

## NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

**Federal Agency Name:** AmeriCorps  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Volunteer Generation Fund  
**Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement  
**Assistance Listing Number:** 94.021

### **Summary Statement:**

AmeriCorps announces a competitive grant funding opportunity in support of its Volunteer Generation Fund to strengthen nonprofit and other social service organizations' ability to recruit and retain mission critical volunteers. AmeriCorps expects to make available up to \$8.558 million for programs that meet critical community needs through service. With these investments, AmeriCorps seeks to fund effective approaches that expand volunteering, strengthen the capacity of volunteer connector organizations to recruit and retain skill-based volunteers, and develop strategies to use volunteers effectively to solve community problems.

**Disclosure:** Publication of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (Notice) does not obligate AmeriCorps to award any specific number of grants or to commit any particular amount of funding.

### **Important Dates**

- Applications are due not later than **Tuesday, May 16, 2023**, by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.
- Successful applicants will be notified by July 2023.
- Successful applicants will be issued awards by September 2023

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# FULL TEXT OF THE NOTICE

## A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### A.1. Purpose of Volunteer Generation Fund Funding

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

Through AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps Seniors, and the Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF), AmeriCorps has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action. Authorized by the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act in 2009, this fund expands the role of AmeriCorps in strengthening the nation's volunteer infrastructure. The Volunteer Generation Fund supports organizations to boost the impact of volunteers on critical community needs and rebuilding the volunteer infrastructure after the covid pandemic.

The Volunteer Generation Fund focuses on investments in volunteer management practices that strengthens nonprofit organizations and other entity's ability to increase recruitment and retention of volunteers to meet critical community needs through service. AmeriCorps seeks to fund effective approaches that expand volunteering, strengthen the capacity of volunteer connector organizations to recruit and retain skill-based volunteers, and develop strategies to use volunteers effectively to solve community problems.

Applicants that receive funding under this Notice may directly carry out the activities supported under the award or may carry out the activities by making subgrants to community-based entities, supporting volunteer generation at these entities.

Subgrants to community-based entities must include one or more of the following:

- Recruit, manage, or support volunteers to a community-based entity such as a volunteer coordinating agency, a nonprofit resource center, school districts, a volunteer training clearinghouse, an institution of higher education, or a collaborative partnership of faith-based and community-based organization.
- Provide technical assistance and support to strengthen the capacity of local infrastructure organizations, address areas of national need, and expand the number of volunteers nationally.

### A.2. Funding Priorities

AmeriCorps released its [2022-2026 strategic plan](#) that defines the agency's goals and objectives to advance the agency's mission to improve lives and strengthen communities. AmeriCorps will execute the following goals to better position the agency to respond to national and local needs and help the communities it serves prosper: partner with communities to alleviate poverty and advance racial equity; enhance the experience for AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers; unite Americans by bringing them together in service; effectively steward federal resources; and make AmeriCorps one of the best and most equitable places to work in the federal government.

AmeriCorps will invest in existing and new partnerships with non-profit, faith-based, and tribal organizations, and state service commissions, to get things done for America. The agency will prioritize investment in the most critical issues of our time – public health, climate and the environment, and education and economic opportunity – within AmeriCorps' Focus Areas ([Appendix 1](#)) and will increase its efforts to ensure our AmeriCorps members, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, and community-based volunteers reflect the communities where they serve. We will target our investments toward communities where the need is greatest, particularly those with populations that face racial inequality and poverty. These steps will enable more Americans than ever to strengthen the communities that need it most across the nation through their service.

AmeriCorps' priorities for this funding opportunity are:

- Programs developing innovative approaches in removing barriers to engage volunteers from historically underrepresented areas including but not limited to the BIPOC, LGBTQI+, veteran and military family communities, as well as persons in rural areas and persons with disabilities.
- Programs that expand, launch, or improve high-impact tutoring, mentoring and other school-based or out of school time programs which will help students succeed academically and support their mental health and overall wellbeing, in line with the [National Partnership for Student Success](#).
- Programs that actively engage volunteers in removing structural racial inequities, advancing racial equality, and increasing opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities. VGF encourages grant applications to include work plans that advance justice and equality in areas such as education, rural communities, access to food and healthcare, workforce development, elder justice, and living independently.
- Projects engaging in activities to counter the corrosive effects of hate-fueled violence on our democracy and public safety in line with the [United We Stand Summit](#).

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**

AmeriCorps expects 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.

Applicants are required to use the specific performance measures outlined in this Notice. See the Program-specific evaluation requirements [embed appropriate link].

All applicants are required to use the following National Performance Measures:

- G3-3.4 (output): Number of organizations that received capacity building services AND
- G3-3.10A (outcome): Number of organizations that increased their effectiveness, efficiency, and/or program scale/reach. \*

\*In the Described Instrument section of measure G3-3.10A, applicants must specifically describe how they will measure organizational effectiveness, efficiency, or program scale/reach with respect to volunteer recruitment or management.

Applicants may optionally select additional performance measure(s), either National Performance Measures or applicant determined performance measures, to describe the type and amount of activities carried out by volunteers managed and/or generated through their program. All performance measures must align with the 2023 VGF Performance Measure Instructions posted on the AmeriCorps website. *Note: the number of volunteers recruited/coordinated/supported by your grant, and the number of hours served by these volunteers, will be reported via standard Performance Data Elements and should not be included as performance measures.*

#### **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.](#)) and the [Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973](#), as amended ([42 U.S.C. §4950 et seq.](#)).

## **B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

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

AmeriCorps anticipates approximately \$8,558,000 million for Volunteer Generation Fund Funding Opportunity FY 2023 awards.

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

Award amounts will vary as determined by the scope of the projects. AmeriCorps will make awards in the range of \$100,000 to \$1,000,000.

### **B.3. Period of Performance**

Successful applicants will be issued awards by September 2023.

AmeriCorps anticipates making three-year grant awards. AmeriCorps generally makes an initial award for the first year of the period of performance, based on a one-year budget. Continuation awards for subsequent years are not guaranteed; they depend upon availability of appropriations in FY 24 and FY 25 and satisfactory performance.

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

Volunteer Generation Fund grants will be awarded on a cost reimbursement basis.

Award recipients will be assigned to an AmeriCorps Portfolio Manager, who will be responsible for assessing recipient performance, providing training and technical assistance, and serving as the agency's primary point of contact.

Volunteer Generation Fund grants will be awarded if an application is successful.

## **C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **C.1. Eligible Applicants**

The following non-Federal entities (all of which are defined in [2 CFR 200.1](#) or [42 U.S.C. 12511\(21\)](#)) are eligible to apply:

- Indian Tribes
- institutions of higher education
- local governments (including School districts and K-12 Schools)
- nonprofit organizations
- state service commissions
- states and US Territories

In addition to Indian Tribes as defined in [2 CFR 200.1](#), tribal organizations that are controlled, authorized, or chartered by Federally recognized Indian Tribes are also eligible to apply. If an entity applies for an award as a tribal organization that is controlled or chartered by one or more Indian Tribes, and the organization does not meet any of the other applicant eligibility types, the organization must provide copies or links to documentation which demonstrates that the organization is controlled or chartered by a federally recognized Indian Tribe. If an entity applies as an organization authorized by a federally recognized tribe, or multiple specific federally recognized tribes, it must submit a resolution or other authorization, adopted by the Tribal Council (or comparable tribal governing body) of each Indian Tribe. The authorization(s) must identify the entity applying for an AmeriCorps award by name as a tribal organization that is authorized by the Indian Tribe(s) for the purpose of applying for AmeriCorps funding (or federal grant funds generally).

Applicants must have a valid SAM registration and Unique Entity Identifier to receive an award. See Section [D.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) for more information.

### **New Applicants**

AmeriCorps strongly encourages organizations that have not received prior funding from AmeriCorps to apply.

## **C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching**

Applicants are required to match funds equal to a percentage of their total requested one-year program budget (AmeriCorps Share plus the Grantee Share equals the total program budget). The applicant's match (Grantee Share) can be cash and/or in-kind contributions. Applicants must indicate whether the match is proposed or secured. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet the percentage match requirement at the time of application submission. See Section [D.6. Funding Restrictions](#) for more information.

Match requirements increase with each year and are as follows:

- 20 percent in the first year
- 30 percent in the second year
- 40 percent in the third year
- 50 percent in the fourth year and any later year in which a recipient receives a VGF grant.

Non-AmeriCorps Federal Funds are not allowed as match.

## **C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements**

Applications that propose to engage in activities that are prohibited under AmeriCorps' statutes, regulations, or the terms and conditions of its awards are not eligible to receive AmeriCorps funding.

Note that under appropriations provisions annually enacted by Congress, if AmeriCorps is aware that any corporation has any unpaid federal tax liability

- that has been assessed;
- for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed; and
- that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability;



that corporation is not eligible for an award under this Notice. However, this exclusion will not apply to a corporation that a federal agency has considered for suspension or debarment and determined that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the federal government.

Pursuant to the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, an organization described in the [Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. §501 \(c\)\(4\)](#) that engages in lobbying activities is not eligible to apply for AmeriCorps funding.

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

This Notice should be read together with the Volunteer Generation Fund regulations, 45 CFR 2520-2522 and 45 CFR 2540.200, [Application Instructions](#) These documents are available online at

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

All information associated with this funding opportunity is available through the AmeriCorps Funding Opportunities webpages. Applicants should refer to [AmeriCorps Funding Opportunities](#) for more information and instructions on how to fully respond to this Notice. Applicants can also send an email to [VolunteerGeneration@cns.gov](mailto:VolunteerGeneration@cns.gov) for a printed copy of the Notice and Application Instructions.

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

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

Complete applications must include the following elements:

- Standard Form 424 (SF-424) Face Sheet: This is automatically generated when applicants complete the data elements in the eGrants system.
- Narrative Sections:
  - Executive Summary: This is a brief description of the proposed program.
  - Program Design
  - Organizational Capability
  - Cost-Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy
- Performance Measures
- Standard Form 424A Budget

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

Applications may not exceed 10 double-spaced pages as according to the pages printed out from eGrants. The application sections that count toward the page limit are the:

- SF-424 Face Sheet;
- Executive Summary; and
- Program Design and Organizational Capability narratives

The application page limit does not include the Budget, Performance Measures, or any required additional documents.

Text entered into Cost Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy, clarification, amendment, or continuation sections of the narrative will not be read or reviewed. These sections may be used after the review process concludes.

Please note that the length of the application as a word processing document may differ from the length of the document printed out from eGrants. The character limits in eGrants do not align with page limits set in the Notice. **AmeriCorps strongly encourages applicants to print out the application from the "Review and Submit" tab in eGrants prior to submission in order to confirm that the application does not exceed the page limit.**

AmeriCorps will not consider the results of any alternative printing methods when determining if an application complies with the page limit. Reviewers will also not consider material that is over the page limit, even if eGrants allows applicants to enter and submit additional text.

### **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. See the [SAM Quick Guide for Grantees](#).

SAM registration must be renewed annually. 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 eGrants 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. The UEI and Employer Identification Number 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.

If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the time AmeriCorps is ready to make a federal award, AmeriCorps may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

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

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

Applications are due not later than **Tuesday, May 16, 2023, by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.**

AmeriCorps will not consider applications submitted after the deadline, except as noted in Section [D.4.c. Late Applications](#). AmeriCorps reserves the right to extend the submission deadline. AmeriCorps will post a notification in the event of an extended deadline on AmeriCorps' website.

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

Additional documents are due by the application submission deadline. See Sections [D.4.a. Application Submission Deadline](#) and [D.7.b. Submission of Additional Documents](#) for more information.

### **D.4.c. Late Applications**

All applications received after the submission deadline published in this Notice, of **Tuesday, May 16, 2023, at 5:00 pm Eastern Time**, are presumed to be non-compliant. To overcome this presumption, the applicant must:

- submit a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance(s) that caused the delay, including:
  - the timing and specific cause(s) of the delay
  - the ticket number if a request for assistance was submitted to the AmeriCorps Hotline
  - any information provided to the applicant by the AmeriCorps Hotline
  - any other documentation or evidence that supports the justification
- ensure that AmeriCorps receives the written explanation or justification and any other evidence that substantiates the claimed extenuating circumstance(s), via email to [LateApplications@cns.gov](mailto:LateApplications@cns.gov) no later than 24 hours after the application deadline as stated in the Notice

Communication with AmeriCorps staff, including an applicant's portfolio manager, is not a substitute for a written explanation or justification of the extenuating circumstance that caused the delay as outlined above. Applicants are required to continue working in [eGrants, AmeriCorps' web-based application system](#), and with the AmeriCorps Hotline to submit the application. AmeriCorps will determine whether or not to accept a late application on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants that do not meet the application submission deadline and do not submit a written explanation or justification or any other evidence to overcome the presumption of non-compliance within the published timeframe will be deemed noncompliant. If AmeriCorps

sustains a noncompliant determination, the application will not be reviewed or selected for award.

AmeriCorps will *not* consider an advance request to submit a late application. Please carefully review and follow the guidance in this section and submit your application as soon as possible.

### **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**

Awards under this Notice are subject to cost share or matching requirements. The amount of funding AmeriCorps provides will be limited to a percentage based on year of funding of the total allowable costs for the funded activity, as determined under [2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E-Cost Principles](#).

There are also limitations on the use of Federal Funds to recover indirect costs. As provided in [2 CFR 200.306\(c\)](#), unrecovered indirect costs may be included as part of an applicant's cost sharing or matching requirements.

Applicants who will be pass-through entities must include in their subawards terms and conditions that will ensure that the pass-through entity's award under this Notice will comply with the cost share and matching requirements. See [2 CFR 200.331\(a\)\(2\)-\(4\)](#) and [2 CFR 200.74](#).

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

Application budgets may include indirect costs. Based on qualifying factors, applicants may either use a Federally approved indirect cost rate or a 10 percent *de minimis* rate of modified total direct costs, or may claim certain costs directly, as outlined in [2 CFR 200.413](#). States, local governments, and Indian Tribes may use previously-approved indirect cost allocation plans. All methods must be applied consistently across all federal awards. Applicants that have a federal negotiated indirect cost rate must enter that information in the Organization section in eGrants. However, under section 121(d) of the NCSA and AmeriCorps' regulations at 45 CFR 2521.95 and 2540.110, no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on VGF grants.

The instructions for how to enter the organization's indirect cost rate are located here: [eGrants Indirect Cost Rate User Instructions](#). Applicants should not submit documentation addressing the indirect 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@cns.gov](mailto:IndirectCostRate@cns.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.

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

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

Applicants must submit applications electronically via [eGrants, AmeriCorps' web-based application system](#). AmeriCorps recommends 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 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 eGrants 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. Note that use of eGrants questions could include a 24-hour or longer response timeframe. [AmeriCorps Hotline hours](#) are also posted.

Be prepared to provide the application ID, organization's name, and the name of the Notice to which the organization is applying. If the issue cannot be resolved by the deadline, applicants must continue working with the AmeriCorps Hotline to submit via eGrants.

If circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit in eGrants, applicants may send a paper copy of the application via overnight carrier below. Applicants must include a written explanation and any other documentation or evidence that support their inability to submit their application electronically.

AmeriCorps  
ATTN: Office of Grant Administration (OGA)/Volunteer Generation Fund Application  
250 E Street, SW, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20525

Please use a non-U.S. Postal Service carrier to avoid security-related delays. **All deadlines and requirements in this Notice also apply to paper applications. AmeriCorps does not accept applications submitted via fax or email.**

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

Applicants are required to submit the following additional documents by the application submission deadline:

1. Tribal organization eligibility documentation (See Section [C.1 Eligible Applicants](#))
2. All applicants regardless of funding level are required to submit an [Operational and Financial Management Survey \(OFMS\)](#). Please submit the OFMS using the [link to the online form](#), where you will be required to submit your response electronically. Forms submitted as a Word document, PDF, or any other document format may not be accepted.

Failure to submit the required additional documents, following the email instructions in this section, by the deadline may have a negative effect on the determination of the application’s eligibility to advance for review.

***Do not submit any items that are not requested in this Notice Application Instructions. AmeriCorps will not review or return them.***

**E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

**E.1. Selection Criteria**

Applications should include a well-designed plan with clear and compelling justifications for receiving the requested funds. Reviewers will assess the quality of applications by using the selection criteria described below and will rate them accordingly. They will also consider the weights assigned to each criterion.

<b>Categories/Subcategories</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Program Design</b>	<b>50</b>
• <b>Goals and Objectives</b>	25
• <b>Program Impact</b>	25
• <b>Notice Priority</b>	0
<b>Organizational Capability</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy</b>	<b>15</b>

**E.1.a. Executive Summary (Required- 0 percent):**

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

The [Name of the organization] will engage [Year 1 number of] volunteers who will [activities volunteers will be doing] which aligns with [funding priority area]. The volunteers will serve [type of community/population served by volunteer intervention] to meet [community need].

### **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.

#### Goals and Objectives (25 percent)

Reviewers will assess the extent to which:

- The applicant convincingly links the identified need, proposed interventions, and the anticipated outputs and outcomes.
- The program design aligns with the purpose and priorities listed in the Notice
- Whether the proposed interventions and activities are evidence-informed or evidence-based. And whether the organizations uses these practices to achieve intended outcomes in the community served.
- The demographics of the community served are described and plans are included to recruit volunteers from geographic or demographic communities in which the program operates are identified. Such communities could include potentially underrepresented populations and communities, including:
  - a. Persons from BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color) communities;
  - b. Persons from LGBTQI+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and/or questioning, asexual/aromantic/agender) communities;
  - c. Persons with varying degrees of English language proficiency;
  - d. Persons with disabilities'
  - e. Veterans and military family members; and
  - f. Persons who live in rural areas.
- A plan is in place to engage volunteers over the course of grant funding.

#### Program Impact (25 percent)

Reviewers will assess the extent to which:

- The applicant demonstrates that the proposed project is likely to have a notable, positive impact as measured by the magnitude of the effect on the need(s).
- The applicant demonstrates that the proposed project is likely to have a notable increase in volunteers generated to meet a community need(s).
- The objectives and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.
- The applicant's plan to measure and collect data on National Performance Measures outcomes and outputs and that data performance elements.

#### Notice Priority (0 points)

- The proposed program fits within one or more of the AmeriCorps funding priorities and meets all of the requirements within that bullet/section as outlined in [the A.2 Funding Priorities section](#).

**E.1.c. Organizational Capability (35 percent):**

Reviewers will consider the quality of the application’s response to the following criteria below. Do not assume all sub-criteria are of equal value.

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the organization has:

- the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan, implement, and evaluate the proposed project.
- the necessary plans and infrastructure to provide programmatic and fiscal oversight, day-to-day operational support, and data collection applicant’s track record raising funds to support service activities and initiatives
- a plan for securing partners and community support for, and involvement in, the proposed project.
- an effective mechanism in place to report, without delay, any suspected criminal activity, waste, fraud, and/or abuse to both the AmeriCorps Office of Inspector General and AmeriCorps and a plan for training staff and participants on these reporting protocols.
- sufficient policies, procedures, and controls in place to prevent, detect, and mitigate the risk of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, this can include an assessment of appropriate segregation of duties, internal oversight activities, measures to prevent timekeeping fraud, etc.
- a monitoring and oversight plan to prevent and detect non-compliance and enforce compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited activities and criminal history checks at the grantee, subgrantee (if applicable), and service site locations.
- a stated commitment to a strategic plan for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the organization and its mission. This can include the inclusion of diversity on the Board of Directors, agency staff and leadership, and/or volunteers.

**E.1.d. Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (15 percent):**

The following selection criteria will be assessed based on information included in the budget section of the application. Do not enter narrative text in the Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy narrative field.

Reviewers will consider the extent to which:

- Match has been secured or the quality of the plan to raise match
- The costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.
- The budget is clear and in alignment with the program narrative.
- The budget includes adequate resources to carry out the program effectively.
- The program demonstrates that financial and in-kind resources will be obtained to



support program implementation.

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

AmeriCorps will engage Staff Reviewers with relevant knowledge and expertise to assess and provide input on the eligible applications. The review and selection process is intended to produce a diversified set of high-quality programs that represent the priorities and strategic considerations described in this Notice. The determinations made by 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 conduct an initial Compliance and Eligibility Review to determine if an application meets the eligibility requirements published in this Notice and advances to the next stage of the review process.

An application is compliant if the applicant:

- is an eligible organization
- submitted an application by the submission deadline
- submitted an application that complies with the following program-specific requirements for a budget with one year of the performance period:
  - requested no less than (CNCS Share) of \$100,000 for a one-year budget
  - requested no more than maximum amount of \$1,000,000 for a one-year budget

Reviewing for eligibility is intended to ensure that only those applications that are eligible for award are further 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**

#### **Internal Review**

AmeriCorps Staff Reviewers will assess the applications based on the Program Design, Organizational Capability, and Cost-Effectiveness, and Budget Adequacy Selection Criteria ([E.1](#)). Staff Reviewers will also consider the priorities and strategic considerations detailed in this Notice. AmeriCorps will recruit and select Staff Reviewers on the basis of demonstrated expertise in Volunteer Generation Fund programming and/or the Focus Areas, as well as experience assessing applications. All Staff Reviewers will be screened for conflicts of interest.

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

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

### **E.2.c. Applicant Clarification**

AmeriCorps may ask an applicant for clarifying information after notification of competition results. An applicant's failure to respond to a request for clarification adequately and in a timely manner may result in the removal of its application from the award process.

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

AmeriCorps staff will assess the risks to the program posed by each applicant to determine an applicant's ability to manage Federal Funds. This evaluation is in addition to those about the applicant's eligibility and the quality of its application on the basis of the Selection Criteria [\(E.1\)](#). Results from this assessment will inform funding decisions. If AmeriCorps determines that an award will be made to an applicant with assessed risks, special conditions that correspond to the degree of assessed risk may be applied to the award. Additionally, if AmeriCorps concludes that the reasons for applicants having poor risk assessment are not likely to be mitigated, those applications may not be selected for funding.

In assessing risks, AmeriCorps may consider the following criteria:

1. Due Diligence, including:
  - Federal debt delinquency
  - suspension and debarment
  - information available through Office of Management and Budget (OMB)- designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information, such as:
    - U.S. Treasury Bureau of Fiscal Services
    - System for Award Management (SAM)
    - "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
  - Public Litigation Records
2. Operational and Financial Management, including:
  - financial stability
  - [Operational and Financial Management Survey \(OFMS\)](#)
3. Past Performance, including:
  - an applicant's record in managing previous AmeriCorps awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, including:
    - timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements
    - accuracy of data reported
    - validity of performance measure data reported
    - conformance to the terms and conditions of previous Federal awards
    - applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on award recipients

- timely closeout of other awards
- meeting matching requirements
- the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards
- National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) compliance. See section [F.2.d. National Criminal History Check Requirements](#) and the [NSCHC webpage](#) for more information

4. Other Programmatic Risks, including:

- publicly available information, including from the applicant organization's website
- amount of funding requested by the organization

Applicants will find information to help them understand pre-award due diligence checks in the [AmeriCorps Due Diligence Review Process and Compliance](#) training available on the [Manage Your Grant](#) website, This content will help applicants obtain due diligence compliance and remain compliant throughout the grant life.

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

Prior to making any award that exceeds the \$250,000, AmeriCorps is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov (See [41 U.S.C. §2313](#)). Additionally, AmeriCorps may expand upon these requirements and use its discretion to review and consider information about any applicant receiving an award, including those under \$250,000.

Any applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM.gov and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov.

AmeriCorps may consider comments by any applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing its review of risk posed by the applicant under the Risk Assessment Evaluation section of this Notice.

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

The review and selection process are designed to:

- identify how well eligible applications are aligned with the application selection criteria ([E.1](#))
- build a diversified portfolio based on the following strategic considerations:
  - a. AmeriCorps Funding Priorities (See Section [A.2. Funding Priorities](#))
  - b. meaningful representation of
    - i. geographic diversity
    - ii. rural communities

- iii. small and medium programs
- iv. single and multi-state programs
- v. faith-based organizations
- vi. focus areas
- vii. innovative community strategies for identified funding priorities
- o CEO discretion to advance strategic goals

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

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

***AmeriCorps reserves the right to adjust or make changes to the review process, if unforeseen challenges or urgent circumstances make it impossible, impracticable, or inefficient to conduct the review process as planned. Any such adjustments or changes will not affect the selection criteria (E.1.) that will be used to assess applications.***

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

Each compliant applicant will receive feedback from the Staff Review of its application. This feedback will be based on the review of the original application and will not reflect information provided during clarification.

### **E.4. Transparency in Grant-making**

AmeriCorps is 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](#) within 90 business days after all grants are awarded.

Submitted program narratives and executive summaries for successful applications will be available upon request via email to [AmeriCorpsOGA@cns.gov](mailto:AmeriCorpsOGA@cns.gov).

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

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

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

AmeriCorps will make awards following the selection announcement. AmeriCorps anticipates announcing the results of this funding opportunity by **July 2023**. All applicants, successful or not, will be notified of funding decisions via email.

Notification of an award is not an authorization to begin activities. The Notice of Grant Award signed by the Office of Grant Administration Grant Award Specialist is the authorizing document. An awardee may not expend Federal Funds until the start of the Period of Performance identified on the Notice of Grant Award.

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

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

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

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

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

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

All awards made under this Notice will be subject to the FY 2023 AmeriCorps General Terms and Conditions, and the FY 2023 Program-Specific Terms and Conditions for the particular program (when applicable). These Terms and Conditions contain detailed, mandatory compliance and reporting requirements. Current versions of the AmeriCorps General and Program-Specific Terms and Conditions for each of its programs is available at [Manage Your Grant](#).

### **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. We encourage grantees to minimize barriers to service without putting their program beneficiaries at genuine risk. The law requires grantees to conduct and document NSCHCs on persons (including award-funded staff, national service participant, or volunteer) receiving a salary, living allowance, stipend, or education award through a program receiving AmeriCorps funds. This includes staff that receive part of their salary through a subgrant.

- Award recipients and subrecipients must conduct an NSCHC for AmeriCorps members, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, and all staff funded under, or whose salary is reflected as match on, the award. Limited exceptions are described in 45 CFR § 2540.201.

- AmeriCorps strongly encourages applicants to review the regulations and additional guidance to fully understand how to comply with the requirements. See [NSCHC regulations and guidance](#).
- AmeriCorps also strongly encourages award recipients to utilize the two AmeriCorps-approved vendors to conduct the required NSCHCs.
- The cost of conducting NSCHC is an allowable expense under the award, and individuals subject to the NSCHC must not be required to cover the cost.
- Failure to fully comply with all NSCHC requirements will result in significant disallowed costs.

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 work or service.

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

- the individual refuses to consent to a criminal history check;
- makes a false statement in connection with a criminal history check;
- is registered, or is required to be registered, on a state sex offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry; or
- has been convicted of murder, as defined in 18 U.S.C. 1111.

See [45 CFR 2540.200- 2540.207](#) and [National Service Criminal History Check Resources](#) for complete information and FAQs.

### **F.2.e. Official Guidance**

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

### **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 ([2 CFR §200.315](#)).

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

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

Recipients are required to provide annual progress reports and semi-annual financial and narrative progress reports through eGrants, AmeriCorps' web-based grants management system.

In addition, at the end of the award period, a grantee must submit final financial and progress reports that are cumulative over the entire award period and consistent with the closeout requirements. The final reports are due 120 days after the end of the period of performance.

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 the recipient organization and its subrecipients. 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 in place data collection and data management policies, processes, and practices that provide assurance that they are reporting high quality performance measure data. At a minimum, recipients should have policies, processes, and practices that address the following five aspects of data quality for themselves and for subrecipients (if applicable):

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

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

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

For more information, email [VolunteerGeneration@cns.gov](mailto:VolunteerGeneration@cns.gov)

For technical questions and problems with the eGrants system, call the AmeriCorps Hotline at (800) 942-2677 Option 3. [AmeriCorps Hotline hours](#) are also posted. 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

AmeriCorps will host technical assistance calls to answer questions about the funding opportunity and eGrants. AmeriCorps strongly encourages all applicants to participate in these sessions. Information for these technical assistance calls is available on the [AmeriCorps' Funding Opportunities website](#)

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

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

## I. IMPORTANT NOTICES

**Public Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for collection of information under this Notice of Funding is estimated to average six hours per submission, including reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing the application and reporting forms. AmeriCorps informs people who may respond to this Notice of Funding that they are not required to respond unless the OMB control number and expiration date are current valid. (See [5 C.F.R. 1320.5\(b\)\(2\)\(i\)](#).) This collection is approved under OMB Control #: 3045-0187 Expiration Date: October 30, 2023.

**Privacy Act Statement:** The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C §552a) requires that we notify you 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. In some programs, the information may also be provided to Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to determine the existence of any prior criminal convictions. The information may also be provided to appropriate Federal agencies and contractors that have a need to know the information for the purpose of assisting the government to respond to a suspected or confirmed breach of the security or confidentiality or information maintained in this system of records, and the information disclosed is relevant and unnecessary for the assistance.
- 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.



## APPENDIX I

### **AmeriCorps Focus Areas**

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

#### **Disaster Services**

Helping individuals and communities prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of disasters and increase community resiliency.

#### **Economic Opportunity**

Improving the economic well-being and security of underserved individuals.

#### **Education**

Improving educational outcomes for underserved people, especially children. AmeriCorps is particularly interested in program designs that support youth engagement and service learning as strategies to achieve high educational outcomes.

#### **Environmental Stewardship**

Supporting communities to become more resilient through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve land and water, increase renewable energy use and improve at-risk ecosystems, especially in underserved households and communities.

#### **Healthy Futures**

Supporting for health needs within communities, including mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 and other public health crises, access to care, aging in place, and addressing childhood obesity, especially in underserved communities.

#### **Veterans and Military Families**

Improving the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength.

#### **Capacity Building**

Support *indirect services* that enable AmeriCorps-supported organizations to provide more, better, and sustained *direct services*. Capacity building activities cannot be solely intended to support the administration or operations of the organization.

## APPENDIX II

[APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS](#)