



## **Tennessee AmeriCorps State 2025**

Notice of Funding Opportunity,

September 11, 2024

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## SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

### A. PURPOSE OF AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL FUNDING

Volunteer Tennessee is a 25-member, bipartisan commission appointed by the Governor with a mission to encourage volunteerism and community service in Tennessee as a means of problem-solving at the local level. Volunteer Tennessee pursues its mission through administration of grants, training, and collaborations and coalitions with public and private organizations interested in volunteerism and service. Volunteer Tennessee currently funds eighteen (18) AmeriCorps State programs across Tennessee. This Tennessee State AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity (*Notice*) will focus on grant-making for fiscal year 2025 in six areas: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, and Veterans and Military Families.

AmeriCorps improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. AmeriCorps brings people together to tackle some of the country's most pressing challenges through national service and volunteerism. AmeriCorps members serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities and those serving.

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations that engage AmeriCorps members in evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to strengthen communities. An AmeriCorps member is a person who does community service through AmeriCorps. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits. After successful completion of their service, members earn a [Segal AmeriCorps Education Award](#) they can use to pay for higher education expenses or apply to qualified student loans.

*Note that all funded programs will be required to prominently display the Volunteer Tennessee and AmeriCorps logos on printed and electronic materials related to the grant.*

### B. AMERICORPS INFORMATION, APPLICATION, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WEBINARS

Volunteer Tennessee will offer webinars to introduce potential applicants to AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee and to go into detail about the *Notice*. A detailed technical assistance webinar may be offered if there is sufficient interest.

Please visit our website ([www.volunteertennessee.net](http://www.volunteertennessee.net)) for more details about the webinars and to access recordings following each webinar.

Volunteer Tennessee strongly encourages new and re-competing applicants to attend the *Grant Information Session* webinar in this extremely competitive year.

### C. IMPORTANT DATES

#### Timeline for Competitive and EAP Grant Applicants

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10/23/24	Draft Competitive (new, re-competing, and continuation) and EAP (new) Grants applications due to Volunteer Tennessee by 3:00 p.m. CT.
11/22	Second Draft Competitive (new, re-competing, and continuation) and EAP (new) Grant applications due to Volunteer Tennessee by 3:00 p.m. CT.

- Pre-Award Risk Assessment information and verification of SAM/CCR registration due from new AmeriCorps Competitive and EAP Applicants.
- 1/7/25 Final draft of Competitive (new, re-competing, and continuation) and EAP (new) Grant applications to Volunteer Tennessee by 3:00 p.m. CT.
- Verification of SAM/CCR registration due from re-competing and continuation AmeriCorps Competitive and EAP Applicants.

**Timeline for Formula Applicants (All New Applicants)**

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- 12/13/25 AmeriCorps Formula Notice of Intent due to Volunteer Tennessee
- 2/13/25 Formula applications due to Volunteer Tennessee by 3:00 p.m. CT.  
Pre-Award Risk Assessment information due from new AmeriCorps Formula Applicants.  
Verification of SAM/CCR registration due from all AmeriCorps Formula Applicants.
- 5/5/25 Inform applicants of Formula funding decision and provide Application Feedback to funded programs.
- 5/12/25 Acceptance of funding due to Volunteer Tennessee via e-mail.
- 5/14/25 Formula Programs submit budget and performance measure corrections, if needed.  
— Begin Formula contract development  
Supplemental funding requests due to Volunteer Tennessee via e-mail.

**SECTION II: NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

**Federal Agency Name:** AmeriCorps  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 AmeriCorps State and National Grants  
**Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement  
**CFDA Number:** 94.006

**Disclosure:** Publication of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (*Notice*) does not obligate AmeriCorps or Volunteer Tennessee to award any specific number of grants or to obligate any particular amount of funding. The actual level, timing, and process of grant funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

**A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

**A.1. AmeriCorps Funding Priorities**

For this funding opportunity, AmeriCorps will prioritize consideration from organizations that:

Serve Communities:

- Serve communities with concentrated poverty, rural communities, tribal communities, and historically underrepresented and underserved individuals. These may include people of color, immigrants, refugees, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, people with arrest or conviction records, religious minorities, etc.;
- Implement programs for or expand access to high-quality youth mental health and substance use recovery services and prepare AmeriCorps members to enter behavioral health careers. These may include individuals with lived experience with substance use and mental health challenges to support youth mental health efforts and continued AmeriCorps work on the opioid epidemic;
- Focus on improving the quality of life for veterans, active-duty members of the Armed Forces, and their families by recruiting veterans, military spouses, and their older children into national service;
- Promote environmental stewardship to help communities (especially underserved households and communities) to be more resilient by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving land and water, increasing renewable energy use and improving at-risk ecosystems;
- Support civic bridgebuilding programs and projects to reduce polarization and community divisions; and providing training in civic bridgebuilding skills and techniques to AmeriCorps members;

#### Benefit AmeriCorps Members:

- Provide 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.;
- Create workforce pathways for AmeriCorps members, including deliberate training, certifications, and hiring preferences or support;
- Enhance and expand services to second chance youth and/or engage those youth as AmeriCorps members;
- Develop and train the next generation of diverse public health leaders through service while addressing pressing community health challenges. Review Public Health AmeriCorps Priority in the Mandatory Supplemental Information for eligibility information;

#### Use Evidence

- Utilize reports from the [AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange](#) on programs assessed as having Moderate or Strong evidence to scale, replicate, or adapt the intervention;

#### Faith-Based

- Organizations that are faith-based; and

#### American Climate Corps

- Please note that applicants may propose projects to be affiliated with the American Climate Corps (ACC), which is a federal government national service and workforce development initiative focused on training young people for the clean energy and climate resilience workforce. Applicants who are interested must demonstrate that their project funds ACC eligible positions meeting the following criteria:
  - The position has verifiable climate or environmental impact.

- The position is temporary (term-limited), and the term length is at least 300 hours.
- The position includes skills-based training as part of the program and provides a pathway to employment.
- The position must receive a living allowance and, in some cases, may receive additional member benefits.

Applicants submitting a workforce development project to qualify for affiliation with the ACC should note that in their application. Successful applicants will be notified if they are part of the ACC and may be subject to additional reporting requirements.

To receive priority consideration, applicants must show the priority area is a significant part of the program focus and intended outcomes. Priority consideration does not guarantee funding.

### **A.2. Volunteer Tennessee Funding Priorities**

For this funding opportunity, Volunteer Tennessee will prioritize the investment of national service resources in the following areas:

- Distressed Counties - programs that align with Governor Bill Lee’s priority to provide services to rural areas. To receive priority consideration, applicants must propose to serve in one or more of [Tennessee’s 9 distressed counties or 31 at-risk counties](#).
- Prisoner Mentorship - programs that align with Governor Lee’s priority to mentor incarcerated individuals to gain the skills needed for re-entry into society. Applicants for this priority should consider evidence-based interventions on the [AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange](#).
- Food Security - that recruit, train, and support AmeriCorps members in order to increase food security. Applicants for this priority should consider evidence-based interventions on the [AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange](#).
- Community Resilience and Public Safety - programs that directly recruit, train, and support AmeriCorps members to increase community resilience and public safety through community emergency preparedness education and facilitation of volunteer disaster response and recovery efforts. Applicants for this priority should consider evidence-based interventions on the [AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange](#).

In addition to the priority on distressed counties, prisoner mentorship, and community resilience and public safety, Volunteer Tennessee expects to invest a significant amount of available funding to programs working in the AmeriCorps Funding Priorities described in section A.1 above. Volunteer Tennessee will pursue a balanced portfolio across the Funding Priorities.

To receive priority consideration, applicants must show that the 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.

### **A.3. Performance Goals or Expected Outcomes**

National Performance Measures: Where possible, AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee expect applicants to use National Performance Measures as part of a comprehensive

performance measurement strategy that relies on both performance and evaluation data to learn from their work and make tactical and strategic adjustments to achieve their goals.

Aligned Performance Measure: 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 [ATTACHMENT C National Performance Measure Instructions](#).

#### **A.4. Program Authority**

Awards under this Notice are authorized by the [National and Community Service Act of 1990](#), as amended, [42 U.S.C. §12501 et seq.](#)

## **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

### **B.1. Estimated Available Funds**

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee expect a highly competitive AmeriCorps grant process. AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee reserve the right to prioritize providing funding to existing grantees over new grantees. The actual level of funding will be subject to the availability of annual appropriations.

### **B.2. Estimated Award Amount**

Award amounts will be different depending on the scope of the projects.

### **B.3. 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, 2025. Continuation awards for future years are not guaranteed; they depend upon future appropriations and satisfactory performance.

### **B.4. Type of Award**

Volunteer Tennessee may award Operating Grants, including a Cost Reimbursement or a Fixed Amount grant, to any successful applicant, but the availability of a Full-Cost Fixed Amount grant is limited to certain applicants.

Professional Corps are not eligible to apply for Cost Reimbursement grants. See the *Eligible Applicants* section and Attachment A: *Mandatory Supplemental Information* for more information. Volunteer Tennessee will not provide both types of grants for the same project in one fiscal year.

AmeriCorps makes available different types of grants. The chart below summarizes these grant types and their distinct characteristics.



<b>Grant Types</b>	<b>Cost Reimbursement</b>	<b>Fixed Amount</b>			
Available Subtypes	Traditional	Full-Cost	Education Award Program (EAP)	Professional Corps <i>See Mandatory Supplemental Information</i> for further requirements	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***	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
Matching Funds Required	Yes	No			
Budget Submission Required	Yes	No			
Availability of Funds Linked to Enrollment and Retention of Awarded MSYs	No	Yes			No
Special Requirements	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
Financial Reporting Requirements	Yes	No			
Available to New Applicants	Yes	Yes (if applying for State Formula funding)	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](#).

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

## **B.5. Cost Sharing or Matching**

### **Fixed Amount Grants**

There is no cost share or match requirement for Fixed Amount grants. AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee do not provide all the funds necessary to operate the program; therefore, organizations should plan to raise the additional revenue required to operate the program.

### **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.

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 according to the minimum overall share chart found in [45 CFR §2521.60](#) and below.

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%

Section 121(e)(5) of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended (NCSA) [42 U.S.C. 12571\(e\)](#) requires programs that use other federal funds as match for an AmeriCorps grant to report the amount and source 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 Waiver**

Please use the Match Waiver information for AmeriCorps State and National Grantees located on the AmeriCorps.gov [Manage Your Grant](#) webpage.

## C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### C.1. Eligible Applicants

The following non-Federal organizations (all of which are defined in [2 CFR 200.1](#)) are eligible to apply:

- Indian Tribes;
- institutions of higher education;
- local governments, including school districts;
- nonprofit organizations; and
- states and US Territories.

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

**Organizations that propose to operate solely within Tennessee must apply through Volunteer Tennessee.** A single-state application submitted directly to AmeriCorps by the applicant rather than through Volunteer Tennessee will be considered noncompliant and will not be reviewed. Organizations that propose to operate in more than one state may apply directly to AmeriCorps. See Attachment A: *Mandatory Supplemental Information* for descriptions of National Direct and Single-State applicants.

### New Applicants

Volunteer Tennessee encourages organizations that have not received prior funding from AmeriCorps to apply. Volunteer Tennessee's general practice is to award no more than 20 member positions (slots) to organizations receiving an AmeriCorps grant for the first time.

New Formula applicants are eligible to apply for either Cost Reimbursement or Fixed Amount grants.

### Threshold Issues

Specific types of applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Professional Corps must show that the community where it will place AmeriCorps members has a shortage of professionals in the relevant area, e.g., teachers, medical professionals, etc.
- If service activities require special member qualifications and/or training, such as [tutoring programs](#), the applicant must describe how these requirements will be met.
- All applicants must propose program designs that are either evidence-based or evidence-informed. Applicants assessed as lower than the Preliminary evidence tier must provide adequate responses to the Evidence Quality review criteria.

### C.2. Other Eligibility Requirements

Under section 132A(b) of [the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended](#), organizations that have violated a Federal criminal statute may not receive assistance described in this *Notice*.

Organizations that propose activities that are not allowed by AmeriCorps' laws, rules, or terms and conditions cannot receive AmeriCorps funding.

Organizations that have any unpaid federal tax liability are not allowed to receive an award. AmeriCorps cannot provide funding to any corporation that has unpaid federal taxes that are not being paid through an agreement with the relevant tax authority. However, this does not apply if a federal agency decided that a suspension or debarment for the corporation is not necessary.

Organizations that are described in the [Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. §501 \(c\)\(4\)](#) that lobby cannot receive AmeriCorps funding according to the [Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995](#).

## **D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

This *Notice* should be read together with the [AmeriCorps regulations](#), [Application Instructions](#), [Performance Measure Instructions](#), and [Mandatory Supplemental Information](#).

### **D.1. Ways to Request an Application Package**

Applicants should refer to the [Volunteer Tennessee Funding Opportunities](#) page at [www.volunteertennessee.net](http://www.volunteertennessee.net) to obtain the necessary information to apply. Applicants can also send an email to [volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov](mailto:volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov) for a printed copy of the application materials.

### **D.2. Content and Form of Application Submission**

#### **D.2.a. Application Content**

Complete applications must include the following elements:

- Standard Form 424 Face Sheet: Automatically generated when applicants complete the data elements.
- Narrative Sections:
  - Executive Summary;
  - Program Design;
  - Organizational Capability;
  - Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy; and
  - Evaluation Summary/Plan.
- Performance Measures.
- Logic Model.
- Standard Form 424A Budget.
- Continuation Changes.
- Clarification.
- Authorization, [Assurances](#), and [Certifications](#).
- Additional Documents, as required.

#### **D.2.b. Page Limits**

Page counts are determined by the number of pages that print out from the grant system.

**Volunteer Tennessee strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the grant system prior to submission to confirm that the application does not exceed the page limit.**

- Narratives
  - Applications must not exceed 11 double-spaced pages for the Narrative.
  - The application sections that count towards the page limit include:
    - SF-424 Face Sheet;
    - Executive Summary;
    - Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy narratives.
  - The application page limit does not include:
    - Evaluation Summary/Plan;
    - Clarification Summary;
    - Continuation Changes;
    - Budget, Performance Measures; and
    - Any required additional documents.
- Logic Model
  - The Logic Model may not exceed eight pages when printed with the application from the “Review” tab in AmeriCorps’ web-based management system.

### **D.3. 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](#).

Volunteer Tennessee 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.

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

Applications must include an Employer Identification Number (EIN). The UEI and EIN must be entered by the organization’s Grantee Administrator, **as the eGrants role that has full access to functionality on behalf of the program as an organization attribute**, and this will apply the information to all applications for the organization.

Applicants should designate an eGrants Administrator prior to applying.

#### **D.4. Submission Dates and Times**

##### **D.4.a. Notice of Intent to Apply**

Applicants intending to apply for a new or re-competing Formula program are **REQUIRED** to complete a Notice of Intent form by 3:00 p.m. CT on December 13, 2024. The form can be [accessed here](#).

**Failure to submit a Notice of Intent to Apply will render an applicant ineligible to apply. Continuation grantees are not required to submit a notice of intent.** Submission of a Notice of Intent to Apply is not an obligation to apply.

##### **D.4.b. Application Submission Deadline**

The due date for Competitive applications is **3:00 p.m. CT on October 23, 2024** and **3:00 p.m. CT on February 13, 2025** for Formula applications. Volunteer Tennessee will not consider applications received after the due date, except as noted in Section *D.4.d. Late Applications*. Volunteer Tennessee reserves the right to extend the submission due date, and any notice of such extended due date(s) will be posted on the Volunteer Tennessee website. These due dates apply to continuation grantees, as well as new and re-competing applicants.

##### **D.4.c. Additional Documents Deadline**

Additional documents are due at the time of the application submission deadline referenced above in *D.4.b*.

Additional documents must be uploaded to the [Volunteer Tennessee AmeriCorps Funding Applicant Additional Documents Form](#).

##### **D.4.d. Late Applications**

All applications received after the submission deadline are late. Volunteer Tennessee will determine whether to accept a late application on a case-by-case basis. To request consideration of a late application, an organization must:

- Submit a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that caused the delay, including:
  - Timing and specific cause(s) of the delay;
  - Ticket number if a request for assistance was submitted to the AmeriCorps Hotline;
  - Information provided to the applicant by the AmeriCorps Hotline; and
  - Other documentation or evidence that supports the justification.
- Ensure that Volunteer Tennessee receives the justification and any other evidence that substantiates the claimed extenuating circumstance(s) via email to [volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov](mailto:volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov) no later than one business day after the application deadline stated in the *Notice*.

Communication with Volunteer Tennessee staff is not a substitute for the written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance that caused the delay as outlined above.

Applicants are also required to continue working in eGrants, [AmeriCorps' web-based application system](#), and with the AmeriCorps Hotline to submit the application as soon possible after the deadline. Volunteer Tennessee will determine whether to accept a late

application on a case-by-case basis. Applicants that do not submit a justification or any other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the published timeframe will not be reviewed or selected for award.

**Please note:** Volunteer Tennessee will not consider an advance request to submit a late application. Applicants are encouraged to continue working on their application until it is submitted. If you are experiencing technical difficulties, please carefully review and follow the guidance listed above.

**D.5. Intergovernmental Review**

This *Notice* is not subject to [Executive Order 12372](#), *Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs*.

**D.6. Funding Restrictions**

**D.6.a. 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.*

**Table: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowance**

<b>Slot Types</b>	<b>Minimum # of Hours</b>	<b>Minimum Living Allowance</b>	<b>Maximum Total Living Allowance</b>
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

**Exceptions to the Living Allowance Requirements**

**a. Programs existing prior to September 21, 1993**, do not have to offer a living allowance. If an organization chooses to offer a living allowance, it does not have to pay its members the minimum but cannot exceed the maximum.

**b. Education Award Program (EAP) Grantees** are not required to provide a living allowance. If an organization chooses to offer a living allowance, it does not have to pay its members the minimum but cannot exceed the maximum.

**c. Professional Corps Grantees** must provide members a living allowance or salary. Organizations must pay members the minimum and can exceed the maximum. Professional Corps member salaries and benefits including childcare cannot be included in the federal share budget request to AmeriCorps.

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

AmeriCorps is keeping the maximum cost per MSY at the same amount as FY 2024 as a safeguard to ensure the number of members serving remains the same or grows. The agency is committed to and prioritizes applicants that maintain or grow the number of AmeriCorps members proposed to serve in their programs without increasing the requested cost per MSY.

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

**Table: Maximum Cost per MSY**

<b>Grant Program</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
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***

\*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 show significant organizational financial need.

\*\* 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](#).

\*\*\*\$18,000, adjusted each year for inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all Urban Consumers. **(As of March 2024, the inflation rate was 0.4%).**

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee may: 1) treat an applicant as a professional corps if they meet the legal requirements for a professional corps (even if they did not submit a professional corps application); and 2) decide not to provide a grant to an organization that it determines cannot operate effectively without AmeriCorps operating funds.

### **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. Segal AmeriCorps Education Award**

AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service will be eligible for an Education Award from the National Service Trust. The amount of the Education Award is linked to the value of the Pell Grant. A member has up to seven years after their term of service to use the Education Award. Use the [Segal AmeriCorps Education Award](#) webpage for more information.

It is imperative that programs enroll their members in the National Service Trust through eGrants to qualify for this benefit.

#### **D.6.b. Indirect Costs**

Application budgets may include indirect costs. Based on qualifying factors, applicants may –

- a) use the AmeriCorps-Fixed Percentage method (five/ten percent fixed administrative cost option) outlined in AmeriCorps' [Indirect Cost Guidance](#);
- b) use a Federally approved indirect cost rate if they have one;
- c) use a 15 percent *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs; or
- d) [may claim certain costs directly](#).

No more than five 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](#). The applicant's selected method must be applied consistently across all Federal awards.

Use the [Indirect Cost Rate \(IDCR\) User Instructions](#) to enter the organization's indirect cost rate. Applicants should not submit documentation addressing the cost rate agreement via email.

Please note: 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@americorps.gov](mailto:IndirectCostRate@americorps.gov). The applicant may also obtain instructions and additional information by contacting the email address above.

#### **D.6.c. Pre-Award Costs**

Pre-award costs, where authorized, are allowed after receiving written approval from AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee.

#### **D.7. Other Submission Requirements**

##### **D.7.a. Electronic Application Submission**

Applicants must submit applications electronically through [eGrants, AmeriCorps' web-based application system](#). AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee recommend that applicants create an eGrants account and begin the application at least three weeks before the deadline. Applicants should draft the application as a word processing document, then copy and paste the text into the appropriate eGrants field no later than 10 days before the deadline.

The applicant's authorized representative must be the person who submits the application. The authorized representative must use their own account to sign and submit the application. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Applicants should contact the [AmeriCorps Hotline](#) at (800) 942-2677 if they have a problem when they create an account, prepare, or submit the application. Information about the AmeriCorps Hotline hours are also posted on the [AmeriCorps Hotline webpage](#).

When contacting the AmeriCorps Hotline, be prepared to provide the application ID, organization name, and the name of the *Notice* to which the organization is applying. If the issue cannot be fixed by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the AmeriCorps Hotline to submit via the grant system.

If extenuating circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit in eGrants, applicants may send an electronic copy of the application via e-mail to [volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov](mailto:volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov). Applicants must include a written explanation and any other documentation or evidence that support their inability to submit their application electronically.

**Requests to e-mail applications must be approved in advance by Volunteer Tennessee.** All deadlines and requirements in this *Notice* also apply to e-mailed applications. E-mailed applications must include a cover letter detailing the circumstances that make it impossible to submit via eGrants. Volunteer Tennessee will not accept applications submitted via fax or mail/overnight carrier.

##### **D.7.b. Submission of Additional Documents**

Your application might not receive funding if you do not upload your documents by the application deadline or do not correctly label your documents.

Additional documents for all applicants:

1. Evidence documents. Please refer to the [Evidence Base section](#) and [Mandatory Supplemental Information](#) for detailed instructions by evidence tier.
2. Labor union concurrence, if applicable.
3. Evidence of SAM.gov current registration.
4. Most recent Single Audit report (or audited financial statements if the agency does not meet the requirement for a Single Audit).
5. Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS). To complete, please follow these steps:
  - Fill out the survey electronically using the [online form](#).
  - Upload the results to the [form linked below](#).

**All additional documents should be uploaded while completing the [Volunteer Tennessee AmeriCorps Funding Applicant Additional Documents Form](#).**

Please note that forms submitted as a PDF or in any other document format without completing the linked online form may not be accepted.

Additional documents for applicants proposing projects previously funded by Volunteer Tennessee:

6. Evaluation Plan. Applicants who have received **three or more years** of competitive funding for the same project being proposed should also provide an: Evaluation plan using the [evaluation plan template](#). Evaluation plans are not scored and will not be reviewed until after funding decisions are made.
7. Evaluation Report. Applicants who have received **six or more years** of competitive funding for the same project being proposed should also provide an Evaluation report. Please submit in Microsoft Word. The evaluation report should include a title page with:
  - the AmeriCorps grant number for the project that was evaluated,
  - the name of the project,
  - the date of completion of the report,
  - the evaluator name(s),
  - evaluator organization name and,
  - evaluator type (internal or external).

If any of this required information is missing, the applicant may not receive credit for meeting their evaluation requirements. Please see the [Evaluation Plan FAQs](#) for additional information of evaluation requirements.

Additional documents for applicants proposing new projects to be funded by Volunteer Tennessee:

1. Most recent Form 990 - Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax.
2. A description of the agency's procedures to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, including procedures for responding to complaints and notifying beneficiaries of their rights under Title VI, specific policies to ensure compliance with Title VI (attach excerpts from their policy manual), and their process for collecting racial and ethnic data on participants and beneficiaries. Title VI provides as follows:

*No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.*

**All additional documents should be uploaded while completing the [Volunteer Tennessee AmeriCorps Funding Applicant Additional Documents Form](#).**

**Do not submit any other items not requested in this Notice or Application Instructions. Volunteer Tennessee will not review or return them.**

## **E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **E.1. Selection Criteria**

Each applicant must describe a project that will use AmeriCorps members effectively to solve a significant community problem.

Applications must have a well-designed plan with clear justification for the requested funds. Reviewers will assess the quality of applications by using the selection criteria described below and will rate them accordingly.

Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

<b>Categories/Subcategories</b>	<b>Percentage of total score</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Program Design</b>	<b>50</b>
• <b>Community and Logic Model</b>	24
• <b>Evidence Tier</b>	12
• <b>Evidence Quality</b>	8
• <b>Notice Priority</b>	0
• <b>Member Experience</b>	6
<b>Organizational Capability</b>	<b>25</b>
• <b>Organizational Background and Staffing</b>	15
• <b>Member Supervision</b>	6
• <b>Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility</b>	4
<b>Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy</b>	<b>25</b>
• <b>Member Recruitment</b>	8
• <b>Member Retention</b>	9
• <b>Data Collection</b>	8

#### **E.1.a. Executive Summary, 0 percent:**

The Executive Summary consists of two paragraphs with fill-in-the-blank sections. The first paragraph is the same for all applicants. There are two options for the second paragraph; please choose the appropriate language for your application. Please fill in the blanks to complete the Executive Summary. Do not deviate from this template:

“The [*Name of the organization*] will have [*Number of*] AmeriCorps members in [*the locations the AmeriCorps members will serve, e.g. – City, State*]. AmeriCorps members will [*service activities the members will do*]. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [*anticipated outcome of project*]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage [*number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable*] who will be engaged in [*what the leveraged volunteers will be doing*].

Cost Reimbursement grant applicants:

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

Fixed amount grant applicants e.g., EAP, Full-Cost Fixed, No Cost Slots:

In addition to the AmeriCorps investment, \$[*amount of local, state, and Federal Funds*] in public funding and \$[*amount of non-governmental funds*] in private funding will support the project.”

Fixed-Amount grant applicants (EAP, Full-Cost Fixed, No Cost Slots) should list their Other Revenue (see Attachment A. *Mandatory Supplemental Information*) in the Executive Summary, because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match but still raise significant additional resources to operate the program.

**E.1.b. Program Design, 50 percent:**

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application’s response to the criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value. Please ensure the Community and Logic Model incorporates the funding priorities listed above, for example supporting communities historically excluded from and/or underserved by 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**

The applicant will provide a detailed summary of the community problem, including:

- How the inequities faced by underserved communities may contribute to the problem.
- How the [CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index](#) explains the extent of the problem.
- How the applicant’s intervention(s) will lead to the outcomes identified in the organization’s Logic Model.

The applicant must describe 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.
  - Setting and community condition 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 members will deliver as part of the intervention including:
  - Length of each activity (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions, or months of the intervention).
  - Dosage of each activity (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 result from the intervention, including meaningful changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition. If applicable, identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

Note: The Logic Model is a visual representation of the applicant’s Theory of Change. Programs should include short, medium, or long-term outcomes. Applicants are not required to measure all components of their 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 suggests targets are reasonable), relevant research (e.g., targets documented by organizations running similar programs with similar populations), or prior program evaluation findings.

Applicants with multiple interventions should include the above information for each intervention in the logic model.

## **2. Evidence Base, 20 points**

The assessment of an applicant’s evidence base consists of two components:

1. **Evidence Tier (12 Points):** Applicants will be assigned to one of the evidence tiers—Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong—based on the strength of their evidence and the likelihood that the proposed intervention will lead to the outcomes described in the Logic Model narrative.
2. **Evidence Quality (8 Points):** Reviewers will evaluate the quality of the applicant’s evidence, its alignment with funding priorities (as outlined in section A.2), and the extent to which it supports the proposed program design.

*The assessment of an applicant’s evidence base consists of two components. First, the applicant will be placed into an evidence tier. Second, the evaluation will focus on the quality of the applicant’s evidence, its alignment with the funding priorities outlined in section A.2, and the extent to which it supports the proposed program.*

### Evidence Tier, 12 points

Each applicant will receive an evidence tier assessment. This is based on the relative strength of the applicant's evidence base and the likelihood that the proposed intervention will lead to the outcomes identified in the Logic Model narrative.

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee values and funds programs at all points along the evidence continuum and expects programs to progress along the evidence continuum over time. Thus, **applicants should not be deterred from applying for funding due to their current evidence level.** In 2024, the evidence tiers of successful AmeriCorps State and National applicants that were competing were as follows: Strong 55 percent, Moderate 16 percent, Preliminary 19 percent, and Pre-Preliminary 11 percent.

To qualify for the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tier, applicants may submit up to two evidence documents, plus the evaluation report from their last three-year grant cycle, if applicable. If multiple evidence documents are submitted by the applicant, the most recent – as measured by the date of completion or publication– will be reviewed first, and any documents submitted beyond the allowable number will not be reviewed.

The intervention evaluated in the submitted evidence documents must match the intervention proposed by the applicant in the Community and Logic Model sections of the application. Use the [Mandatory Supplemental Information](#) for a definition of same intervention. Applicants must meet all requirements of an evidence tier to be considered for that tier.

Submitted evidence documents that do not sufficiently match the intervention will not be reviewed or receive any points.

In the Evidence Tier section of the application narrative, applicants must:

- Summarize the study design and key findings of the evidence documents submitted, plus, if applicable, the evaluation report from their last three-year grant cycle; and
- Describe any other evidence that supports their program, including past performance measure data and/or other research studies that inform their program design.

Applicants should provide citations for the studies they describe.

### Evidence Quality, 8 points

Reviewers will score the quality of an applicant's evidence and the extent to which it supports the proposed program design.

Standards for scoring in the Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong evidence tiers:

Submitted evidence documents:

- 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.;
- Describe evaluations that were conducted relatively recently, preferably within the last six years; and

- Show a meaningful and significant positive effect on program beneficiaries or AmeriCorps members in at least one key outcome of interest.

Standards for scoring in the Pre-Preliminary evidence tier:

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

The **AmeriCorps Evidence Tiers for 2024** are categories used to assess the strength of evidence supporting an applicant's proposed program. These tiers help determine the level of confidence in the program's potential impact and effectiveness. The tiers range from Preliminary to Moderate to Strong, each representing different levels of evidence rigor and relevance. Here is a breakdown of the three tiers:

### **Preliminary Evidence Tier**

- Definition: The Preliminary Evidence Tier indicates that there is some initial evidence suggesting that the program or intervention may achieve its intended outcomes, but the evidence is not yet rigorous or comprehensive.
- Criteria:
  - The applicant has collected systematic data that show positive results, but the data may be limited to pre- and post-test assessments or simple descriptive statistics.
  - The evidence may include:
    - Qualitative data, such as case studies or expert opinions.
    - Quantitative data from pilot studies, needs assessments, or small-scale evaluations without control groups.
    - Anecdotal evidence or theories of change that are supported by preliminary data.
    - The evidence must suggest that the program could potentially meet its objectives, but there is no strong empirical basis to claim causality or generalize findings widely.

### **Moderate Evidence Tier**

- Definition: The Moderate Evidence Tier reflects a stronger level of evidence that shows a meaningful association between the program and its intended outcomes, though the evidence may not yet demonstrate causality with high confidence.
- Criteria:
  - The applicant has conducted at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study or a non-randomized comparison group study.
  - The study shows a significant association between the program and the desired outcomes, though it may not fully control for all possible confounding factors.
  - Evidence may include:
    - Data from multiple sites or larger-scale evaluations.



- Evaluations that have demonstrated improvements in outcomes but do not meet the highest standards of experimental design (e.g., randomized control trials).
- The evidence suggests that the program is likely to achieve its outcomes, but there is room for improvement in terms of establishing causality.

### **Strong Evidence Tier**

- Definition: The Strong Evidence Tier represents the highest level of evidence, indicating that the program is proven to achieve its intended outcomes with a high degree of confidence.
- Criteria:
  - The applicant has conducted at least one well-designed and well-implemented randomized controlled trial (RCT) or several quasi-experimental studies with rigorous methodologies that have consistently demonstrated positive outcomes.
  - The studies:
    - Provide a high level of internal validity, minimizing bias and effectively ruling out alternative explanations.
    - Have been peer-reviewed or published in credible, scholarly journals.
    - May have been replicated in different settings or with different populations, providing external validity and generalizability.
    - The evidence must strongly support the program's effectiveness in achieving its intended outcomes, demonstrating a clear cause-and-effect relationship.

### **Key Differences:**

#### **Rigor of Evidence:**

- Preliminary tier relies on less rigorous or initial data.
- Moderate tier includes more rigorous, quasi-experimental studies that show a clear association but may not fully establish causality.
- Strong tier demands the highest level of rigor with RCTs or multiple robust quasi-experimental studies that clearly establish causality.

### **3. Notice Priority, 0 points**

The applicant's proposed program fits within one or more of the [AmeriCorps funding priorities](#).

### **4. Member Experience, 6 points**

- The applicant describes how AmeriCorps members will be provided leadership and skill development opportunities.

The applicant describes how the organization will orient AmeriCorps members to the community using an asset-based approach, highlighting the community's existing strengths, resources, and positive attributes.

### **E.1.c. Organizational Capability, 25 percent:**

#### **1. Organizational Background and Staffing, 15 points**

- The applicant describes the roles, responsibilities, and structure of the staff that will be implementing and providing oversight of the program.
- The applicant describes their organization's mission and relevant experience in areas such as volunteer recruitment and management, community outreach, overcoming project implementation challenges, etc.
- The applicant describes their organization's experience with managing grants, especially federal or state grants. Include your past performance in meeting:
  - Grant goals and objectives.
  - Compliance and reporting requirements.

*Note: if you do not have experience with managing grants, please indicate that.*

- The applicant has facilitated, partnered, or participated in educational or workforce development programs e.g. work experience or job training programs, etc.

#### **2. Member Supervision, 6 points**

- The applicant describes how AmeriCorps members will receive sufficient guidance and support from their supervisor to provide effective service, e.g., 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.
- The applicant describes how AmeriCorps supervisors will be adequately trained to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations, e.g., 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 strengths and opportunities for growth of supervisors, etc.

#### **3. Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility, 4 points**

- The leadership and staff of the organization have similar lived experience as the beneficiary population and/or community being served.
- The applicant's definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are demonstrated by the organization, e.g., diversity on the Board of Directors, agency staff and leadership, and/or volunteers. The organization upholds a supportive and safe environment for individuals of diverse backgrounds.

### **E.1.d. Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy, 25 percent:**

#### **1. Member Recruitment, 8 points**

- The applicant describes budget expenses to support recruitment of AmeriCorps members best suited to serve the community e.g., from geographic or demographic communities in which the program operates.
- The applicant describes how the AmeriCorps member living allowance and other benefits are adjusted within the maximum and minimum living allowance to accommodate for regional variations in contributing to cost of living including: housing, transportation, food, and other expenses. This may vary depending on a program's type of member slots, e.g., FT, PT, RPT, etc.

## **2. Member Retention, 9 points**

- The applicant provides a description of budget expenses to support the retention of AmeriCorps members. For example, this could include additional member benefits such as paying above the minimum living allowance, offering workforce development opportunities, certifications, coaching, resume building, personal benefits like career counseling, as well as community building, network development, member recognition, alumni programming, etc.

## **3. Data Collection, 8 points**

- The applicant provides a description of budget expenses to support data collection, continuous improvement activities, and evaluation of the interventions and impact on the community and the member experience.

### **E.1.e. Evaluation Plan, 0 percent:**

- **Required for recompeting applicants:**

If the applicant has previously received three or more years of competitive funding for the same project being proposed, the applicant must upload an [evaluation plan](#) (see the D.7.b *Submission of Additional Documents* section).

Applicants should use the [evaluation plan template](#) available on Volunteer Tennessee's website to craft their evaluation plans. The evaluation plan will not be scored and will not be reviewed until after funding decisions have been made.

All applicants enter N/A in the *Evaluation Summary or Plan* field of the Narrative. Any other text entered in this field will not be reviewed.

### **E. 1. f. Amendment Justification, 0 percent:**

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

### **E.1.g. Clarification Information, 0 percent:**

Enter N/A. This field will be utilized should an applicant be funded.

### **E.1.h. Continuation Changes, 0 percent:**

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

## **E.2. Review and Selection Process**

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee will engage External Reviewers with relevant expertise to assess the eligible applications. The determinations made by AmeriCorps reviewers may be different from what the applicant self-determined upon submission of its application. The stages of the review and selection process follow:

### **E.2.a. Initial Application Compliance and Eligibility Review**

AmeriCorps will do an initial compliance and eligibility check before reviewing applications. To pass this check, applicants must:

- Be an eligible organization,
- Be eligible to apply for a Full Cost Fixed Grant,
- Be eligible to submit directly to AmeriCorps,
- Have an active SAM registration, and
- Submit an application by the submission deadline.

Eligibility assessment is intended to ensure that only those applications that are eligible for award are reviewed. However, determinations 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.

### **E.2.b. Application Review**

#### **External Review**

Reviewers will evaluate applications based on the Program Design, Organizational Capability, Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy, and Evidence Selection Criteria.

Upon submission to AmeriCorps by Volunteer Tennessee, **Competitive applications** will be assessed by AmeriCorps staff. External reviewers will review and assess the evidence criteria in the *Notice*. **Formula applications** will be reviewed by Volunteer Tennessee staff and external reviewers. All reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest. For New/Recompeting Competitive applicants that are not selected for Competitive funding, **the initial application submitted on October 23, 2024 will be forwarded to the Formula external reviewers for consideration in the Formula process.**

#### **Post-Review Quality Control**

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee staff will review the initial results for fairness and consistency. Some applications may be selected for a Post-Review Quality Control assessment.

### **E.2.c. Pre-Award Risk Assessment**

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee staff will assess the risks posed by each applicant. Results from this assessment will inform funding decisions. If an award is determined to be made to an applicant with risks, special conditions may be applied to the award. AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee may decide to not fund an applicant based on the level of risk.

In assessing risks, AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee may consider:

1. Due Diligence, including:
  - Federal debt delinquency;
  - Suspension and debarment;
  - Information available through Office of Management and Budget (OMB)-designated sources of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as:
    - [U.S. Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services](#);
    - [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#); and
    - *Do Not Pay*.
  - Reports and findings from single audits performed under Uniform Administrative Guidance and findings of any other available audits or investigations;

- IRS Tax Form 990;
  - [Oversight.gov](https://www.oversight.gov); and
  - Public Litigation Records.
2. Operational and Financial Management, including:
    - Financial stability; and
    - Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS).
  3. Past Performance, including:
    - Applicant's record in managing previous AmeriCorps awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
      - Timely compliance with applicable reporting requirements;
      - Accuracy of data reported;
      - Validity of performance measure data reported;
      - Conformity to the terms and conditions of previous Federal awards;
      - Ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on award recipients;
      - Timely closeout of other awards;
      - Meeting matching requirements;
      - Extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards; and
      - Meeting [National Service Criminal History Check \(NSCHC\) compliance](#).
  4. Other Programmatic Risks, Financial, Organizational, Compliance, and Fraud including:
    - Publicly available information, including from the applicant organization's website;
    - Amount of funding requested by the organization; and
    - Other elements, such as keyword searches for prohibited activities.

#### **E.2.d. Consideration of Integrity and Performance System Information**

Prior to making any award that exceeds \$250,000, AmeriCorps must consider information about the applicant from the designated integrity and performance system accessible through [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov).

Any applicant may comment upon information previously entered by another Federal agency in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov).

AmeriCorps may consider applicant comments when completing its review of risk. AmeriCorps may also consider other information about any applicant receiving an award, including those under \$250,000.

#### **E.2.e. Selection for Funding**

The review and selection processes are designed to:

- Identify how well eligible applications are aligned with the [application selection criteria](#).
- Build a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:
  - [AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee Funding Priorities](#);

- Meaningful representation of:
  - rural communities, and
  - innovative community strategies; and
- Volunteer Tennessee Commission discretion to advance strategic goals.

In selecting applicants to receive awards under this *Notice*, the AmeriCorps Chief Executive Officer and Volunteer Tennessee will try to include a diverse portfolio of applications based on staff recommendations, alignment with selection criteria, and strategic considerations.

**AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee reserve the right to adjust or make changes to the review process, if unforeseen circumstances make it impossible, impracticable, or inefficient to conduct the review process as planned. Any such changes will not affect the [selection criteria](#) that will be used to assess applications.** AmeriCorps reserves the right to re-focus program dollars under this *Notice* in the event of disaster or other compelling needs.

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee reserve the right to prioritize funding existing awards over making new awards.

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

An applicant denied any portion of funding may request reconsideration of a funding decision within 5 business days of receiving notice of their denial. Reconsideration will only be granted if there is clear and substantial error. Any reconsideration of denied applications is entirely subject to the agency's discretion.

#### **E.2.f. Applicant Resolution**

AmeriCorps will ask all Competitive grantees for a written compliance implementation plan that includes notification of waste, fraud, and abuse to the agency's Office of Inspector General.

After the application review process but before any grant awards are issued, AmeriCorps or Volunteer Tennessee may ask an applicant for additional information to address any application compliance or risk issues. If an applicant does not respond promptly to these requests, then the applicant may be denied funding.

#### **E.3. Feedback to Applicants**

Each compliant applicant will receive feedback from the External Review of its application.

#### **E.4. Transparency in Grantmaking**

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

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

[volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov](mailto:volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov).

Further information about funded grants and subgrants is also available in [USASpending.gov](https://USASpending.gov).

## **F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **F.1. Federal Award Notices**

AmeriCorps will make Competitive awards following the selection announcement. AmeriCorps anticipates announcing the results of the Competitive funding process by notifying applicants **by mid-April 2025**, depending on the availability of Congressional appropriations. All Competitive applicants, successful or not, will be notified of funding decisions via email. Notification of an award is not an authorization to begin grant activities. An executed subcontract with Volunteer Tennessee is the only document authorizing awardees to commence grant activities.

Volunteer Tennessee anticipates announcing the results of the Formula process by notifying applicants **no later than May 5, 2025**, depending on timely full year appropriations and notification of Competitive grant selections. All Formula applicants, successful or not, will be notified of funding decisions via email. This notification is not an authorization to begin grant activities. The executed contract with Volunteer Tennessee is the authorizing document for grant activities.

An awardee may not obligate or expend Federal funds until the start of the Project Period identified on the executed subcontract.

### **F.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

#### **F.2.a. Uniform Guidance**

All awards made under this Notice must follow the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, in [2 CFR Parts 200](#) and [2205](#).

#### **F.2.b. Requests for Monitoring or Payment Integrity Information**

AmeriCorps will request information from grantees to ensure compliance with legal requirements, including the [Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019](#). If grantees do not respond promptly to these requests, then their funds may be placed on manual hold, reimbursement only status, or other restrictions as appropriate.

#### **F.2.c. AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions**

All grants must follow the FY 2025 AmeriCorps General Terms and Conditions, and the FY 2025 Program-Specific Terms and Conditions for their particular program (when applicable). These Terms and Conditions contain mandatory compliance and reporting requirements, and applicants should review these instructions prior to any Notice of Grant Award. 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](#).

#### **F.2.d. 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. Use [45 CFR 2540.200– 2540.207](#) and [National Service Criminal History Check Resources](#) for complete information and FAQs.*

Recipients must complete the following criminal history checks:

1. National Sex Offender Public website through [NSOPW.gov](#) (nationwide check);
2. State criminal history record repository or agency-designated alternative for the individual's State of residence *and* State of service; and
3. Fingerprint-based check of the FBI criminal history record database through the State criminal history record repository or agency-approved vendor.

**All checks must be conducted, reviewed, and an eligibility determination made before the individual begins 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, as defined in 18 U.S.C. 1111.

#### **F.3. Use of Material**

To ensure that materials generated with AmeriCorps funding are available to the public and readily accessible to recipients and non-recipients, 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 per [2 CFR 200.315](#).

#### **F.4. Reporting**

Volunteer Tennessee sub-grantees are required to provide mid-year and end of year progress reports, quarterly financial reports, and an evaluation report as required by the AmeriCorps regulations [45 CFR §§2522.500-2522.540](#) and [§§2522.700-2522.740](#). A final financial report is due at the end of the grant.

Award recipients will be required to report [at Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Subaward Reporting System](#) (FSRS) on all subawards over \$30,000 and may be required to report on executive compensation for your organization and for your subgrantees. Recipients and subrecipients 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.

Once the grant is awarded, recipients will be expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices in place that provide reasonable assurance that they are providing AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee with high quality programmatic and



financial data. At a minimum, sub-grantees should have policies and practices that address the following five aspects of data quality for themselves and for sub-sites (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; and
- Grantee actively reviews data for accuracy prior to submission.

In addition to semi-annual reporting of progress toward the grant's approved performance measure outputs and outcomes, additional performance data and narrative data must be reported annually (as applicable), including the number of applicants for AmeriCorps positions and the number of volunteers recruited and/or supported by AmeriCorps members (both episodic and ongoing volunteers).

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

#### **F.5. Continuation Funding Information and Requirements**

Organizations that have current AmeriCorps State awards that will be in program Year 2 or Year 3 in FY 2025 are considered continuation applicants. Continuation applicants must submit an application to be eligible to receive funding for the FY 2025 program year. Continuation applicants must follow the requirements for continuation application content as outlined in the [Application Instructions](#).

Please use the [Attachment B Application Instructions](#) for information regarding how to request the use of unexpended funds.

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

Continuation application review will also be based on progress reports, the federal financial report, evaluation plans, and AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee 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 and Volunteer Tennessee reserves the right to award applications in an amount less than the requested level of funding and will document the rationale for doing so.

#### **G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS**

This *Notice* is available the [Volunteer Tennessee AmeriCorps Funding Opportunities page](#). For further information or for a printed copy of this *Notice*, send an email to [volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov](mailto:volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov) or call (615) 253-6313.

#### **Volunteer Tennessee's mailing address is:**

Volunteer Tennessee  
William R. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower

312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Nashville, TN 37243-1102

For technical questions and problems with the eGrants system, call the AmeriCorps Hotline at (800) 942-2677. AmeriCorps Hotline hours are posted at <https://questions.americorps.gov/>. Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the name of the Notice to which the organization is applying.

## H. Other Information

### H.1. Technical Assistance

In addition to consulting the *Application Instructions, Mandatory Supplemental Information, Performance Measure Instructions*, and AmeriCorps regulations as directed in this *Notice*, applicants are encouraged to consult the [Volunteer Tennessee AmeriCorps Funding Opportunities page](#) for a schedule of technical assistance webinars.

Resources applicants need to effectively manage their grant award and training and technical assistance materials are found on the [Manage Your Grant webpage](#).

### H.2. Re-Focusing of Funding

AmeriCorps and Volunteer Tennessee reserve the right to re-focus program dollars under this *Notice* in the event of disaster or other compelling needs.

## I. IMPORTANT NOTICES

### I.1. Public Burden Statement

The estimated time to complete the application for this Notice of Funding is about six hours per submission. This includes time for reviewing the instructions, gathering, and organizing the necessary data, and filling out the application and reporting forms.

Please note that you are not required to submit a response to this *Notice* unless it includes a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number and expiration date. This collection is approved under OMB Control Number 3045-0047, with the title 'Application Instructions, State and National Competitive, New and Continuation,' and an expiration date of September 30, 2026, according to federal regulations (5 CFR 1320.5(b)(2)(i)).

### I.2. Privacy Act Statement

The Privacy Act of 1974, [5 U.S.C §552a](#), requires that we notify applicants that the information requested under this Notice of Funding is collected pursuant to [42 U.S.C. §12592](#) and 12615 of the [National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended](#), and [42 U.S.C. §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. assistance.

Effects of Nondisclosure - The information requested is voluntary; however, to be a recipient of this grant program, disclosure of personal or sensitive information is required. to receive federal benefits.

## **SECTION III: IMPORTANT MANDATORY SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS**

### **OBLIGATORY APPLICATION ATTACHMENTS**

This Notice is NOT of a higher priority than the following attachments, they should be read together with the documents listed below, this includes but is not limited to the AmeriCorps regulations, Application Instructions, Performance Measure Instructions, and Mandatory Supplemental Information. These documents are available online at [Volunteer Tennessee's Funding opportunities webpage](#).

#### **A. ATTACHMENT DESCRIPTIONS**

##### **ATTACHMENT A: Mandatory Supplemental Information**

The AmeriCorps State & National Mandatory Supplemental Information is intended to provide applicants with additional information for the preparation of their applications under the AmeriCorps State and National Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity. The Supplemental Information provides both detailed definitions of certain terms included in the *Notice*, as well as additional details regarding how to properly file an application under the *Notice*. This Supplemental Information is incorporated by reference in the *Notice*, and applicants must comply with any requirements stated in this Supplemental Information.

##### **ATTACHMENT B: Application Instructions**

The 2025 AmeriCorps Application Instructions conform to AmeriCorps' online grant application system, [eGrants](#). This document contains important information and resources for new and continuing requests to successfully submit an AmeriCorps funding application on eGrants.

##### **ATTACHMENT C: Performance Measures**

All applications must include at least one aligned performance measure (output paired with outcome) that corresponds to the proposed primary intervention. This document reviews performance measure requirements and selection rules.

##### **ATTACHMENT D: eGrants Indirect Cost Rate User Instructions**

The instructions for how to enter the organization's indirect cost rate into eGrants.

#### **B. TN AMERICORPS FUNDING APPLICANT ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS FORM UPLOAD DESCRIPTIONS**

##### **Operational and Financial Management Survey (OFMS)**

This survey is intended to collect information about the capacity of applicants to manage federal grant funds.

## **Evidence**

AmeriCorps applicants must submit evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of their proposed program. This may include evaluation reports, studies, or data that align with specific evidence tiers ([Preliminary, Moderate, or Strong](#)) and support the likelihood that their intervention will achieve the desired outcomes.

## **Evaluation Plan**

If the applicant has received three or more years of competitive funding for the same project, they must upload an evaluation plan outlining their approach to assessing the program's impact and effectiveness (see section [D.7.b, Submission of Additional Documents](#)).

## **Evaluation Report**

If the applicant has received six or more years of competitive funding for the same project, they must upload an evaluation report assessing the program's impact and effectiveness (see section [D.7.b, Submission of Additional Documents](#)).

## **Single Audit**

AmeriCorps State applicants are required to submit an independent audit of their financial statements, conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) (or audited financial statements if the agency does not meet the requirement for a Single Audit), to ensure proper use of federal funds. This audit must cover the applicant's most recent fiscal year and demonstrate financial stability and compliance with federal regulations.

## **SAM**

AmeriCorps State applicants must submit proof of active registration with SAM.gov (System for Award Management) as part of their application. This confirmation verifies the organization's eligibility to receive federal funds and must be current at the time of application.

## **Form 990**

AmeriCorps State applicants proposing new projects to be funded by Volunteer Tennessee must their most recent Form 990 - Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax.

## **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Procedures**

AmeriCorps State applicants proposing new projects to be funded by Volunteer Tennessee must a description of the agency's procedures to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, including procedures for responding to complaints and notifying beneficiaries of their rights under Title VI, specific policies to ensure compliance with Title VI (attach excerpts from their policy manual), and their process for collecting racial and ethnic data on participants and beneficiaries.