edit or delete an existing row by clicking “edit” or “delete” in the last column of the logic model. As you enter your logic model, each field is limited to around 4,000 characters, so to make use of the full eight pages, you will need to add more than one row.

j) Performance Measures (0 points)

All applicants must submit performance measures with their application. See Performance Measure eGrants Module Instructions and Checklist (Appendix A) for instructions for entering performance measures in eGrants, and see the [AmeriCorps National Performance Measures 2024-25](#) for details about the number and type of performance measures required.

k) Program Information

In the Program Information Section, you must check the relevant boxes in order to be considered for AmeriCorps’ assessment of the strategic considerations and Special Initiatives. You should only check the boxes for those characteristics that represent a significant part of the program.

AmeriCorps Funding Priorities. Check any priority area(s) that apply to the proposed program. Only select priorities that represent a significant part of the program focus, high quality program design, and outcomes. If your program design does not propose to meet any of these funding priorities, do not check them. It is not a requirement to fit into them.

Grant Characteristics. Check any grant characteristics that are a significant part of the proposed program.

I) Additional Documents

In addition to the application submitted in eGrants, you are required to submit the requested required additional documents to ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov. After you have submitted the documents, change the status in eGrants from the default “Not Sent” to the applicable status “Sent,” “Not Applicable,” or “Already on File at AmeriCorps.”

For each document you submit, please clearly title each individually and include a header or title within the document itself that includes the legal applicant’s name on each document. Do not combine additional documents into one large document.

Additional documents should be submitted via email. Submit all additional required documents as individual attachments via a single email message to ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov with the subject line: 2024-2025 AmeriCorps Proposal – [Organization Name] [AmeriCorps Program Name]. If an alternate submission method is required, please contact ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov by September 29, 2023.

All additional documents must be **received** by Serve Wisconsin by the deadline of October 10, 2023 at 4:30pm CT. Timely submission of emailed document packets will be determined by the date and time the email was received by Serve Wisconsin. If additional information and/or clarifications are needed, it is the applicant’s responsibility to reply in a timely manner. Occasionally, emails with many attachments can take significant time to send and receive. Please take this into consideration when sending and submit in enough time for Serve Wisconsin to receive by the 4:30pm CT deadline.

Table 7. Additional Document Requirements

Document	Description	Required for New and/or Recompete	Required for Continuation
Audit	Most recent audit for your organization, or other financial statements if you have not had an audit. If a management letter was provided as part of your audit, it must be included with the audit you submit. <i>Wisconsin state agencies and universities do not need to provide the State audit.</i>	Yes	Yes

Evaluation Report	If an evaluation report is required, you must submit a copy at the time of application, even if you think AmeriCorps may already have it on file.	Recompete only	No
Evaluation briefs, reports, or studies	Applicants who have evaluation reports of the same intervention described in the application may submit up to 2 of those reports to qualify for the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tier. See Evidence Base section for more information.	If applicable	If applicable
Labor Union Concurrence	<p>If a program applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposes to serve as the placement site for AmeriCorps members; and Has employees engaged in the same or substantially similar work as that proposed to be carried out by AmeriCorps members; and Those employees are represented by a local labor organization, then the application must include the written concurrence of the local labor organization representing those employees. <p>If a program applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposes to place AmeriCorps members at service sites where they will be engaged in the same or substantially similar work as employees 	If applicable	If applicable

	<p>represented by a local labor organization, then the applicant must submit a written description of how it will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AmeriCorps members won't be placed in positions that were recently occupied by paid staff. • No AmeriCorps member will be placed into a position for which a recently resigned or discharged employee has recall rights as a result of a collective bargaining agreement, from which a recently resigned or discharged employee was removed as a result of a reduction in force, or from which a recently resigned/discharged employee is on leave or strike. 		
<p>Federally approved Indirect Cost Agreement</p>	<p>If you include a federally approved indirect cost rate amount in your budget, you must enter the current approved indirect cost rate agreement in eGrants at the same time you submit your application. To enter the current approved indirect cost rate agreement, follow the eGrants Indirect Cost Rate User Instructions.</p>	<p>If applicable</p>	<p>If applicable</p>

Delinquent Federal Debt	Any applicant that checks Yes to the question on federal debt delinquency must submit a complete explanation in Word or PDF format.	If applicable	If applicable
Organizational Chart	Submit this with the rest of your additional documents. Ensure that proposed program staff and AmeriCorps members are represented in the Chart	Yes	Yes
IRS Determination Letter	Letter reflecting approval or denial of tax-exempt status; Include any amendments	If applicable	If applicable
Cost Allocation Plan	Submit this with the rest of your additional documents, unless you are using the CNCS-Fixed Percentage Method (Five/Ten Percent Fixed Administrative Costs) option for administrative/indirect costs.	If applicable	If applicable
Permission to Use Federal Funds as Match	If using other federal funds for match, submit a copy of a letter or email from the other federal entity showing that those federal funds are permitted to be used as match on an AmeriCorps grant	If applicable	If applicable
Alignment with Wisconsin State Service Plan	This is Attachment E. Submit this with the rest of your additional documents.	Yes	Yes
Financial Management Surveys (FMS)	New and Recompete applicants must submit both versions of the FMS and any associated additional documents as required. The FMS are named: 1) AmeriCorps Operational and Financial Management Survey (Attachment C) and	Yes	No

	2) Serve Wisconsin Financial Management Survey (Attachment D). <i>Continuation applicants are not required to submit either survey.</i>		
Priority Specific Documents	Rural Intermediaries must provide letters of support from the consortium members.	If applicable	If applicable
Additional Checklists	There are two separate checklists: Additional Document Checklist (Attachment A) and the Budget Checklist (Attachment B). These should be submitted but failure to include them will not disqualify your application.	Yes	Yes

m) Funding/Demographics Section

Other Revenue Funds. Enter the amount of funds that your program will use to run the program beyond amounts that are identified on the application budget as AmeriCorps share or grantee share (match).

- Note: Programs **should not** enter the total operating budget for your organization unless the entire operating budget supports the AmeriCorps program.
- Programs that have additional revenue sources beyond amounts that are included in the grantee share column of the budget should provide the amount of this additional revenue that supports the program. **This amount should not include the AmeriCorps (CNCS) or Grantee Share amounts in the budget.**
- Fixed amount grantees should enter all non-AmeriCorps funds that support the program in this field. All fixed grants will have other revenue.

Number of Volunteers Generated by AmeriCorps Members. Please enter the number of volunteers participating in one day service projects or ongoing volunteer commitments that the proposed AmeriCorps members will generate, if relevant to your program design.

n) Review, Authorize, and Submit

You must submit common federal government-wide Representations and Certifications through [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).

eGrants also requires that you review and verify your entire application before submitting, by completing the following sections in eGrants:

- Review
- Authorize
- Assurances
- Certifications
- Verify, and
- Submit

Read the Authorization, [Assurances](#), and [Certifications](#) carefully.

The person who authorizes the application must be the applicant's Authorized Representative or their designee and must have an active eGrants account to sign these documents electronically. An Authorized Representative is the person in your organization authorized to accept and commit funds on behalf of the organization. **A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.**

Be sure to check your entire application prior to submission to ensure that there are no errors. When you verify the application eGrants will also generate a list of errors if there are sections that need to be corrected prior to submission.

If someone else is acting in the role of the applicant's Authorized Representative, that person must log into their eGrants account and proceed with Authorize and Submit. After signing off on the Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications, their name will override any previous signatory that may appear and show on the application as the Authorized Representative.

Note: Anyone within your organization who will be entering information in the application at any point during application preparation and submission in the eGrants system must have their own eGrants account. Individuals may establish an eGrants account by clicking [here](#) and selecting "Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account."

Please direct all questions about these application instructions and attachments in writing to the RFP Manager at ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov.

B. Continuation Applications

The following instructions for submitting a continuation request apply only to programs that are currently in your first or second year of operation within a grant cycle.

If your program is currently in the final year of its grant cycle, you must apply using the application instructions for recompeting programs.

In addition, if you are in year two or three of a cost reimbursement grant cycle, you must submit a “new” application to participate as a fixed amount grant; you cannot continue your existing project and switch from cost reimbursement to fixed amount. AmeriCorps reserves the right to consider your continuation request if your fixed amount application is not funded

Organizations that have current AmeriCorps State and National awards that will be in program Year 2 or Year 3 in FY 2024 are considered continuation applicants. Continuation applicants must submit an application in order to be eligible to receive funding for the 2024 program year.

Requests by continuation applicants for increases in the level of funding or number of positions will be assessed using the [selection criteria](#).

Continuation application selection will also be based on progress reports, the federal financial report, evaluation plans, and AmeriCorps staff’s knowledge of the grant program. To be approved for continuation funding, recipients must demonstrate satisfactory performance with respect to key program goals and requirements, as well as compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant.

AmeriCorps reserves the right to award applications in an amount less than the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so doing.

How to Submit Your Continuation Application

1. Start on the eGrants homepage in the “Creating an Application” section
 - If you are recompeting (in the final year of a competitive funding cycle and applying for a new grant cycle), select Continuation/Renewal
 - If you are not a current grantee, but have received a competitive AmeriCorps grant in the past five years, select Continuation/Renewal
 - If you are applying for the first time, have only received formula funding in the past, or are a former grantee (non-formula) whose last AmeriCorps grant was received more than five years ago, select New, and then refer to the [New and Recompete Applicants section](#).
2. After selecting **Continuation/Renewal**, you will be shown a list of grants that are eligible to be continued. Select the grant you wish to continue.
 - Make sure you select the correct one.
 - Do not start a new application.
3. Select a NOFA
 - Select: FY 2024 AmeriCorps State and Territory Commission (New and Cont)
 - Serve Wisconsin’s Cost Reimbursement Prime Grant number will be updated when available; Application ID number will be updated when available.

- Serve Wisconsin’s Fixed Cost Prime Grant number will be updated when available; Application ID number will be updated when available.
 - The system will copy your most recently awarded application.
4. Edit your continuation application as directed in the continuation request instructions below. When you have completed your work, the Authorized Representative will click the **SUBMIT** button.

Be sure to review the entire *RFP* when preparing your request. If you have questions about the content of your continuation request, please contact the RFP Manager at ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov.

1. Applicant Information and Application Information

Update the Applicant Info and Application Info Sections in eGrants, if necessary.

If you make any changes in these sections, add a short description of those changes in the “Continuation Changes” narrative field.

2. Narrative

Do not modify the original narrative fields that were copied from your previous application, including:

- Rationale and Approach/Program Design
- Organizational Capability
- Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy
- Evaluation Summary or Plan
- Amendment Justification and
- Clarification Information.

Serve Wisconsin and AmeriCorps expect that programs will maintain a consistent program design for the duration of the three-year project period; however, Serve Wisconsin and AmeriCorps recognize that, on occasion, some programmatic changes are necessary. As a result, continuation applicants may request the following changes during the continuation process:

- Changes in Operating Sites
- Significant Changes in Program Scope or Design
- Changes to Performance Measures
- Significant Changes to Monitoring Structures or Staffing
- Budget Revisions

Describe the above changes in the **Continuation Changes** narrative field, if any. The page limit for the Continuation Changes field is six pages, as the pages print out from eGrants. The six-page limit for the Continuation Changes narrative field is an aggregate for the full grant cycle (typically two continuation application cycles). If you are applying for a continuation for the third year of funding, add any new continuation changes for the third year above any changes you described for the previous continuation year.

Any continuation applicant not requesting changes that fit within the above categories should enter “N/A” in Continuation Changes. AmeriCorps expects that most continuation applications will not be requesting changes.

Evaluation plans are approved by AmeriCorps when you re-compete for funding. If you wish to make changes to your evaluation plan, do NOT change the text of the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in your continuation application. Instead, send a revised version of the evaluation plan (with the proposed changes in track-changes mode) along with the other required additional documents for your application. Serve Wisconsin and AmeriCorps will notify you if the changes are approved.

3. Logic Model

Continuation applicants should not enter content into these fields.

4. Performance Measures

Your performance measures are copied from your previous year’s application into your continuation request. If you made changes to your program, such as adding or changing grant-funded activities, or requesting additional slots or MSYs, you may need to revise your performance measures.

Continuation applicants whose measures do not align with the [AmeriCorps National Performance Measures 2024-25](#) (Appendix 2) must revise your measures to conform with the 2024 instructions.

To revise performance measures, “View/Edit” the performance measures that copy over from your original application or add new performance measures (see Appendices A and B for instructions).

Describe the performance measures changes in the Continuation Changes narrative field, if any. If you are proposing to significantly increase or decrease output or outcome targets for existing performance measures, provide a justification for this change.

5. Program Information

In the Program Information Section, review and make selections as appropriate. Applicants should only select priorities and characteristics that represent a significant part of the program.

AmeriCorps Funding Priorities. Check any priority area(s) that apply to the proposed program. Only select Priorities that represent a significant part of the program focus, high quality program design, and outcomes. Your program does not have to fit any of the priorities.

Grant Characteristics. Check any grant characteristics that are a significant part of the proposed program.

6. Additional Documents

In addition to the application submitted in eGrants, you are required to submit all additional documents as part of your application. After you have submitted the documents, change the status in eGrants from the default “Not Sent” to the applicable status “Sent,” “Not Applicable,” or “Already on File at AmeriCorps”. Please see Table 7 on page 29 of this *RFP* for a complete list of documents.

7. Budget

Your budget from the previous year's application is copied into your continuation request so you can make the necessary adjustments. Revise your detailed budget for the upcoming year.

Incorporate any required AmeriCorps increases (such as an increase to the member living allowance) into your budget.

Continuation applicants may apply for expansions, but it is not guaranteed. Expansions are increases in dollars, MSY, and/or members. Expansion requests may not exceed the cost/MSY threshold in the Notice.

Serve Wisconsin retains a 2% share of the 5% federal funds available to programs for administrative costs and this needs to be identified within your budget. See Cost Reimbursement Budget Instructions (Appendix 3) or Fixed Cost Budget Instructions (Appendix 5) for more details.

In the Continuation Changes narrative field, provide a detailed descriptions of each budget change.

Fully funded grantees, previously known as multi-year funded grantees, are grantees that received program year two and/or program year three funds in a previous grant year. Fully funded grantees may request up to the dollar and MSY amounts they were granted for the continuation year for which they are applying. Fully funded grantees may not request funds or MSYs in excess of the amounts they were awarded for each year (year two or year three) of your fully funded grants.

AmeriCorps requires grantees to meet an overall matching rate that increases over time. You have the flexibility to meet the overall match requirements in any of the three budget sections, as long as you maintain the minimum match of 24% for the first three years and the increasing minimums in years thereafter. See [45 CFR §2521.35–2521.90](#) for the specific regulations. See Cost Reimbursement Budget Instructions (Appendix 3) for instructions for applying for the Alternative Match Schedule and/or an individual match waiver.

8. Funding/Demographics

Other Revenue funds. Enter the amount of funds that your program uses to run the program that are not CNCS share or match.

Number of Volunteers Generated by AmeriCorps members. Please enter the number of volunteers participating in one-day service projects or ongoing volunteer commitments that the proposed AmeriCorps members will generate.

9. Review, Authorize, and Submit

Applicants must submit common federal government-wide Representations and Certifications through [SAM.gov](#). You will be required to review financial assistance representations and certifications before your annual registration renewal in SAM.gov can be activated. As you renew and re-register your account, the data collected make SAM.gov the federal repository for the government-wide information.

eGrants requires that you review and verify your entire application before submitting, by completing the following sections in eGrants: Review; Authorize; Assurances; Certifications; Verify; and Submit.

Read the Authorization, [Assurances](#), and [Certifications](#) carefully.

The person who authorizes the application must be the applicant's Authorized Representative or their designee and must have an active eGrants account to sign these documents electronically. An Authorized Representative is the person in your organization authorized to accept and commit funds on behalf of the organization. **A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.**

Be sure to check your entire application prior to submission to ensure that there are no errors. When you verify the application eGrants will also generate a list of errors if there are sections that need to be corrected prior to submission.

If someone else is acting in the role of the applicant's Authorized Representative, that person must log into their eGrants account and proceed with Authorize and Submit. After signing off on the Authorization, Assurances, and Certifications, their name will override any previous signatory that may appear and show on the application as the Authorized Representative.

Note: Anyone within your organization who will be entering information in the application at any point during application preparation and submission in the eGrants system must have their own eGrants account. Individuals may establish an eGrants account at the [eGrants website](#) and selecting "Don't have an eGrants account? Create an account."

Please direct all questions about these application instructions and attachments in writing to the RFP Manager at ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov.

D. Late Applications

Submitting an application after the deadline will result in disqualification of the application.

V. Proposal Selection and Award Process

A. Procuring and Contracting Agency

This *Request for Proposals (RFP)* is issued by the Wisconsin National and Community Service Board/Serve Wisconsin, which is the sole point of contact for the State of Wisconsin during the selection process. All contracts resulting from this *RFP* will be administered by Serve Wisconsin.

The Serve Wisconsin application review and selection process is intended to produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and strategic considerations described in this Notice. The determinations made by reviewers may be different from what the applicant self-determined upon submission of its application. This process includes Board, staff, and peer review of application materials and evaluation of prior performance, where applicable.

In accordance with State Statute 16.22(2)(h), Serve Wisconsin must give priority to the greatest extent practicable to persons providing youth corps programs when awarding grants. Youth Corps programs are given priority with two additional points when they are otherwise comparable.

B. Initial Application Compliance and Eligibility Review

Serve Wisconsin will conduct an initial Eligibility Review to determine if an application meets the eligibility requirements as detailed in this *RFP* and advances to the next stage of the review process.

An application is compliant if the applicant:

1. Is an eligible organization
2. Is eligible to submit to Serve Wisconsin
3. Submitted an application by the submission deadline

Reviewing for eligibility is intended to ensure that only those applications that are eligible for award are further reviewed. However, a determination of eligibility can take place at any point during the application review and selection process. Applicants that are determined to be ineligible will not receive an award.

C. Serve Wisconsin Application Review Process

1. External Review

For New and Recompete applications, external peer reviewers with relevant knowledge and expertise to assess will provide input on portions of eligible applications. All External Peer Reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

Note that applications who receive an average peer review score of less than 80 points are generally not considered for funding.

2. Internal Review

Serve Wisconsin will evaluate the applications using the application review criteria.

If your organization is not applying for Continuation Competitive funding and unless eligible for and applying for Continuation Formula funding (see Section 3.6), your organization will be submitting a New or Recompete application. After review for timely submission, the next steps are the concurrent state level peer review process and the Serve Wisconsin staff technical review process. New and recompetite applications are peer reviewed by outside experts including, but not limited to, community service practitioners, educators, administrators, and former national service participants. All reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest. If you are a current AmeriCorps Grantee, do not assume that peer reviewers are familiar with your program.

Serve Wisconsin staff complete a technical review of all sections of the application narrative, logic model, performance measures, and budget. Staff will prepare funding recommendations to the Board based on the results of the staff technical review and state level peer review. Following final Board approval of applications, staff may request technical changes to applications.

Performance Scoring. Performance scoring percentages will be considered by the Board for applications requesting funding to continue existing programs including recompetite and continuation applications. A program's performance is based on the following criteria: enrollment and retention rates; 30-Day compliance with exiting members; meeting performance measure targets; and timeliness of reporting.

Recompetite applications that have a performance scoring percentage less than 80% (inclusive of rounding to two places after the decimal point) will be eliminated from further consideration for Competitive funding, unless the Board decides to waive the 80% requirement based on evidence of a corrective action plan to include benchmarks and associated milestones. The Board could choose to recommend to CNCS that the application be funded based on the corrective action plan. An exception to the 80% minimum shall apply to applicants proposing a new and not previously funded AmeriCorps project, and shall apply for the first three years that the new/not previously funded project is funded. The exception for such new projects shall not preclude use of other criteria to determine appropriateness of funding such new projects.

An exception to the 80% minimum also applies to Continuation Competitive applications (see Section 3.2). As approved by the Board, any Continuation Competitive application that has a performance scoring percentage less than 80% (inclusive of rounding to two places after the decimal point) will be eliminated from further consideration for Competitive funding, unless the Board decides to waive the 80% requirement based on evidence of a corrective action plan to include benchmarks and associated milestones. The Board could choose to recommend to CNCS that the application be funded based on this plan.

For current and recent Serve Wisconsin grantees, past performance will also be considered. Performance criteria may include up to three years of data, if available, including enrollment rate, retention rate, 30-day exit compliance, performance measures results and timely reporting.

Staff will be screened for conflicts of interest.

3. Peer Review

New and recomplete applications are reviewed by a panel of peers. Peer Review Forms, included in this RFP as Appendix 10, are used for the state level peer review process. Note that the peer review format is revised annually to reflect changes in AmeriCorps' Notice of Funding Opportunity related to the program design portion of the application narrative.

Proposals will be scheduled for review by at least 3 peer reviewers, and the reviewers' scores are then averaged for each application. An application must receive an average peer score of 80 or above to be considered by the Board for submission as a New or Recompete Competitive Application. The Board will consider all applications receiving an average score of 80 or above if they also pass the Performance Scoring Evaluation and may recommend any or all for submission as a New or Recompete Competitive Application. An application that receives an average peer review score of fewer than 80 points will be ineligible for further consideration. Reaching the 80 point threshold is inclusive of rounding to two places after the decimal point.

4. Post-Review Quality Control

After the initial review process is complete, Serve Wisconsin staff will review the results for fairness and consistency. Some applications may be selected for a post-review quality control assessment. This additional level of review may be used to ensure fairness and provide assurances that an application was not disadvantaged in the original review.

5. Ranking

Prior to sending New and Recompete applications to the federal level for competitive review, CNCS requires state commissions to rank proposals. The Board must prioritize the proposals based on their relative quality.

The proposed ranking of New and Recompete applications will be provided to the Board as part of their December 2023 meeting. Average application score and fit in Wisconsin's portfolio criteria for all applicants plus performance scoring for existing programs will be considered for ranking of Competitive applications. Performance scoring percentage and fit in Wisconsin's portfolio criteria will be used to break any tie for the number one ranking position. Fit in Wisconsin's portfolio criteria includes, but is not limited to: program location, program focus, cost efficiency, public or private non-profit registered in Wisconsin, and staff capacity.

6. Pre-Award Financial Risk Assessment

Serve Wisconsin staff will evaluate the risks to the applicant's ability to manage federal funds, including grantees' past performance, if any. This evaluation is in addition to the assessment of the applicant's eligibility and the quality of its application on the basis of the selection criteria in the [Proposal Selection and Award Process section](#). Results from this evaluation will inform funding

decisions. If Serve Wisconsin determines that an award will be made to an applicant with assessed risks, additional monitoring activities and training that correspond to the degree of assessed risk may be applied to the award. If Serve Wisconsin concludes that the reasons for an applicant organization having poor risk assessment are not likely to be mitigated, your application may not be selected for funding.

7. Applicant Clarification

Serve Wisconsin may ask an applicant for clarifying information which is used to make funding recommendations. A request for clarification does not guarantee an award. Applicants may be recommended for funding even if they are not asked for clarifying information. An applicant's failure to respond to a request for clarification adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of its application from consideration.

8. Feedback to Applicants

Following the application reviews, you will receive feedback from the External Review and Staff Review of your compliant application. This feedback will be based on the review of your original application and will not reflect any information you provide during clarification.

9. Program Evaluation & Development Committee Meeting

If applicant passes external and internal reviews, the application will be considered at the meeting of the Program Evaluation & Development (PE&D) Committee of the Wisconsin National Community Service Board. Each application needs to have at least one representative present at this meeting to give a brief presentation to Committee members. For existing programs, past performance will be considered as well. More details about this meeting will be available to qualified applicants.

10. Wisconsin National Community Service Board (Board) Meeting

The applications that the PE&D Committee recommends for funding then make their way to the full Board for consideration. Attendance at this meeting is not required for applicants. More details about this meeting will be available to qualified applicants.

D. AmeriCorps/Federal Review

The applications that the Board approves will be submitted to AmeriCorps for federal review. For information on AmeriCorps' review process, please see pages 27-30 of the [AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity](#).

The review and selection process are designed to:

- identify how well eligible applications are aligned with the selection criteria in this *RFP*
- build a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:
 - AmeriCorps Funding Priorities

- meaningful representation of
 - rural communities
 - innovated community strategies
- CEO discretion to advance strategic goals

AmeriCorps will assess an applicant's strategic considerations. You must check the relevant boxes in the Program Information Tab in eGrants in order to be considered for AmeriCorps' assessment of the strategic considerations. You should only check the boxes if the strategic consideration is a significant and intentional part of your program design and if implementation strategies are described in the application.

AmeriCorps reserves the right to prioritize funding existing awards over making new awards. AmeriCorps reserves the right to award applications in an amount other than at the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so.

E. Application Resolution

AmeriCorps may ask an applicant for information after notification of competition results to resolve any issues prior to award. AmeriCorps will ask all grantees for a written compliance implementation plan that includes notification of waste, fraud, and abuse to the agency's OIG. An applicant's failure to respond adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of its application from the award process.

F. Transparency in Grantmaking

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

Submitted program narratives, executive summaries, a blank template of the external review worksheet, a list of all external reviewers who completed the review process, and a summary of external reviewer comments for successful applications will be available upon request via email to AmeriCorpsOGA@cns.gov.

Information about funded grants and subgrants is also available in [USASpending.gov](#).

G. Appeal of Grant Decision

You can only protest or appeal violation of procedures to the Board that are outlined in this RFP or fall within the grant selection process. Ranking and scoring by the peer reviewers is not subject to protest or appeal.

Notice of intent to protest and any protests must be made in writing. Individuals should make their protests as specific as possible and should fully identify the procedural issue being contested. Any written notice of intent to protest must be filed with the Board and received in no later than five (5) working days after the notices of intent to award are issued. Any written protest must be received within ten (10) working days after the notice of intent to award is issued.

Notice of intent to protest and any protests must be made in writing via email to: The Board Chair, Wisconsin National & Community Service Board: ServeWisconsin@wisconsin.gov. The appeal will be reviewed by the Program Evaluation & Development Committee of the Board and a recommendation will be forwarded to the Board for consideration. The decision of the Board may be appealed to the Secretary of the Department of Administration within five (5) working days of issuance. A copy of such appeal must also be filed with Board. The appeal must allege a violation of a Wisconsin statute or a section of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Federal Award Notices

AmeriCorps will make awards following the grant selection announcement. AmeriCorps anticipates announcing the results of this funding opportunity by mid-April 2024, contingent on the availability of congressional appropriations. All applicants, successful or not, will be notified of funding decisions via email.

Notification of an award is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The Notice of Grant Award is the authorizing document for grant activities. An awardee may not expend federal funds until the start of the Project Period identified on the Notice of Grant Award unless it has received a written pre-award cost approval from Serve Wisconsin.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Uniform Guidance

All awards under the criteria in this *RFP* are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), in [2 CFR §200](#) and [§2205](#).

2. Requests for Monitoring Payment Integrity Information

AmeriCorps may request documentation from recipients in order to monitor the award or to comply with other legal requirements, such as the [Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019](#). Failure to make timely responses to these requests may result in award funds being placed on manual hold, reimbursement only status, or other remedies may be applied as appropriate.

3. AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions

All awards made under the criteria in this *RFP* will be subject to the FY2024 AmeriCorps General Terms and Conditions, and the FY2024 AmeriCorps State & National Program Specific Terms and Conditions. These Terms and Conditions contain detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the AmeriCorps General and Program Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available on the [AmeriCorps Manage Your Grant](#) webpage.

4. National Service Criminal History Check Requirements

The National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) is a specific screening procedure established by law to protect the beneficiaries of national service. We encourage grantees to minimize barriers to service without putting your program beneficiaries at genuine risk. The law requires grantees to conduct and document NSCHCs on persons (including award-funded staff, national service participants, or volunteers) receiving a salary, living allowance, stipend or education award through a program receiving AmeriCorps funds (limited exceptions are described in 45 CFR §2540.201). This includes staff who receive part of their salary through a subgrant.

An individual is ineligible to serve in a position that receives such AmeriCorps funding if the individual is registered, or required to be registered, as a sex offender or has been convicted of murder. The cost of conducting NSCHCs is an allowable expense under the award. Grantees must utilize the two vendors AmeriCorps has engaged to conduct the required NSCHCs.

See the NSCHC Regulations and Guidance and information on the two approved NSCHC vendors on the [AmeriCorps NSCHC](#) webpage.

Failure to conduct a NSCHC may result in significant disallowed costs, including repaying grant funds back to AmeriCorps.

A NSCHC consists of a check of the:

- National Sex Offender Public website (through Truescreen);
- State criminal history record repository or agency-designated alternative for the individual's State of residence AND State of service (both through Truescreen); and
- Fingerprint-based check of the FBI criminal history record database (through Fieldprint)

All checks must be conducted, reviewed, and an eligibility determination made one day or more before the individual begins work or service.

An individual is **not eligible** to serve or work in a position subject to the NSCHC requirements if the individual:

- Refuses to consent to a criminal history check;
- Makes a false statement in connection with a criminal history check;
- Is registered, or is required to be registered, on a state sex offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry; or

- Has been convicted of murder.

See [45 CFR §2540.200 through §2540.207](#) and the AmeriCorps [National Service Criminal History Check webpage](#) for complete information and FAQs.

5. Official Guidance

All AmeriCorps active Guidance is available on the [agency's Guidance webpage](#). The contents of these documents do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way unless incorporated into a contract or grant agreement. These documents are intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

6. Use of Material

To ensure that materials generated with AmeriCorps funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, AmeriCorps reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so ([2 CFR §200.315](#)).

7. Re-Focusing of Funding

AmeriCorps reserves the right to re-focus program dollars for this competition in the event of disaster or other compelling needs.

C. Technical Assistance

Serve Wisconsin intends to provide technical assistance to ensure that strong proposals are developed. The following policies will be followed as a fair process for the provision of technical assistance:

- Technical Assistance will be equally available to all prospective applicants.
- Staff will only respond to applicants who have reviewed the Request for Proposals and available written materials and have a specific question to be answered. For fairness and transparency, questions may only be submitted via email to ServeWisconsin@wisconsin.gov.
- Staff will only provide answers to specific questions and make general comments regarding the Regulations and RFP, as opposed to providing specific suggestions for a particular applicant.
- Staff will not review proposal drafts.
- In compliance with federal regulations regarding conflict of interest, WNCS Board members will not provide any form of technical assistance to a potential grant applicant. Instead, they will refer you to the RFP Manager.

- Serve Wisconsin will provide you with technical assistance on entering and submitting proposals in AmeriCorps' web-based grants management system and will provide guidance on how to access assistance from the [AmeriCorps Hotline](#).

D. Reporting

Recipients are required to submit a variety of reports that are due at specific times during the life cycle of an award. All reports must be accurate, complete, and submitted on time.

Cost reimbursement grantees are required to provide annual progress reports and semi-annual financial reports through eGrants, AmeriCorps' web-based grants management system and an internal or external evaluation report as required by the AmeriCorps regulations [45 CFR §2522.500 - §2522.540](#) and [§2522.700 - §2522.740](#).

Fixed Amount grantees are required to provide annual and final progress reports through eGrants, AmeriCorps' web-based grants management system and an internal or external evaluation report.

In addition, at the end of the award period, a grantee must submit final financial and progress reports that are cumulative over the entire award period and consistent with the closeout requirements. Fixed Amount grantees are exempt from the final financial report requirement.

Once the grant is awarded, recipients will be expected to have in place data collection and data management policies, processes, and practices that provide assurance that they are reporting high quality performance measure data. At a minimum, recipients should have policies, processes, and practices that address the following five aspects of data quality for themselves and for subrecipients (if applicable):

- Data measures what it intends to measure
- Data reported is complete
- Grantee collects data in a consistent manner
- Grantee takes steps to correct data errors
- Grantee actively reviews data for accuracy prior to submission.

Failure to submit accurate, complete, and timely required reports may affect the recipient's ability to secure future AmeriCorps funding.

VII. Notices

These application instructions conform to the Corporation for National and Community Service's online grant application system, [eGrants](#). All funding announcements by the Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps) are posted on [americorps.gov](#) and [grants.gov](#).

Public Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for collection of information under this Notice of Funding is estimated to average 80 hours per submission, including reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing the application and reporting forms. Comments on the burden or content of this instrument may be sent to AmeriCorps, Attn: Arminda Pappas, 250 E Street, SW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20525. AmeriCorps informs people who may respond to this collection of information that they are not required to respond unless the OMB control number and expiration date are current and valid. (See [5 CFR §1320.5\(b\)\(2\)\(i\)](#).)

Privacy Act Notice: The Privacy Act of 1974 ([5 USC §552a](#)) requires that we notify you that the information requested on the AmeriCorps Application is collected pursuant to [42 USC §12581-12585](#) of the [National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended](#), and [42 USC §4953](#) of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 as amended.

Purposes and Uses - The information requested is collected for the purposes of reviewing grant applications and granting funding requests. Routine uses may include disclosure of the information to federal, state, or local agencies pursuant to lawfully authorized requests. In some programs, the information may also be provided to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to determine the existence of any prior criminal convictions. The information may also be provided to appropriate federal agencies and contractors that have a need to know the information for the purpose of assisting the government to respond to a suspected or confirmed breach of the security or confidentiality or information maintained in this system of records, and the information disclosed is relevant and unnecessary for the assistance. Please see the Notice of Funding Opportunity for AmeriCorps' transparency in grantmaking information. The information will not otherwise be disclosed to entities outside of AmeriCorps without prior written permission.

Effects of Nondisclosure - The information requested is mandatory in order to receive benefits.

Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act: Grant recipients will be required to report at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards that equal or exceed \$30,000 and may be required to report on executive compensation for recipients and subrecipients. Recipients must have the necessary systems in place to collect and report this information. See [2 CFR Part 170](#) for more information and to determine how these requirements apply.

Indirect Cost Rates: AmeriCorps allows you to include indirect costs in application budgets. Based on qualifying factors, you have the option of using a federally approved indirect cost rate, a 10% *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs (MTDC) or may claim certain costs directly as outlined in [2 CFR §200.413](#). Applicants who hold a federal negotiated indirect cost rate must use that rate in lieu of the AmeriCorps 5/10% allocation of administrative costs or the 10% *de minimis* rate. All methods must be applied consistently across all federal awards.

Applicants who hold a state or federal negotiated indirect cost rate or will be using the 10% *de minimis* rate must enter that information in the Organization section in eGrants (see Indirect Cost Rate User Instructions/Appendix 6). However, under section 121(d) of the [National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended](#) and AmeriCorps' regulations at [45 CFR 2521.95](#) and [2540.110](#), no more than 5% of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps State grants.

To request a federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement when AmeriCorps is the applicable cognizant agency for an organization's indirect costs, the applicant must submit a request to IndirectCostRate@cns.gov. The applicant may also obtain instructions and additional information by contacting the email address above.

Universal Identifier: You must include a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) in eGrants at the time of submission. You must obtain your UEI and register your entity through the [System for Award Management](#). All grant recipients are required to maintain a valid registration, which must be renewed annually.

The Grantee Administrator role in eGrants is the only user that can add the UEI to eGrants. The UEI is added to the organizational attributes page, and then will automatically populate onto all of the applications that are tied to the organization.

VIII. Appendices and Attachments

The Appendices listed below are for your reference.

The Attachments listed below are to be sent as Additional Documents via email by October 10, 2023 at 4:30pm CT. Please review specific instructions in the [Additional Documents section](#).

A. Appendices are for your reference

- Appendix 1: [Performance Measure eGrants Module Instructions and Checklist](#)
- Appendix 2: [AmeriCorps National Performance Measures 2024-25](#)
- Appendix 3: [Cost Reimbursement Budget Instructions](#)
- Appendix 4: [Cost Reimbursement Budget Worksheet](#)
- Appendix 5: [Fixed Amount Budget Instructions](#)
- Appendix 6: [eGrants Indirect Cost Rate User Instructions](#)
- Appendix 7: [AmeriCorps Mandatory Supplemental Information](#)
- Appendix 8: [Glossary](#)
- Appendix 9: [Serve Wisconsin Formula Funding Process](#)
- Appendix 10: [Peer Reviewer Form](#)

B. Attachments must be submitted (if applicable)

Submit as Additional Documents via email to ServeWisconsin@Wisconsin.gov by October 10, 2023 at 4:30pm CT.

- Attachment A: [Additional Documents Checklist](#)
- Attachment B: [Cost Reimbursement Budget Checklist](#)
- Attachment C: [AmeriCorps Operational and Financial Management Survey](#)
- Attachment D: [Serve Wisconsin Financial Management Survey](#)
- Attachment E: [Alignment with Wisconsin State Service Plan](#)
- Attachment F: [Evaluation Plan Template](#) (*if applicable*)

Additional documents can be found on the [Serve Wisconsin Competitive Program Grant RFP](#) webpage.

IX. Right to Reopen RFP

The Board reserves the right to reopen the RFP if additional funding becomes available, a sufficient number of applications were not received, or it is in the best interest of the Board.