

2026 2027: AmeriCorps Concept Paper and Letter of Intent Guidance

PURPOSE AND PROCESS

The competitive process for 2026 2027 will begin with a Concept Paper and Logic Model submission for new applicants. We define a new applicant as a program that has never received AmeriCorps funding through ServeMinnesota. Programs that have received funding through ServeMinnesota in the past, will submit a Letter of Intent, in lieu of a concept paper, to indicate their intention to submit an application for the competitive process.

ServeMinnesota will review concept paper and logic model submissions and provide feedback. If your program is invited to submit a full application, you will follow the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) which is currently pending release from the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The below dates are subject to change based on the NOFO released.

In past years, applicants have been required to describe the following in their narratives:

- Program design: need, intervention, evidence-base, impact
- Organizational Capability: background, staffing, member supervision
- Costs: member recruitment, member retention, data collection

TIMELINE

October 28, 2025	Concept Paper Guidance released	New
Ongoing	Technical assistance	All
November 14, 2025	Concept paper due, including logic model	New
November 14, 2025	Letter of Intent to Apply due	Recompete
November 21, 2025	Invitation for full application	New
TBD – pending OMB release	Release Full Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)	All
December 12, 2025	Full application deadline to ServeMN in eGrants (plus additional items – see submission checklist)	New and Recompete
Week of Dec 15, 2025	Staff review	New and Recompete
December 24, 2025	Written feedback to applicants	New and Recompete
January 9, 2026	Continuation application due in eGrants	Continuation
January 9, 2026	Revised application to ServeMN in eGrants	New and Recompete
January 2026	Board approval to send applications on to national competition	All
Late January 2026	Applications due to AmeriCorps	All
March 2026	AmeriCorps Clarification/Resolution Period	All
April 2026	AmeriCorps Notification of successful applicants	All
March - May 2026	Formula review Board Approval of formula applications Notification of successful formula applicants	Formula

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Done	Documentation required	Due Date
	New: Concept Paper (narrative and logic model) - email grants@serveminnesota.org	Nov 14, 2025 (5:00pm)
	Recompete: Letter of Intent to Apply - email grants@serveminnesota.org	
	Completed application in eGrants per ServeMinnesota invitation for new applicants	Dec 12, 2025 (5:00pm)
	Completed ServeMinnesota Budget form – email grants@serveminnesota.org	
	Evidence Base Documentation if claiming preliminary, moderate or strong evidence – email grants@serveminnesota.org	
	Recompete: Evaluation Plan using the AmeriCorps form – email to grants@serveminnesota.org	
	Final application in eGrants (all revisions must be complete)	Jan 9, 2026 (5:00pm)
	Evaluation Report (if applicable) – email grants@serveminnesota.org The report must be in MS Word with a title page that includes: AmeriCorps grant ID for the project evaluated, name of the project, and date of completion of the report.	
	A-133 audit or standard financial audit – email grants@serveminnesota.org or mail to ServeMN	
	AmeriCorps Operational and Financial Management Survey – email grants@serveminnesota.org	
	ServeMinnesota Financial Management Survey – email grants@serveminnesota.org	
	Labor Union Concurrence (if applicable) – email grants@serveminnesota.org with title page that includes legal applicant name and application ID	
	Entities Applying on Behalf of a Federally Recongized Tribe (if applicable): Tribal organization eligibility documentation - email grants@serveminnesota.org with title page that includes legal applicant name and application ID	

PROGRAM APPLICATION OVERVIEW

AmeriCorps (formerly The Corporation for National and Community Service)

The Corporation for National and Community Service, now AmeriCorps, was established in 1993 to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service. AmeriCorps is an independent federal agency headquartered in Washington D.C.; has a Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. It is the nation's largest grant maker supporting service and volunteering through AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps Seniors, and the Volunteer Generation Fund. ServeMinnesota is a grantee of AmeriCorps. (For more information visit <https://www.americorps.gov/>)

ServeMinnesota

ServeMinnesota is an independent, non-profit organization charged with administering federal AmeriCorps State grants in Minnesota. ServeMinnesota provides AmeriCorps programs with training and ongoing technical assistance to support the development of high quality AmeriCorps programs.

Minimum Program Size

In order to provide member positions in quantities that make an impact on identified community needs ServeMinnesota highly recommends that applicants request at least 20 Member Service Years (MSYs). One MSY is equivalent to one full-time member.

ServeMinnesota Priorities for Funding

Criteria	Explanation	Indicators
Targeted at solving a critical challenge facing Minnesota	While there are a large number of issues that are identified as “challenges,” we will be most interested in those that have been publicly labeled as threats to Minnesota’s long-term quality of life by state government leaders as well as key civic institutions, especially for marginalized communities. While we will generally view programs and initiatives addressing statewide challenges as more compelling, we will also give consideration to those that are designed to tackle problems faced by a particular region of the state.	Programs utilize persuasive evidence that the identified problem is a critical challenge facing Minnesota. Examples could include state demographer reports, research studies, analysis from respected thought leaders, etc.
Unique, compelling role for AmeriCorps members and other community volunteers	We will expect a proposed program to outline how individuals providing a year or two of service can be particularly effective at addressing the identified challenge and how serving in this program/initiative will create a meaningful experience for AmeriCorps members. We will also want to see how the program will create more high-quality volunteer opportunities for other members of the community.	Programs demonstrate how AmeriCorps service makes a difference. Programs should: Recruit and retain members that reflect the communities being served. Align member activities and program goals Develop and deliver quality professional training for members Build site capacity through improved results and/or value-added supplemental support

		Create meaningful volunteer opportunities that contribute to program goals
Focus on measurable outcomes	Programs seeking an investment of ServeMinnesota resources must be committed to and capable of quantifiably measuring and reporting on the outcomes their program will produce. In particular, we will be most interested in programs that can show a direct connection between the outcomes they generate and the public challenge that needs to be addressed.	Programs create performance measures that: Are consistent with state/federal government and/or research/academic organizations measurement outcomes Document the degree to which implementation mirrors the elements described in its program design. These include, but are not limited, to evidence of transfer of knowledge during training and fidelity of implementation of the program framework across all sites (not site by site variations) Align with the identified challenge the program seeks to address. In cases where relevant outcomes are assumed to be related to one another (i.e., changes in A produce changes in B), a framework should exist to formerly evaluate those associations. Measure specific results that the AmeriCorps program – not the entire organization – is delivering.
Application of evidence-based approaches	We will expect those seeking an investment from us to demonstrate that the efficacy of their model or intervention is supported by documented and independent research. We are particularly interested in programs that directly involve leading experts from the relevant subject area in the design and/or evaluation of the program including experts from the communities being served.	Programs document evidence that they are using “state-of-the-art” or “best” practices in their program design and implementation. Programs should: Evidence-based practices should be culturally relevant to the communities being serve. Point to studies of similar programs that are considered “best” practice Document precise elements of its program that are acknowledged as “best” practice
Broad base of support	We will prioritize programs that will leverage our investment with resources provided by the government, philanthropic, and business sectors. As such, we prefer to invest our resources in programs and initiatives that can demonstrate strong support from policy makers, as well as business/corporate and philanthropic communities.	Programs demonstrate how they have built a large network of support. Programs should: Increase diverse sources of funding Cultivate Interest and recognition from philanthropic and public sector investors, who see and communicate the value

Dedication to Quality	We will expect programs and initiatives seeking our investment to clearly outline how they plan to incorporate quality management practices, such as regularly measuring and reporting on performance, surveying the customers of their service, and engaging in organization-wide learning and improvement strategies.	Programs regularly measure and report on program performance. Program should: Assess internal operations for quality management Assess external outreach and member satisfaction Create feedback loops for service recipients Engage in program learning and improvement strategies Solicit feedback from established experts in the field to guide program implementation and ensure it is consistent with best practices and current research
Return on investment	While we recognize that many “start-up” investments may not generate an immediate positive return, we will expect those seeking such investments to outline how longer-term investments in their program or initiative will produce such a return in the future. We will favor those investment opportunities that are most likely to produce societal benefits and reduce racial inequities, whose value far exceeds the dollars invested.	Programs document their return on investment (ROI) and can: Point to studies of similar programs that have demonstrated ROI Document a quantifiable, societal ROI for specific outcomes Show the actual amount of return for their program that is X times more than the amount of funding
Potential for scale and replication	Programs we consider to invest in may propose to start off small in size or scope; however, we plan to select those that have the potential and willingness to expand substantially in the future so that our investment can have an even greater impact on solving social challenges. This growth can come in the form of the program itself getting larger and/or by other organizations – either in Minnesota or elsewhere – implementing the program in their area.	Programs demonstrate potential for replication and scale. Programs should: Create high quality, easily replicable documentation (training manuals, etc.) Demonstrate breadth of need and/or population served Deliver cost-effective results Develop unique models that are not duplicative of other programs

National Performance Measures

All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure, output and outcome that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. This may be a National Performance Measure or an applicant-determined measure. For more information, refer to the National Performance Measure Instructions.

Period of Performance

AmeriCorps plans to make three-year grant awards. AmeriCorps generally makes an initial award for the first year of the three-year period of performance. Applicants must submit a one-year budget. Applicants may propose any project start date that fits their program design. The period of performance

may not start before August 1, 2026. Continuation awards for future years are not guaranteed; they depend upon future appropriations and satisfactory performance.

Type of Award

AmeriCorps makes available different types of grants. The chart below summarizes these grant types and their distinct characteristics. The most common type of award for new grantees is cost reimbursement.

Please note that these amounts are based on last year's numbers since the FY26 NOFO has not been released yet. The correct numbers for next year will be published with the full NOFO, once released.

Grant Types	Cost Reimbursement	Fixed Amount			
Available Subtypes	Traditional	Full-Cost	Education Award Program, EAP	Professional Corps***	No Cost Slots
Maximum Cost per MSY*	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$800 or \$1,000**	\$1,000	\$0
Type of Slots in the National Service Trust	All slot types	All slot types	All Slot types	FT Only	All slot types
Matching Funds Required	Yes	No			
Budget Submission Required	Yes	No			
Availability of Funds Linked to Enrollment /Retention of Awarded MSYs	No	Yes			No
Special Requirements	N/A	N/A		Must place qualified professionals in communities with an inadequate # of such professionals. Member salaries/benefits must be paid entirely by organization where member serves.	N/A
Financial Reporting Requirements	Yes	No			
Available to New Applicants	Yes	No	Yes		

* Member Service Year (MSY): One MSY is equivalent to a full-time AmeriCorps position, at least 1,700 service hours. Multiple positions at less than full-time can be combined to equal one MSY.

** For the Education Award Program, AmeriCorps may provide a maximum of \$800 per individual enrolled in an approved national service position. If at least 50 percent of a program's enrollees are disadvantaged youth, AmeriCorps may provide \$1,000 per enrollee, 42 U.S.C. § 12581a.

***Use Mandatory Supplemental Information (MSI) for further requirements

Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Reimbursement Grants

Applicants are required to match funds provided by AmeriCorps. The applicant's match can be non-AmeriCorps cash and/or in-kind contributions. Applicants must show that they can meet the match requirement when they submit the application. Applicants must say in their application if they have already secured the match funding. Other federal funds can be used as match with the approval of that agency.

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 three years to 30 percent by year ten.

AmeriCorps Funding Year	Years 1,2, and 3	Years 4,5, and 6	Years 7,8, and 9	Years 10 +
Grantee Share Requirements	24%	26%	28%	30%

Fixed Price Grants

There is no cost share or matching requirement for Fixed Amount grants. AmeriCorps does not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program. Organizations should raise the funds needed to operate the program.

Eligible Applicants

The following non-Federal organizations are eligible to apply:

- Indian Tribes;
- institutions of higher education;
- local governments, including school districts;
- nonprofit organizations;
- State Service Commissions (submit sub-applicants but not operate programs); and
- States and US Territories.

Applicants must have a valid SAM registration and Unique Entity Identifier to receive an award.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

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. Use the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees for more information.

AmeriCorps suggests that applicants 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. Applicants must use their SAM-registered legal name and physical address on all grant applications to AmeriCorps. The legal applicant's name and physical address in the grant system must match exactly the applicant's SAM-registered information.

Applications must include a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), which is generated as part of the SAM registration process. AmeriCorps will not make awards to entities that do not have a valid SAM registration and UEI.

Applications must include an Employer Identification Number (EIN). The UEI and EIN must be entered by the organization's Grantee Administrator as an organization attribute, and this will apply the information to all applications for the organization.

Award Funding Requirements

1. Member Living Allowance

A living allowance is not considered a salary or a wage. Programs are not required to provide a living allowance for members serving in less than full-time terms of service. If a program chooses to provide a living allowance to a less than full-time member, it must follow the limits in the table below.

Organizations applying for Cost Reimbursement grants must include the living allowance in the budget, either as AmeriCorps share or match.

Fixed Amount grant applicants must give members a living allowance that follows the minimum and maximum amounts in the chart below and should indicate that amount in the application.

Please note that these amounts are based on last year's numbers since the FY26 NOFO has not been released yet. The correct numbers for next year will be published with the full NOFO, once released.

Table: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance

Slot Types	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Total Living Allowance
Full-time	1,700	\$20,400	\$40,800
Three Quarter-time	1,200	n/a	\$28,560
Half-time	900	n/a	\$20,400
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	\$15,504
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$10,608
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$8,568
Abbreviated-time	100	n/a	\$2,448

2. Maximum Cost per Member Service Year

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 childcare or the value of the education award a member may earn.

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Table: Maximum Cost per MSY

Grant Program	Maximum
Individual Competitive State/Territory Program (cost reimbursement)	\$25,000
Multi-state competitive (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 and formula)	\$800 or \$1,000**
All non-EAP formula subgrants	\$25,200***

3. Costs Associated with Evidence Building Activities e.g. performance data collection and management, foundational research, program evaluation, etc.

As noted in 2 CFR § 200.455, costs associated with evidence building activities are allowable expenses or match under AmeriCorps grants. This includes costs related to performance data collection and management, foundational research, program evaluation, and related activities.

4. Indirect Costs

No more than three percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps State and National grants 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."